

The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of **Global Dialogue and Democracy**

المبادرة الفلسطينية لتعميق الحوار العالمي والديمقراطية



Israeli policy vis-à-vis the current government and the Palestinian cause

Introduction:

The political developments that followed the Palestinian leadership meeting chaired by President Mahmoud Abbas on May 19 gained particularly significant for the various political sectors and civil society institutions in light of the President's announcement that the PA would withdraw from all commitments, agreements and understandings with Israel and the United States should Israel move forward with its annexation plans in occupied Palestinian territory. The President also said the announcement included all of the subsequent implications of this decision at the various political, economic and security levels resulting from a halt to all forms of cooperation with the Israelis, including security coordination. The leadership decision was made in response to Israel's annexation plan, slated for official commencement on July 1.

Israel's annexation plan stipulates the annexation of settlement blocs in the West Bank and the imposition of Israeli sovereignty in the Jordan Valley, which extends between Lake Tiberius and the Dead Sea, thus becoming a part of Israel's eastern border with Jordan. The Palestinians consider this Israeli move as a violation of international law and resolutions, which call for an end to the occupation and for the establishment of a Palestinian state on all Palestinian territory within the 1967 border.

In accordance with the coalition agreement between Israeli Prime Minister and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue-White Party leader Benny Gantz, implementation of the annexation plan will begin on July 1, contingent upon consultation with the United States, which has indicated it is not opposed to the move.

The challenges faced by the Palestinian cause have increased in light of these new developments, which in turn will impede any attempts at a political solution on the basis of the two-state solution.

Changes at the Israeli and international levels

At the international level, the rise of populist, rightist and racist trends, led by the United States and Israel, has resulted in a weaker European role and consequently a lack of trust in the international community and its ability to combat Israeli and American policies aimed at

eliminating the Palestinian cause. This has meant that their statements rejecting Israeli annexation plans and others have not been translated into practical steps on the ground that would contribute to ending the occupation.

Within the context of these unfavorable international developments -- the nature of the populist, rightist takeover in many western countries, the inability of the EU to counter Israeli policies, Russia's preoccupation with other affairs, the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the agenda of several countries and the Arab world's regional conflicts, which in turn has weakened the international structure for holding Israel accountable – MIFTAH held a public policy session, which brought together Palestinian political and national leaders. This paper summarizes the main ideas discussed in the meeting in a bid to find grounds for developing a national agenda, followed by more dialogue and discussion.

The national project: A complete state on the 1967 borders

The preservation of the national project strongly adheres to the options of negotiation and resistance, which calls for the need to evaluate the previous experience between 1988 and 2020. It also necessitates an openness with the people and confidence-building based on standards of social justice through proposing the following perspectives:

- Focusing on a mechanism to derail the Zionist project by continuing the Palestinian diplomatic course of action at the international level as one approach for Palestinians.
- Promoting popular resistance as a main tool for combatting the Zionist project and ending the occupation; adhering to the option of establishing a state on all territory within the 1967 borders, based on a realistic program for resistance with consensus over the forms and means of this resistance.
- Taking action along two parallel lines: one in defense of the Palestinian strategy to guarantee an end to the occupation and Palestinian self-determination by adopting foundations, rules and principles of international legitimacy; this includes negotiations within the framework of a conference under international auspices, rejection of bilateral negotiations with the Israeli side and rejection of the US as the sole broker of negotiations. The second parallel line is based on resistance to combat the Zionist project on the basis of the Palestinian people's right to resist the Israeli occupation and the right to defend its state, its independence and sovereignty. It is also based on the premise that PLO leadership is the main tool in leading the Palestinian national project and reaffirming its role as representative of the Palestinian people including their quest for ending the occupation and establishing a Palestinian state.
- Amplifying a condition of confrontation on the ground with the occupation is a main requirement that necessitates a unified narrative within the PLO. It also requires a unified vision and contemplation of internal frictions and ending the division, in addition to partnership through joint action on the ground. The daily needs of citizens must be taken into consideration, needs which contribute to their steadfastness and which require

programs of resistance and modifications on some of the current action programs to coincide with the new strategy.

- The adoption of a resistance strategy at the national level that takes into consideration the different components of the Palestinian people, beginning with the PLO, its institutions, the Palestinian government, factions and parties, which have become weak and fragmented; this also includes popular organizations on the basis of the national struggle and the people's unity and affording more attention to the role of citizens in this regard.
- Reaffirming that the central cause is to end the occupation and not to focus efforts on the outer manifestations of statehood. Ending the occupation is the necessary precursor to the independence of any state.
- It is imperative to build on the recent decisions of the Palestinian leadership and to open up the dialogue with all Palestinian groups to combat the dangers and challenges facing the national cause on the premise that the unity of the Palestinian people is the central cause.
- Looking into ways to gradually shift towards recognition of a state and to obtain a UN resolution recognizing the state of Palestine as a full member, with sovereignty over the territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem as its capital.
- The dangers of the current stage require preemptive steps to combat Israeli annexation plans.
- New variables must be taken into consideration when discussing the national project. This requires that everyone including all parties and factions must reassess their previous role and experiences and formulate a new open vision that takes into consideration all of the changes at the Palestinian national and global levels.
- The current reality and serious challenges necessitate that the current Palestinian government must take immediate steps to reactivate and reform the PLO so it can assume its role in leading the people as their sole and legitimate representative; they must also rehabilitate the PA and its institutions, which are one tool by which the PLO carries out its responsibilities towards its people. A critical and open-minded review of past action is also required, devoid of any sectarianism, so that our past experiences are not repeated.
- Galvanizing the role of Palestinian communities abroad within a secure, strong and unifying framework based on a higher dynamic for action.