The Palestinian Issue

Historical Background
& Contemporary Developments

Dr. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh

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English Version

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The Palestinian Issue
Historical Background and Contemporary Developments
القضية الفلسطينية: خلفياتها التاريخية وتطوراتها المعاصرة
Al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah
Khalfiyyatuha al-Tarikhiyyah wa Tatawwuratuha al-Mu'asirah

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List of Abbreviations

CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GS	Gaza Strip
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ISA	Israel Security Agency (Shabak)
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PA	Palestinian Authority
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP–GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command
PIJ	Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNC	Palestinian National Council
PPP	Palestine People's Party
PPSF	Palestinian Popular Struggle Front
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
US	United States of America
WB	West Bank
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II
WZO	World Zionist Organization

Introduction

This study attempts to provide a general overview of the Palestinian issue through the main points of its historical background, thus allowing the reader to better grasp the overall picture and the intertwined factors pertaining to the issue, at any stage, and in a logical sequence, up to the current stage. Indeed we could have examined the Palestinian issue through the lens of themes such as the land, the people, the Zionist program, the resistance, etc., but we believe that such a division would be hard to tackle in a compact study, as it would provide only a general overview of each theme, but not of the overall themes together and in the same context.

This study is addressed to those wishing to become acquainted with the Palestinian issue, particularly those who have little time to read specialized and detailed studies. However, contemporary developments are assessed in detail in Chapter Six, to allow readers to become informed about many events, changes, and complex issues going on around them.

Naturally, this study was written with the belief that the people of Palestine are the rightful owners of their land, and that Palestine is an Arab and Islamic land. This study was developed by following rigorous academic standards, and—wherever possible—was worded in a simple language, with up-to-date information up to 2013, and far from any sensationalism.

This book is a revised and updated edition of the 2002 edition that was printed in Egypt, Kuwait and Malaysia, titled *The Palestinian Issue: Background and Developments Until 2001*.

Dr. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh

Chapter One

*Background of the Palestinian Issue
Until 1918*

Background of the Palestinian Issue Until 1918

First: Palestine

Palestine is the name given to the southwestern part of *Bilad al-Sham* (i.e., Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon), located in western Asia, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Palestine has a significant strategic location, as it is considered to act as a bridge between Asia and Africa, and as the meeting point of these two wings of the Islamic world.

Man has inhabited the land of Palestine since time immemorial, as is evidenced by various excavations and archaeological finds. It is where the first human developments took place, from pastures to agriculture. According to archeologists, Jericho, located in northeastern Palestine, was the first city that was ever built, around 8000 BC.

The oldest known name of this land is the Land of Canaan, since the first known people to have ever inhabited it were the Canaanites, who came from the Arabian Peninsula around 2500 BC. The name Palestine is derived from the Sea Peoples, who possibly came from west Asia Minor and the Aegean Sea around the twelfth century BC. Their name appears in Egyptian engravings as P L S T, and the N was perhaps added later for plural. They lived in the coastal areas and they quickly mingled with the Canaanites, thus leaving no remarkable trace other than giving their name to the land.[1]

As for the land of Palestine, its recognized geographical borders were only defined during the British occupation of Palestine, particularly in 1920–1923. In fact, Palestine's borders have widening and narrowed throughout history, but have generally covered the land situated between the Mediterranean Sea, the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. In the Islamic period, the *Bilad al-Sham* was divided into *ajnad* (singular *jund* or part), and the Palestine *jund* extended from Rafah on the border with Sinai in Egypt to al-Lajjun village located 18 km northwest of Jenin city. But regardless of the divisions made during the various

Islamic eras, Palestine remained part of *Bilad al-Sham*. Such divisions never changed the sentiment of its inhabitants that they belonged to the same Muslim *Ummah* (Nation), while their allegiance to the ruling power did not waver as long as it was Muslim. In any case, Palestine has a surface area of 27,009 km^2 according to contemporary divisions.[2]

Palestine enjoys the moderate climate of the Mediterranean Sea, which is conducive to stability and productivity. It can be divided into three main sections: the coastal plain, the central mountain range, and the Jordan Rift Valley. Most of the Palestinians live on the coastal plain where the ports are located, as well as the centers of trade and economic and agricultural activity. The central mountain range encompasses the Galilee, Nablus, Hebron, and the Negev plateau, with its highest peak being Mount Meron North of Palestine, at 1,207 meters. Palestinian peasants have lived in these mountains for thousands of years, planting grains, fruits, and vegetables, and breeding cattle. The Jordan Rift Valley, where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea, is considered to be the lowest land elevation (400 meters below sea level) on Earth. It is characterized by its warm climate all year round, and is known for producing palm trees, bananas and vegetables.

Second: Palestine's Religious Status

1. Palestine's Islamic Status

Palestine has a great importance in the eyes of the followers of heavenly religions (i.e., Islam, Christianity and Jadaism), who consist around 55% of the world population.

The land of Palestine has a privileged position in the hearts of Muslims, since:

- It is a sacred land according to the Holy Qur'an: "*O my people! Enter the holy land which Allah hath assigned unto you.*"[3]

- It is a blessed land according to the Holy Qur'an: "*Glory to ((Allah)) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque* [*al-Aqsa* Mosque], *whose precincts We did bless,*"[4] and "*(It was Our power that made) the violent (unruly) wind flow (tamely) for Solomon, to his order, to the land which We had blessed: for We do know all things.*"[5]

• **Palestine's Location in the Muslim World**

- It is the site of the holy *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the first *Qiblah* [the direction Muslims face when performing their prayers] for Muslims and the third holiest mosque in Islam to which pilgrimage is encouraged, and where prayer is considered to equal 500 prayers in other mosques. In the words of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), "*Do not undertake journey but to three*

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*mosques: this mosque of mine, the Mosque of al-Haram [The Holy Mosque]
and the Mosque of Aqsa [Bait al-Maqdis],*"[6] and also "*Prayer in the inviolable
mosque [in Makkah] is like 100,000 prayers [elsewhere]. And prayers in my
mosque [in Medinah] is like one thousand prayers [elsewhere]. And a prayer
in Bait al-Maqdis [in Jerusalem] is like five hundred prayers [elsewhere].*"[7]

- Palestine is the land and birthplace of many prophets (PBUT), and was
  inhabited by Abraham (*Ibrahim*), *Lut* (*Lut*), Ishmael (*Isma'il*), Isaac (*Ishaq*),
  Jacob (*Ya'qoub*), Joseph (*Yusuf*), David (*Dawud*), Solomon (*Sulaiman*), Saleh
  (*Saleh*), Zachary (*Zakariyya*), John the Baptist (*Yahya*), and Jesus (*'Issa*)
  (PBUT), who were all mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. It was also visited by
  the Prophet (SAWS) and inhabited by many Israelite prophets who were not
  mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, and one of the prophets who was mentioned
  in *Hadith Sahih* [authentic Hadith] was Joshua (*Yusha' bin Nun*) (PBUH).

- Palestine is the land of *Isra'*—The Night Journey, since *Allah* (SWT) chose
  al-Aqsa Mosque to be the Prophet's destination for his night journey from
  The Holy Mosque, and then his *Mi'raj* (night ascension) to Heaven. *Allah*
  (SWT) thus bestowed a great honor upon the land of Palestine and *al-Aqsa*
  Mosque, where He gathered all the prophets, who were led in prayer by
  Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), in an indication of the continuity of the
  message of monotheism brought by the prophets, and the bequeathal of the
  heritage of these prophets, the Imamate, and the burdens of *Allah*'s message
  to the Islamic nation.

- According to the authentic Hadith, regarding Jerusalem: "*It is the land where
  they* [*all people*] *will be gathered (al-Mahshar) and resurrected (al-Manshar).*"[8]

- The *Bilad al-Sham*, of which Palestine is a part, is "*the center of the realm
  of Islam*"[9] according to the authentic Hadith, and "*Certainly, safety during
  tribulations is to be found in al-Sham.*"[10]

- Those who inhabit this land are in a constant state of *jihad* [fighting in the
  way of *Allah*] and *ribat* [keeping guard], according to the Prophet (SAWS):
  "*The people of al-Sham with their wives and husbands, off-spring and
  slaves to the boundaries of the Peninsula are in a state of ribat (keeping
  guard) in the way of Allah (SWT). Whosoever settles in one of its cities is in*

a state of ribat (keeping guard), and whoever occupies a border outpost in it, is in a state of struggle in the way of Allah [jihad]."[11]

- According to the authentic Hadith the Victorious Group, which shall adhere to the truth until the Day of Judgment, lives in *al-Sham*, particularly in Jerusalem and its surroundings.[12]

Hence, it is not surprising in the least that the hearts of Muslims are attached to this blessed Holy Land, for which they are ready to sacrifice their lives.

2. Palestine's Christian Status

Christians call Palestine the Holy Land, because, according to the Christian faith, Jesus Christ and his disciples were born and lived there; and most of the events mentioned in the New Testament and many of the events mentioned in the Old Testament took place there. According to the Christian heritage, the Christian Annunciation was launched from northern and central Palestine, then spread all over the world.

Palestine contains many holy places for Christians; foremost among them is the city of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, where the Church of the Nativity stands. There is also the city of Nazareth where the Virgin Mary received the Annunciation of Christ's birth, and where Christ grew up; and the city of Jerusalem, where Christ pursued his calling and walked his last steps in the Via Dolorosa (Latin for Way of Grief), and according to the Christian faith, where his "crucifixion and burial" took place. Christians believe in the existence of Christ's tomb in the Church of the Resurrection in the city, considered one of the most important churches in the world. West of Jenin, there is the church of Burqin or St. George's Church, the place where Jesus healed ten leprosy patients. Christians revere different places in the Galilee, especially around Lake Tiberias and on the banks of the Jordan River. The importance of this city as a sacred city did not diminish except after 590 CE, when the throne of Pope Gregory the first became the power center of Christianity, and Rome took precedence over Jerusalem; and the Bishop of Jerusalem started to be ranked fifth in the hierarchy of the Catholic priesthood. Nevertheless, Palestine (the Holy Land) continued to permeate the lives and imagination of Christians in general.

3. Palestine's Jewish Status[13]

Jerusalem ("*Yerushalayim*" in religious terms) occupies a central place in the Jewish conscience. For after it was seized by David, the Ark of the Covenant was transferred to it; afterwards Solomon, built his temple in it. In the religious heritage, the city is called "Zion." It includes Mount Zion, the tomb of David, and the "Wailing Wall" (al-Buraq Wall i.e., the Western Wall of *al-Aqsa* Mosque). The city became a center of Jewish religion, toward which Jews face in their prayers. Its name is mentioned in their prayers, especially during the celebration of Easter, when they repeat the chant: "Next year in Jerusalem."

Jewish legislation and heritage have imparted to the city of Jerusalem many laws and legends. The Talmud describes it as the navel of the world; it says that its beauty is not matched by any other city, that God created Jerusalem when He created the world, and that He established the Tent of Meeting in it.

According to the Jewish faith, Jerusalem was depicted as the place where the blessings of heaven will flow, and from there they will be distributed to the rest of the world. It would be, also, the "Shekinah," which denotes the dwelling or the settling of the Divine Presence of God, especially, in the "Temple" in Jerusalem. Hills surround Jerusalem so that the "forces of darkness" will not reach it; while the Shekinah angels guard it. In Judaism, nothing separates Jerusalem from the God, and all Yisrael's group prayers ascend on high through it. In addition, Jerusalem plays an important role in "repairing the world" (Tikkun); for its walls will rise and it will come near the divine throne. Thus, the balance will return to the world, and to the world of emanations (Sephirot). Jerusalem is also one of Palestine's four holy cities, where Jewish prayers should never stop (in addition to Hebron, Safed and Tiberias.)

Nevertheless, rabbinic Judaism forbids the return to Palestine (Eretz Yisrael), including Jerusalem, except in the last days. Reform Judaism has tried to soften the nationalist side of Judaism by turning the idea of "next year in Jerusalem" to a moral idea, similar to that of the golden age, the dream of happiness and paradise. However, Zionism interpreted the religious slogan literally and turned it into a political slogan.

Third: Palestine Throughout History

There are traces that indicate that humans have inhabited Palestine since the Old Stone Age (500 thousand–14 thousand BC). Moreover, it appears that there existed a civilization in the Middle Stone Age (14 thousand–8 thousand BC), known as the Natufian civilization. When the Canaanites came from the Arabian Peninsula (around 2500 BC), they became the region's indigenous inhabitants, building no less than 200 cities and towns in Palestine, such as Bisan, Ashkelon, Acre, Haifa, Hebron, Ashdod, Beersheba, and Bethlehem.[14]

Historians believe that most of Palestine's current inhabitants, particularly in rural areas, are the descendants of the Canaanite, Amorite and Philistine tribes, and also of the Arab tribes that settled in Palestine both before and after the Islamic openings (conquests).[*] All these peoples blended into a single fabric, brought together by Islam and the Arabic language, under an Islamic rule that lasted 13 centuries.

The coming of Abraham (PBUH) to Palestine (around 1900 BC) became a shining light for monotheism (*al-Tawhid*) in this blessed land. He was a contemporary of the ruler of Jerusalem, the Melki Sadek, who was apparently a monotheist and his friend. The Father of Prophets, Abraham, played an important role in spreading the message of monotheism, and it seems that he was not met with any adversity on the part of the inhabitants of Palestine and did not have to leave because of his religion or his calling. He thus stayed in Palestine, where he moved about freely, until he died in the city that bore his name, *al-Khalil* or Hebron. His sons the prophets followed in his footsteps; Isma'il (PBUH) settled in Mecca, and Isaac (PBUH) and his son Jacob (PBUH) settled in Palestine. Jacob had twelve sons, who were known as the Israelites (Jacob was known by the name of Israel). They immigrated to Egypt, where they and their descendants settled and were prosecuted by the Pharaohs for several centuries. *Allah* (SWT) sent them Moses (*Musa*) (PBUH) (in the 13th century BC) to save them from

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[*] The Muslims usually use the term *Futuh*, which literally means "openings"; as the term conquests may not give the exact meaning, because it implies using force against societies and nations. Using force by Muslims was only confined against tyrant regimes that prevent spreading Islam. While in Islam, it is absolutely forbidden to force people to convert to Islam, as they have the full choice, either to convert or to continue on their own religions and believes.

Pharaoh's oppression, and smote Pharaoh and his soldiers. However, since the Israelites in those times had grown used to humiliation and cowardice, they refused to go to the Holy Land and told Moses: "*Go thou, and thy Lord, and fight ye two, while we sit here (and watch)*."[15]

Moses (PBUH) passed away before he entered Palestine, and when a strong generation of Israelites emerged 40 years later, they were led by Joshua (PBUH) (around 1190 BC) and crossed the Jordan River. The Israelites were able to seize control of some parts of northeastern Palestine. But the 150 years that followed witnessed much chaos, conflict, and religious and moral depravity among the Israelites, until the coming of King Saul (*Talut*), who was able to achieve victory over his enemies.

The arrival of King David (PBUH) (around 1004 BC), who succeeded King Saul, heralded the beginning of a new stage for monotheism in the Blessed Land. He pursued his war against non-believers in the Holy Land, whom he yielded into submission. He was able to move his capital to Jerusalem in 995 BC and controlled most of Palestine, except for most of the coastal areas which did not submit to him. His rule lasted until 963 BC, when he was succeeded by his son Solomon (PBUH) (963–923 BC), during whose reign Palestine flourished, enjoying a strong renaissance. *Allah* (SWT) harnessed the winds and the Jinn for Solomon, and gave him powers not matched by any who came after him. David and Solomon's reign was a golden age, during which Palestine was ruled for around 80 years under the banner of faith and monotheism before the Muslim conquest.

After Solomon's death, his kingdom split into two separate states that were hostile to one another for most of the time that followed. The Kingdom of Israel was established north of Palestine in 923–721 BC (it was scornfully described as a rump kingdom by Encyclopedia Britannica).[16] It grew weak and corruption prevailed among its rulers, before it fell to the Assyrians, led by Sargon II, and was destroyed. Its inhabitants, the Israelites, were moved to Harran, Khabur, Kurdistan, and Persia, and were replaced by the Aramaeans. Thus, no trace remained of the 10 Children of Israel who formed this state. As for the Kingdom of Judah, it lasted from 923 to 586 BC. Its capital was Jerusalem, and it suffered from several weaknesses falling under foreign influence for long periods of

time. It was subsequently defeated by Pharaoh Shishaq of Egypt (near the end of the tenth century BC) and then by the Philistines during Jehoram's reign (849–842 BC). It also had to pay tributes to the Assyrians, and finally fell to the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, taking around 40 thousand Jews as prisoners. This kingdom ultimately fell in 586 BC.

The Torah mentions, in the words of Isaiah, one of their prophets, the evils of the Israelites for which they deserved to witness the destruction of their kingdom: "*Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked the Holy One of Israel; they drew backwards*" (Isaiah-Chapter 1), and: "*And the land has deceived because of its inhabitants, for they transgressed instructions, infracted statutes, broke the everlasting covenant*" (Isaiah-Chapter 24).[17]

Therefore, the Kingdom of the Israelites in Palestine lasted no longer than four centuries, during which they mostly ruled part of its land in a weak and fragmented manner, often submitting to the influence and control of strong neighboring countries. Meanwhile, the Canaanites and other inhabitants of Palestine remained on their land.

When the Persian Emperor Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Palestine, a small number of them went back and lived side by side with the Palestinians. During 539–332 BC, Jerusalem was granted some autonomy while still being under Persian control, which was followed by the Hellenistic conquest of Palestine in 332–63 BC. Jewish affairs were managed by a "High Priest," and, starting 164 BC, the Jews managed to achieve self-governance that would strengthen and weaken, depending on how the conflict among the major powers progressed in Palestine at the time (e.g., Roman, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, etc.).

The Romans were able to control Palestine in 63 BC and submitted it to their direct rule starting in the year 6 CE, when they abolished Jewish autonomy in Jerusalem. The Jews rebelled in 66–70 CE, but the Roman General Titus crushed their rebellion and destroyed the Temple. The Jews rebelled again in 132–135 CE, but the Roman leader Julius Severus invaded and destroyed Jerusalem, and the Roman Emperor Hadrian established atop its ruins a new city called Aelia

Capitolina, which was later known as Aelia, Hadrian's first name. Jews were prohibited from entering Jerusalem for nearly 200 years after that,[18] and their numbers dwindled relative to the other inhabitants throughout the 18 centuries that followed. Meanwhile, the indigenous inhabitants (Canaanites and the Arab tribes that mingled with them) remained settled in the country before, during, and after the presence of the Israelites, and to this day.

The Byzantine state took charge of the eastern part of the Roman state starting in 394 CE and maintained its control over Palestine, with the exception of short periods of Persian control, until the Islamic openings of Palestine in 15 AH/ 636 CE.

Fourth: Palestine in the Islamic Era

Before the Islamic state was established in Medina, the weak minority of Muslims in Mecca had their eyes turned towards *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Jerusalem in Palestine, as the *Isra'*—The Night Journey miracle took place from The Holy Mosque to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, which was the first *Qibla* or direction of Muslim prayer. The battle of Khaybar and Fadak (7 AH), the battles of Mu'tah (8 AH) and Tabuk (9 AH), and the campaign of Usama bin Zayd (11 AH), all represented a prelude for the Muslims' yearnings for the *Bilad al-Sham*.

The most prominent battle fought during the conquest of Palestine was the battle of Ajnadayn, which was led by Khalid bin al-Walid on 27 Jumada al-Awwal 13 AH/ 30 July 634 CE close to Beit Jibrin, which resulted in the deaths of around three thousand Romans. This is in addition to the battle of Fahl-Bisan on 28 Dhu'l-Qa'dah 13 AH/ 23 January 635 CE, which took place between the western part of the Jordan River and the south of Bisan. But the decisive battle was the one that took place at Yarmuk, in the north of Jordan, on 5 Rajab 15 AH/ 12 August 636 CE, in which (according to Islamic sources) the Muslim forces (36 thousand soldiers) led by Abu 'Ubaida bin al-Jarrah and Khalid bin al-Walid confronted the Roman army (200 thousand soldiers), which ultimately suffered great losses, estimated by some historians to be around 130 thousand casualties. This battle led to the conquest of the *Bilad al-Sham*. The Caliph 'Umar bin al-Khattab himself came to take the keys of Jerusalem after the Muslims besieged it for several months. Its inhabitants

wanted peace, provided that 'Umar would take care of it in person. Jerusalem was the only city in the era of the Rightly-Guided (*al-Rashidin*) Caliphs whose keys were received by a Caliph himself. Around four thousand Companions of the Prophet (SAWS) took part in the opening with 'Umar, and Bilal bin Rabah's voice chanted the call to prayer, although he refrained from doing so after the Prophet's death.[19] 'Umar bin al-Khattab wrote a covenant to the inhabitants of Jerusalem which was known as the Covenant of 'Umar:[20]

> In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate
>
> This is an assurance of peace and protection given by the servant of Allah Omar [Caliphate Omar Ibn Khattab], Commander of the Believers to the people of Ilia' [al-Quds/ Jerusalem]. He gave them an assurance of protection for their lives, property, church and crosses as well as the sick and healthy and all its religious community.
>
> Their churches shall not be occupied, demolished nor taken away wholly or in part. None of their crosses nor property shall be seized. They shall not be coerced in their religion nor shall any of them be injured. None of the Jews shall reside with them in Ilia'.
>
> The people of Ilia' shall pay Jizia tax [head tax on free non-Muslims living under Muslim rule] as inhabitants of cities do. They shall evict all Romans and thieves.
>
> He whoever gets out shall be guaranteed safety for his life and property until he reach his safe haven. He whoever stays shall be [also] safe, in which case he shall pay as much tax as the people of Ilia' do.....
>
> To the contents of this convent here are given the Covenant of Allah, the guarantees of His Messenger, the Caliphs and the Believers, provided they [the people of Ilia'] pay their due Jizia tax.
>
> Witnesses hereto are:
>
> Khalid Ibn al-Waleed, 'Amr Ibn al-'Ass, 'Abdul-Rahman Ibn 'Auf and Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi-Sifian, made and executed in the year 15 AH.

This text reflects the religious tolerance of Muslims in a world that was clouded by blind fanaticism and coercion in religion. The conquest of Jerusalem was probably achieved in Rabi' al-Akhir 16 AH/ May 637 CE. Caesarea was the last town to be conquered in Palestine in Shawwal 19 AH/ October 640 CE. It was a prosperous port town, and the Romans sought to keep it for as long as possible.

Administrative
divisions of Palestine
in early Islam

In accordance with the administrative divisions, Palestine became a *jund* of the *Bilad al-Sham*, which was split into four *jund* during the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and five during the Umayyad Caliphate. Palestine remained an intrinsic part of the Islamic state, interacting with its political and cultural developments. No change in the states or the governing families affected the fact that the inhabitants of Palestine were Arab Muslims, loyal to the Islamic state.

The rule of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs lasted until 41 AH/ 661 CE, and was followed by the rule of the Umayyads until 132 AH/ 750 CE. Then came the rule of the Abbasids, whose direct rule of Palestine lasted until it began to suffer from weakness and disintegration, with the end of the first Abbasid era, and the death of Caliph Al-Mutawakkil in 247 AH/ 861 CE. This allowed governors to form local and hereditary authorities, such as the Tulunid dynasty, which ruled Egypt and annexed Palestine during 264–292 AH/ 878–905 CE. Then the Ikhshidid dynasty followed suit, when it ruled Egypt during 323–358 AH/ 935–969 CE. The Ikhshidid and Tulunid dynasties both ruled under the banner of the Abbasids, but only in name.

In 358 AH, the Fatimids, who are Isma'ili Shi'a Muslims, were able to wrest control of Palestine, but they struggled with local rebellions, as well as with the Qarmatians and the Seljuqs over control of this land. Then the Seljuqs managed to control most of Palestine in 464 AH/ 1071 CE, but more clashes took place among the Seljuqs themselves and between them and the Fatimids, as the latter

were able to control Tyre in 1097 and Jerusalem in February 1098 CE. This conflict took place in the midst of the First Crusade, whose first vanguards had begun to reach the *Bilad al-Sham*. The Fatimids contacted the Crusaders, offering their cooperation in combating the Seljuqs, in exchange for giving the northern part of the *Bilad al-Sham* to the Crusaders and Palestine to the Fatimids.[21]

We do not intend to discuss the Crusades in detail in this study,[22] but it must be mentioned that the Crusaders were able to dominate Palestine and control Jerusalem in 492 AH/ 1099 CE after they massacred around 70 thousand Muslims. However, the Islamic nation still had a lot of strength and vitality left in it, and was culturally and scientifically superior to the European Crusaders, despite its fragmentation, political struggles, and internal strife. Indeed, there were fighters who continued to fight and drain the Crusaders throughout their reign, such as Aq-Sunqur al-Bursuqi (508–520 AH) and Imad al-Din Zengi *(Zenki)* (521–540 AH) who brought down the Crusader County of al-Ruha (Edessa), and the latter's son Nur al-Din Mahmud Zengi (541–569 AH/ 1146–1174 CE), who gave an exceptional example of Muslim leadership and adopted a revival project parallel to the liberation project that occupied him throughout his reign. He was able to unite the Islamic forces under his leadership in the *Bilad al-Sham*, before annexing Egypt to his rule. He brought down the Fatimid Caliphate there at the hands of his governor in Egypt, Saladin (*Salah al-Din Yusuf bin Ayyoub*), and was able to liberate around 50 cities and fortresses from the Crusaders. However, he passed away after he secured Egypt and the *Bilad al-Sham* as the two claws of a pincer looming over the Crusaders' necks.

Saladin carried on with the struggle after Nur al-Din in 569–589 AH/ 1174–1193 CE, and reunited the *Bilad al-Sham* and Egypt under his leadership. He fought the decisive battle of Hattin against the Crusaders in 24 Rabi' al-Akhir 583 AH/ 4 July 1187 CE, which struck a decisive blow against the presence of the Crusaders, reconquering Jerusalem in 27 Rajab 583 AH/ 2 October 1187 CE, after 88 years of Crusader rule.

The Crusaders carried on with their campaigns and were able to control a stretch of coastal land between Jaffa and Tyre, as well as Jerusalem once again (due to internal conflicts within the Ayyubid state) for most of the 626–642 AH/ 1229–1244 CE period, until it ultimately returned to the Muslim rule, and remained so until the British occupation of Palestine in 1917 CE.

The Mamluks succeeded the Ayyubid state in 648 AH/ 1250 CE and confronted the Mongol army on the land of Palestine in the battle of 'Ain Jalut on 25 Ramadan 658 AH/ 6 September 1260 CE, under the command of Qutuz (Mahmoud bin Mamdud). This battle is considered to be one of the most decisive battles in history. The Mamluks then carried on with the project of liberating Palestine and the *Bilad al-Sham* from any remnants of the Crusaders. To this end, Baibars made great efforts as he recovered many regions in Palestine and the *Bilad al-Sham*. He was followed in this by Saif al-Din Qalawun, and then by his son al-Ashraf Khalil bin Qalawun, who ended the Crusader presence in the *Bilad al-Sham* by bringing down the Acre Kingdom, which he liberated on 17 Jumada al-Awwal 690 AH/ 18 May 1291 CE. He then rapidly took over Sidon, Tyre, Haifa, and 'Atlit, submitting once again Palestine and the *Bilad al-Sham* to Islamic rule.

After the Mamluks grew weak, the Ottomans came to control Palestine and the rest of the *Bilad al-Sham* in 1516 CE, then Egypt, Hijaz, Yemen, and Algeria the following year. They expanded their control during half of the following century over most of the Arab world, including Iraq, the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, Libya, and Tunisia. They ruled Palestine until the end of World War I (WWI) in 1918 CE.

Palestine had acquired its Islamic character with Caliph 'Umar's conquest, and its inhabitants converted to Islam in their droves. They took up Arab customs and language by mingling with the Arab tribes that came from the Arabian Peninsula under the banner of the Islamic civilization. By contrast, the Crusades did not significantly influence the identity of the land and the inhabitants, as the Palestinians held on to their land and remained steadfast in it, while the Crusaders often found themselves on the defensive.

In any case, Islamic rule of Palestine lasted for around 1200 years until 1917 CE, which is the longest period in history compared to any other rule. It was a Muslim rule over a Muslim people, and it included all of Palestine. Muslims showed exemplary religious tolerance and freedom of faith, and stood guard over the Holy Land to protect its sanctity.

Islam became firmly established in Palestine when some of the Companions of the Prophet settled there, spreading the religion, including: 'Ubadah bin al-Samit, Shaddad bin Aus, Usama bin Zayd bin Harithah, Wathilah bin al-Asqa', Fayruz al-Daylami, Dihyah al-Kalbi, 'Abdulrahman bin Ghanm al-Asha'ri, 'Alqamah bin

Majzar al-Kanani, Aus bin al-Samit, Mass'oud bin Aus bin Zayd, Zinba' bin Ruh, Abu Raihanah Sham'oun al-Ansari, Souwaid bin Zayd, Thul Asabi' al-Tamimi, Abu Ubai bin Um-Haram al-Ansari, Anif bin Mullah al-Jathami, Abu Ruwayhah al-Faz'i….and many other Companions who lived and died in Palestine.

Among the Followers of the Prophet (*al-Tabi'un*—second generation Muslims born after the death of the Prophet) who were born in the land of Palestine were: Raja' bin Haywah al-Kindi, who was born in Bisan and who asked Caliph Sulaiman bin 'Abdulmelik to appoint 'Umar bin 'Abdulaziz as his successor, as well as 'Ubadah bin Nassi al-Kindi, and Ruh bin Zinba'. Among the Followers of the Prophet who visited or lived in Palestine were: Malik bin Dinar, Al-Ouza'i, Hani' bin Kulthum, Hamid bin 'Abdullah al-Lakhmi, Sufyan al-Thawri, and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri.

Among the great imams and scholars who were born in Palestine was Imam al-Shafi'i (born in Gaza). Among the imams who visited or lived in Palestine: Ibrahim bin Adham, al-Layth bin Sa'd, Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Tartushi, Abu Bakr al-Jurjani, and Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi.

The conqueror of Andalusia, Musa bin Nusayr al-Lakhmi, hailed from Palestine, as well as 'Abd al-Hamid bin Yehya, a master of literature, diction and poetry in his time. This is in addition to the first great chemist in Islamic history, the Umayyad Khalid bin Yazid. For the sake of avoiding digression, we shall only mention that the Holy Land was a center for Islamic civilization, whose inhabitants effectively participated in building the great edifices of the Islamic nation and civilization.[23]

Fifth: The Religious and Historical Claims of the Jews in Palestine

The Jews today base their occupation of Palestine on religious and historical claims. They say that *Allah* (SWT) promised them this land, and point to their historical bonds to it, having ruled it at one point in ancient history. They talk about their presence on this land, their emotional and spiritual bonds to it, and its sanctity. We believe that the Jews enjoy their freedom of creed, and no one has the right to force them to change it. However, the Jews have no right to force their beliefs upon others or to displace a people from their homeland, violate their territory, possessions, and holy sites in the name of their religious claims.

As for the Muslims, they believe that the Jews are not entitled to this land. Religiously speaking, this land was given to the Israelites back when they raised the banner of monotheism (*al-Tawhid*) under the leadership of their prophets and righteous rulers. However, they deviated from their path and killed their prophets, wreaking havoc and spreading corruption, and thus lost their legitimacy. Muslims believe they are the real heirs of the banner of monotheism and the only true extension of the nation of monotheism and of the mission of the Messengers. They also believe that the call to Islam is the continuity of the mission of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isma'il, Moses, David, Solomon, and 'Issa. Muslims today are the people most meriting this heritage, after the others deviated from the path. It is not a matter of ethnicity, ancestry, or patriotism, but is linked to following the righteous path. Muslims believe that the experiences of the prophets are their experiences, the history of prophets is theirs, and the legitimacy that *Allah* (SWT) gave the prophets and their followers to rule the Holy Land is an indication of the Muslim's legitimacy and right to this land. *Allah* (SWT) said: "*Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was true in Faith, and bowed his will to Allah's (Which is Islam), and he joined not gods with Allah. Without doubt, among men, the nearest of kin to Abraham, are those who follow him, as are also this Messenger and those who believe: And Allah is the Protector of those who have faith.*"[24] Also: "*And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and so did Jacob; 'Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the Faith of Islam.'*"[25] And: "*And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled: He said: 'I will make thee an Imam to the Nations.' He pleaded: 'And also (Imams) from my offspring!' He answered: 'But My Promise is not within the reach of evil-doers.'*"[26] Hence, *Allah* (SWT) told Abraham (PBUH) that the evil-doers among his offspring shall not become leaders and imams, since it is a matter linked to following *Allah*'s path. If it had been a birthright linked to procreation, then the Israelites cannot understand the promise to be restricted to them alone, and Isma'il (PBUH) and his descendants would have been worthy of the promise that was given to Abraham, as well as the Arabs who are descendants of Isma'il, the ancestor of the Adnanite Arabs, including Quraish and its master Muhammad (SAWS).

Historically speaking, the Israelite ruled some parts of Palestine for less than four centuries, but their rule did not encompass the whole land. As for Islamic

rule, it went on for around 12 centuries (636–1917 CE), a period that was briefly interrupted by the Crusades. Most of the Jews left Palestine and their ties to it were severed for 18 centuries (from 135 CE until the 20th century). By contrast, the original inhabitants of Palestine had not left throughout the past 4,500 years, until a large number of them were forcefully displaced by Zionist gangs in 1948 CE. They are still trying to this day to return to their land and show no willingness to relinquish it.

Moreover, according to Jewish scholars and researchers, notably Arthur Koestler (author of *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and Its Heritage*), more than 80% of Jews today are not related to the ancient Israelites, whether by blood or by history, since most of the contemporary Jews are Khazar Jews whose origins go back to ancient Tatar-Turkish tribes that settled the area north of Caucasia (south of Russia) and converted to Judaism in the eighth century CE under the leadership of their King Bulan in 740 CE. After the fall of their kingdom, they spread into Russia

• Arthur Koestler

and Eastern Europe, becoming what is known today as the Ashkenazi Jews.[27] So if they have any right of return to a certain place, then it is to the south of Russia!

Sixth: Background of the Emergence of the Palestinian Issue in Modern History

As mentioned earlier, the Jews practically lost all of their direct links to Palestine for 1800 years, and only had their religious sentiments to connect them to the land. Their rabbis refused to turn sentiment into a practical program, since they believed that they had deserved to see their state destroyed and to be dispersed because of their sins, and that they had to wait for the Messiah, as only then would they be allowed to settle in Palestine and establish their homeland.

But many important changes took place in modern European history that affected the Jews and precipitated the establishment of the Zionist project. The 16th century saw the emergence of the **Protestant Reformation**, which

focused on faith in the Torah (the Old Testament) and considered the Jews to be the "inhabitants of Palestine" who were displaced from their land. Many Protestants believed in the millennial prophecy stating that the Jews will be gathered once again in Palestine in preparation for the return of the awaited Messiah. He would then convert them to Christianity and lead them in the battle of Armageddon, where he will vanquish his foes, after which a millennium of great happiness would begin. The followers of Protestant churches accounted for a majority of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (US), and the Netherlands, and for around half the inhabitants of Germany. Non-Jewish Zionism thus emerged, particularly among Protestants, who supported the Zionist project based on their religious and cultural beliefs.[28]

On the other hand, Europe witnessed—particularly in the 19th century— significant political shifts. Indeed, the **modern European nation state** took form following the French revolution of 1789, and **nationalism** and feelings of patriotism followed. Secular regimes were established, separating religion from the state and marginalizing the role of the Church. The Jews were "emancipated" and given full citizenship rights, particularly in Western Europe. It was therefore easier for them to integrate into these societies and systems and reach high positions on the political, economic and social ladder, thus achieving greater influence in political, economic, and media circles.

Moreover, the nationalist state and nationalist sentiment in Russia and Eastern Europe, where most of the Jews of the world resided, took a different turn. Russian Jews resisted Russian integration and modernization processes, which were characterized by discrimination, coercion, and terrorism. There was an increase in the participation of many Jews in Leftist revolutionist movements against the Czarist Russian government. The hostility against the Jews became blatant following the assassination of Russia's Czar Alexander II in 1881, as they were accused of being behind the plot. Thus began a wave of strict and violent measures against Jews, known as anti-Semitism, i.e., hostility to Jews because they are Semitic. This led to the **emergence of what is known as the Jewish Question**;[29] millions of Jews in Russia began to search for a way out, and they migrated in large numbers to Western Europe, and North and South America. The Zionist movement took advantage of this opportunity to make

its appearance, and to call for resolving the Jewish Question by establishing a secure and independent homeland for the Jews in Palestine. Many Europeans and Americans sympathized with this idea, whether because of their religious background, or because they wanted to get rid of the burden posed by the influx of Jews to their land.

The **weakness of the Ottoman state**, which ruled Palestine between 1516 and 1917, and the bid by the Western powers to divide its land, led to the emergence of better circumstances for establishing the Zionist project. Indeed, there was a Western desire to fill the vacuum that would be caused by the fall of the Ottoman state, and prevent the reemergence of a great Muslim force that would succeed the Ottomans, and would pose a challenge to western powers, hegemony and imperialism.

At that time, the idea of establishing a buffer state between the east of the Suez Canal and the West of the *Bilad al-Sham*, at the end of the 19th century emerged. This implies the implanting of a foreign entity in the heart of the Arab and Muslim world that would separate its Asian and African wings, and impede its unification. As a result, this Arab Muslim region would remain fragmented, as the survival of the entity (buffer state) is intricately linked to the weakness surrounding it. This entity would also deal a blow to any strong civilizational development in the region. Thus, the region would be preoccupied with a long and complicated problem that would drain its resources and energies, leaving it to the largest extent possible in a state of submission, weakness, and need for the Western powers. It would also leave it as a source of raw materials and a market for Western products. However, just as this entity would require Western support to guarantee its survival, the Western powers would also need it to guarantee the weakness, disintegration, and submission of the region, i.e., keeping it under control. Hence, an unbreakable bond would be born between the two. Here, it is imperative for Arabs and Muslims of the region to realize that this project would increasingly go against their hopes of unity, revival, and progress, and not just against the Palestinians.

Thus, the idea of a **buffer state**, coincided with the idea of resolving the Jewish Question, securing the western powers interests, including protecting the Eastern wing of the Suez Canal.

Seventh: The Political Development of the Palestinian Issue Until 1914

Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign in Egypt, which he effortlessly invaded in July 1798, highlighted the extent of the Ottoman state's weakness and tempted European colonialism to partition the remnants of this state. Despite the fact that Bonaparte's campaign in Palestine ended with failure at the gates of Acre in 1799, he was the first European political figure to address an official call to the Jews to realize their hopes and establish their entity on the land of Palestine. He made this call on 20/4/1799 during his siege of Acre.[30]


• **Napoleon Bonaparte**

The particular significance of Egypt and the *Bilad al-Sham* was never far from the mind of the British, who were the world's biggest superpower at the time. Britain opened its first consulate in Jerusalem in 1838. In its first letter to the vice-consul in Jerusalem, the British Foreign Office asked him to provide protection for the Jews, even if they were not British citizens. The consulate thus remained a center for defending the interests of the Jews until the start of WWI in 1914.[31] When the British took over Cyprus in 1878 and Egypt in 1882, it became the only colonial power to have bases east of the Mediterranean. In addition to religious and historic backgrounds, it started to look at Palestine in light of the colonialist race for the region and in light of its need to protect the eastern wing of the Suez Canal, which became a vital artery of British shipping lanes, especially to India. When the Zionist project was established and the buffer state idea emerged, it no doubt served many religious, cultural, political, and strategic motives and backgrounds. It took practical dimensions that could be executed in light of the rapidly deteriorating Ottoman state.

Yet the calls made by Jews and non-Jewish Zionists for a "return" to Palestine did not take a serious turn before the end of the 19th century. The early signs of such calls appeared in the 16th century, in the first work published on the

subject, *The World's Great Restoration, or the Calling of the Jews*, by British lawyer Henry Finch in 1621. They also appeared in the writings and calls by renowned Christians, such as Isaac Newton (1643–1727), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), Shaftesbury, and Laurence Oliphant.
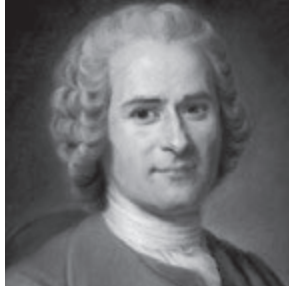
| • Isaac Newton | • Jean-Jacques Rousseau | • Joseph Priestley |

There were also similar calls by Jews, such as Shabbetai Tzvi (1626–1676), Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874), Judah Alkalai (1798–1878), Moses Hess (1812–1875) and others.[32] However, the coming of the Jews remained linked to traditional religious sentiment for visiting holy places or living in their vicinity, and to "charitable" settlement projects, rather than being an overt organized political program. There were around five thousand Jews in Palestine in 1799,[33] which increased to 13,920 Jews in 1876.[34]

| • Moses Hess | • Zvi Hirsch Kalischer | • Judah Alkalai |

Jewish immigration became more organized and intense from 1882, following the escalation of the "Jewish Question" in Russia. The Ottoman authorities took measures to prevent Jewish settlements in Palestine and in 1887 separated the sanjak of Jerusalem (Turkish administrative division) from the province of Syria

and put it directly under the supervision of the central government (Sublime Porte), thus attaching more importance and care to this region.[35] Although the number of Jews who left their countries of origin, especially Russia and Eastern Europe, was around two million and 367 thousand in 1881–1914, only around 55 thousand of them (2.32%) managed to immigrate to Palestine, while the overwhelming majority immigrated to the US, Western Europe, and South America.[36] This highlights the relative success of the Ottoman authorities in limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine.

• The First Zionist Congress 1897

The establishment of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and its first conference held in Basel, Switzerland, on 29–31/8/1897 headed by Theodor Herzl, represented the beginning of organized institutional political Zionist action to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Herzl was keen on achieving the Zionist project through diplomatic efforts and attempting to encourage the major powers, particularly the UK, to adopt this project, in light of the interests and the benefits that could be reaped by the colonial Western powers from supporting it. He tried in vain to convince the Ottoman state to grant autonomy to the Jews in Palestine under Ottoman sovereignty, as well as opening the doors of Jewish immigration in exchange for attractive proposals which the Ottoman

state was in dire need of. However, Sultan 'Abdulhamid II (1876–1909) rejected the suggestion and replied to Herzl's offer by saying:

> I advise him to never move in that direction. I cannot sell even one foot of the country, since it belongs not to me, but to my people. They obtained this empire by shedding their blood and they fed it with their blood, and we are ready to cover it with our blood before we allow anyone to take it from us… Let the Jews keep their billions. If the empire is divided, then the Jews would obtain Palestine without anything in return. But it will only be divided over our corpses, and I will not accept for us to be split for any purpose whatsoever.[37]

• **Sultan 'Abdulhamid II**

The Jews participated effectively in bringing about the fall of Sultan 'Abdulhamid through their great influence on the Young Turks Party and its Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which led a military coup against the Sultan and forced him to step down. One of its leaders, Emanuel Karasu (a Masonic Zionist Jewish leader), was part of the delegation that announced to Sultan 'Abdulhamid that he had been impeached. Karasu had tried to influence the Sultan to let the Jews live in Palestine, so the latter expelled him.[38]

The Jews wielded great influence under the rule of the CUP in 1909–1914; three out of 13 ministers in the CUP government that was formed in 1913 were Jews, while the Arabs, who constituted more than half of the empire's inhabitants, were only represented by one minister.[39]

"Area: from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates. Stipulate a transitional period with our own institutions. A Jewish governor for this period. Afterwards, a relationship like that between Egypt and the Sultan. As soon as the Jewish inhabitants of a district amount to 2/3 of the population, Jewish administration goes in force politically."

> *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (New York: Herzl Press and Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), vol. II, p. 711, cited in http://mailstar.net/tmf.html
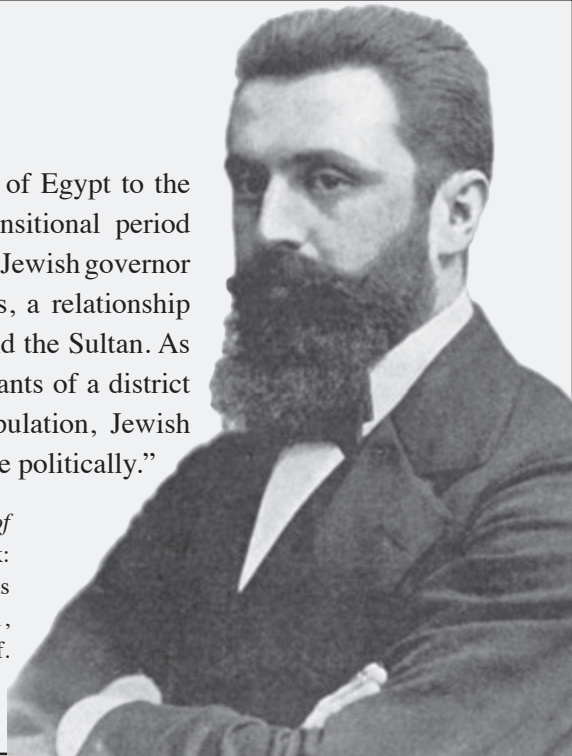
The inhabitants of Palestine fought early on against the Zionist project. The first armed clashes between Palestinian peasants and Zionist settlers erupted in 1886. The Palestinians also submitted petitions to the Ottoman authorities. This is in addition to founding newspapers like *Carmel* and *Palestine*, which highlighted the Zionist danger. Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida, the Lebanese Islamic reformer who lived in Egypt, played a pioneering role in this matter through *al-Manar* magazine. Also, among the Palestinian figures who spoke out about the Zionist danger were: Yusuf Diya al-Khalidi, Suleiman al-Taji al-Faruqi, and Is'af al-Nashashibi. The "Turkification" policies and favoritism to Zionism practiced by the CUP government were a major motive for Palestinians and Arabs to join Arab movements which demanded reform within the Ottoman state, such as the Decentralization Party, the Young Arab Society, and others.[40]

• Yusuf Diya al-Khalidi

• Is'af al-Nashashibi

Eighth: The Palestinian Issue During WWI (1914–1918)

At the start of WWI in 1914, there were around 80 thousand Jews in Palestine. However, the biased stance of the Jews in favor of Britain and its allies against the Ottoman state led to the Ottomans tightening their grip on the Jewish population during the war (1914–1918). Their number thus decreased to around 55 thousand by the end of the war.

WWI posed a great threat on all levels, but it also represented at the same time an opportunity for each party to benefit from its results in case of victory. Hence, negotiations, secret communications, and agreements were actively conducted among various parties in preparation for the post-war phase. Although the WZO suffered momentarily from a state of dispersal because of the presence of many of its leaders in Germany, Chaim Weizmann was able to reshuffle the cards, and went on to lead the organization thanks to his position in Britain. As for Britain, it strove to secure its influence in the *Bilad al-Sham* and Iraq by moving in three opposite and conflicting directions at once, in order to achieve its objectives and emerge victorious in the war.

• Chaim Weizmann

The **first direction** involved negotiations with Sharif Hussein bin 'Ali, Emir of Hijaz, in what became known as the Hussein-McMahon Correspondences (July 1915–March 1916), to encourage him to launch an Arab revolt against the Ottomans in exchange for promises of independence of most Arab regions in the Arabian Peninsula, the *Bilad al-Sham*, and Iraq, under his rule. Many Arab figures were disenfranchised by CUP policies which stripped the Ottoman state of its Islamic credibility. They were also angry at the execution of several Arab leaders in May 1915 by Jamal Pasha, the governor (*wali*) of Syria, even though the leaders of Arab parties had announced at the beginning of the war that they had set their disagreements with the Ottomans aside and stood beside them in combating "non-believers."

• **Sharif Hussein bin 'Ali**

Britain thus adopted a policy of deliberate ambiguity in determining its obligations, but was pressured by Sharif Hussein to be clearer about them, especially regarding the borders of the proposed Arab state. So, on 24/10/1915, Britain sent its reservations regarding the borders, such as its demand of not annexing Mersin and Adana, as well as the areas located west of the sanjaks (Turkish administrative division) of Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Damascus. This was in addition to its continued colonization of the south of Yemen and the Arab Gulf emirates, and its demand for a special administrative status in the south of Iraq that would guarantee British interests. Although Sharif Hussein was aware that he was unable to change anything regarding the colonized Arab countries, and expressed his readiness to discuss British interests in the south of Iraq, he insisted on the Arab identity of the areas located west of the sanjaks of Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Damascus (what is known today as Lebanon). There was an agreement on the necessity to launch the revolt as soon as possible, provided that the suspended issues would be discussed after the war. Sharif Hussein thus launched the revolt in Hijaz on 10/6/1916 and allied himself with the British. He was supported by Arab parties, which had strong influence, especially in the *Bilad al-Sham*, such as the Young Arab Society, the Decentralization Party, and the Covenant Society (*al-'Ahd*).

The **second British direction** involved negotiations with France (Russia joined later) on the future of Iraq and the *Bilad al-Sham*. In what was known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement in May 1916, it was agreed to grant the British most of Iraq (relative to its current borders), Transjordan, and Haifa in Palestine. Lebanon and Syria were to be put under French control. Since all the parties wished to put Palestine under their mandate, it was agreed that it would be put under international supervision.

• **Sir Mark Sykes**
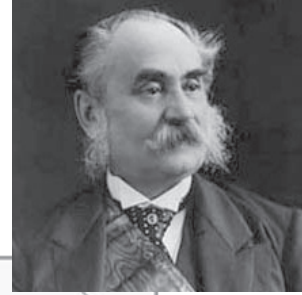
Georges Picot •

• **Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916**

As for the **third British direction**, it consisted of negotiations with WZO on the future of Palestine, due to Britain's dire need to use Jewish influence in the US to push it to take part in the war alongside Britain and its allies (this actually happened in March 1917). This is in addition to the presence of the Jewish Zionist influence in Britain and the British government itself, through the Jewish-Zionist Home Secretary Herbert Samuel, and Zionist Christians such as Prime Minister Lloyd George and Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour—not to mention the previously discussed religious, political, and

• Herbert Louis Samuel

strategic motives and backgrounds. Thus emerged the Balfour Declaration on 2/11/1917, in which Britain committed to establishing a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine. This was one of the most unusual promises in the history of humankind, since not only it was in conflict with all other agreements, but it also presumptuously overstepped the wishes and desires of the country's native inhabitants, and promised a land it did not own, even more, a land it had not yet invaded, to an undeserving people, amidst talk of British honor and the defense of values and principles.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement did not remain secret, as the Russians uncovered it after the Communist revolution toppled the Czarist rule in Russia in October 1917, and the country withdrew from the war. People also became aware of the Balfour Declaration after it reached the press in Arab countries, specifically Egypt, less than one week after it was issued. It constituted a huge shock to the Arab revolt, as the rebels never imagined such extreme British duplicity, and they thus refused to continue with their revolt unless things were made clear. This

• The Balfour Declaration

led Britain to send an envoy, David Hogarth, in January 1918, to allay Sharif Hussein's fears. He carried a British declaration stating that Jewish immigration to Palestine would not conflict with the political and economic interests of its inhabitants. The declaration also carried for the seven Syrian leaders in June 1918 clear assurances that the land occupied by the British (south of Palestine and south of Iraq) would be ruled according to the wishes of its inhabitants. This is in addition to agreeing to the independence of what was still under Ottoman sovereignty in the north of Palestine, the east of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the north of Iraq. On 7/11/1918, after the end of WWI, there was an Anglo-French Declaration which reaffirmed the pledges of freedom and independence to the Arabs that were under Ottoman rule.[41]

"In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country.... The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder important than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land."

• **Arthur James Balfour**

> Balfour memo to Lord Curzon, 11/8/1919, Public Record Office (PRO) (The National Archives), Kew Gardens, London, Files: Foreign Office (FO) 371/4183.

• **Lord Curzon**

Endnotes

1 For more details on the ancient history of Palestine, refer for example to Muhammad Adib al-‘Amiri, *‘Urubat Filastin fi al-Tarikh* (The Arab Identity of Palestine Throughout History) (Saida-Beirut: Al Maktaba Al Assrya (Modern Library), 1972); and *al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah* (The Palestinian Encyclopedia), supervised by Ahmad al-Mir‘achli (Damascus: The Foundation of the Palestinian Encyclopedia, 1984), vol. 1, p. 37, vol. 3, pp. 273–279 and vol. 4, p. 174.

2 See *al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 117–129.

3 *Surat al-Ma’idah* (The Table): 21, http://www.islam101.net/QURAN/5.htm

4 *Surat al-Isra’* (Isra’): 1, http://www.islam101.net/QURAN/17.htm

5 *Surat al-Anbiya’* (The Prophets): 81, http://www.islam101.net/QURAN/21.htm

6 Narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud, for the English translation see http://hadithcollection.com/sahihmuslim/135-Sahih%20Muslim%20Book%2007.%20 Pilgrimmage/10876-sahih-muslim-book-007-hadith-number-3218.html

7 *Hadith Hasan*, narrated by al-Tabarani, for the English translation see http://www.hadithcollection.com/fiqh-ussunnah/350-Fiqh-us%20Sunnah%20Section%2027.%20The%20Mosques/21019-fiqh-us-sunnah-volume-002-supererogatory-prayer-fiqh-2070a.html

8 *Hadith Sahih*, narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* and Ibn Majah in his *Sunan*, for the English translation see http://www.palscholars.com/ar/articleDetails.php?articleId=1006&page =21&Next=20&type=7

9 *Hadith Sahih*, narrated by al-Tabarani, for the English translation see http://aqsamn.org/PDF_ Files/IslamicProspectOfPalestine.pdf

10 *Hadith Sahih*, compiled by al-Hakim and Abu Na‘im in *Hilyat al-Awliya’*, for the English translation see http://aqsamn.org/PDF_Files/IslamicProspectOfPalestine.pdf

11 Narrated by al-Tabarani, and al-Haythami said that this *Hadith* has a trustworthy chain of narrators except Arta’ah Bin al-Mundhir. For the English translation see http://aqsamn.org/ PDF_Files/IslamicProspectOfPalestine.pdf

12 There was a *Hadith* in this sense narrated by Imam Ahmad, saying "*A group of my Ummah will remain on the truth, they will vanquish their enemy and those who disagree with them will not be able to harm them until commands." "Where are these people?" the companions (ra) asked. The Prophet (SAW) said, "In and around Al-Quds (Jerusalem)*." Trustworthy chain of narrators except Mahdi Bin Ja‘far al-Ramli, as Ibn Habban and Yahya Bin Mu‘in documented him, while al-Bukhari graded him weak. For the English translation see http://hamzajennings. com/2009/02/11/course-history-of-the-crusades-and-salahuddin/

13 See "Jerusalem: its place in the Jewish religious conscience," in ‘Abd al-Wahhab el-Messiri, *Encyclopedia of Jews, Judaism and Zionism*, http://www.elmessiri.com/encyclopedia/JEWISH/ ENCYCLOPID/MG4/GZ1/BA07/MD23.HTM

14 See *al-Mawsu‘ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 271–279 and 666–670.

15 *Surat al-Ma’idah*: 24.

[16] See Encyclopedia Britanica, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/439645/Palestine/ 45049/Late-Bronze-Age#toc45050; and see Zafarul Islam Khan, *Tarikh Filastin al-Qadim 1220 BC–1359 CE: Mundhu Awwal Ghazu Yahudi Hatta Akhir Ghazu Salibi* (The Ancient History of Palestine 1220 BC–1359 CE: From the First Jewish Invasion to the Last Crusader Invasion), 4th ed. (Beirut: Dar An-Nafaes, 1984), p. 54.

[17] See Yeshayahu-Isaiah, Chapter 1, http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/15932; and Yeshayahu- Isaiah, Chapter 24, http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/15955

[18] Regarding the ancient history of Israelites, see Zafarul Islam Khan, *op. cit*.; and *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, p. 238, vol. 3, pp. 184–186 and 266–268, and vol. 4, pp. 216–218.

[19] Regarding the conquest of Palestine and *Bilad al-Sham*, see al-Azdi, *Tarikh Futuh al-Sham* (History of the Sham Conquest), edited by 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abdullah 'Amir (Cairo: Mu'assasat Sijill al-Arab, 1970); Ahmad 'Adil Kamal, *al-Tariq ila Dimashq* (The Road to Damascus) (Beirut: Dar An-Nafaes, 1980); and Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tariq ila al-Quds* (The Road to Jerusalem), 3rd ed. (London: Filastin al-Muslimah, 1998), pp. 49–77.

[20] *Al-'Uhdah al-'Umariyyah* (638 AD The Covenant of Omar), Historical Documents (until 1948), al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, http://www.alzaytouna.net/en/resources/ documents/index.1.html

[21] On Palestine during the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Fatimids, and the Ayyubids, see *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 242–266 and 426–428.

[22] The researcher discussed in Chapter 3 of his book *al-Tariq ila al-Quds* the struggle of the Muslims to free Palestine from the Crusaders and the Tatars. See Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp. 89–128.

[23] On the Companions, followers, and figures of Islam who lived in Palestine, see Diya' al-Din Muhammad al-Maqdisi, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis* (The Virtues of Bayt al-Maqdis), edited by Muhammad Muti' Hafiz, *Silsilat Fada'il al-Sham (*The Virtues of al-Sham Series) no. 2 (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1985), pp. 90–92; Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah wa Sala'iluha fi Biladina Filastin* (Arab Tribes and their Descendants in our Country Palestine) (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1979), pp. 47–48, 111–113, 138–140 and 188; and Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *Min Huna wa Hunak* (From Here and There) (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1986), pp. 80–83 and 112.

[24] *Surat al-'Imran* (The Family Of 'Imran): 67–68, http://islam101.net/QURAN/3.htm

[25] *Surat al-Baqarah* (The Cow): 132, http://islam101.net/QURAN/2.htm

[26] *Surat al-Baqarah*: 124.

[27] On Khazar Jews, see Asma' Fa'ur, *Filastin wa al-Maza'im al-Yahudiyyah* (Palestine and Jewish Claims) (Beirut: Dar al-Ummah, 1995), pp. 235–241.

[28] On this matter, see Regina Sharif, *al-Suhuyuniyyah Ghayr al-Yahudiyyah: Judhuruha fi al-Tarikh al-Gharbi* (Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History), translated by Ahmad 'Abdullah 'Abd al-'Aziz, *Silsilat 'Alam al-Ma'rifah* (World of Knowledge Series) no. 96 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature, December 1985).

[29] On this matter, see 'Abd al-Wahhab el-Messiri, *al-Aydyulujiyyah al-Suhuyuniyyah* (The Zionist Ideology), *Silsilat 'Alam al-Ma'rifah* no. 60–61 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature, December 1982–January 1983), vol. 1, pp. 89–116; and As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, *al-Munazzamah al-Suhuyniyyah al-'Alamiyyah 1882–1982* (The International Zionist Organization 1882–1982) (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1990), pp. 23–26.

[30] See Regina Sharif, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–110; and *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 2, p. 279.

[31] Albert H. Hyamson, *Palestine Under the Mandate 1920–1948* (Great Britain: Methuen, 1950), p. 7.

[32] See Regina Sharif, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–81; and As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, *al-Munazzamah al-Suhuyniyyah al-'Alamiyyah*, pp. 27–30.

[33] Hassan Hallaq, *Mawqif al-Dawlah al-'Uthmaniyyah min al-Harakah al-Suhuyuniyyah 1897–1909* (The Stance of the Ottoman State On the Zionist Movement 1897–1909), 2nd ed. (Beirut: al-Dar al-Jami'iyyah li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashir, 1980), pp. 82–84.

[34] Samir Ayyub, *Watha'iq Asasiyyah fi al-Sira' al-'Arabi al-Suhuyuni (*Essential Documents in the Arab-Zionist Conflict) (Beirut: Dar al-Hadathah li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashir, 1984), vol. 1, p. 280.

[35] See Hassan Hallaq, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–105.

[36] See William Fahmi, *al-Hijrah al-Yahudiyyah ila Filastin* (Jewish Immigration to Palestine) (Egypt: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1974), p. 36. Other references estimated the number of Jews who immigrated to Palestine during the period 1882–1914 to be around 55–70 thousand, see Sabri Jiryis and Ahmad Khalifah (eds.), *Dalil Israel al-'Am* (General Guide to Israel) (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1996), p. 40.

[37] Samir Ayyub, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 128.

[38] See Saleh Abu Yasir, *Jihad Sha'b Filastin Khilal Nusf Qarn* (The Struggle of Palestine's People During Half a Century) (Beirut: Dar al-Fatih, 1970), p. 33.

[39] 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, *Rijal min Filastin* (Men from Palestine) (Beirut: Manshurat Filastin al-Muhtallah, 1980), pp. 326–327.

[40] On this matter, see 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *Tarikh Filastin al-Hadith* (The Modern History of Palestine), 9th ed. (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1985), pp. 37–67.

[41] On British negotiations and promises with Sharif Hussein, the French and World Zionist Organization (WZO), see *Ibid.*, pp. 72–84; George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955), pp. 260–272; and *The Royal Commission Report: The White Paper No. 5479*, the official Arabic version, issued by the British mandatory government in Palestine (Jerusalem: 1937), pp. 23–31 (this report was known as the *Peel Report*).

Chapter Two

Palestine Under British Occupation
1918–1948

Palestine Under British Occupation 1918–1948

Introduction

The British completely occupied the southern and central parts of Palestine in December 1917, and occupied Jerusalem on 9/12/1917. According to Arab references, General Allenby, who led the British army, remarked while celebrating his victory in Jerusalem, "Today, the crusades have ended,"[1] as if their campaign in Palestine was the last crusade, and as if the Crusades hadn't ended more than 800 years earlier. However, this is not strange as the King of the British Empire George V was giving remarks

• **Edmund Allenby**

on the "Final Crusade."[2] Besides the British Prime Minister Lloyd George was describing the British occupation of Palestine in a clear crusade spirit.[3] In September 1918, the British occupied the northern part of Palestine, and then in September–October 1918, east of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. After that, Britain forcefully launched the organized Judaization of Palestine, and was able to convince France to abandon the proposed internationalization of Palestine of the Sykes-Picot documents. In exchange, Britain would end its support for the Arab government that emerged in Damascus, led by Faisal bin al-Sharif Hussein bin Ali, allowing France to occupy Syria in the process.

Britain gave itself an international cover with a League of Nations Resolution (dated 24/7/1922), which granted it a Mandate over Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was included in the Mandate documents, and thus became an internationally-recognized official commitment. However, the notion of the Mandate, according to the League of Nations, was based on supporting the people who were under such a Mandate regime, and preparing them to obtain their independence. The documents pertaining to the Mandate of Palestine included Britain's responsibility in advancing institutions for

local governance and fostering the civil and religious rights of all Palestinians. This would have meant that the Balfour Declaration should not ultimately stand in their way for establishing their institutions and their state. Indeed, the Declaration's implementation practically meant harming the interests and rights of Palestinians and hindering the formation of their constitutional institutions with the aim of establishing their state. Britain chose to comply with the part related to Balfour's pledge and completely disregarded the part related to the rights of Arab Palestinians, who represented around 92%[4] of the inhabitants at the beginning of the occupation. So perhaps its aim behind drafting texts related to the rights of Palestinians was to offer the guise of being a fair and impartial referee between the Arabs and the Jews; to encourage the Palestinians to claim their rights according to "constitutional" civil means; and to refrain from shutting all doors before them, so that they do not rapidly have to deal with unrest and revolt. In the meantime, Britain would stall and drag its feet, until the nationalist Jewish state is established in Palestine.

• Arthur Wauchope

Britain put Palestine under direct military rule until the end of June 1920, when it began ruling Palestine under a civil administration. It appointed the Jewish Zionist Herbert Samuel as its first "high commissioner" in Palestine (1920–1925), where he implemented the Zionist project, as did the high commissioners who succeeded him. However, the worst of them was Arthur Wauchope (1931–1938), who advanced the Zionist project to its most dangerous levels.

First: Development of the Zionist Project

Palestine was, under the British occupation, the target of a heinous conspiracy, as the Palestinians were prevented from establishing their constitutional institutions and obtaining self-rule. They were put under direct British rule, and high commissioners were given absolute powers. Britain made it difficult for the Palestinians to earn a living, encouraged corruption,

and sought to deepen tribal and sectarian divisions, creating strife among the Palestinians. On the other hand, Britain encouraged Jewish immigration to the country. 483 thousand Jews immigrated from all over the world to Palestine, without having any legal proof of belonging to it except their claimed Jewish religious belief. It is noteworthy that the Zionist movement signed the *Ha'avara* (transfer) Agreement with the Nazi authorities in Germany on 25/8/1933, to facilitate the Jewish immigration from Germany to Palestine. This official Zionist cooperation with the Nazis resulted in the influx of tens of thousands of German Jews to Palestine. Many of them were highly educated, experts, wealthy tradesmen, managers… who contributed significantly to the establishment of the Zionist state. The process of immigration led to an increase in the number of Jews in Palestine from 55 thousand (8% of inhabitants) in 1918 to 646 thousand (31.7% of inhabitants) in 1948. But despite the concerted efforts of the Jews and the British to acquire land, the Jews were only able to take control of around 6% of Palestine by 1948—most of which being either government-owned or land that was sold by non-Palestinian feudal landowners who lived in Lebanon, Syria, or elsewhere. There, the Jewish settlers went on to build 291 settlements.

The British authorities sought to disarm the Palestinians, even killing those who carried firearms and imprisoning for years anyone who owned ammunition, daggers, or knives. However, it turned a blind eye to, and even secretly encouraged, the armament of the Jews and their formation and training of armed militias: For instance, there were more than 70 thousand fighters when the 1948 war started (64 thousand from the Haganah, five thousand from Irgun, two thousand from Stern, etc.); more than three times the number of the Arab armies that took part in the War of 1948. In 1929, the Jews established the Jewish Agency, which was in charge of Jewish affairs in Palestine, and became the equivalent of a state within a state due to the broad powers it enjoyed. The Jews established huge economic, social, and educational institutions that constituted a strong infrastructure for the future Jewish state. The Histadrut (general federation of labor) was established, and the Hebrew University was inaugurated in Jerusalem in 1925.[5] The British mandate of Palestine can be viewed as characterized by much injustice, oppression, and favoritism.

• **Haganah Soldiers 1948**

Second: The Emergence of the Palestinian National Movement

The Palestinians were drained after WWI, and the Arab countries around them, and the Islamic world in general, fell under the control of colonial powers. The Islamic world lacked the material resources and the ability to exert political pressure and influence, in stark contrast to the support the Zionist project received from the major powers and World Jewry. Despite this disparity, the Palestinians clung on to their full rights in Palestine, and insisted on their independence at any cost; this stance characterized their political struggle throughout the British occupation, focusing on the following specific demands:

- To annul the Balfour Declaration and the injustice it engendered towards the rights of the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Palestine.
- To put an end to Jewish immigration.
- To stop the sale of land to Jews.
- To establish a national Palestinian government, to be elected through a parliament (Legislative Council), representing the true will of the Palestinians.
- To enter into negotiations with the British to sign a treaty that would ultimately lead to the independence of Palestine.

Thus was born the Palestinian national movement, and the Palestinians held their first Palestine Arab Congress in Jerusalem from 27/1–10/2/1919. They rejected the partitioning of *Bilad al-Sham* as a matter that suited colonialist interests alone, considered Palestine to be part of Greater Syria (*Bilad al-Sham*), and demanded the independence of Syria within Arab unity and the establishment of a national government that would rule in Palestine. Seven

• **Musa Kazim al-Hussaini**

congresses were held, up until 1928. The national movement was led by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Congress Musa Kazim al-Hussaini, who remained officially in this post until his death in March 1934.

Under the British mandate, Haj Amin al-Hussaini became most prominent in the Palestinian national movement. He became the *mufti* of Jerusalem in 1921 and was the Chairman of the Supreme Muslim Council from its foundation in 1922, which became the most important fortress of the national movement and one of its driving forces. After the death of Musa Kazim al-Hussaini, Haj Amin became the undisputed leader of Palestine until the end of British colonialism in 1948.

• **Haj Amin al-Hussaini**

The Palestinian National Movement 1918–1929

The Palestinian national movement focused, particularly during 1918–1929, on peaceful resistance against the Zionist project and on the attempt to convince Britain to renounce the Balfour Declaration. It was still hopeful that this could happen, especially as the British were the allies of Sharif Hussein during WWI. The Zionist project had not yet achieved any practical results that had irreversible repercussions on the situation in Palestine. Moreover, the Palestinian leadership did not consider that the Palestinians had sufficient means to enable them to impose their will on the British. Besides these factors, the leadership itself lacked

the determination, will, and internal cohesion to challenge the British occupation. The lack of political experience and the struggle over leadership (between the families of al-Hussaini and al-Nashashibi), which the British fueled, also played a role in weakening the Palestinian national movement. However, such division generally did not affect the Palestinian stance on the Zionist project and British colonialism, or the overall political demands of the national movement.

On the political level, the Palestinian leadership sent its first delegation to London in July 1921, to meet with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill, and a number of officials. However, their appeal fell on deaf ears, although they succeeded in pushing the House of Lords to issue a decision rejecting the Balfour Declaration. On the other hand, the Palestinians thwarted a British attempt in 1923 to form a legislative council in Palestine without effective powers or actual representation of the Palestinians. Balfour's visit to Palestine in 1925 was met with protests and

• **Winston Churchill**

boycotts, with a general strike in all of Palestine. In the fifth Palestinian Congress that was held on 22–25/8/1922 in Nablus, a Palestine Covenant was adopted and the attendees committed to an oath that stipulated that they, the representatives of the Palestinian Arab people, pledge themselves to *Allah*, History and the People that they shall continue their endeavors for the independence of their country, and to achieving Arab unity by all legitimate methods, and that they shall not accept the establishment of a Jewish National Home or Jewish immigration.[6]

During the same period (1918–1929), three uprisings expressed popular wrath towards the Zionist project and were directed against the Jews. They attempted to spare the British (for the aforementioned reasons), but the latter were the ones that played the main role in suppressing these riots. The uprising of al-Quds or *Mawsim al-Nabi Musa* (Prophet Moses Season) took place on 4–10/4/1920 in Jerusalem (five Jews were killed and 211 were injured, compared to four Arabs were killed and 24 injured); the Jaffa Uprising erupted between 1–15/5/1921 and included parts of northern Palestine (47 Jews were killed and 146 were injured, while 48 Arabs were killed and 73 injured); and al-Buraq Uprising lasted from 15 August until 2/9/1929 and erupted due to the

dispute over al-Buraq Wall (The Western Wall of the *al-Aqsa* Mosque) which the Muslims were defending against Jewish Zionist claims and aggressive attitude. The uprising spread all over Palestine, where 133 Jews were killed and 339 were injured, and 116 Arabs were killed and 232 were injured. Most of the Jewish deaths and injuries in these three uprisings were caused by the Arabs, while most of the Arab deaths and injuries were inflicted by the British troops and the British police. Haj Amin al-Hussaini, the *mufti* of Jerusalem, secretly played a prominent role in both al-Quds and al-Buraq Uprisings. As for the official political Palestinian leadership, it continued to adhere to peaceful methods and even strove to contain the sentiments of rage. It is noteworthy that the three revolts took on a combined Islamic and national character, which contributed to further fueling activities against the Zionist project.[7]

The Palestinian National Movement 1929–1939

Al-Buraq Uprising in 1929 ushered in a decade of growing armed resistance against the Zionist project and British colonialism, which reached its peak with the Arab revolution in Palestine (1936–1939). Indeed, the gravity of the Jewish-Zionist project had then begun to become more tangible, particularly following the immigration of more than 152 thousand Jews during 1930–1935, which doubled the number of Jews in Palestine (around 156 thousand Jews in 1929). During the same period (1930–1935), the Jews were able to take over approximately 229 thousand donum of Palestinian land. They also smuggled huge quantities of weapons, which were uncovered on two occasions, on 15/3/1930 and 16/10/1935.[8]

The first half of the 1930s was characterized by an increase in political activity and national interaction with events, as well as direct and widespread hostility towards the British authorities, widely considered to be "the root of all evil." Palestinian parties were formed during this period, with the Independence Party seeing the light in August 1932 and greatly contributing to the hostilities against the British before withering by mid-1933. In March 1935, the Palestine Arab Party was founded. It became the top popular party and was supported by both the *mufti* (Haj Amin) and large segments of the public.[9] During the same period, Muslim Youth Associations and Scout movements became active. This was in addition to secret military resistance movements such as the al-Jihadiyyah Movement led by Ezzedeen Al-Qassam, and the al-Jihad al-Muqaddas organization led by

'Abdul Qadir al-Hussaini (and secretly supervised by Haj Amin). Smaller rebel groups, such as The Green Palm also emerged and entered in early clashes with the colonial authorities.

The Palestinians had lost any hope in obtaining their rights through peaceful and legal means, and Haj Amin al-Hussaini commented on that period by saying that they still had some hope until 1932, but it faded with time. "All their suffering… all their pain was carefully prepared."[10] A memorandum written by the British director of intelligence of the police force records:

> The increase of feeling of disaffection of the Arabs towards the British Mandate and the administration of the country. This feeling is prevalent amongst all classes and discontent and bitterness are general and has been increasing yearly. The Arabs who have all this time hoped that the British would realise the justness of their cause, have become despondent.[11]

The failure of the mission of the Arab Palestinian delegation to London headed by Musa Kazim al-Hussaini in 1930 contributed in perpetuating and spreading hostile feelings against the British. This was in addition to the non-compliance with the recommendations of Sir John Hope Simpson, the housing and land expert who was entrusted by the British government to examine the situation in Palestine and who concluded after a thorough study that there was "no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of such undeveloped land as the various Jewish Agencies hold in reserve." He described Arab unemployment

• **John Hope Simpson**

as "serious and general." Thus he recommended limiting or stopping Jewish immigration if it led to depriving the Arabs from employment.[12] The situation also worsened when the British government refrained from implementing what it had announced in the White Paper in October 1930 (which pledged to limit Jewish immigration), and issued the Black Paper in February 1931, which affirmed Britain's commitment to the Zionist project and practically reversed the White Paper.[13]

The Palestinians were able to revive and mobilize the Arab and Islamic dimensions of the Palestinian issue. Reports in May 1931 mentioned a revolutionist plan for armed resistance to save Arab countries, especially Palestine and Syria, headed by Prince Shakib Arslan (Lebanese Muslim), with the participation of Haj Amin al-Hussaini and Maulana Shaukat 'Ali, the renowned Indian leader. They were in contact with the leaders of Arab movements in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Damascus, and Egypt. However, the plan failed.[14] On 7–17/12/1931, the General Islamic Conference was held in Jerusalem under the chairmanship of Haj Amin al-Hussaini, and was attended by delegates from 22 countries. This firmly established the Islamic dimension of the Palestinian issue, which became a main concern for the whole Islamic world, and was attended by renowned scholars and Muslim figures such as Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida, Indian poet and thinker Muhammad Iqbal, Indian leader Shaukat 'Ali, Tunisian leader 'Abdul Aziz al-Tha'alibi, former Iranian Prime Minister Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i, Syrian leader Shukri al-Quwatli, and others. Many practical decisions were issued, such as the establishment of an Islamic university, the foundation of a company to retain land, and the formation of commissions for Palestine in several countries.[15]

• **Muhammad Iqbal**

• **Shaukat 'Ali**

• **Shukri al-Quwatli**

• **Muhammad Rashid Rida**

• **Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i**

• **'Abdul Aziz al-Tha'alibi**

Delegates attending the General Islamic Conference: 1. Haj Amin al-Hussaini (Palestine) 2. Musa Kazim al-Hussaini (Palestine) 3. Muhammad 'Ali 'Allubah Pasha (Egypt) & behind him Shaukat 'Ali (India) 4. Muhammad Zibara (Yemen) 5. Bashir al-Sa'dawi 6. Hamad Pasha bin Jazi (Jordan) 7. Nu'man al-A'thami (Iraq) 8. Muhammad 'Abdul Latif Darraz (Egypt) 9. Ra'uf Pasha 10. Mustafa al-Ghalayini (Beirut) 11. 'Abdul Wahab al-Najjar & behind him Is'af al-Nashashibi (Palestine) 12. Ibrahim Itfeish (Algeria) 13. Muhammad Tariq 14. Muhammad Rashid Rida (Tripoli-Lebanon) 15. Abu al-Hassan 16. 'Abdul Qahhar Muthakkar (Indonesia) 17. Muhammad Tuffaha 18. Sa'id al-Khatib 19. Mustafa Rajab (Egypt) 20. Hamid al-Miligi (*al-Balagh* newspaper–Cairo)

However, most countries of the Muslim world became colonized and the British persisted in thwarting any practical resolutions, and thus most of these decisions were left unimplemented. Palestinian Muslim scholars saw their role becoming ever more crucial after they held their first conference on 25/1/1935, where they issued fatwas prohibiting the sale of land to Jews, declaring those who do so as apostates, and launched a large awareness campaign for Palestine.[16]

On the other hand, the armed resistance was first represented by the al-Kaff al-Akhdar [lit. the Green Palm] Movement, which emerged following al-Buraq Uprising in the north of Palestine, under the leadership of Ahmad Tafish. The movement conducted operations against the Jews and the British, but the intense British campaign against it led to its end in February 1930, and to the capture of its leader.[17]

In October 1933, the Palestinian political leadership escalated its opposition and organized two mass protests in Jerusalem (13/10) and Jaffa (27/10), which saw the participation of the leaders themselves. The first protest began at *al-Aqsa* Mosque,

while the second began after the Friday prayers in Jaffa. There was a general strike in Palestine during these two days, and the authorities tried to prevent the demonstrations by force, with 35 Arabs killed and 255 injured. The scope of the protests widened, and they became more violent in Haifa, Jerusalem, Nablus, Beersheba, Lod (Lydda), and other cities, causing more victims in the process. A seven-day strike was subsequently held in Palestine and the British authorities arrested 12 Palestinian leaders, three of whom were members of the

• **Occupation suppressing demonstrations in October 1933**

Executive Committee. Musa Kazim al-Hussaini lost conscience during the Jaffa demonstration after being physically assaulted, and ultimately passed away in March 1934 at the age of 81.[18]

• **Sheikh Ezzedeen Al-Qassam**

The Jihadist movement, meanwhile, was founded by Sheikh Ezzedeen Al-Qassam, with its roots going as far back as 1925. A secret struggle movement that follows the principles of Islam, its motto was "This is jihad-victory, or martyrdom", and it spread in northern Palestine, particularly among laborers and peasants. It was able to organize 200 men, in addition to 800 supporters. It took part covertly in al-Buraq Uprising, and carried out some operations in the first half of the 1930s, before

going public in November 1935. Sheikh Al-Qassam and two of his companions were killed in their first confrontation with the police in the battle of Ya'bad on 20/11/1935. However, this did not mean the end of the movement, as it was then led by Sheikh Farhan al-Sa'di, who played a major role in the Palestinian Revolt (1936–1939).[19]

A national-Islamist character marked al-Jihad al-Muqaddas Organization, which was secretly sponsored by Haj Amin. It was mostly located in Jerusalem, and was led by 'Abdul Qadir al-Hussaini, with 400 members in 1935.[20] In the Palestinian Revolt, it led the resistance efforts in Jerusalem and Hebron.

• 'Abdul Qadir al-Hussaini

Third: The Palestinian Revolt 1936–1939

The Palestinian Revolt was one of the greatest revolts in Palestine's modern history. It erupted on 15/4/1936 at the hands of Sheikh Al-Qassam's movement, now led by Sheikh Farhan al-Sa'di, killing two Jewish settlers. A succession of events followed, and mutual acts of retaliation took place between Arabs and Jews. On April 20, the Palestinians declared they were going on a general strike. Arab parties united together, and the Arab Higher Committee was formed (chaired by Haj Amin al-Hussaini himself) on April 25. It announced its insistence to continue the strike until the fulfillment of the Palestinian demands of establishing a responsible Palestinian government before an elected parliament, stopping Jewish immigration, and preventing the sale of land to the Jews. The strike lasted 178 days (around six months), rendering it **the longest strike in history conducted by the entire Palestinian people**. Meanwhile, revolt prevailed throughout Palestine. Its first phase ended on 12/10/1936,

• The Palestinian Revolt 1936–1939

upon the calls of Arab monarchs and heads of state, and in preparation for the visit of the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) to examine the situation and submit its recommendations. The Commission issued its recommendations in early July 1937, and proposed the partitioning of Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews. This reignited the feelings of the revolt, which was started again with the assassination of the British District Commissioner for the Galilee (North Palestine) Lewis Andrews on 26/9/1937.

The British authorities took drastic measures, dissolving the Supreme Muslim Council, the Arab Higher Committee, and the national committees, and attempted to arrest Haj Amin, who was able to flee to Lebanon in mid-October 1937 and continued to lead the revolt from there. However, they managed to arrest four members of the Arab Higher Committee and banished them to the Seychelles islands.

• **Peel Commission Partition Plan 1937**

Source: Peel Commission Report, July 1937, London: HMSO

The revolt reached its peak during the summer of 1938, and the rebels were able to control the Palestinian countryside and villages, and to occupy some towns, albeit for limited periods of time. British civil authority collapsed. Had the

• **The Arab Higher Committee**

matter been restricted to a confrontation between an occupied people and a colonialist authority, perhaps the latter would have withdrawn and the people would have been given their rights. However, the presence and influence of the Jewish-Zionist side, and the nature of its project, exerted a constant pressure on the British to show more obstinacy and belligerency.

The British authorities had to send military reinforcements, led by the best military leaders such as Dill, Wavell, Haining, and Montgomery, which reoccupied Palestine village by village, using the most destructive and modern military capabilities of the time. Many of the revolt's leaders lost their lives, such as Farhan al-Sa'di, Muhammad al-Saleh al-Hamad, 'Abdulrahim al-Haj Muhammad, and Yusuf Abu Durrah.[21]

• **Yusuf Abu Durrah**   • **Muhammad al-Saleh al-Hamad**   • **Farhan al-Sa'di**

Hence, the revolt was significantly weakened, especially after April 1939, and it continued to decline gradually until the end of that year. According to British statistics, the total operations conducted by the revolt's activists during 1936–1939 were as follows:[22]

Year	1936	1937	1938	1939
Total operations	4,076	598	4,969	952

British sources state that during the first part of the revolt there were: 80 Jews killed with 288 injured, 35 killed and 164 injured from the British army and police, and 193 Arabs killed with 803 injured. However, Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah,

the renowned historian, states that there were more than 750 Arabs killed and more than 1,500 injured. As for the second part of the revolt, and according to Darwazah, the Jewish casualties reached around 1,500, of which a quarter, if not a third, were killed—which is close to official Jewish statistics. Darwazah also estimated that around 1,800 British were killed or injured, and three thousand Arabs were killed with seven thousand injured.[23]

• 'Abdulrahim al-Haj Muhammad leading a resistance group, and a personal photograph (corner)

• A train derailed by an explosion set off by resistance forces in the 1936–1939 Palestinian Revolt

Meanwhile, Britain attempted to find a political solution while crushing the revolt. It annulled the project of partitioning Palestine, freed the prisoners in the Seychelles islands, and called for a round table conference in London to be attended by delegations representing Palestinians, Jews, and a number of Arab countries. But the conference, held in February 1939, failed to deliver a decisive result. This paved the way for the British to announce a unilateral solution, which they said they would implement regardless of the two parties' approval.

The British government thus issued the White Paper in May 1939, which represented a limited political victory for Palestinians, as Britain categorically determined that it is not its policy that Palestine should become a Jewish state, and that it wished to see "established ultimately an independent Palestine State. It should be a State in which the two peoples in Palestine, Arabs and Jews, share authority in government in such a way that the essential interests of each are shared." Britain announced that it seeks to establish a Palestinian state within 10 years, the immigration of the Jews in the following five years would not exceed 75 thousand Jews and "no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it." It also stated that there is "in certain areas no room for further transfers of Arab land, whilst in some other areas such transfers of land must be restricted." Most of the Palestinian leaders did not agree with the British project, since they doubted British sincerity and intentions, and since the project linked the independence of Palestine with the cooperation and approval of the Jews. It also did not offer a general amnesty to the rebels or reconciliation with Palestine's leader, Haj Amin. Moreover, the Palestinians considered it unwise to give their premature approval to the project, which entailed some concessions. Since Britain insisted on implementing it in any case, time would demonstrate its seriousness in the matter. The Jews also strongly objected to the British project.[24]

Fourth: Political Developments 1939–1947

The World War II (WWII) took place between 1939 and 1945, and the Palestinians entered this period with depleted capabilities, and with a political leadership that was dispersed after the revolt. Haj Amin had to flee to Iraq in October 1939, then to Iran, Turkey, and Germany, where he arrived in November 1941. This followed the fall of the anti-British regime in Iraq, which he had a major contribution in establishing. In Germany, he found himself obliged to make use of his stay to cooperate with the Germans, the enemies of the British, in order to help the Arabs obtain their rights. A draft declaration was prepared, guaranteeing that the two Axis countries, Germany and Italy, would offer help and support to the Arab countries occupied and controlled by Britain, and would

recognize their independence and help them in overcoming the idea of a Jewish homeland. However, the Germans insisted on issuing the declaration only after the German forces reach Caucasia.

In February 1941, in a secret meeting with Ivan Maisky, the Soviet ambassador in London, Chaim Weizmann (the leader of the Zionist movement) offered the expulsion of one million Palestinians from their land to allow for the immigration of four-five million Jews from Eastern Europe. The ambassador sent a report on the matter, which was archived by the Russian foreign ministry, until it was uncovered by Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* in May 1993 and published by *al-Quds* newspaper and the Jordanian newspaper *Alrai* on 29/5/1993.

• **Ivan Maisky**   • **Chaim Weizmann**

In any case, Haj Amin used his presence in Germany to seek the creation of an Arab army trained by the Germans. Hundreds of young Arabs were thus trained in this army that was officially formed on 2/11/1943, and was equipped by the Germans with light weapons and ammunition. They also hid around 30 thousand small arms and light weapons in Libya for future use.[25] However, the victory of the British and their allies in the war put the Palestinians and their leadership in an even tougher position. The French arrested Haj Amin, but he was able to escape in June 1946, and arrived suddenly in Egypt. Joy and happiness prevailed in Palestine, where decorations were hung everywhere, convoys lined up, and people were extremely relieved,[26] thus showing how popular the *mufti* still was.

The Arab Higher Committee for Palestine was formed on 12/6/1946 by a decision of the Arab League and was chaired by Haj Amin after his return. It thus became the body that represents Palestinians. However, the problems faced by Haj Amin with the Jordanian and Iraqi governments weakened his ability to work and maneuver, not to mention that he was in Egypt, which was still under some form of British influence.

Meanwhile, the Zionists exploited the sufferance and massacres inflicted by Nazi Germany on the Jews in Europe during WWII, in order to attract sympathy and support. They claimed that there was no secure place for them, and that the only way to be saved was to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine.

• **Harry Truman**

The Zionists focused on the rising major power, namely the US, particularly after the Biltmore conference in 1942, and obtained the support of both the Democrats and the Republicans to reverse the British White Paper in May 1939. When Harry Truman became president, he exhibited great sympathy to Zionism and asked the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee on 31/8/1945 to allow 100 thousand Jews into Palestine.

• **Clement Attlee**

The Jews strove to equip themselves militarily, and 26 thousand Jews in Palestine took part in the Jewish units of the British army during the WWII, most of who were members of the Haganah organization, where they gained military experience that turned them into the nucleus of the anticipated Jewish state. Around 92 thousand Jews immigrated to Palestine during 1939–1945, and 61 thousand during 1946–1948. They obtained, in the period 1939–1947, around 270 thousand donums of land, and established 73 new settlements during 1940–1948. On 13/11/1945, amidst Jewish-American pressure and Arab weakness, the British officially abandoned the White Paper in a statement

• **Ernest Bevin**

issued by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, which also called for the formation of an Anglo-American commission to investigate the Palestinian issue and submit its recommendations, thus directly involving the Americans in the issue. The commission recommended in 1946 the immigration of 100 thousand Jews and the freedom of transferring lands and selling them to the Jews.[27]

Zionist groups in Palestine rejected the British White Paper and began a campaign of attacks on British mandate and Arab civilians. However, the Zionist movement had no choice but to stand with the British against Nazi Germany in the WWII which erupted in September 1939. The Head of the Jewish Agency

David Ben-Gurion declared that "We will fight the White Paper as if there is no war, and fight the war as if there is no White Paper."

The militant Zionist underground organization the Irgun declared a revolt on 1/2/1944 against the British mandate. Zionist terrorism reached the climax when the Irgun carried out an attack on 22/7/1946, on the British administrative headquarters for Palestine, which was housed in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. 91 people were killed and 46 were injured. Among those killed 21 were first-rank government officials; 49 were second-rank clerks, typists and messengers…; 13 were soldiers; three were policemen; and five were from the public. Also, among those killed, there were 41 Arabs, 28 British citizens and 17 Jews. The leader of Irgun was Menachem Begin, who later became the Prime Minister of Israel, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

The Palestinian issue took an international dimension when Britain asked the United Nations (UN) on 2/4/1947 to add it to its agenda. Then the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was created to examine the situation and submit its report, which it did on 31/8/1947, with the following recommendations:

- "The Mandate for Palestine shall be terminated at the earliest practicable date."

- "Palestine… shall be constituted into an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish state, and the City of Jerusalem," where Jerusalem would be placed under international trusteeship.[28]

In the Sofar (6/9/1947) and Aley (7–15/10/1947) conferences in Lebanon, the Arab states decided to reject the UNSCOP recommendations and offer support to Palestine in terms of both men and weapons, and take "military measures" and organize military work.

The Zionist demand for a Jewish state was in full contradiction with all principles of modern history and international law.

> Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) 1956–1968, "The Psychology of Middle East Peace," *Foreign Affairs* magazine, vol. 54, no. I, October 1975, pp. 113–114.

On 29/11/1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) issued its Resolution 181 for partitioning Palestine into two, Arab and Jewish, states, which was ratified by a majority of two-thirds of the member states, with American lobbying and strong Russian support. The resolution gave 54.7% of Palestine to the Jewish state (14,400 km^2), and 44.8% to the Arab state (11,780 km^2), and around 0.5% to the Jerusalem area.

The major powers were not having the two-thirds majority, and a vote almost took place on November 26, which would have thwarted the partitioning project, but the UNGA president (the Brazilian delegate), postponed the session. The Jewish Zionist lobbies and Americans launched a strong campaign that succeeded by using all means at their disposal to gain more votes. Indeed, the wives of the Latin American delegates received precious gifts of diamonds and expensive fur coats. The Haiti government, which had voted against the partitioning, ordered its delegate to vote in support of the resolution, after the US promised to offer economic aid. American businessman Robert Nathan used his financial influence to buy the vote of Guatemala, the Firestone company made economic threats to Liberia if it did not offer its support, and the Philippines was strongly pressured, leading to the interference of its president, who ordered his delegate to vote in support of the resolution. It is thus through these "dirty" tricks that the fate of one of the holiest places on earth was sealed. What is the logic behind deciding the fate of a Muslim people and a Holy Land based on Latin American wives receiving diamonds, jewelry or fur coats? Or Liberia being intimidated by an American company? On 29/11/1947, the resolution in question obtained a majority of 33 votes against 13, with 10 abstentions.

It is worth noting that UNGA resolutions are not binding, even within the UN charters themselves. The resolution itself is in contradiction with the basis upon which the UN was founded, namely the right of peoples to freedom and self-determination. Moreover, the Palestinian people, the ones who are concerned by the issue first and foremost, were not consulted. This is in addition to the blatant injustice imposed by the resolution in giving around 55% of Palestine's land to an immigrant Jewish minority representing 31.7% of the population and possessing no more than 6% of the land.

Population Dynamics in Palestine Under British Occupation

Year	Arabs		Jews	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
1918	600,000	91.6	55,000	8.4
1948	1,390,000	68.3	646,000	31.7

Land Ownership in Palestine Under British Occupation

Year	Arabs (%)	Jews (%)
1918	98	2
1948	94	6

"It is high time for a few prominent and respectable American Jews, particularly those from whom I learned a lot, to courageously and publicly say Let's quit lying to the world and to ourselves. We stole Palestine. We stole it. Even if we give the Palestinians autonomy or self-determination, or the West Bank or a Palestinian State, We will still have stolen most of their country. Let's at least start by telling the truth."

> Ron David, *Arabs and Israel for Beginners* (New York: 1993), p. 210.

Fifth: The 1948 War and Its Repercussions

The war erupted upon the issuance of resolution on the partitioning of Palestine. The Palestinians bore this war's burdens alone during the first six months, with the help of a limited number of volunteers, as the Arab states refused to send their armies until Britain left on 15/5/1948. The Palestinians formed the Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas led by 'Abdul Qadir al-Hussaini, and the Arab League formed the Arab Liberation Army (ALA), which consisted of volunteers from Arab and Muslim countries. Although they suffered tragically as a result of weak Arab support in terms of weapons and supplies, the Palestinians were able to show strong performance against the Zionist gangs for a long time. This led the US to seriously consider abandoning the partitioning project in March 1948. Until the entrance of the Arab armies, the Palestinians were able to maintain around 80% of the land of Palestine, despite their terrible shortcomings in everything compared to the Jews, and despite the cooperation of the British with the Jews during the British withdrawal.

The involvement of the seven Arab armies represented another tragedy, as they included a total of 24 thousand fighters up against more than 70 thousand Zionist Jewish fighters, and they suffered from a lack of coordination, were ignorant of the land, and lacked modern efficient weapons. Some of these armies occupied themselves with removing the weapons of Palestinians instead

of arming them. In other cases, weapons given to Palestinians were faulty and dangerous to use. Other armies lacked good leadership, not to mention that one of these armies had 45 British nationals among its 50 high ranking officials. This was in addition to the newly-acquired independence of some Arab states and the lack of experience of their armies. Indeed, some of these states were still practically under the influence of British colonialism.[29] The following table demonstrates the military balance of forces in terms of numbers between the Arab and Zionist sides:

	Arab forces (thousands)	Jewish forces (thousands)
Before the Arab forces entered the war (December 1947–May 1948)	12	60
First phase of fighting (when the Arab armies entered)	21	67
Second phase of fighting (when the war ended)	40	106

The Palestinians and Arabs were extremely enthusiastic about resistance and sacrifice, but the political leaders and armies were a source of great frustration and failure. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) Movement in Egypt made great efforts to save Palestine, and MB leader Hassan al-Banna volunteered in October 1947 ten thousand members of the MB Movement as a first batch to participate in the battle. But the Egyptian government greatly restricted their ability to travel. Nonetheless, the hundreds of fighters who were able to take part in the battles and fight heroically were arrested and imprisoned before they returned to Egypt. The MB Movement was dissolved before the battles ended in December 1948, and the
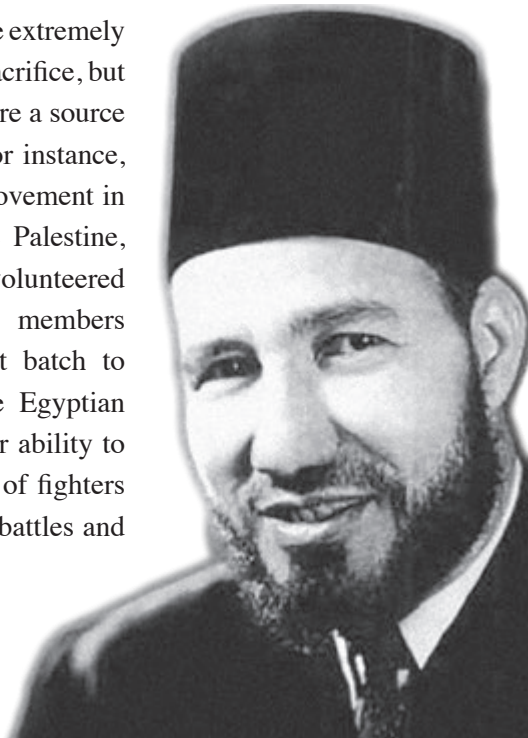
• **Sheikh Hassan al-Banna**

Egyptian intelligence services assassinated Hassan al-Banna on 11/2/1949, prior to signing the armistice with the new Zionist state. Moreover, MB members from Jordan, Syria, and Iraq also participated in the resistance, revealing a commitment to sacrifice for the Palestinian issue. Besides, there was heroic participation of others, such as the fighters of Army of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas in addition to the participation of many Arabs in the liberation army, and around 250 Bosnians in this war to defend Palestine.

The Zionists declared the State of Israel on the evening of 14/5/1948, and were able by the end of the war to defeat the Arab armies and seize around 77% of the Palestinian land. Meanwhile, the Arab Higher Committee decided to establish a Palestinian government to fill the vacuum left by the British withdrawal, and strove in vain to persuade the Arab governments of this in March, April, and the first half of May 1948.

• **David Ben-Gurion reading out the proclamation of establishing the state of Israel**

On 23/9/1948, the Committee declared the establishment of the **All-Palestine government** in Gaza, headed by Ahmad Hilmi 'Abdulbaqi. The Arab governments (with the exception of Jordan) recognized this government. In affirmation of its legitimacy, the All-Palestine government and the Arab Higher Committee convened a Palestinian National Conference in Gaza on 1/10/1948, headed by Haj Amin. The conference declared the independence of Palestine and the establishment of a free sovereign and democratic state based on the internationally-recognized borders established during the British occupation. The conference gave a vote of confidence to the All-Palestine government, which was composed of 10 ministers and led by Ahmad Hilmi 'Abdulbaqi.[30]

• **Ahmad Hilmi 'Abdulbaqi, the head of All-Palestine government**

When the All-Palestine government attempted to exercise its powers in the Gaza Strip (GS), the Egyptian authorities interfered and forcefully transported Haj Amin al-Hussaini to Cairo, and forced a number of members of the national council to leave Gaza for Cairo. It then also forced the head and members of the All-Palestine government to move to Egypt. Arab governments refused to recognize the passports issued by the All-Palestine government, and the forces of al-Jihad al-Muqaddas affiliated with the Arab Higher Committee were disbanded. The Egyptian authorities appointed an administrative governor to rule over the "regions under the control of Egyptian forces," i.e., the GS.[31]

One of the direct consequences of the 1948 war was that the Palestinians were stripped of around 77% of their land by Jewish-Zionist gangs. Around 800 thousand out of one million and 390 thousand Palestinians (about 58%) were forcefully displaced, driven out of the land on which the Jews went on to establish their state. They also displaced 30 thousand other Palestinians to other areas within the occupied territory itself. The Zionists destroyed about

400 villages that existed prior to the war, in addition to staging 34 massacres during the 1948 war against Palestinian civilians in their bid to drive out the Palestinian population. The most infamous massacre of these was that of Deir Yasin, which took place on 9/4/1948, in which the Zionists admitted to slaughtering 254 men, women, and children.[32]

• The Deir Yasin Massacre

The Zionist terrorism was not confined to Palestinians. For instance, the militant Zionist gang Lehi (Stern) assassinated the Swedish diplomat Folke Bernadotte, the UN mediator in the 1948 war. He was assassinated on 17/9/1984 in Jerusalem, while pursuing his official duties. Yitzhak Shamir, a Lehi leader, who became later the Prime Minister of Israel, was responsible for the decision of Bernadotte's assassination. The Israeli authorities arrested the accused. However, they were accused of membership of a terrorist group (not the assassination), and they were released two weeks later!!

The 1948 war tore apart the social and economic fabric of the Palestinian people, who found themselves completely exposed, after having inhabited this land for the past 4,500 years. Sadly, this people had to be destroyed in order to pay for the crimes of the Europeans against the Jews. They had to be expelled in order to realize the wishes of the major international powers that sympathized with the Zionist movement. The Zionists who built their entity on a sea of Palestinian blood, pain, and suffering showed no remorse whatsoever, despite the injustice that they claim had befallen the Jews, and for which they rallied the whole world. Surely, injustice inflicted on Jews by Europeans, doesn't give the Zionists the right to inflict injustice and oppression on Palestinians. Moshe

• The forced displacement of the Palestinians 1948

• **The forced displacement of the Palestinians 1948**

Dayan, who occupied the posts of the chief of staff of the Israeli army, defense minister, and foreign minister, said, "Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages, and you do not know even the names of these Arab villages, they are not there anymore."[33] It was a premeditated organized crime, and the fact that the UN has issued more than 120 resolutions to this day calling for the return of the refugees to their land did not change anything. The number of Palestinian refugees from the Palestinian land occupied in 1948 reached more than six million and 250 thousands in 2012, in addition to more than one million refugees from GS and the West Bank (WB) who are living outside historic Palestine, and not allowed to return there.
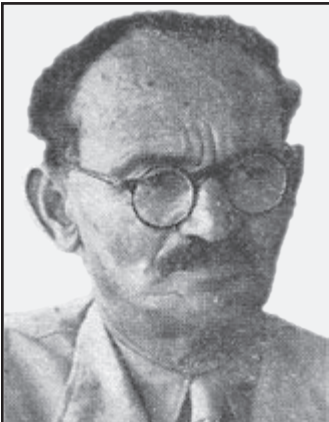
• *Yosef Weitz*

"... it must be clear that there is no room in the country for both [Arab and Jewish] peoples ... If the [Palestinian] Arabs leave it, the country will become wide and spacious for us... The only solution [after the end of WWII] is a Land of Israel, at least a western land of Israel [i.e., Palestine since Transjordan is the eastern portion], without [Palestinian] Arabs. There is no room here for compromises.

The Zionist idea is the answer to the Jewish question in the Land of Israel... The complete evacuation of the country from its other inhabitants and handing it over to the Jewish people is the answer."

> Yosef Weitz, director of the Jewish National Fund's Land Settlement Department, The Weitz Diary, A246/7, entries dated 20/12/1940 and 20/3/1941, The Central Zionist Archives (CZA), cited in Nur Masalha, *The Expulsion of the Palestinians* (USA: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), pp. 131–132.

Endnotes

[1] Emile Gory, *Filastin 'Abr Sittin 'Aman* (Palestine Throughout Sixty Years) (Beirut: Dar An-Nahar, 1972), pp. 28–30.

[2] R. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary 1917–1956* (London: The Cresset Press, 1959), p. 11.

[3] Barbara Haddad, *al-Mawaqif al-Baritaniyyah fi Filastin Bayna 'Amay 1918 wa 1920* (The British Stances in Palestine Between 1918 and 1920), *Shu'un Filastiniyah* magazine, no. 17, January 1973, p. 118.

[4] The number of Arabs was around 610 thousand and of Jews around 50–55 thousand.

[5] For more details on the development of the Zionist project, see Muhammad Salamah al-Nahhal, *Siyasat al-Intidab al-Baritani Hawla Aradi Filastin al-'Arabiyyah* (The Policy of the British Mandate on the Arab Land of Palestine), 2nd ed. (Beirut: Manshurat Filastin al-Muhtallah, 1981); *Harb Filastin 1947–1948* (The Palestine War 1947–1948) (The official Israeli story) translated by Ahmad Khalifah (Cyprus: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984), pp. 18 and 26; Saleh Abu Yasir, *op. cit.*, pp. 465–485; and Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'uf Salim, *Nashat al-Wikalah al-Yahudiyyah li Filastin: Mundhu Insha'iha wa Hatta Qiyam Dawlat Israel 1922–1948* (Activity of the Jewish Agency for Palestine: From Its Foundation to the Establishment of the State of Israel 1922–1948) (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1982).

[6] On this matter, see 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *op. cit.*, pp. 104–105 and 134–198.

[7] On the three revolts, see Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tayyar al-Islami fi Filastin wa Atharuhu fi Harakat al-Jihad 1917–1948* (The Islamic Movement in Palestine and Its Effect on the Movement for Jihad 1917–1948) (Kuwait: Maktabat al-Falah, 1988), pp. 165–191.

[8] See Palestine Government, *A Survey of Palestine*, prepared in Dec. 1945 & Jan. 1946 (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1946), vol. 1, pp. 141, 185 and 224; and see *Peel Report*, the official Arabic version, p. 266.

[9] See Bayan al-Hout, *al-Qiyadat wa al-Mu'assasat al-Siyasiyyah fi Filastin 1917–1948* (Political Leaderships and Institutions in Palestine 1917–1948) (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1981), pp. 301–314; and Kamil Khullah, *Filastin wa al-Intidab al-Baritani 1922–1939* (Palestine and the British Mandate 1922–1939) (Tripoli (Libya): al-Mansha'ah al-'Ammah li al-Nashir wa al-Tawzi' wa al-I'lan, 1982), pp. 517–521.

[10] Zuhair al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma' al-Haj Amin al-Hussaini* (One Thousand Days with Amin al-Hussaini) (Beirut: n.p., 1980), p. 77.

[11] Appreciation of Arab Feeling as Affecting Palestine, Memorandum by H.R. Rice Submitted to the Chief Secretary, Government of Palestine, 8/9/1933, Secret, Colonial Office (CO) 733/257/11.

[12] *Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, by Sir J.H. Simpson, 1930, Cmd. 3686 (London: His Majesty Stationary Office, 1930), pp. 141–153.

[13] The paper was known as the *Passfield White Paper*. As for the *Black Paper*, it was a letter addressed from British Prime Minister R. MacDonald to Chaim Weizmann, the president of WZO, and read before the British House of Commons on 13/2/1931.

[14] 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

[15] See Bayan al-Hout, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 246–247 and 872–873.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 294–295; *Watha'iq al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah 1918–1939: Min Awraq Akram Zu'aytir* (Documents of the National Palestinian Movement 1918–1939: From the Papers of Akram Zu'aytir), prepared for publication by Bayan al-Hout, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984), pp. 381–391.

[17] See Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Quwwat al-'Askariyyah wa al-Shurtah fi Filastin 1917–1939* (Military and Police Forces in Palestine 1917–1939) (Amman: Dar al-Nafaes, 1996), pp. 405–408.

[18] *Ibid*., pp. 408–418.

[19] For details about this movement see Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tayyar al-Islami fi Filastin*, pp. 229–327.

[20] See Emile Gory, *op. cit*., pp. 232–235.

[21] On the Great Revolt, see 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *op. cit*., pp. 260–300; and Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Quwwat al-'Askariyyah wa al-Shurtah fi Filastin*, pp. 437–618.

[22] See Yusuf Rajab al-Radi'i, *Thawrat 1936 fi Filastin: Dirasah 'Askariyyah* (The Revolt of 1936 in Palestine: A Military Study) (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Abhath al-'Arabiyyah, 1982), pp. 61–62, 69, 73 and 78.

[23] Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah, *Filastin wa Jihad al-Filastiniyyin* (Palestine and the Struggle of Palestinians) (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1959), pp. 43 and 220.

[24] See British White Paper of 1939, the Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp; 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *op. cit*., pp. 300–302; and Kamil Khullah, *op. cit*., pp. 733–743.

[25] See Falah Khalid 'Ali, *Filastin wa al-Intidab al-Baritani 1939–1948* (Palestine and the British Mandate 1939–1948) (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1980), pp. 107–111; and Zuhair al-Mardini, *op. cit*., pp. 157–162, 171, 200–202, 241 and 243.

[26] Khalil al-Sakakini, *Kadha Ana Ya Dunya* (Such Am I, Oh World), vol. 2, ([Damascus]: al-Ittihad al-'Am li al-Kuttab wa al-Sahafiyyin al-Filastiniyyin, 1982), p. 367.

[27] On this paragraph see Falah 'Ali, *op. cit*., pp. 141, 181, 195–197 and 203–205; and *Harb Filastin 1947–1948* (The official Israeli story), pp. 26 and 87.

[28] Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 11, United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, Volume 1, New York, A/364, site of United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), 3/9/1947, http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/c17b3a9d4bfb04c985257b28006e4ea6/07175de9fa2de563852568d3006e10f3?OpenDocument; and Falah 'Ali, *op. cit*., pp. 248–250.

[29] On the state and conduct of Arab armies in the 1948 war, see 'Arif al-'Arif, *al-Nakbah: Nakbat Bayt al-Maqdis wa al-Firdaws al-Mafqud 1947–1951* (The Nakbah: The Catastrophe of Jerusalem and the Lost Paradise 1947–1951) (Saida-Beirut: Al Maktaba Al Assrya, 1954), vol. 2, p. 342 and vol. 6, p. 225; and Muhammad 'Izzat Darwazah, *op. cit*., pp. 80–89. This was also detailed by Saleh Abu Yasir in his book *Jihad Sha'b Filastin*.

[30] Hussien Abu al-Namel, *Qita' Ghazzah 1948–1967: Tatawwurat Iqtisadiyyah wa Siyasiyyah wa Ijtima'iyyah wa 'Askariyyah* (The Gaza Strip 1948–1967: Economic, Political, Social and Military Developments) (Beirut: Markaz al-Abhath—Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 1979), pp. 22–23.

[31] See *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 342–344, and vol. 4, pp. 377–379 and 556–561; and Hussien Abu al-Namel, *op. cit*., p. 25.

[32] See Salman Abu Sitta, *Palestinian Right to Return* (London: The Palestinian Return Center, 1999), pp. 16 and 27. See also Ibrahim Abu Jabir, "The Arab Society in Israel," in Jawad al-Hamad (ed.), *al-Madkhal ila al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah* (Introduction to the Palestinian Issue), *Silsilat Dirasat* (Studies Series) no. 21 (Amman: Middle East Studies Center (MESC), 1997), p. 427.

[33] See also Clifford Wright, *Haqa'iq wa Abatil fi al-Sira' al-'Arabi al-Israeli* (Facts And Fables: The Arab-Israeli Conflict), translated by 'Abdullah 'Uraiqat and 'Abdullah 'Ayyad (Amman: Dar al-Nasir, 1992), cited in *The Guardian* newspaper, 14/11/1973. See also Rachida El Diwani, "An Arab Perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," site of Lake Superior State University, www.Issu.edu/faculty/jswedene/FULBRIGHT_FILES/Rachida%27s%20Arab%20Perspective.doc

Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

Chapter Three

The Palestinian Issue 1949–1967

The Palestinian Issue 1949–1967

Introduction

A feeling of bitterness and disenfranchisement prevailed among the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Muslims after the war of 1948. The people of Palestine found themselves displaced and uprooted from their land for the first time in history, and subjected to the rule of several regimes that gave them varying degrees of freedom and civil rights, and the right to organize themselves into political and resistance groups seeking to liberate their land. However, the Palestinians, with their renowned vitality, dealt with admirable positivity with the situation and tried to adapt themselves to their difficult circumstances. For instance, only a few years passed before they became the most educated people of all the Arab countries, since education was one of the important ways to compensate for their tough conditions, and to prepare for tackling the future and the challenges it brought with it.

First: The Arab States and Palestine

The period in question saw the decolonization of most countries in the Arab and Islamic worlds. However, the "independent" regimes that replaced the colonial ones adopted the Western style of ruling, and secular systems that had liberal, socialist, or conservative underpinnings, or fell under direct military rule. Each regime sought to assert its own influence and individual national identity, instead of striving towards unity in a broader framework, thus leading to further divisions. Nevertheless, the pan-Arab rhetoric and slogans remained prevalent in the Arab arena. The Palestinians pinned their hopes during that period on the "pan-Arab nature of the battle" and on certain Arab regimes, particularly Egypt under the leadership of Gamal 'Abdul Nasser.

That period's slogan was "unity is the road to liberation." But the more this slogan was discussed, the more people felt despair about ever achieving it, especially after the failure of the Egyptian-Syrian union in 1958–1961, and following the "loss of the credibility" of its leaders in the aftermath of the catastrophic war of 1967. To be sure, these leaders lacked the real conviction,

the sound methodology and the necessary persistence needed to achieve the goal of the liberation of Palestine. They therefore achieved neither unity nor liberation, in addition to losing the rest of Palestine, the Sinai, and the Golan Heights in the war.

This period also witnessed a surge in nationalist and leftist ideologies against the decline of the Islamist movements on the political, popular, and resistance fronts, especially after the fierce organized campaign led by Nasser and his supporters against the Islamists.

In any case, the official state of war with Israel continued throughout this period, but the Arab regimes made practical moves towards maintaining rather than challenging the status quo. In other words, they favored "settlement" over "liberation" for both subjective and objective reasons, with the result being that they began to feel genuine incapacity. They thus occupied themselves with tickling the fancies of the public, which waited eagerly for the battle to come, while Israel grew stronger and its roots deepened.

Therefore, Palestinian resistance was adopted mostly for "tactical" political reasons rather than in the context of comprehensive strategic plans. The policies of the countries that were in confrontation with Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinian resistance followed two lines:

- **First:** Focus was on each regime's safety and survival, avoiding its exposure to the dangers of Israeli retaliation, and, in general, avoiding any confrontation that may reveal the regime's weakness. These regimes sought to control Palestinian guerilla operations and prevent them from using their borders with Occupied Palestine for armed resistance operations.

- **Second:** Allowing the presence of armed resistance on the ground only for tactical and provisional reasons, in order to achieve popular political gains or avoid internal turmoil, and appease the angry public. Hence, confrontation countries kept their territories off limits to Palestinian guerilla operations, with very few exceptions imposed by specific circumstances. The most important such exception was south Lebanon, which saw the formation of a strong resistance base after the 1967 war that continued until 1982, not in response to the wishes of the ruling regime there, but as a result of its weakness and the strength of the Palestinian revolution and its broad support base in the country.

Second: Palestinian National Action

During the same era, popular Palestinian attitudes were characterized by the following:

- Attempting to absorb the shock and adapt to the new reality, as well as focusing on education and the means for achieving self-dependency.

- Joining nationalist organizations and parties including the Nasserites and the Ba'ath Party, communist and leftist groups and Islamist ones (in the first half of the era in question examples include the MB Movement and Hizbut-Tahrir).

- The emergence of a Palestinian national identity, which had been overshadowed by nationalist and leftist ideologies, e.g., the birth of the Fatah Movement, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

- The immigration of many Palestinians to the east bank of the Jordan River and the Gulf countries, particularly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Kuwait.

- Gradual decline of popularity of Haj Amin al-Hussaini.

The Jordanian government completed its constitutional control of the WB, which represented most of what was left of Palestine (5,878 km^2, i.e., 21.77% of Palestine's area), after it encouraged several conferences that were attended by pro-Jordanian Palestinian dignitaries calling for unity with Jordan. A conference was held in Amman on 1/10/1948 (in parallel with the Gaza conference) chaired by Sheikh Suleiman al-Taji al-Faruqi, and participants gave King 'Abdullah bin al-Sharif Hussein bin 'Ali full mandate to speak on behalf of Palestine's Arabs.[1] Another conference was held in Jericho on 1/12/1948 chaired by Muhammad 'Ali al-Ja'bari, the head of the municipality of Hebron. The conference declared the unity of the Jordanian and Palestinian lands, and declared King 'Abdullah sovereign over Palestine. The Jordanian government issued a statement saying that it "respected the will of the Palestinian people and agreed with it." The Jordanian National Assembly convened on 13/12/1948 to approve the Jericho conference and the stance of the Jordanian government and took a decision to unify the two banks (East Jordan and WB). In the end of that year, a third conference was held in Ramallah and a fourth in Nablus; both supported the decisions of the Jericho conference.

However Jordan's position was met with strong opposition in both official and popular Arab and Palestinian circles, yet Jordan's military and administrative

control over most of what remained of Palestine (the WB) enabled it to prevent the All-Palestine government from exercising its powers. The Jordanian government took a number of unification measures in 1949, and in December 1949 a royal decree was issued, granting Jordanian nationality to all Palestinian residents in East Jordan and WB. Another royal decree was issued for holding elections on 20/4/1950 in both banks. On 24/4/1950, the first representative parliament for the two banks was formed, and went on to approve the unity between the WB and East Jordan.[2]

Meanwhile, the Egyptian government took over the GS (363 km^2, i.e., 1.34% of Palestine's area) and began to administer it. Haj Amin, the Arab Higher Committee and the All-Palestine government were prevented from residing or engaging in politics in the WB and the GS. The All-Palestine government remained in Egypt, but was unable to carry out any of the tasks it was entrusted with. The Egyptian authorities imposed a siege on the Arab Higher Committee's headquarters in Cairo and strict surveillance on Haj Amin, restricting his freedom of action and movement. Thus, the Arab Higher Committee and the All-Palestine government were besieged, ignored, and tightly controlled, until any practical effect they had on Palestinian life ended. After Haj Amin found himself practically a
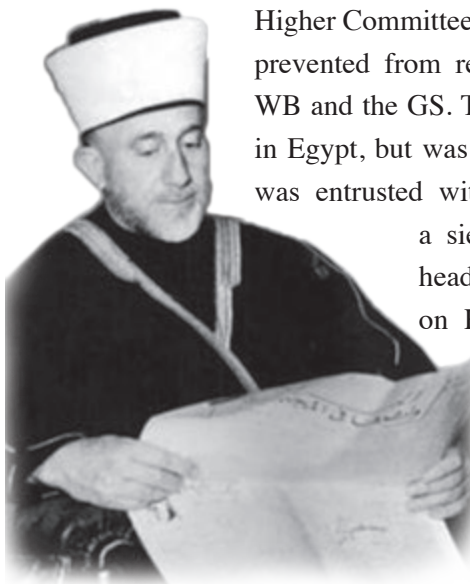
• **Haj Amin al-Hussaini**

hostage in Egypt, tasting the bitterness of isolation and restrictions; he had to leave for Lebanon in 1958. "His" committee and government gradually became smaller and more isolated, until they were restricted to one or two flats in Cairo! The role of the head of the All-Palestine government turned in 1952 into one of a mere delegate of Palestine in the Arab League. It is thus that Haj Amin's role gradually grew weaker. But whether or not he was greatly popular until the mid–1950s and whether or not some part blamed him for the loss of Palestine, Haj Amin was renowned for his strength and loyalty, and was the first symbol of the Palestinian national movement for more than 30 years.

At the popular level, the MB Movement prevailed in Palestinian circles during 1949–1954, both in the WB and the GS, thanks to their reputation for fighting in the 1948 war and their patriotic Islamic and social welfare programs. They enjoyed a relative freedom in Egypt until 1954, and favorable conditions in Jordan. Moreover, Hizbut-Tahrir became a party to be reckoned with, particularly in Jordan in the mid–1950s, where it focused on political work and the reestablishment of the Islamic Caliphate.

The communists represented a popular challenge to the Islamic movement, especially among student and professional circles, with their attractive slogans on the suffering of the people, and their accusations against the regimes of treason and collaboration with the enemy. However, they and the other nationalist and leftist movements were not able to compete with the Islamists until 'Abdul Nasser dealt a harsh blow to the MB Movement, and began cracking down on them, using the media to distort their image. The general attitude of the MB Movement and the Islamists thus became about self-preservation and keeping a low profile until better conditions emerged. An example of the Islamist force was the Palestinian Students League in Egypt, where the Islamists or their supporters won its internal elections year after year until 1957. This association was chaired by Yasir 'Arafat, at a time when he was close to the MB Movement as a student.

The Palestinian resistance took, during that phase, simple forms that had a limited impact. During the first half of the 1950s, the resistance conducted cross-border operations to retrieve possessions of displaced families or to retaliate against the Zionists. In GS, the MB Movement formed a covert military organization, which conducted a number of operations in collaboration with the Bedouins in the Negev, and benefited from 'Abdul Mun'im 'Abdul Ra'uf, the MB Movement officer in the Egyptian army, who was posted to the GS, following the success of the Egyptian revolution in 1952. 'Abdul Ra'uf facilitated the group's military training. An attack on a bus, on 17/3/1954, was one of the most famous operations that bore the hallmarks of the Bedouins, in collaboration with the MB Movement, and led to the death of 11 Israelis near Beersheba, near the settlement of Ma'ale Akrabim.[3]

Zionist reactions to resistance operations were violent and heavy-handed, both in the WB and the GS, such as with the Qibya Massacre on 14–15/10/1953, which claimed the lives of 67 people.[4] On 28/2/1955, the Zionist forces perpetrated the Gaza Massacre, which resulted in 39 deaths with 33 injured, and provoked Gaza's inhabitants to rise up and demand military action. The Egyptian leadership approved Palestinian military operations, and entrusted the mission to Egyptian officer Mustafa Hafiz, who carried out the task effectively. Thousands volunteered to fight, but only those with

• **Mustafa Hafiz**

fighting experience and intricate knowledge of the territory were chosen, and in the end, more than a thousand guerilla fighters enlisted. They conducted swift daily operations, including large-scale operations at times, from September 1955 to October 1956. However, Mustafa Hafiz was killed on 11/7/1956 due to a parcel bomb that was sent to him by the Israeli Mossad through a double agent.[5]

According to a statement by the then Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in the Knesset in March 1956, the number of Israeli victims due to border incidents was 137 in 1951; 147 in 1952; 162 in 1953; 180 in 1954; and 258 in 1955.[6] On the other hand, and according to Hussein Abu al-Naml, 1,176 Israelis were killed between the armistice in March 1949 and the invasion of the GS and the Sinai in October 1956.[7]

The Tripartite Aggression (Israeli-British-French) on Egypt began on 29/10/1956. The Zionists sought to put an end to Palestinian resistance operations in the GS, open maritime lines for their ships in the Red Sea, either by opening the Suez Canal or by lifting the siege off the Eilat port, and fulfill

• **Tripartite Aggression 1956**

their expansionist aspirations. This was in accord with British colonialist intentions to continue to control the Suez Canal, and with the French desire to deal a blow to Egypt, which supported the Algerian revolution. All this led to the Israeli occupation of the GS and the Sinai, and

Britain and France took part in striking Egypt's airports and occupying its ports. The Israeli occupation was swift and decisive, and exposed the weakness of the Egyptian army and the shortcomings of its political leadership. Nonetheless, the Egyptian media shed light on the resistance of the Egyptian leadership against making concessions, and took advantage of the withdrawal of the Israeli, British, and French forces (under pressure from the US) on 6/3/1957 to restore 'Abdul Nasser's stature. But resistance operations through the GS ceased after the Tripartite Aggression, and Egypt shut off its borders to Palestinian resistance fighters.

TROOP MOVEMENTS

5 British paratroops
7 French paratroops
Port Said
Occupied Palestine 1948 (Israel)
Suez Canal
Ismalia
8
JORDAN
3 Cairo
1
EGYPT
2
Gulf of Suez
SINAI PENINSULA
Eilat
Gulf of Aqaba
British paratroops
French paratroops
Israeli paratroops
Suez Canal Zone
Egyptian blockade
Israeli troop movements
Al Tor
4   6
Sharm al-Sheikh
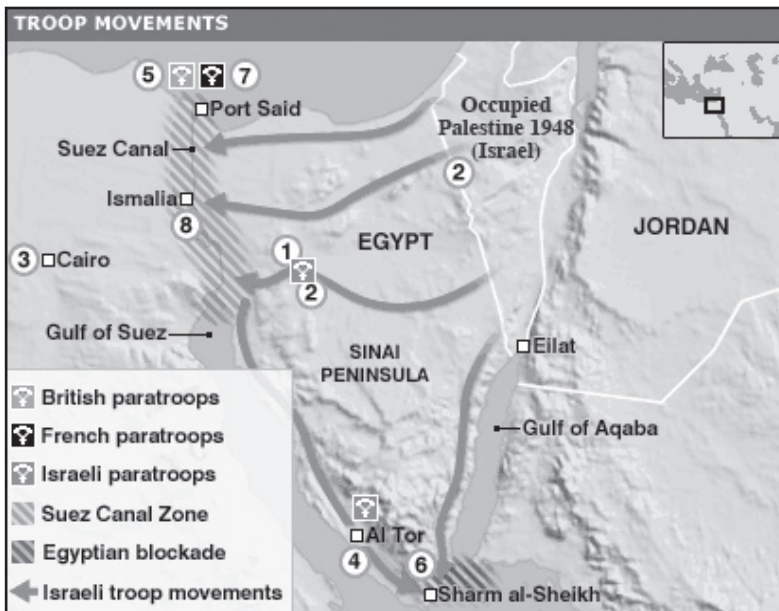
• **Tripartite Aggression 1956**

Third: The Birth of the Fatah Movement

During that period, persecution against the Islamist movement, especially in Egypt and the GS, caused young and eager Palestinian members of the MB Movement to begin to wonder what to do to liberate Palestine. Despite the fact that the general trend among them called for patience and for focusing on educational and religious endeavors, another trend began to go in the direction of establishing an organized armed movement. The inclination was for this not to have any overt Islamic forms, and to instead adopt a nationalist framework that would enable such a movement to mobilize larger sectors of young people, and protect it from

persecution by hostile anti-Islamist regimes. The Algerian revolution at the time was one of this movement's primary inspirations. Thus were planted the first seeds of the Fatah Movement (the Liberation of Palestine Movement, and later the Palestinian National Liberation Movement) in 1957 in Kuwait, headed by Yasir 'Arafat, and which originated from the MB Movement and, more specifically, the inhabitants of the GS.

Khalil al-Wazir (aka Abu Jihad), who became the number two man in Fatah for over 30 years (till his assassination in April 1988), submitted a proposal for the creation of such a movement to the MB's leadership in the GS, but received no response. Nonetheless, this did not prevent several respectable members of the MB from joining Fatah upon its foundation and becoming some of its leading members (e.g., Sa'id al-Muzayyan, Ghalib al-Wazir, Salim al-Za'nun, Salah Khalaf, As'ad al-Saftawi, Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar,

• **Yasir 'Arafat**

Kamal 'Adwan, Rafiq al-Natshah, 'Abdul Fatah Hammoud, and Yusuf 'Umairah). However, after Fatah focused on recruiting members of the MB Movement until 1963, the movement then opened up to other currents and segments, especially after

• **Yasir 'Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir**

the Brotherhood leadership in Gaza issued orders that compelled members to choose between being members of Fatah or the MB Movement.[8] Fatah took on a nationalist secular inclination that still represents its general identity to this day. The movement formed its military wing, *al-'Asifah* (The Storm), and conducted its first military operation in early 1965. It was able to conduct around 200 military operations from then up to the war of June 1967.[9]

As for the **Arab Nationalist** Movement, most of its founding members were Palestinians who studied at the American University of Beirut in

the mid–1950s, including George Habash. The movement's slogan was nationalist unity and the liberation of Palestine, and it supported Nasserist policies and established the Palestine Committee in 1958. After the failure of the Egyptian-Syrian union, the movement adopted socialist patterns in both its ideology and activism. May 1964 saw the foundation of the National Front for the Liberation of Palestine and its military wing "Shabab al-Tha'r," which launched resistance operations in November 1964. In 1966, it adopted Marxist ideology.[10] In December 1967, it founded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in collaboration with other factions.

• Salim al-Za'nun

• Salah Khalaf

• Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar

• Kamal 'Adwan

• 'Abdul Fatah Hammoud

• Rafiq al-Natshah

• Sa'id al-Muzayyan

Fourth: The Establishment of the PLO

Meanwhile, Arab regimes became aware of the covert activities, movements, and organizations that preoccupied the Palestinian arena. Nasser wished to keep things under control, especially in light of the differences between the Arab regimes. This gave rise to a trend that sought to include the Palestinians within a recognized controllable official entity. In 1959, the Arab League took a decision calling for reorganizing the Palestinian people and uniting them through representatives chosen by the people. However, this kept being postponed, until the death of Ahmad Hilmi 'Abdulbaqi, the delegate of the All-Palestine government at the Arab League in 1963.

With Nasser's support, Ahmad al-Shuqairi was chosen to replace 'Abdulbaqi and was entrusted with examining the Palestinian issue and the means to reinvigorate it. When the First Arab Summit was held in Cairo on 13/1/1964, al-Shuqairi was entrusted with contacting the member states and the Palestinian people, in order to reach an adequate basis for organizing the Palestinian people and enabling them to perform their role in liberating their homeland and determining their fate. Al-Shuqairi did not submit a report to the Arab League on the proposed means, as he was convinced that it would be subjected to even

• **Ahmad al-Shuqairi**

more stalling. He therefore decided to put the Arab League face to face with the *fait accompli*, and established, with Egypt's support, the PLO.

The first Palestinian national conference was held in Jerusalem on 28/5/1964 in the presence of 422 representatives of Palestine, and was sponsored by King Hussein bin Talal of Jordan. The birth of the PLO was officially announced, and the Palestine National Charter affirming armed struggle with the aim of liberating all of Palestine and refusing to cede any part of it, was ratified. Ahmad al-Shuqairi was voted president of the PLO, which decided to create the Palestinian liberation army, in addition to taking tactical and public relations measures. In general, the Palestinians welcomed the establishment of the PLO, since it represented the Palestinian entity and national identity that had previously been absent. However, some, like the Fatah Movement, doubted the basis of its foundation and its ability to perform its tasks.[11]

• The First Palestinian National Conference in
Jerusalem 1964

Fifth: The June 1967 War and Its Repercussions

An Arab-Israeli war erupted on 5/6/1967, after mutual escalation during which Egypt shut off the Straits of Tiran in the Red Sea and asked the UN observers on its borders to leave, and the Arab states declared their readiness for the liberation of Palestine. However, on the morning of June 5th, the Israeli forces launched attacks on the air forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and within six days, the whole matter was settled with a new and catastrophic Arab defeat. The Zionists occupied the rest of Palestine, including the WB 5,878 km^2 and the GS 363 km^2; in addition to the Sinai 61,198 km^2, and the Golan Heights 1,150 km^2.

According to Palestinian anecdotes about the event, Jewish soldiers entered Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque while chanting slogans offensive to Muslims. The Arab and Islamic peoples awoke to a catastrophe they had never expected to happen, and discovered the extent of deception and illusions fed to them by the Arab regimes during the 19 previous years. Indeed, Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian aircrafts were destroyed on the tarmac, before even

• Israeli soldiers celebrating the
occupation of Jerusalem

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taking off. 80% of the Egyptian army's equipment was destroyed, and around 10 thousand Egyptian fighters were killed, along with 6,094 Jordanians and one thousand Syrians; thousands of others were injured.

• Destroyed Egyptian army trucks in 1967 war

• General Uzi Narkis (left), Defense Minister Moshe Dayan (center) and Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin (right) entering Jerusalem in 1967 after its occupation

As a result of this war, another 330 thousand Palestinians were displaced, Gamal 'Abdul Nasser's popularity and clout faded, and the trust in Arab regimes diminished. The Palestinians strove to take matters into their own hands, and the Palestinian nationalist movement grew stronger and more influential. However, one of the most important negative repercussions was that the Arab regimes, and the PLO later, focused on liberating the lands occupied in 1967 (the WB and the GS), i.e., 23% of Palestine's land, with an implicit readiness to cede the land that was occupied in 1948, despite the fact that all these wars and organizations had initially started with the goal of liberating those territories.

Beirut

LEBANON

Damascus

SYRIA

Golan
Heights

Territories conquered
and occupied by Israel
as of 10 June 1967

PASSIA

Haifa

Mediterranean Sea

Tel Aviv
Jaffa

Amman

Jerusalem

Gaza

Kerak

Port Said

El-Arish

Negev
Desert

JORDAN

Ismailya

Ma'an

Suez

Sinai

SAUDI
ARABIA

EGYPT

Sharm
Esh-Sheikh

Red Sea

• Results of the June 1967 War

Endnotes

[1] As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah* (The Palestine Liberation Organization) (Nicosia: Markaz al-Abhath—PLO, 1985), p. 33.

[2] See *Ibid.*, p. 34; and *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 377–379.

[3] See Public Record Office (PRO) (The National Archives), Kew Gardens, London, Files: Foreign Office (FO) 371/111077, 111098–111100.

[4] *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 3, pp. 502–504.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 393–398; and Hussien Abu al-Namel, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–123.

[6] Dispatch, British Embassy, Tel Aviv, to Lloyd, London, 10/3/1956, FO 371/121773.

[7] Hussien Abu al-Namel, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[8] See 'Abdullah Abu 'Azzah, *Ma' al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-Duwal al-'Arabiyyah* (With the Islamic Movement in Arab Countries) (Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1986), pp. 71–96; and Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp. 160–163.

[9] Salah Khalaf, *Filastin bila Hawiyyah* (Palestine Without an Identity), 2nd ed. (Amman: Dar al-Jalil li al-Nashir, 1996), pp. 75–83.

[10] Fawzi Taym, "The Palestinian Political Forces," in Jawad al-Hamad, *al-Madkhal ila al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah*, pp. 357–358.

[11] On the PLO, see As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah*; and *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 313–325.

Chapter Four

The Palestinian Issue 1967–1987

The Palestinian Issue 1967–1987

Introduction

1967–1987 was a period characterized by the emergence of the national Palestinian identity, the leadership of the PLO by Palestinian factions, and the PLO's success in achieving recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, obtaining observer status at the UN.

The period was also characterized by the decline of the Arab dimension of the Palestinian issue, with occupied Palestine's neighbors shutting off their borders to Palestinian resistance activities, as well as the end of the official state of war between some Arab countries and Israel and the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and the latter.

The Palestinian resistance's expulsion from Jordan and its subsequent sinking in the quagmire of the Lebanese civil war, and then its exit from Lebanon in 1982, came with an increased inclination by the Palestinian leadership to pursue political settlements, temporary solutions, and the establishment of the Palestinian state on any liberated part of Palestine.

This period also witnessed the rise of the Palestinian Islamic movement both inside and outside of Palestine, as it became a significant popular force, active in mosques, schools, universities, trade unions, and charity associations. There emerged also during this period the first nuclei of Islamic armed resistance.

First: The Emergence of the Palestinian Identity

The 1967 War left Arab dignity in tatters. The Arab regimes attempted to absorb the shock and restore the people's trust in them, with the Arab leaders meeting in Khartoum between 29/8–1/9/1967, where they proclaimed that there shall be no peace, negotiations, or recognition of Israel. Arab countries pledged to support Palestine's neighboring countries in rebuilding their armed forces. Egypt and Syria entered a war of attrition with Israel (August 1968–August 1970) that contributed greatly to restoring trust and improving the morale of the Egyptian and Syrian armies.

In order to avoid the wave of popular anger and to overcome the feeling of hopelessness resulting from the 1967 War, Arab regimes had to open the way for Palestinian resistance action, which was able to build a strong and broad base in Jordan and Lebanon. Palestinian resistance organizations, led by

• **Yasir 'Arafat at the UN 1974**

Fatah, were able to take leadership of the PLO, which came to be chaired by Yasir 'Arafat in February 1969. Armed popular struggle and guerilla warfare became prominent, and the emergence of national Palestinian identity gained significant momentum. The PLO was able to obtain recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people from the Arab states, at the Arab Summit in Rabat in October 1974. It achieved a political victory the following month when Yasir 'Arafat was called on to give his speech at the UN headquarters in New York, and the PLO was granted observer status thereupon. The UN no longer dealt with the Palestinian issue merely as a refugee issue as it had for the previous 20 years. Indeed, it recognized the existence of the Palestinian people on 10/12/1969 and issued resolutions in the 1970s in support of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and to adopt all legitimate means to obtain their rights, including armed struggle.

In 1974, the Palestinian issue returned as an independent item on the UN agenda for the first time since the 1940s. One of the most important resolutions of the UN was Resolution 3236 issued on 22/11/1975, which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine including (a) the right of self-determination without external interference, (b) the right to national independence and sovereignty, (c) the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and (d) the right of the Palestinian people to regain its rights by all means in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN. Then there was a succession of resolutions of international "legitimacy" supporting Palestinian right, and the Israelis found themselves in a state of political siege, especially when the UN began, in 1975, to issue resolutions that equated Zionism with racism. However, the US was always ready to stand beside Israel and use its veto power against any binding international resolutions.[1]

Thus, armed struggle forced the world to listen to and respect the voice of the Palestinians. However, the blows dealt to the Palestinian resistance and the fragmentation of the Arab and Muslim world decreased the chances of the Palestinians effectively benefiting from international support.

While Palestinian political gains increased in the Arab and international arenas during that period, armed Palestinian action and effective Arab support, which rose at first, went in to decline during the second half of this period with negative repercussions for the political gains themselves.

Second: The Armed Palestinian Struggle

The period between 1967 and 1970 proved to be a golden era for armed Palestinian resistance, for which borders were opened between Palestine and Jordan (360 km) and Lebanon (79 km). The battle of Karamah, which took place on 21/3/1968 between Palestinian resistance fighters and Jordanian forces on one side, and the Israeli forces on another, led to enormous losses on the Israeli side and represented a big moral victory for the Palestinian resistance. Tens of thousands volunteered to fight alongside the resistance, and Palestinian

• **Yasir 'Arafat after the battle of Karamah**

armed action grew from 12 operations per month in 1967 to 52 per month in 1968, then 199 operations per month in 1969, and 279 operations per month in early 1970.[2]

• **King Hussein standing on a destroyed Israeli tank after the battle of Karamah**

However, the violent clashes between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian resistance in September 1970 and July 1971 led to the exit of Palestinian resistance from Jordan and thus deprived it of one of its most important arenas. The Palestinian resistance was able to strengthen its base in Lebanon, but was forced to battle with the Lebanese army to

achieve this, before the Cairo Agreement was concluded in November 1969, which allowed the resistance to conduct armed operations through Lebanon.

• The 'Ain al-Rummaneh bus incident, the spark that ignited the Lebanese Civil War in 1975

The Palestinian resistance soon found itself involved in the quagmire of the Lebanese civil war, as the Kataeb-Maronite alliance, which ignited the war on 13/4/1975, targeted the Palestinian presence. This greatly depleted resources and support base of the resistance and weakened its ability to focus against the Israeli enemy. The resistance also suffered as clashes erupted with previous allies such as the Shiite Amal Movement, which besieged the Palestinian camps for more than two years (1985–1987). Moreover, Egypt and Syria closed their borders in the face of the Palestinian resistance, thus rendering any cross-border Palestinian resistance operations virtually impossible.

Israel retaliated harshly against the areas that harbored the Palestinian resistance, both in Jordan and Lebanon, particularly against innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure, including factories, bridges, power plants, and even agricultural crops. In Lebanon, the Israelis led intense campaigns on al-'Orqoub (1970–1972) and assassinated three PLO leaders on 10/4/1973, Muhammad Yusuf al-Najjar, Kamal 'Adwan, and Kamal Nasser. They also conducted a broad invasion in the South of Lebanon in March 1978, in which they succeeded in creating a buffer zone on Lebanese territory with the help of Sa'ad Haddad, a Lebanese ex-army officer who led the South Lebanon Army, a military faction that collaborated with Israel.

• The assassination site of Kamal Nasser 1973

In the battle of the Beaufort (*al-Shaqif*) on 19/8/1980, the Palestinian resistance achieved an important success against Israel, after it was able to deter an attack by an army that outnumbered it 15 to one. The Israelis thus incurred great losses that led it to withdraw.[3] In the period 10–24/7/1981, Israeli aircraft and artillery batteries intensively bombed 46 towns, villages, and bases belonging to the Palestinian resistance in al-Nabatiyeh region, killing 150 and wounding 600 others. The Palestinian resistance retaliated with a barrage of shells and rockets on around 30 Israeli military bases, settlements, and towns in northern occupied Palestine (Israel).

• **Security Zone in South Lebanon (formed by Sa'ad Haddad – lower right corner)**

• **The Israeli invasion to Lebanon 1982**

The Israeli army's invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 was the most violent attack of its kind on Lebanon. Israel was able to invade South Lebanon with relative ease and speed. However, it stopped at the gates of the capital, where it was fiercely confronted by the Palestinian resistance and its allies, while the Arab, Islamic and international states stood idly by. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon began on 4/6/1982, with about 125 thousand soldiers, supported by 1,600 tanks.

On June 9th, the Israeli invasion forces reached the capital, and the ensuing battle of Beirut lasted 65 days (9/6–12/8/1982). The Israeli forces had to agree to a ceasefire on 12/8/1982, after failing to capture West Beirut.

However, they were able to achieve their objectives in general, as the ceasefire arrangement included the exit of the Palestinian resistance and PLO leadership from Lebanon. This led to the exit of around 11 thousand Palestinian fighters, who went to encampments in Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, Yemen (both South and North), Algeria, and Sudan.

• **Israeli plane bombarding Beirut 1982**

The Israeli forces did not adhere to their commitments and invaded West Beirut two weeks after the exit of the Palestinian resistance and supervised the massacre perpetrated by the Christian extremist forces in Sabra and Shatila on 16–18/9/1982, in which 3,500 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians were slaughtered, including children, women, and senior citizens.

• **Departure of PLO fighters from Lebanon**

The 1982 war resulted in 55 thousand Palestinians and Lebanese deaths and injuries, and despite the courage and ability of Palestinian fighters and the failure of the Israelis in crushing the resistance and their leadership, they succeeded in destroying most of the infrastructure of the Palestinian resistance, which no longer posed a serious threat to Israel. The PLO thus found itself far from Palestine and deprived of the ability to carry out military operations from Palestine's neighboring countries.[4]

• **Sabra and Shatila Massacre 1982**

• The attackers of Savoy Hotel 1975

As a result of these events, the number of external Palestinian resistance operations greatly decreased in the 1970s and 1980s, to very modest levels. Nonetheless, there was a significant number of noteworthy operations, such as the Savoy Hotel Attack on 6/3/1975, which was executed by Fatah in Tel Aviv and which led to the killing of 100 Israelis; the Kamal 'Adwan operation also executed by Fatah on 11/3/1978, which led to the killing of 37 and the injuring of 82 Israelis.

• The PFLP hijacking and destruction of airliners 1970

The PFLP carried out a number of prominent hijackings of airliners, especially in 1970, as well as the attack against Lod (Lydda) airport on 30/5/1972, which claimed the lives of 31 people with 80 others wounded. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command (PFLP–GC) carried out al-Khalisa Operation on 11/4/1974, which led to the killing of 18 Israelis and injured 15 others,[5] as well as the Hang Glider Operation in November 1987. Moreover, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) executed important operations such as the Tarshiha Operation on 15/5/1974, which led to the killing of 27 Israelis and the injury of many, in addition to various operations in Bisan, Tabaria, 'Ain Zaif, and Jerusalem.

• Members of al-Khalisa Operation 1974

Hence, since 1982, the military fatigue of the PLO led to political weakness, and the supporters of "realpolitik" rallied more people towards adopting peaceful solutions. In fact, the PLO began to change its political discourse as early as the late 1960s, calling for the establishment of a democratic secular state for both Palestinians and Jews, and abandoned the condition of the return of Jewish emigrants to their countries. It then adopted, in its 12th Palestinian National Council (PNC) (1–8/6/1974), the ten–point program, which included political action as a means for liberating Palestine, replacing armed struggle as the sole route for such liberation, as well as transitional solutions and the establishment of the "independent combatant national authority for the people, over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated" (or retrieved by other means). The PLO's approval of the Fez Arab Project for Peace in 1982 represented a huge compromise, as it included an implicit recognition of Israel and its violation of most of Palestine's land in 1948, when it called for "guarantees of peace between all States of the region, including the independent Palestinian State" (including Israel), and agreed to enter into negotiations.[6] The PLO went through bleak years in 1983–1987, which were reflected in a decrease in armed struggle, and declining political influence and effectiveness, even within Arab circles.

Third: Arab States and the Palestinian Issue

For the Arab states, upholding Palestinian national identity and the PLO's sole legitimate representation of the Palestinians practically removed the burden of responsibility from their shoulders, leaving it to the Palestinians alone. Calls for the "pan-Arab nature of the battle" died down, and the struggle became restricted within a narrow Palestinian framework. The Palestinians were left alone to confront some of the most powerful entities in the world. With time, especially after 1973, the responsibility of the Arab countries became confined to political and economic support, and even economic support became weaker in the 1980s, after each state focused on its local priorities, and oil-producing countries became preoccupied with their problems resulting from the fall of oil prices. The PLO also had problems with a number of Arab regimes that prevented it from carrying out its mission. Indeed, its problems with Jordan, the broadest and most important arena had spanned most of the 1970s, and with similar problems with Lebanon persisted throughout the subsequent period. The PLO's problems with Syria inflamed in 1976, and then escalated again from 1983 onwards, when

Yasir 'Arafat was expelled from Damascus and an attempt was made to end the presence of his supporters in North Lebanon, especially in the Nahr al-Bared and Baddawi refugee camps that same year. This was in addition to the enmity with the greatest Arab power, namely Egypt (especially in 1977–1983) after it accepted the principle of a peaceful settlement and signed the Camp David Accords with Israel. Meanwhile, Iraq was occupied with its war against Iran in 1980–1988 and was thus unable to exert any serious influence on the development of the Palestinian issue.

• **Egyptian forces crossing the Suez Canal in the October War of 1973**

• **The hoisting of the Egyptian Flag in the October War of 1973**

The Arab stance at the beginning of that phase was stringent, through the Khartoum conference in 1967 and the participation of Egypt and Syria in a war of attrition with Israel. **On 6/10/1973, the Arab-Israeli war (October/ Ramadan War) began**, in which Syria and Egypt took part against the Israelis and achieved some early successes.

The Egyptians were able to advance towards the eastern part of the Suez Canal and penetrate into Sinai, while the Syrians were able to penetrate the Golan Heights. However, the Israelis soon benefited from a US airlift and took control, breaking through the western part of the Suez Canal (Deversoir Gap) and

• **Ariel Sharon heading to Deversoir Gap in the October War of 1973**

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• Results of the October War of 1973

retrieving what they had lost in the Golan Heights, as well as occupying 39 new Syrian villages (in what was known as the Sa'sa' pocket). Nonetheless, Egypt's approval of the UN Security Council resolution to stop the war on October 22 surprised the Syrians and forced them too to stop the war. After this, the war of attrition resumed, lasting around 80 days (13/3–31/5/1974), halting with the signature of the Separation of Forces Agreement.[7]

Egypt signed an Agreement for the Disengagement of Forces with Israel on 18/1/1974 stipulating the pullout of the Israeli forces from the west of the Suez Canal to a position 20 to 30 km away from the eastern side of the Canal, and the maintenance in Egypt of limited forces in the lands it retrieved east of the Canal (8–12 km deep).[8] On 21/2/1974, Israeli forces pulled out from west of the Suez Canal (Deversoir Gap). The Separation of Forces Agreement was signed between Syria and Israel on 31/5/1974, upon which Israeli forces withdrew from the Sa'sa' pocket (551 km²), which it had occupied during the 1973 war, and from Qunaitra and its surroundings, which it had occupied in 1967 (112 km²).[9]

The relative improvement in the Arab performance and the heavy losses incurred by Israel in the October War broke the myth of Israel's invincible army and brought back the morale and trust that were broken in the 1967 War. The October War was portrayed as a victory for Arab countries, and the Syrian and Egyptian leaderships were considered heroes. However, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat used this war to move towards a peace settlement, and benefited

from it to ward off accusations of failure or reluctance vis-à-vis Israel, as he was now the "October [War] hero" and Egypt had "fulfilled its obligations" towards Palestine. Sadat visited Israel in November 1977 and signed the Camp David Accords in September 1978, thus putting an end to the conflict between the two parties and regaining the Sinai Peninsula. The Palestinian issue thus lost the most active and important party in the conflict against the Israelis, and the prospect of any future large-scale military confrontation with Israel was lessened.

• Sadat's visit to Israel 1977

• Camp David Accords Signing Ceremony 1978

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that following the burning of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was established in 1969 (now known as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), and was the source of hope for uniting the efforts of Muslims to support the Palestinian issue. The OIC held numerous meetings and issued tens of resolutions in support of the Palestinian issue politically, financially and militarily. However, its resolutions remained mere ink on paper because they lacked any real and binding implementation mechanisms. Ostensibly, many Islamic states used the OIC as a platform to "vent out" the feelings of their peoples that craved unity and the liberation of the holy sites, instead of adopting any practical and effective programs. What was more, some Islamic states, such as Turkey, maintained relations with Israel, and all the Islamic states held the Palestinian side responsible, as the PLO was "the legitimate and sole representative" and most of them contented themselves with expressing their wish to see Palestine liberated. Some even erected obstacles in order to maintain the status quo. This led to the confinement of the conflict within Palestine and the practical removal of its Arab and Islamic dimensions. The conflicts among the Muslims themselves also negatively affected the role of the Islamic world, such as the Iraqi-Iranian war in 1980–1988, which exhausted the two countries' energy and resources.

Fourth: The Emergence of the Palestinian Islamist Trend

It is noteworthy that the Islamic trend among the Palestinians was revived during that period, and more people moved towards Islam, after they witnessed, what they believed, the failure of nationalist, secular, and leftist ideologies in resolving the Palestinian issue. The participation of the MB Movement in the Palestinian resistance operations in 1968–1970 through what was known as the "Sheikhs' Camps" in Jordan in coordination with Fatah, was one of the early indications of this revival, as they acted under the cover of Fatah, while maintaining internal administrative autonomy. Close to 300 men were trained and distributed among seven resistance bases. Despite their limited resources and participation, MB members offered outstanding examples in strong operations such as the Green Belt Operation on 31/8/1969 and Deir Yasin on 14/9/1969, where 13 of them were killed.[10]

In 1980, the secret organization *Usrat al-Jihad* (lit. The Family of Jihad) was uncovered in the land that was occupied in 1948 "Israel," and around 60 of its members were arrested after conducting several operations.

• **Sheikh Ahmad Yasin**

The first indications of the establishment of the MB's military wing appeared when its leadership sent some members abroad for training in 1980. Sheikh Ahmad Yasin established the military wing in GS, and it was first led by 'Abdul Rahman Tamraz then by Salah Shehadeh. However, the uncovering of the military wing dealt it a blow in 1984 and led to the arrest of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and some of his companions. The military wing was restored and rebuilt in 1986 under the name "the Palestinian Mujahidin," and became active before the 1987 *Intifadah*. The

MB's security apparatus was established in GS in 1981 as part of the military action, and it was restructured and expanded in 1985. In the summer of 1985, the MB command took the decision of exploiting any incident to take part in the confrontation against the occupation.

The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ) was formed in 1980, and was headed by Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi. Its founding members were former members of the MB Movement, and it conducted several resistance operations. The Jihad Brigades (that merged with PIJ) conducted the Mughrabi Gate Operation on 16/10/1986, which killed and injured around 80 Israeli soldiers.

• **Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi**

Generally speaking, PIJ operations remained limited and modest during that period, compared with other Palestinian organizations, especially Fatah, but nonetheless represented a prelude to a future phase in which it would play a more central role. The Islamic movement's main achievement was its broad popularity and growth, especially since the mid-1970s, both within Palestine and in Jordan, Kuwait, and Lebanon. Islamists began to win in student elections by the end of the 1970s, such as in An-Najah National University in Nablus and the Islamic University–Gaza, as well as in Jordanian universities. They also dominated in trade unions. The Palestinian Islamic movement was strongly present in Kuwait University, where Khalid Mish'al and some of his companions founded the Islamic Justice list in 1977 for the elections of General Union of Palestinian Students. After his graduation, his colleagues established the Islamic Association for Palestinian Students in 1980. The Palestinian Islamists succeeded in charity, social, and educational work, which enabled them to have a strong and broad base of supporters. Indeed, the Islamic movement (and more specifically the MB Movement) became the principal rival of the secular current represented by Fatah, which controlled the PLO.[11]

Endnotes

[1] On the Palestinian issue in the UN, see *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 360–362 and 552–563, and vol. 2, p. 260.

[2] Salah Khalaf, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–98.

[3] *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 638–641.

[4] According to Israeli sources, the PLO losses until mid-July 1982 were one thousand killed and six thousand prisoners, and Syria's losses were 370 killed, one thousand injured and 250 prisoners. Syria also lost 350–400 tanks, 86 fighter aircrafts, five helicopters and 19 rocket launch pads. Israel lost 35–40 tanks, one fighter aircraft, two helicopters, 300 killed and 1,600 were injured.

See Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War & Peace in the Middle East* (New York & London: Random House, 1982), p. 353.

[5] On these operations, see *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 313–314 and 567, vol. 3, pp. 661–662, and vol. 4, p. 42.

[6] On the settlement projects, see Munir al-Hur and Tariq al-'Isa, *Mashari' al-Taswiyah li al-Qadiyyah al-Filastiniyyah 1947–1985* (Settlement Projects for the Palestinian Issue 1947–1985), 2nd ed. (Amman: Dar al-Jalil li al-Nashir, 1986). See also Political Programme of 9 June 1974, 12th Palestine National Council, UNISPAL, 9/6/1974, http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/BA7A9909F792340F8525704D006BDAF1; and General Assembly, thirty-seventh session, A/37/696, Security Council, thirty-seventh year, S/15510, Agenda items 31, 34, 58 and 134, UNISPAL, 15/12/1982, http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/A65756251B75F6AD852562810074E5F4

[7] On the war at the Syrian front, see Chaim Herzog, *op. cit.*, pp. 285–307; Haytham al-Kilani, *al-Istratijiyyat al-'Askariyyah li al-Hurub al-'Arabiyyah* (Military Strategies of Arab-Israeli Wars) (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1991), pp. 368–372; *al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 188–191; and Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nawawi, *Ru'yah Islamiyyah fi al-Sira' al-'Arabi al-Israeli* (Islamic Viewpoint of the Arab-Israeli Conflict) (n.p.: n.p., 1983), vol. 1, p. 452.

[8] See Text of Egyptian-Israeli Agreement for the Disengagement of Forces, 18/1/1974, site of Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development, http://sadat.umd.edu/archives/Egyptian_Israel%20Negotiations/AADMDisengagement%20Agreement%201.18.74.pdf

[9] See Separation of Forces between Israel and Syria, 31/5/1974, site of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Peace+Process/Guide+to+the+Peace+Process/Israel-Syria+Separation+of+Forces+Agreement+-+1974.htm; and Haytham al-Kilani, *op. cit.*, pp. 448–452.

[10] See Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp. 196–198.

[11] On the Islamic trend during that period, see *Ibid.*, pp. 164–170.

Chapter Five

The Palestinian Issue 1987–2000

The Palestinian Issue 1987–2000

Introduction

During this period, the Palestinian people's capacity for making sacrifices and giving was heightened, but politically, the situation was disappointing. The "*Blessed Intifadah*" reflected the courage of an oppressed people, whose women and children faced the Israeli tanks with stones, and who aspired to freedom. However, there was despair caused by the Oslo Accords and the practices of the Palestinian Authority (PA) against its people and fighters. That period was thus characterized by the following:

- The *Intifadah* (1987–1993) and the emergence of the Islamic Jihadist movements.

- The Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israel in 1993, including the compromises it imposed on Palestinian rights.

- Weakness, fragmentation, and inter-Arab conflict following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and the ensuing war, suffering, and aggression.

- The peace settlement agreement signed by Jordan and Israel.

- The collapse and fragmentation of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe, resulting in massive Jewish emigration to Israel, and US global hegemony.

First: The Intifadah

The *Intifadah* was ignited on 9/12/1987, following the intentional killing of four Palestinian workers on the previous day. The Islamic movement decided that night to take part in the *Intifadah* and direct it, and began to organize massive demonstrations after the dawn prayer on December 9 from the mosque of the Jabalia refugee camp. Hatim Abu Sisi was killed, and then Ra'ed Shehadeh in another demonstration next to al-Shifa Hospital. Then, many others were killed, and the demonstrations expanded to encompass the WB and the GS. The *Intifadah* was characterized by the following:

First: The inhabitants of the occupied "heartland" (WB and GS) took the initiative of resistance, after it had previously been in the hands of Palestinians living abroad.

Second: The Islamic movement strongly and effectively took part in the *Intifadah* and emerged on the confrontation scene in an impressive manner.

Third: The *Intifadah* included Palestinians from all sectors, political persuasions and ages.

Fourth: The *Intifadah* was characterized by courage and sacrifice, and the broad participation of children, adolescents, and women, as well as noble behavior and the denunciation of treason and corruption.

The first stage of the *Intifadah* witnessed large-scale popular confrontations and turmoil, demonstrations, the boycott of the Israeli civil administration, and the cleansing of society from spies working for Israel, corruption, and drugs. Around four years later, the second stage witnessed the growth of armed operations against the Israelis, as well as the decline of large-scale popular actions.

• Scenes of the 1987 *Intifadah*

The Fatah Movement and its allies in the PLO considered the Oslo Accords (September 1993) to be the end of the *Intifadah* and ceased their actions. As for the other sides, especially Hamas and the PIJ, they pursued their actions and even escalated their resistance operations. However, the PA's formation in the WB and GS (May 1994) took away a lot of the *Intifadah*'s mass appeal and daily popular participation, and the uprising thus became confined to the members of movements and organizations.

According to PLO statistics, the *Intifadah's* six years (December 1987–December 1993) resulted in the death of 1,540 Palestinians, the injury of 130 thousand others, and the arrest of 116 thousand persons for varying periods of time.[1]

Second: The Inception of the Hamas Movement

The birth of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas coincided with the beginning of the *Intifadah*. It issued its first communiqué on 14/12/1987, and was considered one of the most active group during the *Intifadah*. Hamas defined itself as a wing and extension of the MB Movement and stated in its charter that "The Movement's programme is Islam. From it, it draws its ideas, ways of thinking and understanding of the universe, life and man. It resorts to it for judgement in all its conduct, and it is inspired by it for guidance of its steps." Its objective is the liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an Islamic state on its land, and it calls for the comprehensive education of future generations in order to achieve its desired goals.[2]

Hamas was able to become widely popular, as its supporters represented (and still represent) between one third and half of the votes in student and professional syndicate elections, such as in An-Najah National University, Islamic University–Gaza, Hebron University, Birzeit University, and al-Quds University, and the orders and syndicates of engineers, doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, and teachers, in addition to the chambers of commerce. Dr. Hisham Sharabi, who is renowned for his secular tendencies, said in an interview (published in *al-Hayat* newspaper, 5/3/1995) that Hamas is the new form of resistance, and that it has succeeded today in what the PLO and its factions have failed to do for more than 25 years, in coming up with new forms for organizing the Palestinian people and enabling them to conduct an effective military struggle away from any external aid.[3]

Hamas considers that, in light of the Zionist and Israeli rise, western support to Israel, Palestinian political weakness, and Arab and Islamic fragmentation, its actions do not aim for the direct and rapid liberation of Palestine, but it rather deals with it as a battle that spans across several generations. It thus strives to be active while maintaining the "fire of justice and struggle" over the long-term. Hamas was able to face many challenges by the virtue of its dynamism, leadership and discipline. Former Military Intelligence Chief General Uri Sagi (in an interview with *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper, on 5/4/1993) described Hamas as having advanced work methods and a high level of secrecy, enabling it to execute strong and prominent operations. Hamas has enjoyed vitality and endurance that enabled it to change many leaders in a short period of time. Indeed, every time its leaders were uncovered, killed, or imprisoned, there was always someone to replace them and pursue their work.

The Hamas military wing, *al-Mujahidun al-Filastiniyyun* (Palestinian Fighters), was led during the *Intifadah* by Sheikh Salah Shehadeh. It was

• **Ilan Saʿadon and Avi Sasportas**

able to kidnap and kill Israeli Sergeant Avi Sasportas on 3/2/1989 and soldier Ilan Saʿadon on 3/5/1989, but was soon thereafter dealt a blow in May 1989 during a fierce campaign launched by the Israeli forces. In May 1990 Hamas formed its current military wing, the Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades, which replaced *al-Mujahidun al-Filastiniyyun*.

On 13/12/1992, Hamas kidnapped Sergeant Nissim Toledano and demanded in exchange for his release the release of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin. When Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin refused to respond, the movement liquidated the soldier, thus leading Rabin to declare in the Knesset a full-fledged war against

Hamas. Hence, 1,300 Hamas supporters were arrested, and the Israeli authorities conducted their greatest displacement and expulsion operation since the 1967 war, by expelling 415 persons, of which the majority (around 380 persons) were civilian Islamic leaders affiliated with Hamas.

• **Deportees of Marj al-Zuhur**

However, their rejection of expulsion by Israel and their steadfastness in Marj al-Zuhur, on the border with Lebanon, won them international media attention, broadened international interest in Hamas, and increased its popularity. This forced the Israeli authorities to approve the gradual return of the deported, which was completed one year after deportation.[4]

• **ʿAziz al-Duweik and ʿAbdul ʿAziz al-Rantissi in Marj al-Zuhur**

According to a study prepared by Ghassan Duuʿar, in 1993 Hamas executed a total of 138 resistance operations, and according to Israeli reports 79 Israelis were killed and 220 injured.[5]

The PLO entered into a peace settlement with Israel and became autonomous in the residential areas of the WB and GS from 1994, thus rendering any resistance action virtually impossible. However, during 1994–1998, there was qualitative development in the resistance operations, especially those of self-immolation.[*]

• Cave of the Patriarchs Massacre (executed by Baruch Kopel Goldstein – upper left)

For instance, Hamas retaliated against the 25/2/1994 Cave of the Patriarchs Massacre with five resistance operations that killed 39 Israelis and injured 158. There was also its retaliation against the 5/1/1996 killing of Yahya 'Ayyash (who engineered several resistance operations that killed 70 Israelis and injured 340), with several resistance operations during 25/2–3/3/1996, which according to Israeli sources killed 45 Israelis and injured 113. These operations shook Israel and led to the organization of an international conference with the participation of major countries for what they dubbed "fighting terrorism."

• Engineer Yahya 'Ayyash

The Israelis and the PA considered that their peaceful project had become jeopardized, or "in the eye of the storm" in the words of PA leader Sa'ib 'Uraiqat. Israel and the PA, in direct cooperation with the US and with the use of a range of security techniques, launched a vehement campaign to uproot anything

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[*] Self-immolation: The overwhelming majority of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims consider these operations to be "martyrdom operations" while most Israelis and western writers and media consider them "suicide operations." We used the word "self-immolation" in this report to be as neutral as possible. However, such terms may need more discussions.

• **Muhyiddin al-Sharif, 'Imad and 'Adel 'Awadallah**

that is linked to Islamic resistance movements in Palestine. Hamas and the PIJ went through a tough period and were dealt severe blows. The PA was able to dismantle most of the resistance cells. Only very limited resistance operations were executed until 2000, and several symbols of resistant military action were taken out, such as Muhyiddin al-Sharif, 'Imad 'Awadallah, and 'Adel 'Awadallah.

• **Musa Abu Marzuq**

Hamas also suffered from external pressure and hostility, such as the arrest of Musa Abu Marzuq in the US (July 1995–May 1997), the assassination attempt on Khalid Mish'al on 25/9/1997, the closing of the movement's offices in Jordan in August 1999, and the deportation of four of its leaders from Jordan (after their detention for more than two and a half months) to Qatar in November 1999.

Despite Israeli-PA-international coordination to uproot this movement, its supporters still won student and syndicate elections, and Hamas still enjoyed strong popularity both domestically and abroad.[6]

As for the PIJ Movement, it conducted several self-immolation operations such as Netzarim in November 1994, Beit Lid in January 1995, and Tel Aviv in March 1996. They were exposed to

• **Khalid Mish'al assassination attempt**

as much pressure and pursuit as Hamas, and their leader Fathi al-Shaqaqi was killed by the Mossad on 26/10/1995. It is to be noted that PIJ obtains around 3–5% of the votes in student elections.

Third: The PLO: From Armed Struggle to Peaceful Settlement

The PLO suffered from political weakness after the successive attempts to undermine it militarily, and was greatly marginalized in the October 1987 Arab summit in Amman. It considered the *Intifadah* a political boost, and tried to exploit it early on. The PLO formed the Unified National Command of the *Intifadah* one month after the *Intifadah* began, in which it actively took part alongside the Palestinian factions, especially Fatah. On 16/4/1988, Israel retaliated by assassinating Abu Jihad (the second-in-command in the PLO and Fatah) in Tunisia, as part of its fierce campaign to quash the *Intifadah*. When Jordan severed its administrative and legal links with the WB on 31/7/1988, the PLO reaffirmed its sole representation of the WB inhabitants and launched what it dubbed "the Palestinian peace attack."

During the PLO's 19th Palestinian National Council (12–15/11/1988), a Palestinian program was established based on the recognition of the UNGA Resolution 181 of 1947, which partitioned Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish. The PLO recognized for the

• **19th Palestinian National Council–Algiers 1988**

first time UN Security Council Resolution 242 that was issued in November 1967, and called for a political settlement through an international conference. In order to help the Palestinians swallow all these bitter pills, the conference announced "the establishment of the State of Palestine."[7] This announcement was internationally acclaimed, and more than 100 countries recognized the state within a few months. Although the US and the western European countries did not recognize it, and it remained more of a hope than a reality, the announcement highlighted again the Palestinian issue on the international arena and restored the PLO's political presence, after it had accepted dwarfing its demands and reduced its attempts to struggle against occupation.

Changes took place both on the Arab and the international levels at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, which greatly weakened the Palestinian and Arab stance. Indeed, further weakness and disintegration took place in the Arab arena, particularly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2/8/1990. The invasion generated hostility among Arab countries, the depletion of Arab resources, the destruction of Iraqi military infrastructure, the displacement and emigration of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from Kuwait during and after the Iraqi invasion, and a withdrawal of support for the PLO. Generally speaking, the Iraqi invasion and Gulf War and its consequences had drastic effects on the Palestinian issue.

Internationally, this period also witnessed the collapse and dismantlement of the Soviet Union and the socialist Eastern bloc. Their competition and hostility with the US and its allies changed to agreement, when they adopted Western capitalism and democracy and sought economic aid. This contributed to the destabilization of the international political balance, which was the basis of Palestinian and Arab maneuvering.

• Bill Clinton

• Alan Greenspan

• Robert Rubin

• Dan Glickman

• William Cohen

Thus, the US prevailed as the sole major power in the world, especially after the Gulf War in 1991. What made matters worse to Palestinians was the increase of the Jewish Zionist influence in the US administration. For instance, President Bill Clinton's Administration appointed several officials in crucial positions; Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve (Central Bank) Alan Greenspan.

The US sought to impose its hegemony, and vision of a new world order, including pushing to close the Palestinian file in order to serve Israel, its strategic ally. While the Palestinians paid a hefty price for the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist states, these countries restored their diplomatic ties with Israel, and opened up the doors of Jewish immigration to Palestine, especially from the Soviet Union. Indeed, on 7/5/2000 Israel celebrated the arrival of the millionth immigrant from the Soviet Union since September

• **Jewish immigrants**

1989, welcomed by the prime minister himself.[8] This wave of immigrants included around 92 thousand scientists,[9] among whom were several thousand specialized in the nuclear industry, not to mention the advanced military competences, which increased the danger of Israel and its nuclear project in the region.

• **Haidar 'Abdul Shafi**

It is amid such advantageous circumstances for the US and Israel that the US succeeded in dragging the Arab states to the Arab-Israeli Peace Conference in Madrid in October 1991, which was followed by direct Arab-Israeli negotiations. Around two years of negotiations between the two did not break Israeli intransigence. The announcement of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (Oslo Accords) between both sides came as a surprise, as it was disclosed that secret negotiations had been taking place between the two sides since 20/1/1993, unbeknown to the official negotiating Palestinian delegation (headed by Haidar 'Abdul Shafi) and most of the PLO officials.

• **Signing Oslo Accords 1993**

The Accords were initially signed in Oslo, Norway, on 19/8/1993, before being signed officially on 13/9/1993 in Washington. It was sponsored by US President Bill Clinton, and took place in the presence of Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The Accords were signed by Mahmud 'Abbas for the Palestinian

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side and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for the Israeli side, in addition to the US and Russian foreign ministers acting as witnesses.

The multi-phased Oslo Accords,[10] which constituted the basis for the PA, stipulated self-governance in the GS and Jericho first, then in broader Palestinian areas (especially inhabited ones) in later stages. It stated that authority will be transferred to the Palestinians in the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism. Negotiations were supposed to take place on sensitive issues and the final status two years after self-governance. However, the Israelis kept stalling and delaying, while granting the powers to the Palestinians encountered many complications that usually revolved around demanding the PA to succeed in the Israeli "test" of striking a blow to Hamas and the resistance movements, and to offer even more concessions.

• Palestinian Autonomous Areas - Jericho 1994

Source: Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP), *Haaretz*, 9/5/1994.

Many detailed agreements then followed, such as the Cairo Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area on 4/5/1994, the Oslo II Accords (Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) also known as Taba Agreement on 28/9/1995, the Wye River Plantation Memorandum on 23/10/1998, and the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum on 4/9/1999. The self-governance regions were divided into A and B. Until 2000, the PA only controlled 18% of the WB under Article A pertaining to its security and administrative control, and around 22% of the WB under Article B pertaining to its administrative control, while the security control was administered jointly with the Israelis.

The Palestinian people were divided in their stance towards Oslo Accords and the peace process. Fatah Movement was the backbone of the support to the agreement, aided by some small Palestinian factions like the Palestinian Democratic Union (Fida). They saw in this agreement the best practical way to regain WB and GS

• **Palestinian Autonomous Areas - Gaza Strip 1994**

and to establish the Palestinian independent state. On the other side, there was a very strong opposition to the peace agreement among Islamic, Leftist and national factions. Hamas, PIJ, PFLP, DFLP, beside six other factions formed the

"Alliance of the Ten Factions" which rejected Oslo Accords. Furthermore, several Fatah leading members opposed Oslo Accords, including Faruq al-Qaddumi, Khalid al-Hasan, Muhammad Jihad, Muhammad Ghunaim, etc.

Generally speaking, the main comments and observations on the Oslo Accords can be summarized as follows:

1. As seen by many Muslims, the Palestinian issue is the issue of all Muslims and not just the Palestinians. Indeed, it is a cross-generational battle, and no generation is entitled to yield or make concessions that would degrade the following generations. Many Muslim scholars agreed that this peace settlement is not valid and called for *jihad* to liberate the holy land.

2. The PLO leadership signed this agreement and other agreements followed alone, without consulting the Palestinian people, many of whom objected to these settlements.

3. The PLO command recognized "the right of Israel to exist" and the legitimacy of its occupation of 77% of Palestine in 1948, over which no negotiations will ever take place.

4. The most crucial issues were not tackled and were postponed to the final negotiations stage. Because the PLO committed to never resort to force, the issue became linked to the "generosity" of the Israelis, who held all the cards, and these issues are:

   a. The future of Jerusalem.
   b. The future of Palestinian refugees.
   c. The future of Israeli settlements in the WB and the GS.
   d. The surface area of the promised Palestinian state, and its sovereignty on its land.

5. The PA's responsibility did not include external security and borders, and no one may enter the PA territory without an Israeli permit. The PA may not form an army, and weapons may only enter upon Israel's permission.

6. Israel has the power of veto over any legislation issued by the PA, during the transitory phase.

7. The agreements do not include any indication to the right of Palestinians to self-determination, or to the establishment of their independent state, nor is there any indication that the WB and the GS are occupied territories, thus reinforcing the impression that they are disputed lands.

• **Palestinian Autonomous Areas (Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum 1999)**

The West Bank
After the First Israeli Redeployment
According to the Sharm al-Sheikh Memorandum – September 1999

Source: Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP)

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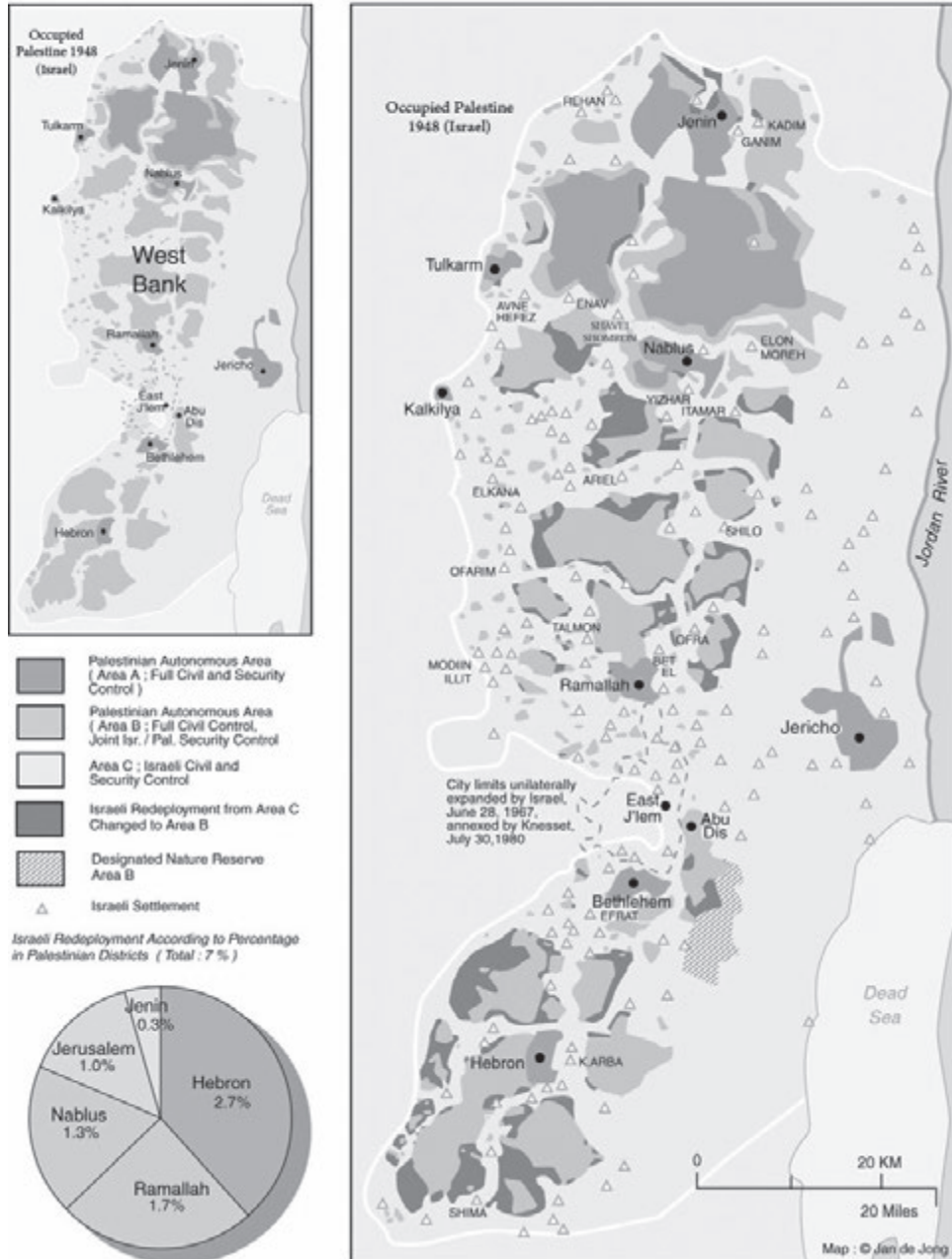
8. While the PLO (the PA) pledged both not to use armed struggle against Israel and to resolve its problems through peaceful means, it was also forced—in light of its peaceful commitments—to quash any armed resistance against Israel, and fight the Palestinians who resorted to it. It practically found itself something of a tool for the protection of "Israeli security" in its regions and launched wide and fierce campaigns of arrest as proof of its "good intentions" and in order to maintain peace with Israel.

In a nutshell, the situation was as described by the renowned Palestinian writer Edward Said, who said that 'Arafat involved his people in an inescapable trap;[11] while Palestinian thinker Hisham Sharabi said that the Palestinian command was left unaware of how decisions are made and how fates are decided.[12]

Fourth: The PA

The Palestinian police first entered the GS on 18/5/1994, and the self-governance members took their oath before Yasir 'Arafat in Jericho on 5/7/1994. Many fears related to the peace settlement and potential performance of the PA materialized. Since the self-governance agreements were temporary and since the transfer of the land to the authority took place at an extremely slow pace, and also since achieving any progress had become linked to Israel's approval, the PA found itself "at the mercy" of the other side and was forced to bow to its pressure in order to obtain any rights, no matter how minor. The Israelis sought to stall and delay in order to achieve new concessions, and linked any progress in the peace settlement with the PA's quashing of the armed opposition. Israel succeeded in portraying Hamas, the PIJ, and the Palestinian opposition as an obstacle that the PA must quash, until it achieves what it considers to be Palestinian nationalist objectives.

Indeed, the Israeli stalling continued for years after the Oslo Accords, and the crucial issues, due to be settled in 1998 under the Accords, remained unresolved. The effective PA centers of control became in the inhabited regions, in which the Israelis had long wanted to delegate all the "dirty work" such as security tracking, taxes, municipal work to Palestinians, so that their colonization could seem legitimate.

The security aspect of the PA was heightened, with around 40 thousand members of the Palestinian police, constituting the highest police offer to

population ratio in the world. The PA formed eight different security forces, dealt mercilessly with Palestinian opposition and coordinated directly and openly with the Israeli and US security forces. The budgets for security and 'Arafat's office increased until they reached around 70% of the total PA budget in 2000.[13]

The emphasis on security for Israel was at the expense of the economy, educational institutions, political freedoms, and social institutions. In April 2000, prominent Palestinian figures and human rights organizations described the Oslo Accords as an economic and political catastrophe for Palestinians, and called on 'Arafat to resign in a document published in Washington. This document stated that Palestinian income had decreased by 30% and that the unemployment rate had tripled in the WB and the GS since 1993.[14]

The PA suffered from rapidly spreading administrative corruption and nepotism. One of the major Fatah leaders, Muhammad Jihad, did not hesitate to say that 'Arafat had surrounded himself with a cabal of thieves and racketeers.[15] Another figure said that revelry was taking place on a daily basis in the streets and there was much talk about depravity, bribes, and nepotism.[16] In May 1997 a report was published by the Legislative Oversight Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) affiliated with the PA. It stated that financial corruption in the PA's bodies and theft had reached $326 million,[**] an enormous proportion of the PA's budget; around $1.5 billion. Thus, the PLC passed a no-confidence motion against 'Arafat's government (56 votes to one). In November 1999, twenty prominent Palestinian thinkers and figures under PA rule signed a document, "The Twenty," which accused the PA of corruption, nepotism, paralysis, restricting freedom, etc. Then, Hisham Sharabi described the PA's formation as non-representative of the Palestinian people: It is unable to change the condition of the Palestinians, and it itself is one of the reasons why the tragic situation has gotten worse.[17]

As for the opposition, it suffered from the PA's security restrictions and the constant campaigns to uproot it. The PA launched 12 arrest campaigns during its first year. In GS, with its area of 363 km^2, established 24 arrest and detention centers. In one month for instance (19/4–9/5/1995), the PA raided 57 mosques 138 times, in the context of its oppression of the Islamist movement.[18] Security campaigns took place after each resistance operation, the harshest taking place

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[**] The symbol $ used throughout this book is the US dollar.

in March 1996 following the self-immolation operations executed by Hamas in retaliation for the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash. The dialogue attempts between the PA and Hamas failed, and the PA arrested and tortured more than once its interlocutors, such as Hassan Yusuf, Jamal Salim, and others. The Israeli-Palestinian-American security coordination succeeded in thwarting several resistance operations and arresting several freedom fighters. In January 1997, human rights organizations announced that there were at least 1,600 Palestinian detainees in the PA prisons, 700 of them without any charge or trial.[19]

Fifth: Israel

Throughout its 52 years of existence (1948–2000), Israel was able to bring in around two million and 900 thousand Jewish immigrants. The number of Jews in occupied Palestine thus increased from 650 thousand in 1948 to four million and 947 thousand by the end of 2000, i.e., around 38% of the Jews in the world.[20] Israel was able to overcome its international isolation. Indeed, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Communist regimes, Russia and Eastern European countries rushed to open their embassies and strengthen their political and economic relations with Israel. In light of Arab and Islamic weakness following the Kuwait invasion and the Gulf War (1990–1991) and the signing of the Oslo Accords, Jordan signed a peace agreement with Israel, and was followed by several Arab states that opened and exchanged commercial representation, offices and interests (including Qatar, Oman, Tunisia). More than 50 other states in the world entered into diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.

With the regression of the Arab liberation project, and the PA in GS and WB taking on the task of repressing armed resistance against Israel, the latter enjoyed relative stability that enabled it to enjoy economic growth. Indeed, its GDP increased from $15 billion and 300 million in 1983 to $105 billion and 400 million in 2000, a seven-fold increase (689%). It was no longer at the mercy of US aid and external donations that represented 25% of its GDP in 1983. This dwindled to 3%, even though the amount of aid remained the same (around $4 billion annually). The average annual per capita income in Israel increased to $18,300 in 2000, one of the highest in the world.

Endnotes

[1] *Sawt al-Sha'b* newspaper, Amman, 8/12/1993.

[2] The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, 18/8/1988, the Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp

[3] *Al-Hayat* newspaper, London, 5/3/1995.

[4] See the issues of *Filastin al-Muslimah*, London, which covered the deportees and their news in detail throughout 1993.

[5] See Ghassan Duu'ar, *Maw'id ma' al-Shabak: Dirasah fi al-Nashat al-'Askari li Harakat Hamas wa Kata'ib 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Khilal 'Am 1993* (A Meeting with the Shabak: A Study of the Military Activity of Hamas and Sheikh Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades During 1993) (London: Filastin al-Muslimah, 1995).

[6] On Hamas, see Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp.183–205; and Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000).

[7] Palestinian National Council Declaration of Independence, 14/11/1988, site of Arab Thought Forum (*al-Multaqa*), http://www.multaqa.org/pdfs/PNC%20INDEPENDANCE%20DECLERATION.pdf

[8] *Al-Khaleej* newspaper, Sharjah, 8/5/2000.

[9] *Al-Khaleej*, 25/1/2000, and according to the same source, there are ten thousand nuclear scientists in Israel.

[10] On Oslo Accords and what followed, see 'Imad Yusuf et al., *al-In'ikasat al-Siyasiyyah li Ittifaq al-Hukm al-Dhati al-Filastini* (The Political Repercussions of the Palestinian Self-Governance Accord) (Amman: MESC, 1995); Munir Shafiq, *Oslo "1" wa "2": al-Masar wa al-Ma'al* (Oslo "1" and "2": Its Path and Its Outcome) (London: Filastin al-Muslimah, 1997); and Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *al-Tariq ila al-Quds*, pp. 174–182.

[11] *Al Hayat*, 12/8/1995.

[12] *Al Hayat*, 5/3/1995.

[13] According to news on 1/3/2000, see site of The Palestinian Information Center (PIC), 2/3/2000, http://www.palestine-info.info/ar/

[14] *Al-Khaleej*, 16/4/2000.

[15] *Al-Seyassah* newspaper, Kuwait, 27/4/1995.

[16] *Asharq Alawsat* newspaper, London, 22/3/1995.

[17] Hisham Sharabi's declaration in *al-Hayat*, 5/3/1995.

[18] Dawud Sulayman, *al-Sultah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah fi 'Am 1994–1995* (The Palestinian National Authority in 1994–1995) (Amman: MESC, 1995), p. 135.

[19] Palestine Facts 1997, site of Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), http://passia.org/palestine_facts/chronology/1997.htm

[20] On the immigration of Jews and their numbers, see Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2010*, no. 61, table 4.2, http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton61/st04_02.pdf; and 'Umran Abu Subayh, *al-Hijrah al-Yahudiyyah Haqa'iq wa Arqam: 1882–1990* (Jewish Immigration, Facts and Figures: 1882–1990) (Amman: Dar al-Jalil li al-Nashir, 1991).

Chapter Six

The Palestinian Issue 2000–2013

The Palestinian Issue 2000–2013

Introduction

The first decade of the 21st century new aspects of the Palestinian issue emerge, as many factors and changes affected its path but did not lead to any decisive results. Among these important events were:

- The *al-Aqsa Intifadah* (2000–2005), which dealt a blow to Israeli security and economic pillars and vividly highlighted the Palestinian people's attachment to its rights, land, and holy sites.

- The rise of Hamas as a major player in the Palestinian arena, after it played an essential role in the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* and won legislative elections. It formed the 10th Palestinian government, controlled GS, successfully thwarted the Israeli aggression on the Strip, and maintained great popularity both inside and outside Palestine.

- The Palestinian schism and the struggle between the Fatah and Hamas movements, the geographical division in the PA administration between Ramallah and GS, and the paralysis of PLO institutions.

- The increase of religious and right-wing extremism in Israeli society, in addition to the weakness and disintegration of leftist trends.

- The peace settlement reaching a dead-end, after Israel's insistence on continuing to build settlements in the WB, despite the PA executing all its obligations as specified in the Road Map.

- The "war on terror" waged by the US, and its occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, along with its failure to impose its vision regarding the Middle East or to resolve the Palestinian issue.

- The changes and revolutions witnessed in the Arab world since 2011 and the successful revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia; the move towards the establishment of regimes that reflect the will of the people. This is in addition to a new strategic reality for Israel in which more states in the region are supportive of resistance movements, and the unbalancing of the traditional

setup of the "moderate states axis" that pursued policies harmonious with US interests in the region.

- The emergence of Turkey as a major regional player, with an increased tendency to support the Palestinian issue and move away from Israel.

First: The Aggression and the Resistance

1. *Al-Aqsa Intifadah*

The *al-Aqsa Intifadah* began on 29/9/2000, following Likud leader Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 28/9/2000. The visit was supported by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who sent 600 soldiers to accompany Sharon, mobilizing more than one thousand soldiers and policemen in Jerusalem and its neighborhoods.[1] Muslims decided to defend the mosque, and the first confrontations led to five deaths and more than a 100 injuries. The elements for igniting the situation were in place, as the peace process had

• **Sharon "storms"**
al-Aqsa Mosque **2000**

reached a dead end, Israel's designs on Jerusalem and the *al-Aqsa* Mosque were confirmed, and the Israelis continued to confiscate land and expand settlements.

In a secret meeting, on 25/10/2000, Ehud Barak stated that the only solution on the horizon was to push the situation towards explosion.[2] Perhaps he wanted to show more strength and gain more popularity among Israelis, and aimed to exploit this in order to halt the peace process or put it through successive crises, to be able to exert more pressure on the PA, which as past years had proved, was able to make concessions, retreat, and lower the ceiling of its demands.

The *Intifadah* resulted in several facts and indicators:

1. The Muslim *Ummah* (Nation) was still alive, despite the many blows it had suffered, and the spirit of resistance and sacrifice had not died. Indeed, tens

of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of demonstrators staged protests in almost every country in the Muslim world, from Rabat in the far west of the Muslim world to Jakarta in the far east, in support of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Jerusalem, and Palestine. These protests demanded resistance and offered donations and support, a glimpse of the huge potential of Islamic unity over Palestine.

2. The Palestinian issue unites Muslims, and motivates them to overcome their differences and focus on their common challenge represented by the Israeli occupation. This issue has become the Muslim world's leading issue, with as no other issue or enemy bringing Muslims together this way.

3. The *Intifadah* dealt a strong blow to the peace process and normalization with Israel, and the resistance option emerged stronger.

4. This *Intifadah* was reflected in people's manner of thinking and daily lives, hostility increased against Israel and the US, and resistance and unity were reinforced. The masses responded to the calls for boycotting US and Israeli goods, and millions of people changed their daily eating, drinking, clothing, transport, communication, and entertainment habits. Thus emerged a popular socio-educational school with results the like of which reform movements needed years to reach. Even more, US companies had to publish ads stating that they were not related to Israel, and to make donations to the *Intifadah* victims. This was the case for McDonald's, where the license holders of McDonalds franchises in the KSA pledged to donate one Saudi riyal (about $0.27) to Palestinian children's hospitals for each meal sold during Ramadan.[3]

5. The importance of the media and its role in mobilization was highlighted, as Muslims were able to break the Western pro-Israeli media circle through Arab satellite channels, internet and email, especially during the first stages of the *Intifadah*.

The *Intifadah* was thus characterized by broad popular participation all around Palestine, by all Palestinian movements. Simultaneously, it was characterized by extreme Israeli oppression, which included the killing of children and innocents and the use of internationally prohibited weapons.

In 2005, the wave of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* subsided as a result of the circumstances that followed the death of Yasir ʻArafat, the election of Mahmud ʻAbbas as PA president, and the preoccupation of Palestinians in GS and the WB with the municipal elections and the preparation for the legislative elections. This was in addition to the announcement made by the Palestinian factions on 22/1/2005 of unilateral appeasement followed by the announcement of the ceasefire between the PA and Israel on February 8th.

Between 28/9/2000 and 31/12/2005, the Palestinians who were killed reached 4,242, including 793 children and 270 women. The number of targeted killings reached 376, and 140 persons (including children, women, and old people suffering from heart and kidney disease, and cancer) died because of Israeli hurdles and checkpoints, while the number of wounded reached 46,068.[4] Despite the announcement of Palestinian appeasement and the decline of the *Intifadah*, there was an increase in the number of prisoners from around 7,800 in early 2005 to around 9,200 by the end of the same year. Moreover, 3,495 Palestinians were arrested during 2005, of who 1,600 remained jailed.[5]

• **Yasir ʻArafat traveled to a military hospital near Paris for treatment 2004**

During *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, Yasir ʻArafat was put under siege in his Ramallah headquarters for two and a half years and passed away in mysterious circumstances on 11/11/2004.

Several Hamas leaders also were killed, such as Jamal Salim and Jamal Mansur on 31/7/2001, Salah Shehadeh on 22/7/2002, and Ismaʻil Abu Shanab on 21/8/2003. Hamas was dealt one of its strongest blows when its spiritual leader and founder Sheikh Ahmad Yasin passed away on 22/3/2004, followed by ʻAbdul ʻAziz al-Rantissi on 17/4/2004. Moreover, 604 members of Al-Qassam Brigades were killed during *al-Aqsa Intifadah* (28/9/2000–end of 2005), Abu ʻAli Mustafa, the Secretary General of the PFLP was assassinated by the Israelis, on 27/8/2001.

• Abu 'Ali Mustafa

• Jamal Mansur

• Jamal Salim

• Salah Shehadeh

• Isma'il Abu Shanab

• Sheikh Ahmad Yasin (left) and the site of his assassination; a pool of blood and the remains of his wheelchair can be seen

• 'Abdul 'Aziz al-Rantissi

• Demolished houses

• Demolished educational
institutions

• Uprooted trees

71,470 houses were totally or partially demolished, and 316 educational institutions were bombed. Moreover, 43 schools were turned into military barracks. The Israelis uprooted and destroyed one million and 355 thousand trees. The unemployment rate reached 28.4% in 2005, and the poverty rate in the WB and GS stayed at 42% until the end of 2004 (63.2% in the GS, 31.2% in the WB). According to estimates, the Palestinian economy lost around $15 billion and 600 million between the start of the *Intifadah* and 29/9/2005.[6]

All Palestinian factions took part in military operations. According to Israeli estimates, 22,406 resistance operations were executed between 29/9/2000 and 24/7/2005.[7] Hamas had a prominent role in self-immolation operations that destabilized security in Israel. 135 self-immolation operations took place until 1/12/2005, of which Hamas executed 61 and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the PIJ conducted many others.[8]

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades focused on shooting settlers and Israeli forces in the WB and GS. As for the PIJ, it conducted several strong resistance operations that left a great impact. Also, the PFLP and DFLP executed many operations. Among the noteworthy operations was the PFLP assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, on 17/10/2001. Ze'evi was a former army general and an extremist and the killing was in retaliation for the assassination of the PFLP's Secretary General Abu 'Ali Mustafa.

• Rehavam Ze'evi

Despite their relative small number, the self-immolation operations were most effective. Those who defend executing such operations said that Palestinians under the Israeli brutal occupation, killing their innocent beloved ones, destroying their land and properties, having nothing but their bodies to sacrifice. They noted that many of the Israeli "civilian" victims are in fact Israeli reserve soldiers, as almost all (male and female) Jews in occupied Palestine aged 18 and above are subjected to mandatory military training. However, the large majority of Palestinian victims were civilians. According to the Israel Security Agency—ISA (*Shabak*) report, 1,513 Israelis were killed and 3,380 were injured from the beginning of the *Intifadah* until July 2005.[9]

The Israeli economy declined compared to its pre-*Intifadah* levels. Tourism, Israel's second largest income, was quasi-paralyzed during the *Intifadah's* first two years. A report published by the National Insurance Institute of Israel stated that the number of Israelis living below the poverty line had increased to around 22% by the end of 2004, a total of one million and 534 thousand Israelis.[10]

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), 2002 was the worst year economically for 50 years in Israel (1953–2003). Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by 1% in 2002, in continuation of a 0.9% decrease in 2001 and compared with a 7.4% increase in 2000.[11] Annual GDP per capita decreased by around $3 thousand (from $18,600 in 2000 to $15,600 in 2002). According to the Lahav economic division, around 50 thousand shops closed in 2002.[12] According to some estimates, total Israeli economic losses during the *Intifadah's* first two years reached around $8 billion, around $11 million a day.

Therefore, the core transformation caused by the *Intifadah* was that the Palestinian people were no longer the only ones paying the price of the Israeli occupation; i.e., being killed, wounded, and suffering destruction. Israel this time also paid a hefty price for its occupation and injustice.

The *Intifadah* shook two of Israel's pillars: security and economic prosperity. Tens of thousands of Jews packed their bags and left for Europe, the US, and Australia, and public opinion polls revealed that more than 25% of Jews in Palestine were seriously thinking of leaving the country. A poll conducted by the *Jerusalem Post* newspaper on 29/11/2002 showed that 69% of Israelis lived in a state of fear from injury or death by self-immolation operations.[13] On the other hand, despite great Palestinian suffering, a poll published on 18/12/2002

revealed that 80% of Palestinians supported the continuation of the *Intifadah* and 63% supported self-immolation operations.[14]

2. The Aggression and the Resistance 2006–2012

Israel continued its aggression during 2006–2012, while the Palestinian factions continued their resistance, albeit in different manners and forms. The period was characterized by:

- The Palestinian resistance was hit and most of its cells were dismantled in the WB because of the comprehensive cooperation between the PA and Israel.

- The development of Palestinian resistance in the GS, under the sponsorship of the Hamas-led government. It was able to mobilize thousands of resistance members and to smuggle weapons. It was also able to develop its rocket capacities, albeit in a very limited manner compared to Israeli capacities, and despite the suffocating siege of GS.

- Great reliance on rocket launching from the GS as part of resistance operations, and a decrease in self-immolation operations that characterized *al-Aqsa Intifadah*. According to Shabak, 8,513 rockets and 4,234 mortar shells were launched from the Strip during 2006–2012,[15] including 742 rockets and mortar shells fired during the aggression against GS in 2008–2009.[16] Besides, only eight self-immolation operations were executed in this period, leading to the killing of 19 Israelis.[17] Although there were a large number of rockets and mortar shells fired, their impact was limited because they were mostly imprecise and short-range, and filled with very few explosives. According to Israeli statistics, 17 Israelis were killed and 1,150 were injured during 2006–2009 by these rockets and shells—including five killed during the aggression on GS in 2009. Nonetheless, they affected the morale of around one million Israelis in the area close to the GS, putting them in a constant state of fear.[18]

• **Launching rockets**

- Israeli aggression in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 and in the GS at the end of 2008 and early 2009.

During 2006–2012, 3,667 Palestinians were killed and 17,467 were wounded in the WB and GS, and among those injured there were several international solidarity activists.[19] Whereas, 137 Israelis were killed and 2,255 injured during the same period.[20] However, the GS Ministry of Health stated that in 2012 alone, 278 Palestinians were killed and 2,158 were wounded in GS.[21] A simple comparison reveals the extent of the suffering and massacres endured by the Palestinians due to superior Israeli military capabilities, while the Palestinians resisted by simple means. This also reflects the Palestinian schism in which one Palestinian side stalled and hindered resistance actions in the WB during most of the period; while there was no direct contact with Israeli forces and settlers in the GS due to the Israelis' 2005 withdrawal.

Israeli military campaigns during that time were focused on GS in order to topple the Hamas government, attack the resistance, and stop rocket attacks. Among Israel's major campaigns was Operation Summer Rains, during the period 26/6–31/10/2006.

Operation Summer Rains came after Hamas led the Operation Dispelled Illusion (*al-Wahm al-Mutabadid*) in collaboration with the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam, which led to the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Operation Summer Rains caused the killing of 400 Palestinians and the injury of 1,852 others. Israel also executed Operation Autumn Clouds in November 2006, which led to the killing of 105 Palestinians and the injury of 353 others; and Operation

• **Operation Summer Rains**

Hot Winter on 27/2–3/3/2008, which led to the death of 107 Palestinians. These operations were faced with heroic, although often symbolic, resistance by the Palestinians.[22]

However, the fiercest and broadest Israeli attack was the wide-scale aggression on GS from 27/12/2008–18/1/2009, known as Operation Cast Lead, and dubbed by the resistance the *al-Furqan* Battle. The Israeli war machine was faced

with strong resistance by Hamas and other resistance forces, and Israel failed to occupy GS, break down the resistance forces or topple the Hamas-led government. Consequently, the Israelis withdrew unconditionally, which greatly boosted the morale of resistance forces, and made them win broad Palestinian, Arab, Muslim,

• **Victims of Israeli aggression on GS 2008–2009**

and international support. This Israeli aggression led to the deaths of 1,334 Palestinians, including 417 children and 108 women, and the injury of 5,450 citizens. Additionally, 5,356 homes were destroyed, while a further 16 thousands were damaged. As for Israel, it only acknowledged the deaths of nine Israelis and the injury of 185, while the resistance forces estimated the killing of around 80 Israelis during this aggression.[23]

• **Israeli aggression on GS 2008–2009**

• **Determined for victory despite imprisonment**

The condition of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons greatly reflected Palestinian anguish. Arrests did not stop even after the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* ended, with number of detainees increasing until it reached 11,550 by the end of 2007, among whom 10,485 were from the WB, 860 from GS, and 140 from the 1948 occupied Palestinian territories, in addition to tens of Arab detainees. During that year, 52 members of the PLC and ex-ministers were detained; 47 detained PLC members of whom 42 were of the Change and Reform List (Hamas), in addition four were from the Fatah Movement, of whom three were arrested before the PLC elections, along with Ahmad Sa'dat, the secretary general of the PFLP.[24]

In early 2011, there were still around seven thousand prisoners in the Israeli occupation's jails, since arrest operations are continuous. The prisoners are often released after a few months, but are quickly replaced by others. In 2007, around 7,500 Palestinians were arrested, compared to 5,800 in 2008, 5,100 in 2009, and 4,200 in 2010. It is likely that

• **Ahmad Sa'dat**

• **Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons**

the statistics show a decline in Palestinian resistance because of the increased effectiveness of the security cooperation between Salam Fayyad's government in Ramallah and Israel.

During that period, the Israelis launched a full-fledged 33-day aggression (12/7–14/8/2006) against Lebanon, which specifically targeted South Lebanon and the southern suburb of Beirut. It faced a strong resistance from Hizbullah,

beside other resistance forces, thus leading to the withdrawal of the Israeli forces and their subsequent failure to achieve their objectives. This war led to the killing of 1,400 Lebanese people and the injury of 3,700 others, as well as the temporary displacement of 973,334 people. It also caused massive destruction of infrastructure, damaging around seven thousand houses and 145 bridges. Israeli losses were estimated at around 400 killed and 1,187 injuries, as well as 11 thousand damaged houses due to the fall of 3,204 Katyusha rockets. Hizbullah also declared that it had managed to destroy 120 Merkava tanks, 30 armored vehicles, 2 warships, and 5 helicopters.[25]

• **Israeli aggression on Lebanon 2006**

Despite the end of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, the exceptional events witnessed in the WB, and the siege of GS, the heroic resistance that took place during that period, and its development of its armament abilities, especially regarding rockets, confirms that the spirit of resistance continued, and that the resistance forces were characterized by resilience, bravery, sacrifice, and their ability to innovate and cause losses to the enemy.

Second: The Internal Palestinian Situation

The internal Palestinian situation during the first decade of the 21st century was characterized by the rise of the Hamas Movement and its success in the legislative elections; its control of the GS; the death of Yasir 'Arafat and his replacement by Mahmud 'Abbas; the disruption of the Fatah Movement's course; the Palestinian schism; the paralysis of the PLO and its institutions, and the regression of the Palestinian Left. The general Palestinian frame of mind was occupied during the first five years of the decade with resistance and the activation and support of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, but in later years it focused on putting the Palestinian house in order, national reconciliation, and lifting the siege.

1. The PA's Course

Al-Aqsa Intifadah restored the glory of resistance action. While the security grip of the PA weakened, the scope of resistance action grew wider, and gathered around it all the Palestinian people and its factions, including Fatah Movement. Hamas Movement and the resistance forces took advantage of these conditions to rearrange their internal structures.

Hence, *al-Aqsa Intifadah* was accompanied by the Hamas Movement's growing popularity, due its leading resistance role. There was also a decline in the popularity of Fatah and the PA as a result of their mismanagement and corruption.

With the occupation of the PA-controlled areas by Israel and the destruction of the PA's headquarters and police stations, as well as the siege of Yasir 'Arafat (March 2002 until his death on 11/11/2004), the PA responded to Israeli-American pressures. It approved the Road Map for peace plan proposed by George W. Bush, and the "PA reform," which included the creation of the prime minister post, giving him prerogatives that would diminish those of President 'Arafat, and merging the nine security forces into three, in addition to a number of administrative and financial reforms.

Mahmud 'Abbas was prime minister during the period 29/4–6/9/2003 and succeeded in securing an appeasement deal on 29/6–21/8/2003, which collapsed following the Israeli forces' assassination of Hamas leader Isma'il Abu Shanab, on 21/8/2003. 'Abbas faced many difficulties in dealing with President 'Arafat, the factions, and the Israelis, and this ultimately led to his resignation. He was replaced by Ahmad Qurai', who formed the seventh, eighth, and ninth Palestinian governments, from 5/10/2003 to 27/3/2006, in which Salam Fayyad was entrusted with the Ministry of Finance.

• **Ahmad Qurai'**

The *Intifadah* suffered exhaustion in 2004 because of the brutality of the Israeli occupation, the scarce resources, and weak Arab, Muslim, and international support. In the summer of 2004, Fatah leader Muhammad Dahlan roused hundreds

• **Muhammad Dahlan**

• **Rawhi Fattuh**

• **Mahmud 'Abbas proclaiming victory in the presidential elections**

• **Mustafa Barghouti**

of supporters into demonstrations and protests that targeted president 'Arafat under the pretext of demanding reform. The protests were supported by many Fatah leaders, especially in GS, as well as by the US and European Union (EU). These protests stirred many questions; about their timing, their real objectives, the person behind them and the person who was targeted. There were also questions about Mahmud 'Abbas' lack of reaction or objection. A few months later, Yasir 'Arafat had a mysterious illness and had to go to Paris to seek treatment. However, he died there on 11/11/2004, amid many unresolved questions about the real cause of his death. His body was carried to Cairo then to Ramallah, where he was buried. Yasir 'Arafat was present on the political scene for 35 years, and headed Fatah, the PLO, the PA, and the Palestinian state, in addition to holding the position of supreme commander of the Palestinian forces. 'Arafat was a combination of the pragmatic politician and the embodiment of the Palestinian people's hopes, even if many Palestinians and Palestinian factions did not assent to his leadership.[26] 'Arafat became increasingly popular and respected during the Israeli siege of his compound before his death.

In accordance with the Palestinian Basic Law, the Speaker of the PLC Rawhi Fattuh became the interim president of the PA, following the death of President Yasir 'Arafat. The Palestinian presidential elections took place on 9/1/2005, and were boycotted by Hamas and the PIJ. 65% of voters participated, and the winner of the elections was Mahmud 'Abbas, the Fatah candidate, with 62% of the votes, while the Leftist candidate, Mustafa Barghouti, gained 20% of the votes. 'Abbas also headed Fatah and the PLO.

Following the ceasefire that 'Abbas secured with the cooperation of Palestinian factions, and the Cairo Agreement that was signed by the Palestinians on 17/3/2005, the *Intifadah* was effectively over. The Palestinians became busy with putting the Palestinian house in order and with the PA's municipal and legislative elections.

The Israeli withdrawal from GS in September 2005 represented a huge victory for the resistance forces, and a drawback to the peace process. Indeed, the Israelis paid a hefty political and human price for resistance actions. Also, the unilateral withdrawal was without any negotiations or coordination with the PA, as if the Palestinian-Israeli peace process was nonexistent.[27]

The municipal elections, which took place in four phases, revealed the growing popularity of Hamas, which worried the Fatah leadership and the PA. However, it was not easy to accurately determine the results, especially in light of the fact that many of the Hamas candidates were independent candidates in the elections for security or social reasons. Generally speaking, Hamas obtained more votes than Fatah and prevailed in the large municipalities, while Fatah obtained more seats than Hamas and prevailed in the small municipalities. It was noteworthy that Hamas won 74% of the votes in Nablus, and that the PA did not hold municipal elections in Hebron and Gaza, which are Hamas strongholds. According to estimates, Fatah won 1,164 seats while Hamas won 862 seats, and the other organizations and the independents got 701 seats. Hamas obtained half of the votes in the first and fourth stages, and 33.7% in the second stage, and 26% in the third stage. As for Fatah, it obtained 32% of the votes in the first stage, 40% in the second, 53.7% in the third, and 30% in the fourth.[28]

Amidst uncertainty and internal conflicts in Fatah, 'Abbas postponed the legislative elections from July 2005 to 25/1/2006, and the elections were only confirmed after Fatah overcame its conflicts and united the official list with "the Future" list announced by Muhammad Dahlan, in agreement with Marwan Barghouti, Jibril Rajoub, and many young Fatah leaders. The elections would not have taken place had there not been a feeling of reassurance resulting from the polls that Hamas would win only 25% of the votes or seats, compared with 38–40% for Fatah. 'Abbas was in dire need of affirmation of the legitimacy of his presidency and believed that introducing Hamas as a "controlled" opposition in the framework of "Palestinian legitimacy" would enable him to pursue the peace process with greater strength. This led the US to support the electoral process, and the Israelis did not object, although they did express fears about it.

• **Hamas winning legislative elections**

Everyone (including Hamas supporters and leadership) was surprised when Hamas won 74 out of the 132 seats of the PLC. Moreover, four independent candidates on the Hamas lists also achieved victory, while Fatah won 45 seats, the PFLP won three seats, the DFLP and the Palestinian People's Party (PPP) coalition won two seats, the Independent Palestine List headed by Mustafa Barghouti won two seats, and the Third Way List headed by Salam Fayyad won two seats.

Hamas sought in vain to form a national unity government with Fatah and other Palestinian factions but did not succeed, and thus had to form the government alone. Amidst the shock, confusion, and frustration of Fatah and PA leaderships, who found by their side an unwelcomed partner imposed by the people. Many measures were taken to besiege Hamas and weaken its government and lead it to failure, despite the leaderships' announcement of acceptance of the election results and respect for Palestinian democracy. Among the main measures were:

- A session was held by the former PLC, in which Fatah enjoyed the majority, two weeks after the election results were announced. Many decisions and constitutional amendments were made (in violation of legal and parliamentary practices), aimed at strengthening the president's powers and weakening the government and the elected council. They gave the president absolute power in forming the Constitutional Court in addition to the authority over the General Personnel Council. The PLC, whose mandate had expired, approved a presidential decree stipulating the appointment of a secretary general for the PLC to replace the council's secretary, who must be an MP from the council. This was dubbed by Hamas an "overthrow and constitutional corruption."

- President 'Abbas issued a decree that put all media outlets affiliated with the PA under his direct supervision.

- 'Abbas issued a decree establishing the General Administration of Crossings and Borders headed by Sa'ib 'Uraiqat.

- 'Abbas issued a decree appointing Rashid Abu Shbak director-general of Internal Security Forces in the Ministry of Interior, thus heading Preventive Security, Civil Defense and Civil Police Forces.

• **Rashid Abu Shbak**

- 'Abbas appointed Suleiman Hilliss head of National Security Forces.

- President 'Abbas transferred the responsibility of following up the Palestinian embassies abroad from the PA's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the PLO.

- President 'Abbas also excluded all the government's ministers, including the foreign minister, from his international trips, and his meetings and discussions with Arab and foreign officials.

This was how the Fatah command began its battle to remove the prerogatives of the Hamas government and to make it fail even before it began its work. The complete control of Fatah on the security forces and the bureaucratic administrative body of the PA, its ministries and institutions, was a great obstacle before the Hamas government (despite its ministers' exceptional competencies), which had to deal with many security and administrative leaderships that sought to stall, delay, and thwart.

The Hamas government also faced huge difficulties in managing the situation under occupation, and in dealing with influential Arab and international forces. Indeed, a political and economic siege was launched by Israel and other countries, and the aid to the PA, which represented more than half of its budget, was halted. Israel refused to deliver the taxes it collected for the PA, and which represent around a third of the latter's budget, and bank transfers to the PA's accounts were suspended. The conditions of the Quartet (US, EU, Russia and the UN) were imposed on dealing with Hamas and its government. They included the recognition of Israel by Hamas, the rejection of "terrorism" by Hamas and its suspension of armed resistance, in addition to its approval of all the agreements signed by the PLO. These were impossible conditions for Hamas to agree to without losing its identity and democratic mandate entirely.

The Hamas government found itself with an empty treasury, and debts in excess of $1 billion and 772 million.[29] The opposition forces (especially Fatah) organized protests, demonstrations, and strikes to demand the payment of salaries. The security forces did not cooperate with Interior Minister Sa'id Siyam in an adequate manner, as his alleged powers over them were stripped, at a time when chaos and lawlessness spread—especially in the GS.

• Sa'id Siyam

• The Executive Force

This forced the interior minister to form the Executive Force, which was composed of loyalists to Hamas and the resistance forces that were on good terms with it.[30] This dragged the PA into a new conflict over powers, and President 'Abbas established a security force known as the Presidential Guard, a few days after the formation of the Executive Force.[31] The US allocated $86 million and 400 thousand to support the Presidential Guard forces.[32]

• The Presidential Guard

In a context of power struggles, protests and counter-protests, and media campaigns, serious efforts were made to drive Fatah and Hamas to clash. Political instigation gradually turned into incidents of shooting and armed skirmishes. The assassination on

31/3/2006 of 'Abdul Karim al-Quqa, the secretary general of the Popular Resistance Committees (which were close to Hamas), was major step towards starting an armed conflict, as the Committees accused Muhammad Dahlan of being well-informed on the assassination. This was followed by the assassination of Muhammad al-Tattar, a Hamas military leader, on 16/5/2006, and

• 'Abdul Karim al-Quqa

Hussein al-'Awja, a Hamas political leader, on 6/7/2006. The political conflict, between 1/1–30/11/2006, led to the killing of 41 Palestinians, with 40 of them being killed in GS alone. However, as for the general state of turmoil during 2006, 260 persons were killed and 1,239 were injured.[33]

The agreement among the Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, on the National Reconciliation Document of Palestinian Prisoners inside Israeli Prisons, in June 2006, paved the way for the formation of a national unity government. Hamas agreed to decrease its rightful quota of ministers in the government and abandoned the post of prime minister, refraining from nominating any front-row leaders in the government. It then became clear that the issue was linked to the Quartet conditions and Israeli-US-European pressures, and not just to the quota and powers of each side in government. What added insult to injury was the call of President 'Abbas on several occasions (21/5/2006, 27/9/2006, 16/12/2006, and 19/1/2007) for early presidential and legislative elections; 'Abbas did not have the constitutional powers to dissolve the PLC, and his call was therefore undemocratic.

• Gilad Shalit

Conditions for the PA became more complicated after Operation Dispelled Illusion that led to the capture of Gilad Shalit. This was followed by Israel's launching of a broad campaign of immediate arrests that included 64 Hamas ministers, leaders, and members of the PLC. The scope of the arrests and military campaign was then widened, thus suspending

the work of PLC and Hamas government in WB. Starting on 26/6/2006, and for a period of five months, Israel executed Operation Summer Rains and Operation Autumn Clouds in GS, leaving 505 Palestinians killed and 2,205 wounded. In 2006, Israel arrested 5,671 Palestinians, and among the detainees were

• **Dispelled Illusion Operation and the destroyed Merkava Mark III tank**

30 Hamas PLC members and four ministers of Isma'il Haniyyah's government.[34]

As tensions and skirmishes escalated between Fatah and Hamas in early 2007, KSA called for a dialogue between the two parties, thus leading to the Mecca Agreement on 7/2/2007, which was received by the Palestinians with elation. The agreement stipulated the formation of a national unity government headed by Isma'il Haniyyah. It was formed of nine members from Hamas, six from Fatah, four from the other factions, and five independents, and on 17/3/2007 the PLC passed a vote of confidence in it. However, on 2/3/2007, President 'Abbas appointed Muhammad Dahlan as his national security advisor and as secretary of the Palestinian National Security Council (PNSC), making him very influential over the security forces, in violation of the Palestinian Basic Law. This appointment was the first problem in the government's work, because it snatched its control over the security forces and put them in the president's hands.

• **Formation of a national unity government headed by Isma'il Haniyyah**

The internal Palestinian crisis escalated again, after the new independent Interior Minister Hani al-Qawasmi did not succeed in exercising his powers or making any security reforms. His resignation was a result of the fact that Rashid Abu Shbak (who was close to Dahlan) controlled the Interior Ministry's security forces and prevented the interior minister from contacting the leaders of these forces. Also, the Palestinian presidency stripped the Interior Ministry of its financial and administrative powers.[35]

• **Hani al-Qawasmi**

2. Hamas' Control over GS, and Fatah's over the PA in the WB

Events indicated that Fatah and Hamas were moving towards a clash. US-Israeli plans aimed to topple the national unity government, and a Palestinian side close to Fatah was ready to maintain Lieutenant General Keith Dayton's plan to arm and train the Palestinian Presidential Guard for potential confrontations with Hamas in GS.[36] There was a recommendation that "Dahlan oversees effort in coordination with General Dayton and Arab [countries] to train and equip 15,000-man force under President 'Abbas's control," and that there is a "need for bolstering Fatah's forces in order to 'deter' Hamas."[37] As for Dayton, he assured the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia of the House of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives at the end of May 2007 that the "worrisome scenario in Gaza that I have been warning about for the past several months is coming to a head."[38]

• **Keith Dayton**

The Palestinian presidency and the influential Fatah security forces did not really show cooperation in controlling and organizing the security forces. The influential forces took several measures that corresponded to a great extent with what was leaked regarding US plans. This included the expansion of the Presidential Guard, the erection of security checkpoints, and several abductions and assassinations attributed to the loyalists of 'Abbas and Dahlan, especially in mid-May 2007. Hamas sources said that 22 of its members were assassinated in one week by the security forces.[39]

Hamas waged what it called a "decisive battle" against "Fatah's coup movement," and was able on 11–14/6/2007 to take control of GS. According to the statistics of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, the decisive military battle claimed the lives of 161 victims during 7–16/6/2007, including 43 civilians, 91 members of the Fatah Movement and its affiliated security forces, and 27 members of the Hamas Movement, Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades, and the Executive Force.[40]

• **Hamas faced a state of lawlessness after it won the PLC elections**

Hamas considered its actions a necessity which only targeted a certain portion of people affiliated to Fatah. It said that it had not intended at first to control the Strip, but the situation "deteriorated" until it reached that point, and that it had not planned to control the "Security Square" and the presidential office compound, but was obliged to do so because the latter was abandoned by the security forces and was pillaged by the people. Hamas sought to control some security forces in order to block the road before those who are implementing an Israeli agenda and are part of these forces.[41]

The "decisive operation," or the "takeover," also included negative practices that harmed the image of Hamas. Indeed, media and news outlets showed that the execution of Fatah militant Samih al-Madhoun was carried out in a crude

and damaging manner. They also showed footage of Palestinian security officers who were made to go out bare-chested. Other footage and pictures broadcasted by Hamas affiliated media outlets were effectively used to foment against Hamas. Many Hamas leaders acknowledged and rejected such acts, explaining that they were the result of mutual instigation between Fatah and Hamas.

Moreover, Hamas refused to call what it did an "overthrow," since the person who took the decision was the prime minister, who was also the interior minister in the national unity government and who was supported by an elected PLC representing the majority of the members. Also, Hamas maintained its recognition of President 'Abbas and his legitimacy, and called him to dialogue, without any prior conditions. Regardless of whether it was a "decisive battle" or an "overthrow," what Hamas did had great repercussions on the Palestinian arena:

- For the first time, there was a geographical division in addition to the political schism, and the Gazans found themselves under the control of Hamas and its caretaker government, while the WB found itself under the control of Fatah, the Palestinian presidency, and the emergency government.

- The events revealed the strong effect of external factors on the Palestinian national scene.

- The events greatly harmed the image of the Palestinian national project and its resistance program, and caused much distress among Arabs and Muslims, and the international movements supporting Palestinian rights.

- The Palestinian presidency dealt with the control of Hamas over GS as an opportunity to bring down the national unity government and form a loyalist emergency government (in violation of the Basic Law) in the WB. It took advantage of the absence of the PLC, controlled by Hamas, to issue presidential decrees that have the force of law. Presidential decrees and measures and the emergency government went a long way in pressuring Hamas and assaulting its members in the WB, in addition to closing its societies and institutions and attempting to dismantle its organizational and military structure. This was while the presidency and the government in the WB developed their security coordination with the Israeli occupation. According to Hamas sources in the WB, Hamas was the target of 1,007 aggressions during 11/6–31/8/2007 by the security forces and Fatah members, including 639 arrests and abductions, 36 shootings, and 175 aggressions on institutions and societies, including Quran learning centers, charities, media companies and offices, schools and

nurseries. Also, there were 156 aggressions against the private properties of Hamas members and supporters.[42]

On the other hand, Hamas and its caretaker government tightened their control over GS and dealt harshly with Fatah supporters, whose practices they considered to be a threat to security and stability in the Strip. However, there are no statistics available about the extent of legal violations in GS. Both authorities in GS and WB were condemned by human rights organizations.

- The Palestinian presidency found itself free, in the absence of a partnership with Hamas and the absence of the PLC, to resume the peace process with the Israelis, with US, European, and Arab support.

- The GS was under a continuous and stifling siege, with continuous Israeli aggressions. Regrettably, some PA members helped to foment against Hamas in order to topple its government.

- The "decisive operation" led to the diminution of insecurity in GS, and the decrease in the clashes between factions and families, thus indicating that Hamas succeeded in controlling such issues. This also shows that what Hamas claimed was probably true; that the state of lawlessness was the responsibility of a specific security force affiliated with Fatah.

  According to statistics by Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, the number of victims of insecurity in the first six months of 2007 reached 422 killed and 1,946 injured. While six months after Hamas took control of GS, the number killed reached 60 and the injured 425.[43] Despite the harsh circumstances endured by GS, there were no victims of the Hamas-Fatah clashes in the first quarter of 2008, and it appeared that the situation was under control.

- The decision for the "decisive operation" was taken by Hamas on the ground in the GS, and was not a centralized decision.

- It was obvious that most of the security forces members did not consider the battle with Hamas to be their battle, but rather the battle of a certain security force within Fatah. Had these forces (more than 55 thousand members in GS) considered this to be their battle, it would have been extremely unlikely that Hamas would have won. A report by the Fatah military bureau in GS on the reasons behind the rapid collapse of the security forces, states that many members were convinced that they were defending the project of a single influential trend in the PA and Fatah Movement.

3. Salam Fayyad's Government

After Hamas' control of GS on 14/6/2007, Palestinian President Mahmud 'Abbas sought to put Hamas out of Palestinian legitimacy and supersede the PLC, where Hamas held a majority. He resorted to the PLO umbrella to support his relevant presidential measures, despite the fact that the PLO is a reference for the PA in major issues and not an executive or legislative tool within the framework of the PA. The PLO's Executive Committee held an emergency meeting on 14/6/2007 and issued several recommendations that were put at the disposal of President 'Abbas:

- Dismissing the government of Isma'il Haniyyah.

- Declaring a state of emergency.

- Forming an emergency government.

- Holding early elections.[44]

Salam Fayyad formed an emergency government on 17/6/2007. It then became a caretaker government after a month, even though the Palestinian Basic Law allows the president to declare a state of emergency only, not to form an emergency government, and it should transform the already existing government (Isma'il Haniyyah's government) into a caretaker one. Even if we were to recognize the legitimacy of Salam Fayyad's government, the Palestinian Basic Law states that it must gain the vote of confidence of the PLC, which did not happen.

• **Fayyad forms the emergency government**

Practically speaking, Fayyad accepted the disabling of the PLC in order to stay in his position. The Palestinians now had a government openly fighting the will of the majority and the party democratically mandated to represent the population of the WB and GS.

President 'Abbas and Fayyad's government re-drafted economic, social, and security laws, and took advantage of the PLC's absence; the PLC would have

opposed their measures. From June 2007 until June 2008, President 'Abbas and the Ramallah government issued 406 decrees that practically covered all aspects of life and the political and legal system.[45] This led the president and the caretaker government of Fayyad to be accused of overthrowing the legitimacy of the PLC and fighting its representatives, while they accused Hamas of causing an overthrow in GS and bypassing legitimacy.

Fayyad's government dissolved all the Zakat (almsgiving) committees in the WB, under the pretext that they were a financial source for Hamas.[46] Hamas stated on 12/11/2008 that it had 616 political prisoners detained by the PA, and a total of 2,921 political detainees in the WB from 10/6/2007 to 11/11/2008.[47]

Fayyad was not only the object of protest by Hamas and some Palestinian opposition factions, but also that of many Fatah officials and leaders, who strongly objected his presence, but were expected to stay quiet at the insistence of 'Abbas (and the Israelis and the Americans). During the Fatah Movement's 25th Revolutionary Council (on 26/5/2008), members launched scathing attack on Fayyad who was compared by some to Paul Bremer, the first US governor of Iraq, while others said his government was US-imposed. When Fayyad formed his government on 19/5/2009, he faced opposition from the Fatah parliamentary bloc, which was pressured by 'Abbas to keep quiet.

• **Michael Moeller**

Fayyad pensioned off hundreds of officials in the security forces (including many Fatah members), and offered the opportunity to US experts, notably Keith Dayton and Michael Moeller, to prepare the security forces for a peace agreement including the pursuit of resistance forces. During Fayyad's mandate, security collaboration with Israel reached its peak and included the exchange of information, the uncovering of resistance networks and capturing the persons involved, repressing protests, preventing friction with the Israelis, and returning Israelis who had entered PA areas.

The Fayyad-led government strove to recruit police members, based on loyalty and not necessarily on nationalism. This resulted in a special battalion of 620 soldiers which underwent a four-month training program in Jordan under the

supervision of Dayton. According to *Haaretz* newspaper (April 2008), senior PA officials dubbed the battalion as "Dayton's baby." According to Israeli sources, coordination with the PA reached unprecedented levels, thus leading the Shabak to announce in 2010 the absence of any Palestinians

• **New police battalions recruited**

on its list of wanted persons for the first time in 20 years. In its report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in Brussels (published on 13/4/2011), the Israeli government stated that in 2010 there were 2,968 instances of coordination and 686 joint bilateral meetings with the Palestinian security forces in the WB.[48]

As for economic performance, of which Fayyad was proud, this was blown out of proportion. Indeed, it remains an economy bound by occupation, siege, and foreign aid. GDP increased under Fayyad's government (2007–2012) from $4 billion and 600 million to $6 billion and 800 million, compared with the increase of the Israeli GDP for the same period of $166 billion to $241 billion. In other words, the Palestinian GDP per capita increased from $1,303 to $1,679 in 2007–2012, thus increasing by $376 in five years, at a rate of $75 per year. Meanwhile, the Israeli GDP per capita for the same period increased from $23,000 to $30,400, i.e., an increase of $1,480 per year. Also, Israel controls the PA's foreign trade in the WB, as around 70% of the PA's imports in Ramallah come from Israel, and around 85% of its exports go to Israel. As for the unemployment rate, it reached 18.3% in the WB by the end of 2012.[49]

The problem of the PA's economy is that it is designed to be at the mercy of the Israeli occupation and the peace process, thus making economic pressure a type of political blackmail. Around 50–55% of the PA's budget originates from donor countries, and a third of it comes from Palestinian taxes collected by Israel. Thus, Israel and other foreign countries can impose on the Palestinians who spends taxes and how they are spent. Hence, it is not just an issue linked to competence and transparency, but also to political and security performance.

Fayyad's government, which used to claim it spent more than $100 million per month on GS, was offering a distorted image of reality. What was true was that a huge amount of money used to be allocated to employees who did not go to work. Indeed, since the Palestinian division began, the PA in Ramallah has paid salaries to those staying at home in GS and has suspended payment to those who go to work, with certain exceptions such as the health and education sectors. Fayyad's government used to spend money on around 60 thousand employees (out of 78 thousand) provided they stayed at home, and they thus obtained 86% of the salaries transferred by the PA in Ramallah to the GS. In other words, the funds sent to GS were used by Fayyad (and his successors at the head of the PA) for political objectives.

When Fayyad formed his new government on 19/5/2009, he strove to "establish the institutions of the independent state" within two years.[50] The plan included the establishment of projects such as an airport, a railway, and a basic infrastructure; the provision of electricity and water; the improvement of housing, education, and agriculture; the promotion of investments; the improvement of the performance of security forces; in addition to building hospitals and clinics, etc.[51] Fayyad wanted to be practical, by making the most of available conditions and imposing facts on the ground that support the establishment of the Palestinian state or at least the steadfastness of the Palestinian people. However, he was faced with an Israeli side that stalled and obstructed, and was able to destroy any achievements. Israel was also able to make Fayyad's actions seem feeble compared with its own swift actions, such as the vast Judaization plans in Jerusalem and the rest of the WB, while it "enjoyed" the PA's implementation of its commitments in repressing the resistance movements, without this authority having any real leverage to use against the Israeli side.

Throughout the six years of Salam Fayyad's government, the announcements of its achievements related to Israeli objectives far exceeded those related to the national objectives. Fayyad's policies provided relative peace on the security level, but it was a calmness linked to dealing a blow to the resistance project and to one of the most important strengths of the Palestinians in the face of occupation. Thus, it was a quietude that tempted the occupier to continue with its occupation.

Fayyad's policies also provided a relative economic improvement, but which was in essence linked with the donations and support of the donor countries, without achieving any real development. This is while Israel continued to smother the sources of production and the operations of import/ export and fund transfers, and used them as tools for political and economic blackmail in order to achieve new gains.

Salam Fayyad submitted his government's resignation on 13/4/2013, which President 'Abbas accepted on the same day. The resignation reflected the mounting pressure by Fatah leaders to dismiss Fayyad, and appoint another figure from Fatah or close to Fatah to the premiership.

The resignation also indicates that 'Abbas, after hesitating for a long time, had become finally convinced of the need to dismiss Fayyad, either because of criticisms of his political and economic performance, or because of acting independently at times from President 'Abbas, or because 'Abbas wanted to pave the way for the formation of a national unity cabinet.

A statement issued following Fatah Revolutionary Council meeting on 4/4/2013 had stated that the policies of Fayyad's government were improvised and ambiguous on many financial and economic matters.

It seems that it was not easy for 'Abbas to appoint a suitable figure for the post of prime minister, as he needed six weeks before he could appoint Rami Hamadallah, the President of An-Najah National University who is close to Fatah, as prime minister-designate on 2/6/2013. However, Hamadallah resigned in turn on 20/6/2013, when he felt that he could not exercise all his powers. His government thus became a caretaker government, until 'Abbas reappointed him on 13/8/2013.

4. The Caretaker Government in GS

Haniyyah's government continued to consider itself a legitimate caretaker government after Mahmud 'Abbas dismissed it, in accordance with the Palestinian Basic Law. Despite the withdrawal of the Fatah ministers and other factions' ministers, and despite the fact that only Hamas ministers stayed, the government continued its tasks through the remaining ministers who were in the GS. By the end of June 2008, Isma'il Haniyyah issued a decision

appointing Muhammad Asqul as minister of education, Usama al-'Issawi as minister of transport and communications, Taleb Abu Sha'r as minister of awqaf (endowments) and religious affairs, Ahmad al-Kurd as minister of social affairs, Ahmad Shuwaydeh as minister of justice, and confirmed Sa'id Siyam as minister of interior.[52] Siyam was later assassinated in the Israeli aggression on GS. Haniyyah's government strove more than once to expand its ministerial formation by asking several factions to take part in it until 2011, but in vain.

• Taleb Abu Sha'r   • Usama al-'Issawi   • Muhammad Asqul

• Ahmad Shuwaydeh   • Ahmad al-Kurd

The caretaker government in GS (or what was known as the dismissed government) found itself swimming against the current in an inter-divided Arab environment, and an international setting that was either hostile or indifferent. The success of this government that was headed by Isma'il Haniyyah was represented in its ability to survive amid near-impossible circumstances. However, it paid for this success dearly with a stifling siege of more than a million and a half Palestinians, the destruction of infrastructure, and preoccupation with providing fuel, food, and medicine. But the government did not have much choice, since failure would mean the return to insecurity; the eradication of Hamas and the

resistance program from GS; breaking the will of the Palestinians for change; the return of the Oslo plan, the Road Map, and Annapolis, with all their negative aspects. The government thus considered that its endurance was worthy of all the suffering, and that if it must choose between "bread or dignity," it would choose dignity.

The siege of GS generated disastrous economic outcomes, especially when Israel suspended the GS customs code on 21/6/2007, which implied the end of commercial transactions, commercial representations and trademarks with the importers and exporters located in GS. Consequently, 95% of the industrial facilities in the Strip were closed, i.e., nearly 3,700 out of 3,900 plants. Construction and infrastructure projects valued at $370 million were suspended due to the lack of construction materials. Also, the health sector regressed due to the severe lack of medicines

• **Sufferings due to the siege of GS**

and medical equipment, and more than 75 thousand workers were sacked from the private sector. Agricultural exports were suspended, and around 90% of the commercial transportation sector was halted. Also, the education sector was affected due to the lack of books, stationery, and publications.[53] The GS poverty rate exceeded 80% and unemployment rates reached 60%.[54] Around 60% of the GS population does not have water supplies except once every few days for limited hours per day. Potable water is limited to 10% of the total needs.[55] Moreover, more than 80% of the refugees in the GS depend on the aid of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Haniyyah's government was able to fully control the GS, while the dire needs, the siege, and the insecurity failed to topple Hamas. The government was quite popular in the Strip, amidst strong opposition, particularly by the

• **A tunnel under Egyptian borders**

Fatah Movement which rearranged its ranks. The tunnels on the Egyptian border, which increased in number from 24 to more than 500, represented a partial solution to providing some necessities, as this covered around 50% of the GS "imports." The government continued to provide a cover for the resistance movements, and the transport and "smuggling" of weapons into the Strip continued, with the rest being manufactured. However, the square in which the government found itself, rendered the actions of Hamas and the resistance movements rather defensive. Also, the government's performance was linked to the control of security, the provision of necessities, and the fight against corruption, without circumstances enabling any development or economic advancement.

The harsh conditions resulting from the blockade resulted in a recession of the GS economy during 2006–2008. However, it seems that Haniyyah's government has been able to adapt the situation and to achieve a relatively good economic growth, during 2009–2012, compared to those achieved by Fayyad's government in Ramallah, which enjoys Arab and international support, and relative cooperation by the Israeli side. Indeed, in 2009, GDP growth achieved by Fayyad's government in the WB was 7.1%, compared to 8.4% achieved by Haniyyah's government in GS. In 2010, economic growth achieved by Fayyad's government was 8.4%, compared to 11.9% by Haniyyah's government, and in 2011, growth achieved by Haniyyah's government jumped to 17.6% compared to 10.4% by Fayyad's government. Furthermore, in 2012, economic growth achieved by Haniyyah's government was 6.6% compared to 5.6% by Fayyad's government (see table). This may imply that Haniyyah's government was more able to benefit from available resources and to crack down on corruption. GS also drew closer to achieving self-sufficiency in vegetables and poultry production, and in providing many basic needs for the citizens. Unemployment in GS also dropped to 30.3% in 2011 and to 32.2% in 2012, having had reached 60% in 2007.[56]

**GDP Growth in the WB and GS 2005–2012 at Constant Prices
(2004 is the Base Year) ($ million)[57]**

Year		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012[*]
WB	**GDP**	2,876.7	2,977.7	3,317.2	3,716.7	3,979.6	4,315.4	4,764.7	5,030.5
	Average annual growth (%)	-	+3.5	+11.4	+12	+7.1	+8.4	+10.4	+5.6
GS	**GDP**	1,682.8	1,344.6	1,236.9	1,161.6	1,259.7	1,409.1	1,656.7	1,766.8
	Average annual growth (%)	-	-20.1	-8	-6.1	+8.4	+11.9	+17.6	+6.6

Note: The data excludes those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israel in 1967.
[*] Preliminary estimates and it will be revised.

Although the policy of the president and the government in Ramallah with public employment led to the weakening of the governmental sector in GS, it appears that Haniyyah's government was able to adapt and provide salaries for more than 18 thousand employees.[58] It covered its minimum job requirements, as the number of security staff reached 13,600 after it had once been 56 thousand.[59] It also filled many of the vacancies with those who support its policies and programs, or who accept working in the prevailing conditions in GS. The government also resorted to Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades for overseeing security when needed. This prompted accusations against the latter and Hamas of favoring their supporters and giving governmental work in the GS a partisan character.

Haniyyah's government succeeded in dismantling the security zones of several influential families in the Strip, such as the Bakr family (on 13/6/2007) in the Beach Refugee Camp, the Helles family (on 2/8/2008) in al-Shuja'iyyah neighbourhood, and the Daghmash family (on 15/9/2008) in al-Sabra neighbourhood in the middle of Gaza city.[60] Haniyyah's government was able, by the end of summer 2008, to deal with a general strike which was held by teachers and doctors in GS and supported by the Fatah Movement and its supporters. On 15/8/2009, Haniyyah's government conducted a security operation against the Jund Ansar Allah organization in Rafah, south of GS, where

28 people were killed, including the group's leader Sheikh 'Abdul Latif Mussa, and 130 were injured. This was soon after Mussa declared the creation of an "Islamic Emirate."[61] Thus, Haniyyah's government tightened its grip on the GS, making most of its opponents believe in the difficulty, or even impossibility, of toppling it or of changing it from the interior.

Haniyyah's government endured the Israeli war on GS (27/12/2008–18/1/2009), and was able, with the resistance movements, to survive the Israeli attack and force the Israeli forces to completely withdraw from the Strip. It was also able to quickly absorb the shock of the war and pursued its administration and control of matters as usual. The chaos or insecurity wagered on by many sides did not happen. The steadfastness of the resistance and its courage represented a great popular, political, and media leverage for the caretaker government and Hamas, and generated much disenchantment among the opponents of Hamas. All this represented a motive for pursuing national dialogue and achieving Palestinian reconciliation.

There was great destruction in the GS as a result of the war: 5,350 buildings were fully destroyed, and more than 16 thousand buildings were partially destroyed. Many of these buildings housed ministries and official and security institutions. However, Haniyyah's government continued to offer its services directly after the war in alternative locations. The caretaker government estimated the costs of reconstruction at $2 billion and 215 million, and held on to the supervision of the rebuilding process, rejecting any direct overseeing from Fayyad's government in Ramallah.[62] However, it did not object to the donors executing the reconstruction efforts themselves or through trustworthy companies. But all this work failed to benefit the government, even though it was the one that administered everything on the ground. The donors insisted on dealing with President 'Abbas and Fayyad's government, and abided by Israeli conditions and considerations, which meant the continuation of siege and the inability to carry aid and execute projects.

Between 14–21/11/2012, Israel launched a large-scale assault on GS it called Operation Pillar of Defense, while the resistance in GS called it Stones of Baked Clay. The Israeli assault killed 189 Palestinians and wounded 1,526 others,

while up to 130 government building, mosques, schools, and hospitals were destroyed or sustained heavy damage. Moreover, 200 residential buildings were fully demolished and eight thousand more buildings were damaged, with direct and indirect losses amounting to nearly $1 billion and 245 million.

The resistance forces fought back fiercely, and for the first time ever, they were able to launch rockets all the way to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, with a range of nearly 75 km. And despite its alleged accuracy, the Israeli anti-missile system dubbed Iron Dome could only intercept 421 out of 1,506 rockets fired by the resistance. Israeli economic losses as a result amounted to nearly $790 million. Furthermore, the Palestinian resistance and Haniyyah's government received broad Arab, Islamic and international support and sympathy. The resistance did not halt fighting until Israel agreed to lift the blockade of GS. Although Israel did not lift the blockade afterwards except partially, this was still a great moral victory for the resistance.[63]

The Arab uprisings, or what had become known as the Arab Spring, that began in early 2011, brought a strong morale boost to Haniyyah's government in GS. To be sure, the revolutions were an expression of the will of the peoples who support the Palestinian resistance in general, and are hostile to Israel. They also brought "political Islam" to power, especially in Egypt. This helped ease the blockade of GS, due to the fact that the new Egyptian regime led by Muhammad Morsi and the government of Hisham Qandil sympathize with the government in GS. The Egyptian prime minister visited GS during the Israeli aggression on the Strip in November 2012, and was followed by Arab and Muslim foreign ministers, officials, and others who expressed solidarity with the Gazans. Egypt had an active role in stopping the Israeli assault and imposing Palestinian conditions. The visit by the Emir of Qatar on 23/10/2012, and then the prime minister of Malaysia on 22/1/2013, also had a strong moral effect, in conjunction with economic support that helped ease the political and economic siege of GS. However, the Islamist administration in Egypt did not enjoy the kind of stability that would have allowed it to play a deeper role in Palestinian affairs. Then, on 3/7/2013, a military coup in Egypt ended the role of political Islam, strengthening the blockade of GS, and restoring most of the policies enforced by Egypt under Hosni Mubarak vis-à-vis the Palestinian issue.

5. The PLO

Although the PLO established the PA and gave it cover and legitimacy, the PA became bigger while the PLO became isolated and declined, until it appeared with time to be nothing but a mere tool of the PA. The PLO was put in the "recovery room" after it was marginalized and its institutions emptied of their content, only needed as a "rubber stamp" for taking resolutions. Despite the end of the usual legal term for the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the Executive Committee, and the Central Council being 1999, the Executive Committee and the Central Council continued to convene, and the PLO leadership (the same leadership as the PA and Fatah) used them to afford legitimacy to its legal and political stance, especially for its government in Ramallah. Its attempt to control several files, in the context of the conflict of powers after Hamas's victory in the 2006 elections, and its attempt to remove Hamas from legitimate, mainstream politics after its control of GS in 2007, necessitated ignoring the PLC, because Hamas members had the absolute majority. The PA's presidency was bound to have an authority that would bestow legitimacy on its decisions, and so it resorted to the PLO. Its institutions (and more specifically its Executive Committee and the Central Council) suddenly began to convene, debate, and issue decisions about daily PA matters, even though this violated the Basic Law. Indeed, the PLO represents a reference for the PA in major issues, and not an executive or legislative tool within the PA. Hence, this was a kind of selective activation of institutions that lack legitimacy and whose duration has expired, according to prior agreements among Palestinian forces awaiting their reformation and election.

The PNC convened 20 times between the PLO's foundation in 1964 until 1991, although the charter stipulates the holding of one meeting a year. Then in the following 20 years (until 2011), only one meeting was held! In other words, the PNC effectively lost its legislative and supervisory role (especially after the Oslo Accords in 1993), and was isolated and marginalized from the Palestinian national decision-making process. Moreover, the meeting that was held in April 1996 was only held under US-Israeli pressures to cancel the clauses of the national pact that were hostile to Israel and Zionism. It is a meeting to which Yasir 'Arafat added more than 450 new names, and therefore there were more

than 850 members who were invited to attend the session for abrogating the pact, unbeknownst to the council's head Salim al-Za'nun, and without his approval, and without submitting the new member names to the PNC committees.[64]

One is entitled to wonder about the process used to select the representatives of the Palestinian people in the PNC. Why is it still restricted to a certain part of the population, while a large part is marginalized, especially the supporters of the Islamic movement, such as Hamas and the PIJ? Why does the number of members in the PNC exceed that of the Indian parliament, or the US Congress, at a time when the Palestinians are in dire need of effectiveness, flexibility, and the ability to meet and take decisions quickly?

Any real activation of the PLO and rebuilding of its institutions is linked to comprehensive Palestinian reform, and putting the Palestinian political house in order. These two depend on conducting talks between Fatah, Hamas, and other factions to reach consensus on a joint national program. Although the PLO's reform file was an essential point in the Cairo Agreement in March 2005, it stumbled because Palestinian, Arab, and international parties feared the possible control of Hamas over the PLO, after its victory in the 2006 PLC elections in WB and GS. Although the National Reconciliation Document of Palestinian Prisoners inside Israeli Prisons (2006) and the Mecca Agreement (2007) both included clauses about the activation and reform of the PLO, no serious measures were taken in this regard. Certainly, the Fatah-Hamas conflict over legitimacy in 2007 was a reason behind the suspension of the reform process, but must not be considered the only cause. Indeed, the weakening and marginalization of the PLO was essentially linked to the peace process and the Oslo Agreement, and to the development of an individualistic style of leadership, which is at odds with institutionalization.

In 2005, there was a Palestinian consensus that the members of the PNC should number 300, half of whom would be from the WB and GS and the other half from the Palestinians in the Diaspora. However, the victory of Hamas by a vast majority represented a shock to the main movement leading the PLO and controlling the national council (i.e., Fatah). This led the PNC Head Salim al-Za'nun to head a meeting, on 4/2/2006, with more than 100 members of the PNC and Fatah in Jordan, at which he made strange and surprising statements

that were in full contradiction with what he had previously declared. He said that he would defend every member of the PNC and not allow, under any circumstances, any alterations to the PNC, whether to the number of its members or to its structure. He added that he would defend this PNC to his last drop of blood.[65] On 16/2/2006, in the opening session of the PLC, al-Za'nun declared that the 132 PLC members would be added to the 783 PNC members! The least that can be said about this step is that it thwarts any real move towards the reform of the PLO, and its institutions and elected members will be lost in the sea of appointed members!!

'Abbas sought to strengthen his influence in the PLO but without making any real reforms in its structure and institutions. He issued a decision on 9/11/2006 to appoint a person close to him, Yasir 'Abd Rabbo, as secretary of the Executive Committee, and decided on 18/12/2006 to shut down the PLO's Political Bureau headquarters in Amman, which was considered to be a blow to his adversary Faruq al-Qaddumi, head of the Political Bureau and one of the Fatah's notable leaders, whose work was thus restricted to supervising his Political Bureau in Tunisia. The Central Council and the Executive Committee gave President 'Abbas the cover needed (regardless of its legal and constitutional validity) in forming the emergency government in Ramallah and turning it into a caretaker government, and stripping Haniyyah's government of its legitimacy, in addition to a variety of decrees and measures linked to fighting Hamas, the resistance forces and their institutions in the WB. In addition, he called for early presidential and legislative elections, supporting the peace process, his election as president of the state of Palestine on 23/11/2008, and the extension of his presidential mandate that ended on 9/1/2009.

• **'Abbas and al-Za'nun in the opening of the PNC emergency session 2009**

'Abbas did not wait for the results of the Cairo dialogue with Hamas and held an emergency session of the (expired) PNC on 25/8/2009 at the presidential headquarters in Ramallah for the election of six members to the Executive Committee that would replace six of its deceased members, after the committee faced

the problem of the quorum not being met. The PNC convened in the presence of 325 members out of more than 700 registered members in 1996. It was agreed to elect four members in an uncontested election: Sa'ib 'Uraiqat, from Fatah, Ahmad Majdalani from the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), Hanna 'Amira from the PPP, and Saleh Ra'fat from Palestinian Democratic Union (Fida). As for the two remaining seats, they were won by Ahmad Qurai' from Fatah and Hanan 'Ashrawi (independent).

• **Sa'ib 'Uraiqat**

Some raised questions over the freedom the PNC enjoys under occupation and its ability to represent the Palestinian people whether those in the WB and GS or in the Diaspora, in addition to the problems linked to the expiry of its term. Questions were also raised over the presence of Yasir 'Abd Rabbo in the Executive Committee as representative of the Fida Party, which he had left years ago, while Saleh Ra'fat was its new representative. This faction, combined with its two allies (DFLP and PPP), were not able to obtain more than two seats (out of 132) in the PLC elections in 2006. Despite this they have four seats in the Executive Committee, excluding 'Abd Rabbo.[66]

• **Ahmad Majdalani**

• **Hanna 'Amira**

As for the National Reconciliation Agreement (Cairo Document) that was signed in Cairo between Fatah and Hamas and other Palestinian factions on 3/5/2011, it stated that the "political parties of both Fateh and Hamas agree that the tasks and decisions of the provisional interim leadership cannot be hindered or obstructed, but in a manner that is not conflicting with the authorities of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization." There was also a consensus on holding PNC elections, simultaneously with the PLCs in the WB and the GS.[67]

• **Saleh Ra'fat**

6. The National Reconciliation Path

Since the beginning of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, the increase of Hamas's influence put the PA in a new political crisis in addition to its various other crises. The PA found itself between the hammer of strong Israeli-American-European pressure demanding the halting of the *Intifadah* and additional concessions, and the anvil of the Islamic and national resistance demanding the adoption of a national program based on the escalation of the *Intifadah* to force the Israel to withdraw.

It was obvious that the PA was unable to take crucial and effective decisions without referring to the resistance movements, particularly Hamas. 'Arafat had tried more than once to declare the ceasing of the *Intifadah*, but it continued and grew, thus embarrassing the PA and reducing 'Arafat's credibility. Based on this reality, the PA, which was fully supported by Egypt, called for an inter-Palestinian dialogue, aiming to stop the *Intifadah* or to announce a truce, while seeking to pursue negotiations with Israel. Egypt took advantage of its inter-Arab weight and its special relations with the PA, Israel, and the US, in addition to its relations with the Palestinian opposition, to call for these talks. Hence, the most important talk took place on 10–13/11/2002 between Fatah and Hamas, and with the participation of all the Palestinian factions on 24–28/1/2003 and 4–7/12/2003. Perhaps these talks helped bring viewpoints together, but the PA failed to obtain what it wanted other than the three month truce announced by the factions, which actually only lasted 52 days (29/6–21/8/2003).

In early 2005, the Palestinians entered a new period of reconciliation and putting the Palestinian political house in order. The Palestinian factions held between 15–17/3/2005 intense talks that culminated in the Cairo Agreement, which affirmed the Palestinian fundamentals, including the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of return of the Palestinian refugees. A truce (*Hudnah*) appeasement period until the end of the year was announced, provided Israel stopped its aggressions and released the prisoners. It was also agreed to hold the PLC elections, and to pursue the reform of the PA apparatuses, as well as to reorganize the PLO on an agreed upon basis to include all trends and factions.

Generally speaking, the Palestinian municipal and legislative elections took place in an atmosphere of transparency and democracy that reflected to a large extent the balance of forces on the Palestinian arena. However, although the PLO's command, identical to the PA and Fatah command, wished for all the Palestinian forces to take part in the legislative and executive institutions, it also wanted to continue to have unrestrained control over leadership, decision-making processes, and institutions, particularly political and security ones. Moreover, it often sought to execute what it wanted from the agreements and in the manner it wanted. After the Cairo Agreement, it did nothing to restructure the PLO, and when it realized that the municipal elections do not really serve it, it thwarted the elections in Hebron and the city of Gaza. When it was surprised by Hamas's victory in the PLC elections, it took several of the aforementioned measures to confiscate some vital powers of the PLC and the Palestinian government, in order to thwart Hamas work and topple its government, and then seek new PLC elections in which Fatah would attempt to secure victory. In short, the Fatah command, after around 40 years of monopolizing leadership, was no longer used to or wished to have a real transfer of power, particularly with sides that have opposing ideologies, strategies, and priorities like the Islamic movement.

The Palestinian internal situation was, and still is, faced with two different visions and paths in dealing with the priorities and fundamentals of the national work. They have two different approaches to managing the struggle with Israel; resistance and peace settlement, and they have different ways in dealing with Arab and international states. Hence, it would not be fair to simplify the differences between Fatah and Hamas by saying they are a mere struggle for power. One cannot explain the steadfastness of Hamas in the face of the Israeli siege and aggression on GS, the shutting down of its institutions, the imprisonment of its PLC members, and the pursuit of its supporters in the WB, as being merely a wish to have a better position in power.

Besides, one cannot explain Fatah's persistence to see Hamas recognize the PLO agreements, and to form a government whose political program adheres to the PLO's program and the Quartet's conditions, except in the light of pushing Hamas towards a political program that includes the recognition of Israel and the relinquishment of most of occupied Palestine in 1948, and the ceasing of

resistance actions, which contradicts the principles of Hamas. Hence, Palestinian dialogue suffered from three main crises:

- The crisis of determining the course of Palestinian national action, including its fundamentals and priorities, ways to manage the conflict, and its political program. Indeed, there is a tug-of-war between a resistance Islamic ideology seeking change and new equations for managing the conflict, and a pragmatic national path that is adapted to Arab realism and available possibilities.

- The crisis of trust especially between Fatah and Hamas, that became deeper due to political divisions; lawlessness; the control of Hamas over the GS; the collaboration of the PA in WB with the occupation to pursue Hamas and try to eradicate it; and the mutual media and security campaigns against each other.

- The crisis of external pressures and conditions, such as the Quartet requirements and US and Israeli standards were used like a sword hanging over the dialogue process, even if different "lighter" formulations were used, namely: "abiding by the agreements signed by the PLO," and "the formation of a government that lifts the siege." All these expressions reflected the same meaning. Also, there were constant US threats to stop the peace process, cease aid, and return to a siege of the WB if Hamas participated in a government that does not meet the Quartet's requirements. Practically, the US had no objection to achieving Palestinian reconciliation as long as it leads to Fatah's victory in the elections and regaining its control over GS, in addition to containing or marginalizing Hamas and stripping it of its popular legitimacy. Any other path would mean the continuation and worsening of the siege and the crisis.

Amidst the struggle for power and the Israeli siege after the victory of Hamas and its formation of the 10th government, the National Reconciliation Document of Palestinian Prisoners inside Israeli Prisons emerged. It was signed by figures who were imprisoned in the occupation's jails and who belonged to various factions, including Fatah, Hamas, and the PIJ.[68]

The document affirmed the meaning of national unity; the peaceful transfer of power; cooperation and integration between the presidency, the government, the PLC, and the judicial authority; the formation of a national unity government;

the reform of the PA and the PLO; formation of a unified resistance front with a unified political reference. The document also affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state on all territories occupied in 1967, with Jerusalem (*al-Quds*) as its capital, to secure the right of return for the refugees and to liberate all prisoners and detainees based on the historical right of the Palestinian people based on the UN Charter and international law. The document ratified, in its third clause, the adoption of negotiations and diplomatic action in tandem with resistance, and stipulated in its seventh clause that the administration of negotiations falls within the jurisdiction of the PLO and the president of the PA, on the condition that any agreement must be presented to the new PNC for ratification or a general referendum to be held in the homeland and the Diaspora.

The representative of the PIJ expressed reservations on the seventh clause pertaining to the negotiations, while Hamas prisoners in Nafha, Ashkelon, Beersheba, Naqab, Ofer, and Majeddo issued a statement in which they declared that the document did not reflect their true position, rejecting a number of the issues, and expressing reservations on other clauses.[69]

The document was acclaimed by President 'Abbas and the PLO's Executive Committee, reflecting the support the text gave to negotiations with Israel. The document also focused on the establishment of a Palestinian state on all the territories occupied in 1967, without confirming or denying whether this would constitute a final peace settlement and without confirming or denying the right to liberate the land occupied in 1948. Moreover, the document put the results

• **National Dialogue Conference 2006**

of the negotiation process in the hands of the new PNC or a referendum, despite Hamas's initial stance that fundamentals cannot be the subject of a referendum or vote. 'Abbas said at the National Dialogue Conference, which was held by the

PLC in Gaza and Ramallah on 25–26/5/2006, that he would subject the document to a popular referendum if no agreement was reached within 10 days.[70]

Officially, Hamas considered the document to be a good basis for discussion, but refused to adopt it as such, or to conduct a referendum on it. After lengthy negotiations, the document was issued in its amended form on 28/6/2006, keeping most of its original content and an ambiguity regarding several interpretations that could be used by Fatah, Hamas, and the other factions. The clauses pertaining to the negotiations process were maintained, with the addition in the fourth clause that comprehensive Palestinian political action must take place in a manner that preserves the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

Despite what appeared to be a concession by Hamas regarding the administration of the PLO and the Palestinian leadership of the negotiations process, talks on forming a national unity government stumbled due to the continued state of lawlessness, the intensification of the Israeli and international siege, and the Israeli campaign against Hamas and the resistance forces following the capture of Gilad Shalit. It is amid these circumstances that Saudi King 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul 'Aziz called on 29/1/2007 for a dialogue between Fatah and Hamas in Mecca. The invitation was welcomed by both sides, and numerous meetings were held on 6–8/2/2007, leading to the Mecca Agreement, which affirmed the sanctity of Palestinian blood and agreed on the establishment of a national unity government, and also on going ahead with the development and reform of the PLO. Furthermore, it affirmed the principle of political partnership and the basis of political multiplicity.[71]

• **Mecca Agreement**

The Mecca Agreement included a text in which the government of Isma'il Haniyyah commits to the entrustment letter issued by the PA president in regard to protecting the higher national interests of Palestinians, preserving their rights, maintaining and developing what they acquire, and working on achieving national objectives as ratified by PNC decisions, the Basic Law, the

National Reconciliation Document, and the decisions of Arab summits. On these bases "the government respect the agreements signed by the PLO," and this was included in the government's program.[72] Many considered that the PA's use of the term "respect" represents a new concession by Hamas, while Hamas considered that even though this term reassured Fatah and others, it did not contain any concessions or legal implications, and that it was necessary to use it, in order to end division and face the siege. Hamas also had to respond to the number two man in al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who accused it of making concessions, saying that Palestine is an Islamic endowment land, and no one can cede a single tract of it, and that Hamas is a "movement of struggle and resistance, and will remain so, as long as there is one tract of Palestine occupied."[73]

The Mecca Agreement only survived three months. Indeed, despite Haniyyah's formation of a national unity government that gained the vote of confidence of the PLC, that period was rife with state of lawlessness and attempts by Israel, the US, and a group within the Fatah Movement to thwart progress. This led to an overt struggle between Fatah and Hamas, which resulted in the control of Hamas over the GS. Thus, in addition to political conflict and power struggle, there was geographical separation, the formation of two governments in Ramallah and Gaza, violence, and a lack of trust. This hampered the occurrence of any possible understandings or dealings in a civilized institutional manner.

President 'Abbas and his supporters viewed Hamas as having conducted a bloody overthrow and that no understanding with it was possible until it recanted it and announced its commitment to Palestinian, Arab, and international "legitimacy." 'Abbas announced before the PLO's Central Council on 18/7/2007 the end of the Cairo Agreement (17/3/2005), and accused Hamas of an assassination attempt against him. He also called for early presidential and PLC elections based on proportional representation. Certainly, the notion of proportional representation was acclaimed by the factions and small parties (particularly the leftist ones) because it would turn them from parties with a marginal impact on the Palestinian decision-making process into potential *king makers* with decisive impact, especially in light of the differences between Fatah and Hamas. Moreover, 'Abbas went extreme

when he sought to impose a rule on every candidate to the PLC that he must first adhere to the PLO's political stance (before its restructuring and reform and inclusion of Hamas, PIJ, and the other resistance forces). This effectively meant keeping Hamas away from the political process and eliminating any opportunity for reconciliation.[74]

As for Hamas, it considered that what it did was a legitimate, inevitable act, under the order of the PA's prime minister, who himself was performing the tasks of minister of interior, with the support of the majority of the PLC. He faced the promotion of lawlessness of the PA security forces, which refused to comply with the government's instructions. Hamas considered Haniyyah's caretaker government the legitimate government under the Palestinian Basic Law, while the formation of the government in Ramallah was a violation of this Law. Hamas wanted dialogue, but without any prior conditions. It refused to disregard the legitimacy of the PLC and the government. It also refused to use PLO institutions outside their jurisdiction in order to go beyond the PA's legislative institutions, and called for dealing quickly with the security file and rebuilding the security forces on national and professional bases and eliminating any corrupt or suspicious members.[75]

The Palestinian factions, namely those affiliated with the PLO, were clearer in their strong criticism of the "overthrow" conducted by Hamas and more understanding of 'Abbas's measures in the WB. They made minor criticisms of the decrees issued by 'Abbas and the strict security measures he took. It must be noted that these factions, especially the leftists, were closer to Hamas's political stance in criticizing the peace process as championed by 'Abbas.

The DFLP submitted an initiative for national reconciliation based on four points:

- Hamas renunciation of its overthrow in GS.

- The formation of a transitional government headed by an independent leader, to prepare for new elections.

- The amendment of the general elections system by adopting the proportional representation system.

- The activation and development of the PLO.[76]

• **Fatah and Hamas discuss Yemeni Initiative**

But this initiative fell upon deaf ears, and there was a succession of Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic efforts to reconcile Fatah and Hamas. A major effort was the Yemeni Initiative, which ended with the San'aa Declaration of 23/3/2008. However, both this declaration and 'Azzam al-Ahmad, who signed it on behalf of Fatah, were heavily condemned by President 'Abbas's advisors, thus thwarting the opportunity to build upon the declaration. The approval of Fatah and Hamas of the Yemeni Initiative were stipulated as a framework within which to resume dialogue between the two movements and go back to the pre-Gaza events status quo (14/6/2007). 'Abbas tended to take his advisors' stance, considering the Yemeni Initiative a framework for execution rather than for dialogue.

In his capacity as the head of the OIC summit, Senegalese President 'Abdoulaye Wade attempted to achieve reconciliation in June 2008, when he met with two delegations from Hamas and Fatah in Dakar, but without achieving any tangible results.

• **'Abdoulaye Wade**

On 5/6/2008, President 'Abbas called again for dialogue in a positive and reconciliatory tone, and for Egypt to sponsor the dialogue. Egypt and Hamas welcomed the idea, and Egypt prepared for the dialogue with the participation of 14 Palestinian factions, drafting a reconciliation paper. However, the atmosphere became tense because of the continuing campaign of arrests of Hamas members in the WB, and lack of seriousness in the talks. The Egyptians informed Hamas that 'Abbas would sit on the platform at the opening alongside several Arab officials, and that he would leave the room after the officials' speeches. Hamas asked that 'Abbas attends all the dialogue sessions in his capacity as Fatah leader, and a major side in the conflict, and not a sponsor of the conference. There were also doubts that 'Abbas really wanted the conference to be held as he was more concerned

with retaining the international legitimacy to renew his mandate as head of the PA. Hence, Hamas and three other factions (PIJ, PFLP–GC, al-Sa'iqah) refused to attend the Cairo meeting, which was thus cancelled, angering the Egyptian government.

The outstanding performance and steadfastness of the GS during the Israeli aggression on 27/12/2008–18/1/2009, and the increase of Hamas's popularity, and the sense among its opponents that it was difficult, if not impossible to overthrow Hamas, all gave a strong push to the national dialogue. Egyptian-sponsored dialogue sessions were held between Fatah and Hamas on 24–25/2/2009, followed by the participation of the other factions on 26/2/2009. Five committees were formed to deal with the issues of the PLO, elections, security, transitional government, and national reconciliation. Six dialogue sessions were held, the last being on 28–30/6/2009, and it appeared that a great leap forward was achieved on several issues. However, the issue of Palestinian political detainees, especially in the WB, continued to cast its shadow on the talks. The negotiations were lengthy, the stifling siege on GS worsened, the popularity Hamas enjoyed after the war on GS ebbed away, and the PA leadership began to hope to achieve a breakthrough in the peace process after Barack Obama was inaugurated as president of the US. Consequently, Fatah was no longer in a hurry, and increasingly hardened its stances. At a time when Hamas focused on a comprehensive reconciliation agreement that would be fairly implemented on the ground, Fatah focused on forming a national unity government that would be able to lift the siege (i.e., was not opposed by Israel and the international community) and on holding presidential and legislative elections.

Egypt submitted a final detailed proposal for the reconciliation agreement composed of 4,100 words (22 pages) and asked Fatah and Hamas to sign it before 15/10/2010. Amidst the wide and very strong criticism of the weak performance of the PA towards the Goldstone Report, regarding the Israeli aggression against GS, Fatah rushed to approve, while Hamas asked for some time to peruse the text. The Egyptian document can be summed up as follows:

- Affirming the activation and development of the PLO.

- Forming a temporary leadership framework until the election of a new PNC that makes its decisions by consensus.

- Holding presidential, PLC and PNC elections simultaneously. The PNC elections would take place according to full proportional representation in

the homeland and abroad. PLC elections would take place with 75% will be elected according to lists and 25% will be elected according to region, with a 2% determination rate.

- Security forces would be professional and non-factional, and a supreme security committee would be established, by order of the Palestinian president, comprised of professional officers, by agreement. The Egyptians and representatives of the Arab countries will oversee the committee so as to monitor its implementation of the National Reconciliation Document in the WB and in GS.

- Resolving all the violations that resulted from the state of lawlessness and divisions in a legal and legitimate manner.

- Releasing all political detainees in the WB and the GS.

The crisis of trust and recent historical experience played a role in the document's insistence that Hamas revise the text and enshrine expressions, the elimination or amendment of which could be used as an exit to retreat from commitments. Hamas insisted on several amendments that can be summed up as follows:

- When talking about the temporary leadership framework of the PLO, they added the sentence: The aforementioned tasks cannot be suspended because they gained unanimous national approval.

- Amending the paragraph about the elections committee so that it stipulates the formation of a national consensus elections committee, upon a presidential decree.

- Demanding the addition of a text clarifying that the formation of the higher security committee "is agreed upon."

- Amending the following text: "The Palestinian security forces are restored and structured with Egyptian and Arab help," by replacing the term "restored" with "rebuilt."[77]

However, the Egyptian government and the Fatah Movement refused to debate or amend the document. Thus, the reconciliation project continued to stumble, and Palestinian attempts to reach adequate solutions by sides such as the PFLP and independent officials such as Munib al-Masry and Yasir al-Wadiyyah, did not help. There were also mediation attempts by Qatar, KSA, Sudan, Libya, and Turkey, but in vain.

The file was breached once again after Mish'al's meeting in Mecca with the chief of the Egyptian General Intelligence Service 'Umar Suleiman, who said that he didn't mind if Fatah and Hamas agreed on understandings that take into account the reservations of Hamas on the Egyptian paper.[78] Talks were held in Damascus on 24/9/2010, during which many of Hamas's amendments were adopted, except for the security aspect. The two movements met in Damascus once again on 9/11/2010, but to no avail.

The changes in the Arab world since early 2011 contributed to the increase of pressures towards Palestinian reconciliation. The signature of Fatah and Hamas on the National Reconciliation Agreement in Cairo on 3/5/2011, after making Hamas's amendments and after resolving the security issue, represented a milestone in the path to national unity.

On 20/12/2011, the Palestinian factions met in Cairo and agreed to form a central elections committee, committee of freedom and confidence building in the WB and GS, and the societal reconciliation committee. In early February 2012, Fatah and Hamas agreed to appoint President 'Abbas himself as head of the upcoming consensus government, in what seemed to be a gesture of goodwill by Hamas to push reconciliation forward. However, reconciliation faltered and stalled until the time of writing this document (summer 2013).

However, there are still enormous challenges that will be faced by both parties in achieving reconciliation. Indeed, the two sides need a real program to build trust between them and to deal firmly with those benefiting from the division, in addition to preventing external interference, namely by Israel and the US, aiming to thwart this agreement.

Third: The Path to Peace Talks

The Israeli strategy for negotiation was based on "management" rather than "resolution." It aimed to weaken Israel's opponents by all means until they accepted the only available option on Israeli terms, and this explains why the negotiations process was stalled. The Israelis had managed, since the signature of the Oslo Accords in September 1993, to reinforce Yitzhak Rabin's saying "no dates are sacred,"[79] which became the basis of Israel's policy and one of its means of pressure and blackmail.

When the Labor Party, led by Ehud Barak, came back to power after three years of Likud rule (1996–1999), it announced its wish to reach a final settlement but presented a platform based on the Five Nos:[80]

1. No to returning East Jerusalem to the Palestinians, and Jerusalem is the eternal, united capital of the State of Israel and only of Israel.

2. No to Israel's return to the borders of the pre-1967 war.

3. No to the return of Palestinian refugees.

4. No to the removal of Jewish settlements in the WB and the GS.

5. No to the presence of an Arab army in the WB (meaning that the Palestinian state should be without an army or full sovereignty).

In the summer of 2000, the Israeli and Palestinian sides were invited to Camp David by US President Bill Clinton, where marathon negotiations were held on 12–25/7/2000 to reach a final agreement. It appears that the matter of borders and settlement blocs were among the issues that could be agreed upon (more than 90% of the GS and all the WB to the Palestinians, with land swaps, and Israel allowed to keep

• **Camp David meetings 2000**

the settlement blocs). However, the issues of Jerusalem and the return of the Palestinian refugees remained without any solution, leading to the collapse of negotiations and the launching of the *al-Aqsa Intifadah* two months later.

Israel moved towards more extremism, and Ehud Barak was forced to resign as a prime minister on 9/12/2000. Ariel Sharon won the general elections on 6/2/2001 against his opponent Barak with a historical majority of more than 25%, thus confirming the return of the extremist Likud Party.

Sharon was unable to provide security to the Israelis and to crush the *Intifadah* within 100 days as he had promised. Instead Sharon tried to change the dynamic and impose the reality he wanted. He did not believe in reaching a peace settlement, as he had voted against the Camp David Accords with Egypt and against the Oslo Accords. He had also expressed reservations on the Treaty

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of Peace Between The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan And The State of Israel, and had claimed several times that the Oslo Accords were dead. When Sharon came to power, his project was essentially a security one, and he only offered Palestinians autonomy over 40–45% of the WB. He also refused to enter into any talks before the *Intifadah* ended. Sharon stayed in power until early 2006, and the peace talks stumbled

• Ariel Sharon

during his mandate, with Israel busy repressing the *Intifadah* and trying to find alternate solutions.

1. The Geneva Accord

While the Palestinians were busy with the *Intifadah*, secret negotiations took place for two years between a group close to the Palestinian presidency and Fatah, and an Israeli group close to the Israeli left and center. The negotiations led, in late 2003, to the Geneva Accord which was set to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is a Draft Permanent Status Agreement that stipulates the following:

- It affirms "that this agreement marks the recognition of the right of the Jewish people to statehood and the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to statehood."

- "Palestine shall be a non-militarized state," and would include the WB and GS with border amendments that would annex the settlement blocs and Jewish districts in Jerusalem to Israel. The latter in exchange would relinquish the same size and quality of an area from "its land." The land is about 2–3% of the WB area.

- "The Parties shall have their mutually recognized capitals in the areas of Jerusalem under their respective sovereignty." There shall be no digging, excavation, or construction on *al-Aqsa* Mosque or what the Israelis call "Temple Mount, unless approved by the two Parties. The initiative considered the Jewish district" in Jerusalem, the Western Wall, and the Jewish cemetery in the Mount of Olives, shall be under Israeli administration.

- The initiative gave the refugees the right to return to the Palestinian state, but didn't give them the right to go back to their land that was occupied in 1948, and made the acceptance of their return a matter of Israeli sovereignty. It also

stated that refugees "shall be entitled to compensation for their refugeehood and for loss of property."

-   The initiative approved the setting up of strict security arrangements in the Palestinian state areas that would prevent any "terrorist" acts against Israel. It may maintain two Early Warning Station in the northern, and central WB, and the "Israeli Air Force shall be entitled to use the Palestinian sovereign airspace for training purposes."

-   All border crossings shall be monitored by joint teams composed of members of the Palestinian Security Forces (PSF) and Multinational Force (MF). All border crossings shall be monitored by joint teams composed of members of the PSF and the MF.[81]

Although this was an unofficial initiative, it was significant because it showed the extent to which the Palestinian leadership can push for Palestinian rights in the proposed state. The participating Palestinian officials who were a major part of the decision-making process, among whom were many ministers and leaders, such as Yasir 'Abd Rabbo, the secretary of the PLO Executive Committee and former minister of information and culture; Hisham 'Abdul Raziq, former minister of detainees' affairs; Nabil Qassis, former minister of tourism; Ghaith al-'Umari, the political advisor to Mahmud 'Abbas; and also Qaddoura Fares, Muhammad al-Hourani; Zuhair Manasra, all among the well known leaders of Fatah.

• **Yasir 'Abd Rabbo**

• **Hisham 'Abdul Raziq**

• **Muhammad al-Hourani**

• **Nabil Qassis**

• **Qaddoura Fares**

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As for Israeli participants, they all belonged to the Israeli opposition and do not have a comparable role in the Israeli decision-making process: Yossi Beilin, Yossi Sarid, Amnon Shahak, Amram Mitzna, and Avraham Burg.

• Yossi Beilin

• Yossi Sarid

• Amnon Shahak

• Amram Mitzna

• Avraham Burg

2. The Arab Initiative

The Arab summits and the Arab League continued to govern most of the Arab vision of Palestine's future. Moreover, the clauses of the Arab Project for Peace adopted at the Fez Arab Summit in 1982 defined the path for Arab stances. The project stated that an "independent Palestinian State should be set up [in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967] with Al Qods (Jerusalem) as its capital," and it affirmed "the right of the Palestinian Arab people to return to their homes," and that all "States in the region should be able to live in peace."[82]

In 2002, the Saudi Peace Initiative, which was adopted at the Arab summit in Beirut on 27–28/3/2002, replaced the Fez Arab Project for Peace and became the reference for the Arab vision of a peace settlement. In essence, it did not differ from the initiatives preceding it regarding the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the WB and the GS and the return of the refugees. However it does state that "the acceptance by Israel to this initiative means that Arabs could establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace."[83]

3. The Road Map

It appeared that there was a new Palestinian political victory when the UN Security Council issued resolution 1397 on 12/3/2002, which reflected for the first time a clear vision regarding the future of the struggle to establish an independent Palestinian state that would "live side by side" with Israel.[84]

On 24/6/2002, George W. Bush presented his vision for the final peace settlement, calling for negotiations that would lead to the "emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state," and two states who would "live side by side in peace and security."[85] This vision was adopted by the Quartet, and was amended in its final form in April 2003 into what became known as the Road Map.[86]

• **George W. Bush**

The importance of the Road Map lies in the fact that it is the first declared US commitment to establish the Palestinian state within a set time frame, i.e., by the end of 2005. It was divided into three phases and based on a trust-building program between the two parties, and offered comprehensive security guarantees to Israel, while demanding that the PA stop the *Intifadah* and launch a comprehensive political, administrative, and economic reform process. The Road Map was full of loopholes: even though it called for reaching a final and comprehensive permanent status agreement, it did not offer a plan for resolving key issues, instead leaving them for future negotiations. It did not impose anything on the Israeli negotiator, while it put the Palestinian negotiator at Israel's mercy. Practically speaking, what the US implemented were Palestinian commitments. But the Israelis did not implement their commitments, not even those related to the first phase of the Road Map, namely dismantling settlement outposts and freezing all settlement activity.

The Road Map did not offer a vision regarding the final status issues (Jerusalem, the refugees, the settlements, the borders, sovereignty…), or any real mechanism to force the Israeli side to execute its commitments. Moreover, it focused on guaranteeing the security of the occupying power instead of providing security to the victims of this power.

On 25/5/2003, the Israeli government approved the Road Map, but entered 14 reservations about it, thus practically stripping it of its intended authority. The US administration expressed its understanding of the Israeli reservations,

which included the end of the *Intifadah*; the dismantling of "the existing security organizations" and implementing "security reforms during the course of which new organizations will be formed" where these "organizations will engage in genuine prevention of terror and violence." Also, the PA was obliged to "complete the dismantling of terrorist organizations (Hamas, PIJ, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and other apparatuses) and their infrastructure," while collecting all illegal weapons and ceasing weapons smuggling and incitement, before any progress to the second phase of the Road Map. This was just the first reservation, but it was enough to halt the Road Map for years, and gave a hint of a potential civil war among Palestinians. As for the other reservations, they called for the emergence of a new and different leadership in the PA, eliminated the time frame of the Road Map and the Saudi Initiative as reference, as well as UN Security Council Resolution 1397 which affirms "a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side." These reservations were in addition to the Israeli condition that Palestinians announce "Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and to the waiver of any right of return for Palestinian refugees" to the 1948 occupied Palestinian land.[87]

The PA for its part put together all the security forces in three apparatuses and created the Prime Minister's Office, where Mahmud 'Abbas was first appointed followed by Ahmad Qurai'. After Yasir 'Arafat's death, the Palestinians in the WB and the GS elected Mahmud 'Abbas as president of the PA on 9/1/2005. This authority made various governmental amendments, particularly on the financial and economic levels, as evidence of transparency. The PA was able to convince the Palestinian factions to unilaterally declare appeasement on 22/1/2005 and then declare a ceasefire between the PA and Israel on February 8th.

On 21/6/2005, Sharon met 'Abbas in Jerusalem, and despite Sharon's acknowledgment of the progress made at the security and appeasement level, he did not deem it to be sufficient. According to Israeli sources, 'Abbas demanded that Israel "strengthen his hand" and told Sharon, "Our situation is bad... Every bullet and mortar fired at you is fired against me too." He added that in his difficult situation, Israel was asking a lot from the PA, as most of the operations against were launched from Israeli controlled areas.[88]

Sharon-'Abbas meeting

4. Unilateral Separation

Israel's unilateral separation means that it set the final form of its borders and of the peace settlement, by maintaining the largest surface area of the land, and getting rid of the greatest number of Palestinians, without having to pay costly dues linked to Jerusalem, refugees, or the dismantlement of the settlements in the WB. The issue therefore ultimately seemed like a border problem between the Palestinians and the Israelis that could die with time. The idea of unilateral separation dominated the Israeli political vision from the end of 2003 to 2006.

On 18/12/2003, Sharon announced that he had adopted the idea, and in April 2004 he presented the Disengagement Plan, which included that "Israel will evacuate the Gaza Strip, including all existing Israeli towns and villages, and will redeploy outside the Strip." It stated that "Israel will guard and monitor the external land perimeter of the Gaza Strip, will continue to maintain exclusive authority in Gaza air space, and will continue to exercise security activity in the sea off the coast of the Gaza Strip." This practically implied turning GS into a large prison, and would keep it under Israeli occupation according to international law. The Disengagement Plan included the maintenance of six settlement blocs in the WB, in addition to East Jerusalem and the settlements around it.[89]

The US supported the unilateral Disengagement Plan at a joint press conference between Bush and Sharon in Washington on 14/4/2004, and the implementation plan was divided into several parts, beginning with withdrawal from GS and four isolated settlements in the WB.

Al-Aqsa Intifadah played a major role in pushing the Israelis to withdraw from the GS after it had become a security and economic burden.[90] The protection of around eight thousand settlers in GS was a costly and draining, requiring the deployment of thousands of soldiers to protect the settlements amidst one million and 400 thousand Palestinians. Nonetheless, the Israeli government sought to exploit its withdrawal to achieve the greatest number of political and material gains. Indeed, it was getting rid of a great demographic burden that could not be part of any plan aiming to preserve the Jewish identity of the state. Moreover, redeployment of the Israeli army ended any contact with the Gazans, decreased the possibility of being attacked, and made the resistance in the GS lose international justification for its military operations. The Israeli government,

on one hand, took advantage of the Road Map plan and tried to isolate the WB in order to Judaize Jerusalem, erect the Separation Wall, confiscate land and secure the settlement blocs under any future political settlement. On another hand, it attempted to improve its image and present itself to the international community as a peace-loving partner enduring "painful" concessions for peace.

The Israeli withdrawal from GS began in mid-August 2005 and ended on 11/9/2005. Israel announced its unilateral withdrawal and retention of control over the GS's borders, coastline, airspace, and border crossings. On 15/11/2005, it reached an agreement with the PA on border management with European supervision and surveillance cameras that constantly monitor the search process for the Israelis. The PA agreed to consult with the Israelis and the third party (Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement and his staff and/ or the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) and his staff) prior to the PA making a decision to prohibit travel or not. During this consultation, which should not take more than six hours, the person in question would not be permitted to cross.[91] The PA celebrated the opening of the border on 25/11/2005.

The Israeli government's enthusiasm for the Disengagement Plan did not last long, as frustration began to set in during the second half of 2006, and the plan was no longer on the government's list of priorities, until it was discarded, namely due to:[92]

- The victory of Hamas in elections, the formation of its government, and the failure of the attempts to topple it spread concern that a withdrawal may be viewed as a victory for Hamas and a consolidation of its authority on the ground.

- The failure of the Israeli war on Lebanon and Hizbullah in the summer of 2006, and the increasing conviction that the pullout from South Lebanon in 2000 strengthened Hizbullah's and the resistance's abilities and heightened the fear that a similar scenario might be repeated in the WB.

- The decrease in popularity of the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the Kadima Party weakened Olmert's ability to manipulate events in Israel's favor.

- Convictions on the necessity of supporting Mahmud 'Abbas and coordinating with him to confront Hamas.

- The Israeli public was preoccupied with corruption scandals and the investigations in to the war on Lebanon.

- The emergence of security, economic, and legal difficulties that deterred its implementation on the ground, and Olmert considered, in mid-August 2006, that his convergence plan was no longer at the top of his government's agenda. Olmert said it was impossible to ignore the Palestinian problem, but added that at that point in time (after the 2006 war on Lebanon), Israel and its government faced the enormous challenge of rebuilding the North.[93]

5. The Return Through Negotiations to the Palestinian State Option

The victory of Hamas in the elections confounded the Palestinian and Israeli governments and affected the peace process, as everyone involved attempted to control or topple Hamas. When President 'Abbas formed the emergency government headed by Salam Fayyad in Ramallah following Hamas's control of the GS in June 2007, Israel opened the way to cooperate with it, especially on the security level. There was again talk about stirring the peace process, which was rounded off by the Annapolis Conference in the US on 27/11/2007.

The Israelis offered nothing new; they still wanted an entity that was more than autonomous, but less than an independent state. Many propositions were made by Israeli leaders affiliated mainly with the Kadima Party, which remained in power until February 2009 and included Ehud Olmert, Tzipi Livni, Shimon Peres, Haim Ramon. They called for a withdrawal from around 90% of the WB while maintaining the settlement blocs and conducting an exchange of lands to compensate Palestinians for what they would lose because of the settlements.

2009 was the year when the extreme right returned to power under the leadership of Likud, which still believed that it was possible to "squeeze" the Palestinians further in order to achieve even more concessions. Although the US under Obama initially stirred the peace process, it failed in imposing the simplest condition of the Road Map, namely to freeze settlement construction. Hence, the course of negotiations was suspended throughout 2009, and stumbled in 2010. Indeed, efforts were made at resuming the talks, and led to agreement on indirect talks to be followed by direct talks, in exchange for Israel announcing a 10-month construction freeze on all of its WB settlements. However, these efforts collapsed when Israel categorically refused to extend the freezing period, which ended on 26/9/2010.

The Arab revolutions, which began to emerge and expand in early 2011, rendered the peace process even harder to attain, when the Arab regimes supporting it (mainly Egypt) collapsed. Israeli and US policy suffered from a worrisome situation, where Israel tightened its security measures and reinforced its military infrastructure. Moreover, there was additional talk about the establishment of a Palestinian state within temporary borders, and the postponement of other final status issues. There was also talk about unilateral withdrawal.

A new push for the peace process began in July 2013, when the Palestinian leadership under President 'Abbas agreed to abandon its condition of suspending the settlement building before resuming any negotiations, which it had clung to for three years. This coincided with the military coup that took place in Egypt on 3/7/2013, and which hit Islamist factions in Egypt hard. So far, it appears that the political attitudes of this coup are in support of the PA led by 'Abbas and its negotiations track, and is unfriendly towards Hamas, which is what gave a strong push to the peace process. However, it is difficult to expect the two sides to reach a final peace settlement in light of a number of sensitive issues to which it will be difficult for the two sides to reach a solution, such as those of the refugees and Jerusalem—albeit the American side had promised to try to reach a final solution within six to nine months from the start of negotiations.

6. The One-State Option

Even if the Palestinian negotiator did not initially take heed, the option of a bi-national state began to receive increasing Palestinian attention due to the prevailing frustration regarding the two-state solution. Palestinian intellectuals and leaders affiliated with Fatah began talking about the one state option either as a tool to pressure and threaten the Israeli side, or as realistically the only option to exit the crisis and end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

On 11/8/2008, Reuters reported that when Ahmad Qurai' met behind closed doors with Fatah members, while he was leading negotiations after Annapolis, he did not exclude the idea of a bi-national state with the Israelis on historic Palestine. Moreover, Sa'ib 'Uraiqat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, suggested in November 2009 the adoption of the one-state solution, if the Israelis failed to stop building settlements.[94]

Fourth: Jerusalem and the Status Quo

Jerusalem is a central issue in the Zionist Jewish thought due to religious and historical considerations. UNGA Resolution 181 (the 1947 Partition Plan) stipulated the partitioning of Palestine into two states (Arab and Jewish), considered Jerusalem a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime should be administered by the UN. But the Zionists invaded West Jerusalem in 1948, and expelled 60 thousand of its Arab residents. The Palestinians own around 88.7% of the area of West Jerusalem, which was Judaized entirely by the Zionists, who built Jewish residential neighborhoods there as well as in the confiscated Arab towns surrounding it, such as Lifta, where the Israeli parliament (Knesset) and several ministries were built, in addition to 'Ein Karem, Deir Yasin, al-Maliha, and others.[95]

• Lifta village

• Knesset Building on Lifta land

In 1967, Israel continued its occupation of East Jerusalem, which was under Jordanian control, and which is considered to be a part of the WB. There began an intense Judaization campaign in East Jerusalem, and it was announced that the two parts of Jerusalem were unified under Israeli administration on 27/6/1967. An official Israeli announcement was made on 30/7/1980 declaring Jerusalem the eternal and unified capital of Israel.[96]

Israel gradually expanded the scope of Jerusalem's borders so it could include other areas of the WB, and so that it could conduct a large-scale Judaization of the city. When Israel occupied Jerusalem in 1967, East Jerusalem extended over 6.5 km^2 and West Jerusalem extended over 24 km^2. So it widened the scope of the city to 104 km^2, which it took from land belonging to 28 Palestinian towns

in the vicinity of Jerusalem, most of which were located east of the city, i.e., in the WB. Israel continued to expand the city's municipal borders during the 1970s and 80s until its area reached 126 km², of which 72 km² are located in East Jerusalem and 54 km² in West Jerusalem.

According to estimates of 2010, there are 776 thousand inhabitants in Jerusalem (East and West), including 492 thousand Jews (63.4%), of whom 200 thousand reside in East Jerusalem; and 284 thousand Arabs (36.6%), who almost all live in East Jerusalem.[97] As for 2013, the number of Jews is estimated to be 514 thousand and the Arabs 309 thousand, since the annual population growth of the Jews is 1.5% and the Arabs 2.9%. Despite all its stringent measures, the Israeli occupation has failed until now in executing its plan to decrease the proportion of Arabs to 22%.

Israel confiscated most of the land in East Jerusalem, and built the settlements that surrounded East Jerusalem and deprived the Palestinians of the right to build on most of Jerusalem's land. There remained only nine thousand donums (out of 72 thousand donums) allocated for building purposes, i.e., 12.5% of the East Jerusalem area, or 7.25% of the Jerusalem area defined by the occupation.

On 11/6/1967, the Israeli forces expelled the residents of the Moroccan Quarter, minutes after giving them a warning to exit their premises. This was followed by the demolition of the Quarter's 135 houses that faced the Western Wall, most of which were Islamic endowments. Everything was razed to the ground, so that Jews could use the place for worship. The Israeli authorities controlled the Sharaf neighborhood, which is known as the Jewish Quarter, in the Old City. Indeed, they issued on 18/4/1968 an order to confiscate 116 donums including that neighborhood, Chain Gate Street, al-Bashura neighborhood and the Moroccan Quarter. The area contained five mosques, two nooks, four schools, an ancient market, and 700 buildings, of which the Jews owned 105 buildings before the 1948 war, and the Arabs owned 595 buildings.

The Israeli authorities began to build the first Israeli settlement, Ramat Eshkol, east of Jerusalem in 1968, with subsequent settlements built rapidly after that. They built a strip of 11 Jewish neighborhoods within East Jerusalem and a larger strip around Jerusalem composed of 17 Jewish settlements, in an attempt to separate Jerusalem from its Arab and Islamic surroundings, and therefore stop any peace agreement that might restore East Jerusalem to the Palestinians.[98]

The Separation Wall was built to surround Jerusalem, extends to over 167 km and aims to isolate it from its Arab and Islamic surroundings. According to reports, around 231 thousand Palestinians, about 56% of Jerusalemites, will be segregated by the Wall. Also, this Jerusalem Envelope isolates 617 holy and historical sites from their Arab and Islamic surroundings.

Moreover, the Israeli authorities endeavored to achieve a permanent and direct Jewish presence in *al-Aqsa* Mosque and its surroundings, in order to give Jewish character to the Old City and facilitate the breaking into the mosque, as well as providing a cover for the excavation works. The Israeli authorities allowed the building of synagogues at the Mosque's Wall, such as the Tankaziyya School Synagogue, and below the mosque such as Wilson's Arch, and in its vicinity, such as the Ohel Yitzhak (Tent of Isaac) and Hurva Synagogues. Their most notable achievement was the inauguration of the latter in 2010.

The Israelis began an intense campaign of excavations below and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque, focusing on the western and southern areas. This led to the appearance of cracks in several buildings, including the Ottoman Mosque, Ribat al-Kurd, al-Jawahiriya School and al-Majakia School. The excavations have been through 10 stages since 1967, and were active but discreet, reaching a dangerous level when diggers began to remove soil and rocks from under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the Dome of the Rock and used chemicals to melt the rocks. This led *al-Aqsa* Mosque to be at risk of collapse at any moment under the effect of a strong storm or a light earthquake. The Israeli authorities have confiscated and demolished many mosques and Islamic historical buildings. For instance, on 14–20/6/1969, they demolished 31 historical buildings and evicted their residents. Moreover, by 21/8/2012, there were 47 excavations and tunnels below and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque, leading to several collapses and cracks inside and around the mosque.

There were 40 attacks against *al-Aqsa* Mosque during 1967–1990, and neither the peace process nor the Oslo Accords were instrumental in stopping these attacks. 72 aggressions were recorded during 1993–1998, an indication of the escalation of the fierce campaign against one of the most sacred sites for Muslims. The most infamous of theses attacks was the arson attack on 21/8/1969 by a Christian fanatic named Denis Michael Rohan. There were also attempts to blow up the *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 1/5/1980, and in January, August, and December 1984.

On 17/10/1989, the Temple Mount Land of Israel Faithful Movement laid the cornerstone for the Third Temple near the entrance of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[99] The number of assaults in the area that took place under the protection of the Israeli police increased and reached 34 assaults between 22/8/2010 and 21/8/2011.

• *Al-Aqsa* **Mosque arson 1969**

Muslims in Jerusalem and Palestine protect *al-Aqsa* Mosque despite their oppression and suffering, even without Arab and Islamic support. All Jewish aggressions were faced by Muslims, even if this led to massacres. Such an occurrence happened on 8/10/1990, when 34 Muslims were killed and 115 were injured when a Jewish group attempted to lay the cornerstone for the Temple

inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque; and on 25–27/9/1996 after the *Intifadah* that erupted following the Israeli authorites' opening of a Hasmonean tunnel under the Western Wall of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, thus leading to the death of 80 Palestinians and the injury of 1,600 others.[100]
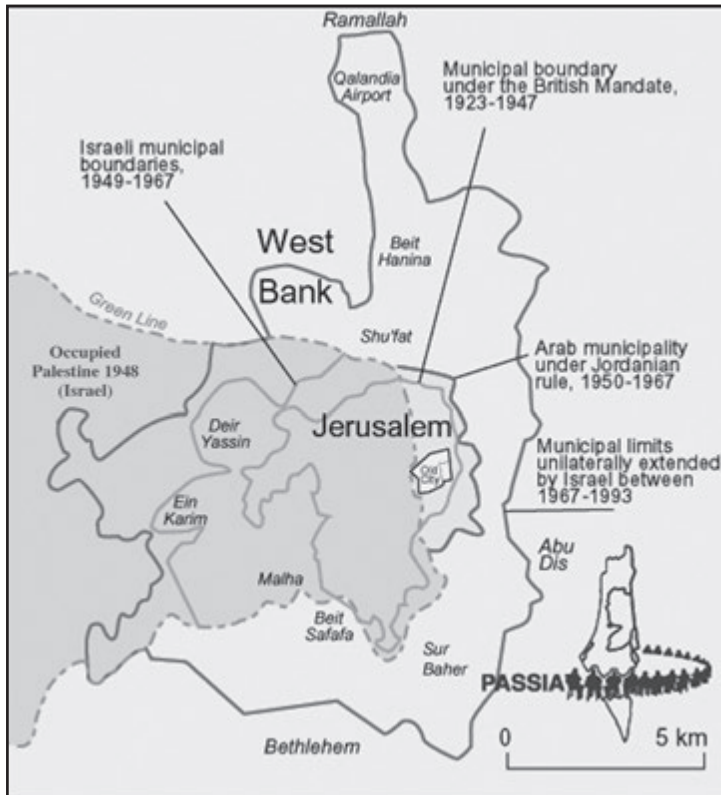
• **Jerusalem Municipal Boundaries 1947–2000**

Tens of international resolutions were issued by the UNGA and the UN Security Council rejecting Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and any material, administrative, or legal measures that would change the status of Jerusalem, declaring them null and void. These resolutions considered the Israeli state an occupation force that must leave Jerusalem (and all of the WB and GS). The first of these resolutions was A/RES/2253 (ES-V) issued by the UNGA on 4/7/1967. This was followed by several other resolutions until Israel officially annexed Jerusalem. The UNGA then passed resolution A/RES/ES-7/2 on 29/7/1980 with a majority of 112 votes, with seven opposed, and 24 abstentions, calling upon Israel to "withdraw completely and unconditionally from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem." On 20/8/1980,

the UN Security Council issued Resolution S/RES/478 adopted by 14 votes to none with the abstention of the US, in which it declared that "all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to a\lter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recent 'basic law' on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith." Resolutions continue to be issued to this day. Though they acknowledge the rights of Palestinians, they are not accompanied by the required resolve and the necessary mechanism to force Israel to respect international resolutions.[101]

Fifth: The Separation Wall

The Separation Wall being built by Israel around the WB is reminiscent of the apartheid policies that were used in South Africa. This is indicative of the nature of Israel, which remains a foreign body surrounded by religious, political, cultural, and language "barriers" that separate it from its neighbors; isolated in a hostile environment. It is an implicit acknowledgment on its part that it did not succeed in being an entity that is accepted in the region.

The Israeli government had erected a fence surrounding GS after the first *Intifadah* in 1987, and Yitzhak Rabin won the elections in 1992 based on the slogan "We are here and they are there."[102]

• **Part of the Separation Wall route**

The Israeli government approved the erection of the Separation Wall in the WB in April 2002, and work on it began on 16/6/2002. The Wall's anticipated length extended from 734 km in June 2002 to 770 km in April 2007, and the Ma'ale Adumim settlement east of Jerusalem was annexed to it. In other words, the length of the Wall became more than double the length of the Green Line (the border of the WB with the territories occupied in 1948) that only extends for 320 km. Until the end of 2008, there were around 502 km of the Wall built, and the area of the Western Separation Zone which includes the region lying between the Separation Wall and the Green Line according to the final modifications of the route is 733 km^2,[103] equivalent to 12.5% of the WB.

If the Separation Wall is built as it is planned, it will directly affect around 680 thousand Palestinians, and 250 thousand Palestinians will find themselves stuck between the Separation Wall and the Green Line, while 330 thousand Palestinians will find themselves separated by the Wall from their lands, crops, and workplace. 101 towns and villages will also be affected, with 19 of them to the west of the Wall being prevented from any contact with the other parts of the WB. 53 towns and villages would

• **One example of the suffering of the Palestinians due to Separation Wall**

also be surrounded by the Wall on three sides. Moreover, the Wall would seek to bring together the greatest number of Israeli settlements in the WB, including most of the WB settlers.

The Israeli authorities are attempting to market the Separation Wall as a mere fence, but anyone following its plans and the locations of its erection, will find a complex military setting including an eight meter-high cement wall with an electric fence, surveillance cameras, and strong lights, in addition to military observation towers.[104]

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its advisory opinion on 9/7/2004 which considered that the "construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around

East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law." It further stated that Israel is "under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall" and to "compensate, in accordance with the applicable rules of international law, all natural or legal persons having suffered any form of material damage as a result of the wall's construction." The ICJ declared that "the de facto annexation of land interferes with the territorial sovereignty and consequently with the right of the Palestinians to self-determination."[105]

Sixth: The Israeli State

Israel entered the second decade of the 21st century with an advanced military and technological force compared to its Arab surrounding. It also enjoyed international support and influence, especially from the US, thus enabling it to be "above the law."

The internal Israeli political scene was characterized by:

- The increasing influence of right-wing parties, including Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu. Even in the supposedly moderate Kadima Party, many of its leaders and members have Likudnik and right-wing backgrounds.

- The increased influence of religious parties, especially organized movements, leading to the increase of their members among the officers of the Israeli army, from 7% thirty years ago to around 40% in 2011.

- The decline in the influence of the Israeli Left and its fragmentation, including the Labor Party, which was for 55 years the backbone of Israeli politics, or one of its two pillars. It regressed however in the 2009 elections to the fourth position, then was fragmented in 2011 when its Chairman Ehud Barak and some of its Knesset members left the party and formed the Atzmaut (Independence) Party.

- The increase of corruption in Israeli society both on the popular level and in the political leadership. Examples of this are the accusations of corruption addressed against Prime Ministers Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli President Moshe Katsav, the Vice Prime Minister Haim Ramon, Israeli Chief of Staff Dan Halutz and others. The values of exploitation, pleasure, and egoism were widely spread, not to mention sexual harassment and family division; this was reflected in the increase in the number of suicides and army desertions.

- Jewish migration to Israel declined to less than 17 thousand persons a year, while reverse migration increased to 10–15 thousand annually,[106] with indications that there are around 700 thousand Israelis living abroad.[107]

- Increased racism against Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories, whether by Israelis, Israeli officials, or racist laws and regulations.

Demographically, at the end of 2012 there were six million Jews and five million and 755 thousand Palestinians in Historic Mandatory Palestine (in 1948 and 1967). According to statistical estimates, if demographic growth rates remain as they are, the number of Palestinians will exceed the number of Israelis in 2017, and will exceed it by 300 thousand in 2020.[108] This constitutes a source of concern for the Israelis, at a time when there are increasing calls for expelling the Palestinians, or for what Israelis are trying to rephrase as "population transfer." Besides, some Israeli trends are calling for unilateral withdrawal from demographically densely populated Palestinian areas in the WB.

Economically, Israeli GDP in 2012 reached $241 billion, and per capita income reached $30,400, which is almost similar to the rates in Europe and developed countries. Israeli exports in 2011 amounted to $67 billion and 260 million. As for total imports, they amounted to $73 billion and 540 million. Manufactured goods represent 78.5% of Israeli exports.

The US continued to enjoy its standing as Israel's leading trade partner, which receives almost third of Israeli exports. Although it is a wealthy and developed country, Israel received in 2012 a US annual financial aid of $3 billion and 98 million. Hence, during the period 1949–2012, it received a total of $115 billion and 133 million from the US.[109]

Part of the Israeli economic prosperity is due to the decline of the Palestinian *Intifadah* and resistance operations, and the calm of the Arab fronts, along with improved political and economic relations, particularly with Egypt and Jordan, in addition to the political and economic breakthroughs achieved by Israel with China, India, Russia, and Eastern Europe countries.

As for the military sector, Israel still has enormous expenditures, with an approved military budget for 2012 of $15 billion and 900 million. The Israeli military budget is one of the highest in the world compared to GDP or population, with an annual per capita military spending amounting to $2 thousand, compared

for example to $46 in Egypt, $88 in Syria, and $211 in Jordan. Moreover, there are 178 thousand soldiers in the Israeli army and 427 thousand reservists. The Israeli army has outstanding combat skills and advanced training, in addition to the best and latest weapons, whether manufactured by Israeli industry or imported from the US and Europe. Israel has around 200 nuclear warheads, and it manufactures all kinds of military electronic devices, electronic blocking devices, and missile guidance systems. It was able to manufacture Kfir fighter jets, Arrow (Hetz) ballistic missile interceptors, and Merkava tanks, which are considered among the best tanks in the world. Israel is considered among the six greatest weapons-exporting country in the world ($7 billion in 2012).[110]

Despite the great capacities of the Israeli army, it failed both in the July 2006 Lebanon war and in its aggression on the GS at the end of 2008/ beginning of 2009. At a time when there is a decline in the Israeli soldier's capabilities, and the Israeli army is witnessing increasing psychological problems, corruption, and desertion, resistance soldiers are readier than ever to endure and sacrifice.

Israel faces real crises: its presence in a hostile environment and its failure to turn into a normal entity in the region. Because it is an entity based on the violation of land and rights and the expulsion of the indigenous population, and because the Palestinian people persist with their right to return and to liberate their land with the support of the Arabs, Muslims, and the free people of the world. Indeed, the Israelis cannot remain strong forever, nor will the Palestinians remain weak forever. Israeli leaders and thinkers acknowledge that there are great challenges posed first by the rise of Islamist forces inside Palestine, which have an enduring ability to resist, and which refuse to recognize Israel or concede any part of Palestine. The second challenge occurs if the Arab regimes close to Palestine change into either democratic, nationalist or Islamic regimes that support the Palestinian issue, this would be a major change in Palestine's strategic environment, to the benefit of the resistance forces. This may also lead to a possible change in the balance of power on the mid- to long-term. Furthermore, there are no guarantees that the unconditional US-Western support will remain, and that Israel will stay above the law indefinitely, especially in light of the economic crises in the West, or if Arabs and Muslims are able to put their capacities to good use to pressure the US and the West.

Endnotes

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The daily newspapers covered these events. See the news in the days following the events, for example in *Alrai* and *Addustour*.

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[102] Mohsen Moh'd Saleh and Basheer M. Nafi, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2005*, p. 68; and Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and All Forms of Discrimination, General Assembly, Commission on Human Rights, sixty-first session, Item 6 of the provisional agenda, E/CN.4/2005/NGO/3, UNISPAL, 27/1/2005, http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/5707841A3BE6728685256FA4005BB548

[103] The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), "Six Years After the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories," site of Project of Monitoring the Israeli Colonization Activities (POICA), 9/7/2010, http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=2596

[104] Tens of reports and studies have been written on the Separation Wall, and the information contained in the text was taken from several sources, among which: Peter Lagerquist, "Fencing the Last Sky: Excavating Palestine after Israel's 'Separation Wall'," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, Winter 2004, pp. 5–35; Separation Barrier, Route of the Barrier Around East Jerusalem, B'Tselem, 1/1/2011, http://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier/jerusalem; and B'Tselem and Bimkom–Planners for Planning Rights, "Under the Guise of Security Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable the Expansion of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank," December 2005, http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publication/200512_under_the_guise_of_security_eng.pdf

[105] Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Request for advisory opinion), International Court of Justice, 9/7/2004, http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/131/1677.pdf

[106] For more information on Jewish migration, see Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12*, p. 82.

[107] See *al-Khaleej*, 7/10/2006; and Arabs 48, 17/10/2006. See also Yogev Karasenty and Shmuel Rosner, What Million Missing Israelis?, site of Foreign Policy, 28/7/2011, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/07/28/what_million_missing_israelis

[108] CBS, http://www1.cbs.gov.il/www/yarhon/b1_e.htm; and PCBS, *Palestine in Figures 2012* (Ramallah-Palestine: PCBS, March 2013), http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_PCBS/Downloads/book1967.pdf

[109] See Jeremy M. Sharp, U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel, Congressional Research Service (CRS), Report for Congress, 11/4/2013, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf

[110] See *Haaretz*, 25/6/2013, http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.531956; and *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 23/7/2013, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4408718,00.html

Afterword

Afterword

The land of Palestine is holy and blessed. It is an Arab and Muslim land whose people have made great sacrifices to liberate and safeguard it. But the Zionist project, backed by the major powers, proved to be more than their capacities and capabilities could overcome.

The contemporary Palestinian resistance (PLO and Palestinian resistance groups) now leading the Palestinian front, have also made great sacrifices, and fought to entrench the national Palestinian identity. Though the Palestinian resistance won the recognition of most countries, it suffered many pressures that weakened its efforts and ability to achieve its goals, including:

– The Approach: Palestinian resistance factions initially adopted a secular ideology, ranging from nationalism and pan-Arabism, to various leftwing ideologies. It did not adopt the Islamic approach which is more capable of mobilizing the Muslim *Ummah* and rallying its energies, and unifying it against Zionist project. The PLO approach tended always to cave into pressure and the requirements of immediate concerns, and to remain in the spotlight even if at the expense of core principles and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. As a result, the political demands of the Palestinian leadership shrank over time: From the full liberation of Palestine and the expulsion of the usurpers, to the democratic state that accommodates both Arabs and Zionist aggressors, and consenting to the "right" of the Israelis to 77% of the land of Palestine, and finally, to agreeing to self-rule in the WB and GS under the Oslo Accords.

– The Leadership: The Palestinian political leadership has lacked harmony, and suffered from divergent objectives and the need to take into account the desires of Arab and international parties at the expense of the priorities of the Palestinian issue. The Palestinian leadership did not respect the principles of institutionalized action. The leader of Fatah and the PLO held on to all powers, controlling both political decision-making and financial matters, in addition to security and military institutions. This meant that Palestinian action fundamentally depended on the initiatives of "the leader." This led to paralysis and widespread cronyism, and undermined the structure of the Palestinian revolution, with many competent leaders and members driven away or excluded.

– The Institutions: The ineffective conduct of the Palestinian leadership weakened Palestinian institutional work. It also disabled the PNC, which then failed to fulfill its role in oversight and accountability. The PLO's role declined, and the organization was effectively placed into "intensive care," while the role of the PA swelled. After that, the PA found itself hostage to US-Israeli pressure and decisions. The role of other important institutions in the PLO declined as well, such as the National Fund, the Research Center, the institutions for martyrs' welfare, SAMED (Palestine Martyrs Works Society), the planning department, and others. Over time, control of Palestinian action fell to a handful of individuals, who gave themselves the right to decide the fate of the most important issue of the Arab and Islamic worlds in modern history.

– The Palestinian revolution suffered much from supposed Arab friends. It shed blood and great efforts in its battles with the regimes that sought to subdue the Palestinian revolution, or seize it and speak on its behalf or even sidestep it. This also weakened the revolution, squandered its energies, and prevented it from engaging in armed resistance abroad, confining its activities to the realm of what is "politically possible."

The resistant movement (especially the Islamic trend), took on incontrovertible roles in resistance against the Zionist project. However, this movement was met with attempts to uproot it, distort its goals, or marginalize it, whether in Palestine, the Arab world, or beyond. Yet the movement is required to:

– Carefully develop its vision and strategy, both in the immediate and long terms, for how it intends to confront Israel and liberate Palestine. It must also carefully gather the facts, analyze them, study the complexities, monitor local, regional, and international developments, and provide realistic solutions that draw inspiration from the Islamic model and rally the masses.

– Expand the circle of interaction with the Palestinian issue, to bring together the Palestinian, Arab, Islamic, and global dimensions of solidarity in a positive and harmonious way, while developing the means conducive to achieving this.

– Develop its organizational and advisory bodies, its leaders' competencies, and take better advantage of the nation's capabilities. In addition, it must carry out a smooth and sound process of handing over leadership to current and future generations.

– Exhausting more efforts in rallying the support of the international community, and all people (from different religions, races and nationalities) who are peace, freedom and justice lovers.

– Stick closer to the concerns of the masses and their suffering, and offer services and reach out to them, while turning the cause of liberating Palestine into a daily concern shared by all.

– Keep the resistance alive, along with the voice of righteousness that would never relinquish Palestine, no matter the sacrifices.

Palestininas, Arabs, Muslims and all lovers and supporters of freedom and justice are certain that occupation and oppression will not succeed in Palestine that the Zionist aggression is going against the norms of life and against the movement of history.

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2. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2006*, 2010.
3. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2007*, 2010.
4. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008*, 2010.
5. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2009/10*, 2011.
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7. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, editor, *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12*, 2013.

Am I Not a Human? Series:

8. Abbas Ismail, *The Israeli Racism: Palestinians in Israel: A Case Study*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (1), translated by Aladdin Assaiqeli, 2009.
9. Hasan Ibhais, Mariam Itani and Sami al-Salahat, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Woman Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (2), translated by Iman Itani, 2010.
10. Ahmad el-Helah and Mariam Itani, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Child Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (3), translated by Iman Itani, 2010.
11. Firas Abu Hilal, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Prisoners & Detainees Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (4), translated by Baraah Darazi, 2011.
12. Mariam Itani and Mo'in Manna', *The Suffering of the Palestinian Refugee*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (6), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2010.
13. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *The Suffering of Jerusalem and the Holy Sites Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (7), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2012.
14. Hasan Ibhais and Kahled 'Ayed, *The Separation Wall in the West Bank*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (8), translated by Baraah Darazi, 2013.

15. Mariam Itani, Amin Abu Wardeh and Waddah Eid, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Worker Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (10), translated by Salma al-Houry, 2014.

16. Fatima Itani and Atef Daghlas, *The Suffering of the Palestinian Patient Under the Israeli Occupation*, Book Series: Am I Not a Human? (11), translated by Mohammed Ibrahim El-Jadili and Saja Abed Rabo El-Shami, 2012.

Non-Serial Publications:

17. Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, *Religion and Politics in America: The Rise of Christian Evangelists and Their Impact*, 2007.

18. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh and Ziad al-Hasan, *The Political Views of the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon as Reflected in May 2006*, 2009.

19. Ishtiaq Hossain and Mohsen Moh'd Saleh, *American Foreign Policy & the Muslim World*, 2009.

20. Karim El-Gendy, *The Process of Israeli Decision Making: Mechanisms, Forces and Influences*, 2010. (electronic book)

21. Ibrahim Ghusheh, *The Red Minaret: Memoirs of Ibrahim Ghusheh (Ex-Spokesman of Hamas)*, 2013.

22. Mohsen Moh'd. Saleh, *The Palestinian Issue: Historical Background & Contemporary Developments*, 2014.

This Book

This book seeks to present a comprehensive overview of the Palestinian issue, its historical background, as well as its modern and contemporary developments.

The book, in a documented, methodical, and concise style, and in plain language, delves into the history of Palestine from its early history throughout the Islamic era, and the background of the emergence of the Zionist movement, as well as the British occupation of Palestine and the founding of Israel. The book analyzes the various phases of the Palestinian issue and its developments, shedding light on the struggle of the Palestinian people, their uprisings and revolutions, and the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its factions, as well as the role of the Palestinian Islamic movements.

The book places particular emphasis on the first decade of the twenty-first century, so that the reader would be able to obtain a clear picture about many of the issues related to the contemporary aspects of the Palestinian question.

The revised edition of the book covers the period up to the year 2013, and contains a large collection of pictures and maps to illustrate its points.

The book is an important source for readers seeking to acquaint themselves with the Palestinian issue, and to become informed of the pertinent facts in a balanced manner. It can also serve as an introduction to further studies of the Palestinian issue.

The Palestinian Issue

Historical Background & Contemporary Developments

Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations