

**BASIC
FACTS
ON THE
PALESTINE
ISSUE**

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1

The name "Palestine" is designated to the south western part of Bilad al-Sham (i.e. countries of Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon). It is situated on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, west of the Asian continent. It is the connecting link between Asia and Africa. Palestine is also distinguished by its close proximity to Europe. It is bordered to the north by Lebanon, to the northeast by Syria, to the east by Jordan and to the south by Egypt. The area of historic Palestine according to its present known boundaries, is 27 thousand km². It enjoys a moderate Mediterranean climate.

2

The land of Palestine is amongst the oldest inhabited parts of the world. According to contemporary archaeological discoveries, it is the first land that experienced the transformation of primordial human life to a sedentary and agricultural one almost 11 thousand years (9000 BC) ago. The world's oldest city, Jericho, was founded in Palestine about 8000 BC. It has since remained a splendid abode of various civilizations until our time.

3

Palestine has a unique place in the heart of every Muslim. It is, according to the Quran, a sacred and blessed land.² It contains al-Aqsa Mosque; the first Qibla or direction of Muslim prayer, the second mosque consecrated to Allah Almighty (God) on earth and the third most sacred mosque in Islam. It is also the land of Al Isra' (i.e. The Night Journey). To its sacred realm, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was taken on a miraculous night journey. It is the land of the prophets. Many of the prophets mentioned in the Holy Quran were born, raised and buried in its soil may the peace of Allah be upon them all. From an Islamic perspective, it is the land of the Gathering and Resurrection and the centre of the abode of Islam. It is the abode of the victorious and righteous people who uphold truth, until the day of resurrection.

4

The land of Palestine is also holy to Jews and Christians. The Jews regard it as their promised land, the focal point of their history and the resting place of their prophets. The centres of their holy sites are in Jerusalem and Hebron. The Christians consider it the cradle of their religion, as 'Isa (peace be upon him) or Jesus, was born there and conveyed his mission therein. The great centres of Christianity, namely Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth are in Palestine.

² The borders of sacredness and sanctity of Palestine's land is not necessarily confined to today's known geographical borders. These borders were set by the British occupation in the first half of the twentieth century.

5

From an Islamic perspective, Muslims believe that they are the true heirs worthy of carrying out the mission and the legacies of David, Solomon, the Prophets of the Israelites and their venerable forefathers, who ruled Palestine for a period of time under the banner of monotheism (Tawheed). The legitimacy of their rule was transferred to Muslims because they are the ones who raised the banner of monotheism after those prophets, and have since pursued their path.

6

During their rule of Palestine, the general attitude of Muslims, especially in Jerusalem, was civilized and based on tolerance, coexistence, justice and benevolence toward those of different religions, ethnicity and social status (ensuring the rights of Jews, Christians and others, protecting them and preventing any offence or unjust acts against them). Furthermore, Muslims opened the doors to the followers of other religions to fully participate (on the same footing) in building the Islamic Civilization. While historically, the general attitude of the others who ruled Palestine was a negative one that failed to coexist with other religions, oppressing their followers and trying to get rid of them; as the Romans, Crusaders and others did previously, and the Israelis do today.

The oldest people to inhabit Palestine and inscribe their mark upon it are the “Canaanites”, who came from the Arabian Peninsula about 4,500 years ago; hence the first known name of the Land was the “Land of Canaan”. Present day Palestinians are the descendants of the Canaanites, the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, i.e. the PLST (Peleset) or the Philistines, and Arab tribes who inter married with them thereafter. Although various peoples had ruled Palestine, the land’s indigenous people continued to inhabit it uninterruptedly. The overwhelming majority of these inhabitants embraced Islam, and on its advent, they adopted the Arabic language as their lingua franca. Thus, the Islamic identity of Palestine has been uninterruptedly established since the Islamic conquests in 15 AH/636 CE and until today, though a big part of the population has been forcibly expelled by the Israeli occupation in 1948.

The Jewish claim of their historical rights in Palestine is not equivalent to the claims of Arabs and Muslims. Indeed, the sons of Palestine inhabited and developed the lands for more than 1,500 years before the children of Israel established their state. They continued to inhabit it during the existence of that state and after Jewish links with Palestine were severed. The Jews ruled over parts of Palestine, and not all of it, for about four centuries (1,000–586 BC).³ Their rule faded away as did the rule of other foreign powers, like the Assyrians, Persians,

Pharaohs, Greeks and Romans, while the Palestinian people remained firmly rooted in their land.

With the brief interlude of 90 years during the Crusades, the Islamic rule of 1,200 years is the longest in Palestinian history (636–1917 CE). The capacity of Jewish people to settle in Palestine was effectively non-existent for about 1,800 years, from 135 CE until the 20th century. During that period, they had no political, civilizational or leadership presence in Palestine. Indeed, their religious teachings prohibited any return to it. As established by some Jewish researchers and scholars (including the renowned Arthur Koestler), more than 80% of contemporary Jews are in no way related to Palestine, nor are they descendants of the children of Israel. The vast majority of Jews today trace their origins to the Khazars (Ashkenaz), who inhabited the northern Caucasus region and were judaized during the eighth century CE. Therefore, if members of the Jewish community want to invoke their right of return it should be to the areas which they originally inhabited as opposed to the area of Palestine.

Additionally, the Jewish claim of their historic association with Palestine and their link to it is questionable in face of the fact that the majority of the children of Israel refused to join Moses in his exodus to the Holy Land. Similarly, most of them refused to return to it from Babylon, though the Persian Emperor Cyrus the Great had offered to guarantee their safety.

³After the death of Solomon (P.B.U.H) in 923 BC, his kingdom was divided into two states: Israel in the north was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC; and Judea which fell in the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC.

The Zionist movement, that strove to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, owes its existence to the pro-Zionist agitation amongst the European Christians and especially the Protestants since the 16th century, who campaigned for the assembly of the Jews in Palestine. Other factors for this development were the failure of the Jewish enlightenment (Haskala) to assimilate them in the societies in which they resided, as well the rise of nationalist patriotic ideologies and nation states in Europe. In the 19th century, the emergence of the "Jewish Question," notably in east Europe, and the Russian suppression of the Jews, acted as precipitants to Zionist ambitions in Palestine. In their drive to achieve this goal, the Jews made use of the good offices of some of them who rose to certain positions of influence in Europe and U.S.A. In addition, a number of west European and American countries resisted the absorption of the waves of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, and acted to divert them elsewhere.

The establishment of the Zionist entity to fulfil the role of being a "buffer state" supported by western colonialism, especially the British, represents the pinnacle of the western Zionist threat. By establishing it in the heart of the Islamic and Arab lands, it would split the two wings of the Islamic world in Asia and Africa into two separate parts. It would obstruct Muslim unity and thereby weaken it. Hence, this would ensure that the Arab and Muslim world remains divided and incapable of any revival, rotating instead in the orbit of subservience, producing raw materials and consuming western commodities. The chances of the Zionist State continuing to enjoy stability and growth in a hostile environment rest upon an assurance that the Muslim states around it remain weak, fragmented and underdeveloped. Likewise, the likelihood of the revival of the Muslim Ummah (nation), its unity and strength is also dependent upon its ability to end the Zionist occupation of Palestine.



11

The World Zionist Organization (WZO) was founded in Basle in August 1897 under the leadership of Theodor Herzl. It linked itself to the western colonial projects. It failed to obtain anything substantial until the end of the First World War. The Zionist movement is a racist movement founded on the basis of the Jewish religion, heritage and nationalism. The condition for its success is dependent upon the abrogation of Arab Palestinians' rights in their land and replacing them. There is no fundamental difference among the various strands of Zionist thought, be it secularist, socialist, religious or political. Indeed, all strands of Zionism are unified by the principal common goal of establishing a homeland for the Jewish people.

12

Britain adopted the Zionist project, and on 2/11/1917 issued the Balfour Declaration for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine and managed to complete its occupation of Palestine in September 1918. It contradicted its own pledges of freedom and independence to the Arabs under the leadership of Sheriff Hussein. It, moreover, divided the areas of al-Sham and Iraq into spheres of influence between itself and France according to the Sykes Picot Agreement in May 1916, which planned to make Palestine under international control. Subsequently, Britain gained control of Palestine by virtue of the San Remo Agreement of April 1920. It also managed to include the Balfour Declaration in the mandate for Palestine, which was acknowledged by the Council of the League of Nations in July 1922.

13

During the period of its occupation of Palestine (1918–1948), Britain opened the doors of immigration before the Jews. Their number skyrocketed from 55 thousand in 1918 to 646 thousand in 1948, (i.e. from 8% to 31.7% of the population). It also supported the acquisition of land, so much so that Jewish ownership increased from approximately half a million donums (1 donum = 1000 m²) (2% of the land) to about 1.7 million donums (6.3% of the land of Palestine). All this was channelled to the Jews mostly by the British authorities or non Palestinians. The Palestinian people managed, despite the severe conditions and suffering, to stand firm in their land throughout the 30 years, maintaining their majority population status (68.3%) and controlling most of the land (93.7%). Nonetheless, The Zionist Jews managed with the active help and cover of the British occupation, to establish economic, political, educational, military and social institutions. By 1948 they had established 292 settlements and formed a military force of about 70 thousand fighters from the Haganah, Irgun and Stern terrorist groups, and prepared to declare their state.

Although the British empire and great powers policies against Palestine was much larger than the ability of its people to defend, they nevertheless rejected the British occupation and the Zionist project, and, therefore, demanded their independence. The Islamic and nationalist movements under the leadership of Haj Amin al-Hussaini spearheaded a number of political initiatives that included mass mobilization and popular uprisings. The first of these was the Jerusalem uprising in 1920, which was followed by similar uprisings in Jaffa in 1921, al-Buraq Wall in 1929 and October 1933. The “Jihadiyyah” movement under the leadership of ‘Ezzedine al-Qassam, took an important role in the resistance. Under the pressure of the Palestinian Revolt of 1936–1939, Britain was forced to issue the White Paper of May 1939 promising to enable the independent Palestine State to come into being within 10 years, to prohibit transfers of Palestinian land to the Jews except under very exceptional circumstances, and to prohibit further Jewish immigration after five years. British authorities, however, betrayed these obligations in November 1945 (Ernest Bevin Statement) when new life was breathed into the Zionist project under the auspices of the United States of America.

On 29/11/1947, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly issued Resolution No. 181 recommending the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and the other Jewish (about 54% of the land going to the Jewish state, 45% to the Arab state while 1% which includes the area of Jerusalem, was designated as a corpus separatum under a special international regime). Within the very context of the UN, the resolutions of the General Assembly are however, not binding. Besides, Resolution No. 181 contradicted the basis upon which the UN was itself founded, that is the right of people to enjoy freedom and self-determination. Furthermore, the people who were primarily affected, i.e. the Palestinians, were never consulted, not to mention as a matter of fact the oppression that was reflected in granting the immigrant Jewish minority the greater portion and the best part of the land.



The Zionists announced the creation of their state "Israel" on the night of 14/5/1948. They managed to defeat the Arab armies, which reflected a model of poor leadership, weak coordination and inexperience on the part of the Arabs. To make matters worse, some of them were under colonial influence. The Zionists seized 77% of the land of Palestine (20770 km²) and forcibly expelled 700 thousand inhabitants out of a total of 925 thousand Palestinians outside the area in which they established their state (The Palestinian population was estimated in 1948 to be 1.4 million Palestinians in whole Palestine). They obliterated most of Palestinian villages and perpetrated no less than 34 massacres.

As for what remained of Palestine, Jordan officially annexed the West Bank (WB) (5,876 km²), while Egypt placed the Gaza Strip (GS) (363 km²) under its administration. The UN agreed to Israel's membership into the world body on condition that it allows the Palestinian refugees to return to the homes and villages from which they were expelled. But, to this day, Israel adamantly and absolutely refuses to comply with this demand. It is a state that is based on oppression, racism and religious fanaticism. It is an entity with no official borders and no written constitution, thus contradicting the most conspicuous features of a modern civilized state.

Throughout the period 1948–1967, the slogans of "Nationalistic Battle" and "Unity is the Way to Liberation" were given much prominence among Arab regimes. Led by Gamal 'Abdel Nasser, who took the initiative, while the role of the Palestinian leadership was curtailed, clearing the way for a presumable Arab solution. But the Arab regimes lacked the correct methodology, seriousness and genuine will to fight. They adopted the Palestinian resistance for several tactical reasons and not as part of a comprehensive strategic plan. Meanwhile, they were engaged in playing on the emotions of the masses instead of preparing them for liberation, while the "young" Zionist state became, progressively, stronger and more entrenched.



The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in 1964 under the leadership of Ahmad Shuqayri, and with the direct support of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who feared that matters would slip out of his control after the emergence of secret movements and organizations in the Palestinian scene, especially Fatah whose roots can be traced to 1957. The PLO aimed at liberating all the Palestinian lands occupied in 1948. Its Charter emphasized armed struggle as the only means of liberation. The majority of Palestinians welcomed its emergence and considered it the embodiment of the Palestinian national identity after long years of eclipse. In July 1968, the Palestinian commando organizations, headed by Fatah, joined the PLO. Fatah leader, Yasir 'Arafat, assumed and maintained the leadership of the PLO since February 1969. In 1974, the Arab regimes endorsed the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That same year, it was granted permanent observer status in the UN.

The June 1967 war resulted in a bitter defeat for the Arab regimes. Within a matter of days, the rest of Palestine was lost. The WB, including East Jerusalem, as well as the Gaza Strip, were all captured, while 330 thousand Palestinian inhabitants were expelled. At the same time, the Syrian Golan Heights (1,150 km²) and Egyptian Sinai (61,198 km²) were also occupied.

Israel intensified the judaization of the Palestinian land and tried to change its Arab and Islamic identity, as well as its civilizational features. It expropriated, or put at its disposal, 96% of the land it occupied in 1948, including the property of the evicted Palestinians, most of the Islamic charitable endowments (Awqaf) and much of the land of those Arabs who remained. The Zionists built hundreds of cities and settler villages in the lands occupied in 1948. After the 1967 war they expropriated vast areas of the WB and persistently and methodically judiaized them. They built over 160 settlements, and more than a hundred settlement outposts, the Separation Wall and established hundreds of barriers that paralyzed the WB. They also controlled most of water sources, besieged the WB and GS and transformed them into effectively two large open prisons. While prohibiting the people of Palestine from returning to their homes and villages, Israel opened the doors for Jewish immigration to Palestine. Hence, about 3.26 million Jews immigrated to Palestine between 1948 and 2018 to make their total number around 7.09 million Jews in Israel proper at the beginning of 2019.

Israelis concentrated much of their efforts on the Judaization of Jerusalem. They confiscated 86% of the city and filled it with Jewish immigrants (about 546 thousand Jews and 342 thousand Palestinians in East and West Jerusalem in the beginning of 2018). In an area in East Jerusalem, where the al-Aqsa Mosque is located, about 220 thousand Jews were settled there, and after it was encircled with a series of settlements that aim at isolating it from its Arab and Islamic surroundings. They declared Jerusalem the eternal capital of Israel.

The Israelis have attached great importance to their control over al-Aqsa Mosque. They seized the Western Wall (Ha'it al-Buraq) of the Mosque, destroyed the Mughrabi neighbourhood and expropriated its land. They conducted intensive excavations under and around al-Aqsa Mosque in a way that threatens the collapse of the Mosque; for until 2017, the number of excavations and tunnels reached 64. The Israelis carried out continuous violations against the al-Aqsa Mosque, especially after the Oslo Accords in 1993. The most infamous of these attacks was the partial burning of the Mosque on 21/8/1969.

The Palestinian refugees have insisted on their right to return to their homes and villages and adamantly rejected all attempts aimed at their resettlement outside their ancestral land. Although the UN issued a resolution affirming the refugees' right of return to their villages and lands they left in 1948 (Resolution 194 adopted in 1948), and reaffirmed this right over the past years in more than 120 resolutions, none of them has ever been implemented because of the intransigence of Israel and the lack of will and seriousness on the part of the major powers and the international community in coercing it to comply.

In the beginning of 2019, the number of Palestinians living outside Palestine was estimated to be 6.55 million refugees. Another 2.15 million refugees from the 1948 occupied territories, live in the WB and GS, in addition to 150 thousand refugees living in the 1948 occupied territories but away from their lands and villages. Therefore, there are about 8.85 million Palestinians suffering refuge and exile, i.e. 67.5% of the Palestinian people estimated to be 13.1 million Palestinians. This is considered to be the largest number of refugees worldwide. It is also by far the highest ratio of refugees in the globe. As such, the Palestinian refugee problem is indeed, the oldest and most tragic humanitarian refugee problem of the 20th century, which is still occurring.

From 1949 until the beginning of the 1970s, the UN related to the Palestinian Question as a refugee problem. But after 1974, it began to issue resolutions, most of which from the General Assembly, that affirmed the Palestinian right to self determination and recognized their struggle (including armed struggle) to restore their usurped rights. The world body further declared Zionism a form of racial discrimination and upheld the inalienable right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes. Notwithstanding, the United States and its allies have always been supporting Israel in its rejection, disregard and contravention of these resolutions. The USA constantly used its veto in the Security Council to prevent the practical enforcement of any of these resolutions, while, at the same time it advanced this presumed international "legitimacy" to consolidate the Israeli state on Palestinian land and to entrench its presence there. This undoubtedly exposes the ugly and oppressive face of such "legitimacy."

Throughout the history of the Palestinian cause, the prejudice of the great powers in favour of Israel remains one of the greatest difficulties that face this cause. This bias is crystal clear in their acknowledgement of Israel's "right" to establish a state on a land that was usurped in 1948, i.e. 77% of Palestine's land.

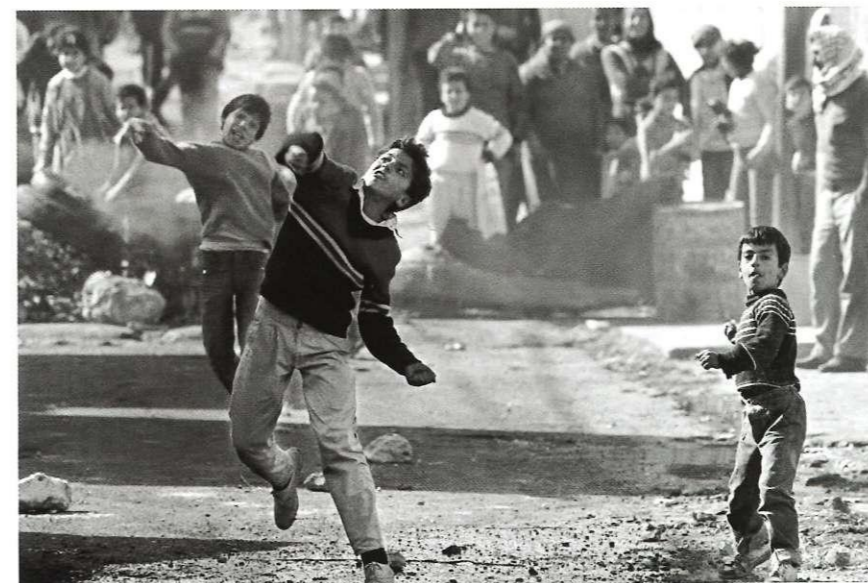
In some respects, the period 1967–1970 represents the Golden Age of Palestinian resistance and its commando operations. But, since 1971, it was prevented from using Jordan as a haven. Though henceforth concentrating its activities in Lebanon, several attempts were made to uproot it, particularly during the Lebanese civil war of 1975–1990. The continuous Israeli aggression against Lebanon, including its invasion of southern Lebanon in 1978 and the establishment of a security zone there, and the subsequent 1982 invasion of the southern and middle parts of the country up to the capital Beirut, destroyed the PLO's infrastructure, and compelled it and its fighters to withdraw from Lebanon. Thus, closing all the Arab borders with Israel in the face of the Palestinian resistance.



Generally speaking, the Palestinian revolution has experienced some of its worst setbacks at the hands of its Arab brothers, who drained its energy and blood in conflicts with regimes that tried to domesticate, control, speak on its behalf, and even jump over it. After the October 1973 war against Israel—which achieved some moral gains for Egypt and Syria—and the recognition in 1974 of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the Arab sense of responsibility towards Palestine began to decline. Following its signature of the Camp David Agreement in September 1978, Egypt, the most powerful Arab power, stepped out of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Similarly, the Iraqi Iranian war of 1980–1988, and the drop in oil prices led to a reduction of financial support from the Gulf States to the Palestinian revolution. The subsequent Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the resultant war and far reaching fragmentation of the Arab and Islamic ranks had further exacerbated these setbacks. The demise of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc had also weakened the Palestinian resistance and resulted in the resort of the PLO leadership to the peace settlement. Its activities have, thus, been confined to the “possible political” arena.

On the other hand, since the midst of the 1970s, the activities of the popular Islamic movement have become well-known inside and outside Palestine. The signs of Islamic Jihadist organizations appeared, such as Usrat al-Jihad (Family of Jihad) in the late 1970s, in the 1948 occupied Palestinian territories; Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement in 1980 led by Fathi al- Shiqaqi, and Tanzim al-Mujahidun al-Filastiniyyun (The Palestinian Mujahidun Organization) established by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in the early 1980s.

The first Intifadah (The Uprising of December 1987–September 1994) seized the initiative for the Palestinians in the WB & GS. The Islamic movement was very prominent to the extent that it has become the fundamental element of the Palestinian resistance; especially the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which officially announced itself at the beginning of the Intifadah. It aroused the sympathy of the Arab and Islamic worlds, as well as the international community, for the Palestinian cause. But the prevailing conditions and the compromising mentality of the Palestinian and Arab leadership neither capitalized nor built upon this support toward liberation. Instead, they exploited it for quick political gains by coming to a peace settlement with Israel.



With the continued weakening of the PLO, the elements which supported a peaceful settlement with Israel gradually dominated the Organization. This ultimately led to the PLO's decision of November 1988 to declare the State of Palestine and to recognize the UN Resolution No. 181 which recommended the partition of Palestine between the Jews and Arabs. It also recognized the Security Council Resolution No. 242 of November 1967, which related to the Palestinian Question as a refugee problem and called for the resolution of the conflict by peaceful means. In October 1991 the PLO and Arab states entered into direct peace negotiations with Israel in Madrid. After almost two years of futile negotiations, the official Palestinian delegation failed to arrive at an agreement with Israel. Meanwhile, since December 1992, parallel secret negotiations were conducted in Oslo, Norway, that led to the drafting of the Oslo Accords or Gaza-Jericho First Agreement. They were officially signed by the PLO and Israel in Washington on 13/9/1993.

Through the Gaza Jericho First Agreement, the PLO leadership recognized the "right of Israel to exist" and acknowledged the legitimacy of its occupation and ownership of 77% of Palestinian land. It also pledged to stop the armed struggle and the Intifadah, and to abrogate all the clauses in the PLO's National Charter which called for the total liberation of Palestine and the destruction of Israel. It further undertook to solve all problems by peaceful means. By this agreement the PLO practically cancelled itself, its objectives and charter. In return for these far-reaching concessions, the PLO leadership obtained recognition from Israel as the representative of the Palestinian people and was granted a limited self autonomous rule in the GS and parts of the WB, pending the resolution of the core issues of the conflict within the next five years.



Oslo Accord was faced with strong objection from many Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims, which may be summarized in the following points:

A. The leadership of the PLO had unilaterally concluded the Oslo Accord and subsequent treaties without consulting the Palestinian people, amongst whom sizeable groups—Islamists, leftist, nationalist and even within the ranks of Fatah itself—strongly objected to these deals.

B. The deal did not settle the most important and sensitive issues, that were allowed to drag on pending the “generosity” of the powerful and manipulative Israel. These are:

- The future of Jerusalem.
- The future of Palestinian refugees.
- The future of the Jewish settlements in the WB.⁴
- The nature of the Palestinian future entity, its jurisdictions, borders and sovereignty over the land.

C. This project complied with the Israeli desire to get rid of the densely populated Palestinian territories, which are overburdened with security and economic problems.

D. The outcome of the agreement is a defective self-rule

⁴ In the autumn of 2005, the Israelis withdrew from the settlements of GS.

administration that has limited executive jurisdiction and is connected to the occupation and under its direct hegemony. Israel is empowered to veto all legislations and resolutions issued by the Palestinian Authority (PA). It is also prohibited to recruit its own army, while entry of armaments into “self-rule” territories is strictly conditioned on a prior Israeli permission.

E. Due to its solemn undertaken to refrain from any military resistance against Israel, the self-rule administration found itself obliged to crush any such resistance undertaken by its own people. It became anxious to preserve its “peace” with Israel and to demonstrate “good will” towards the Israelis. Its performance in the economic, political and social arenas was very weak, and corruption spread throughout its organs.

F. The borders remained under Israeli administration, while entering or leaving the PA territories need a prior Israeli consent.

G. The treaties do not pinpoint the Palestinian rights of self determination and the establishment of an independent state. They, furthermore, do not refer to the WB and GS as occupied territories.

H. This Accord made the doors wide open for the Arab and Islamic countries to make agreements and build relations with Israel.

Al-Aqsa Intifadah, which began on 29/9/2000, asserted that the Palestinian people adhere to their right to their land. It also showed the widespread interaction of the Arab and Islamic peoples with the Intifadah. It made the Islamic aspect of the Palestinian issue quite clear, while it revealed the Israeli occupation viciousness and the ugly face of those among them who claim to be peace advocates.

The Intifadah was a clear answer to the peace settlement project that is conducted at the expense of the rights and fundamentals of the Palestinians and Muslim Ummah. The Palestinian people suffered great hardship and misery; and the Israelis have reoccupied most of the territories of Palestinian Authority. However, their great steadfastness and heroic resistance, in which all Palestinians participated, undermine the two fundamentals on which Israel stands; security and economy. In October 2005, Israel was obliged to withdraw from GS and dismantle its settlements there, due to the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people. The death of Yasir 'Arafat who led the PA since its inception and the preoccupation of the Palestinians with the presidential, municipal and legislative elections, as well as the agreement by all factions to calm things down (17/3/2005) had together led to the dwindle of Al-Aqsa Intifadah.

Hamas' victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, at the beginning of 2006, was an indicator of the rise in the trust placed by the Palestinians in the Islamic movement and the resistance. It was also an indicator that the Fatah movement was suffering fragmentation, decay and corruption; and that the peace process was in recession. The Israeli, Palestinian, Arab and international attempts to overthrow and thwart Ismail Haniyyah's government were evidence of the extent of their animosity towards the Islamic and resistance movements. It asserts the double standards of those who do not respect the democratic process and election results, when it comes to Muslim movements.

The two Hamas-led governments were subjected to a harsh siege, lawlessness and brutal Israeli assaults. The PLC was paralyzed, when most of the members of Hamas parliamentary bloc in the WB were detained, or when it was prevented from convening. There were many attempts to subdue Hamas by imposing the international Quartet's conditions, which include recognizing Israel, in return for lifting the siege. In June 2007, Hamas was compelled to mount a military move to control the GS, while the Authority's presidency and Fatah took control of the WB, and continued their commitment to the peace settlement, subduing resistance movements, Hamas in particular. Palestinians suffered from the deepening Palestinian rift and schism, from the deterioration in the role of the institutions that represent the Palestinian people, in particular the PLO, Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the PLC, as well as from external pressure,

especially those of Israel and the US, on Palestinian decision making and orientation.

The heroic steadfastness of the resistance and failure of the wide Israeli aggression on GS in three wars; during the period 27/12/2008–18/1/2009, in November 2012, and in the summer of 2014, made the resistance's public support continue, and widened the Arab, Islamic and International sympathy with the Palestinian people. It also gave a thrust to the drive of putting the Palestinian house in order. The Palestinian reconciliation agreement was signed in May 2011, however, the agreement has suffered failures, due to differences in determining the Palestinian fundamentals, the priorities of national action and national interim program, and due to the Fatah-Hamas confidence crisis and external influences and interventions.

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Like their Muslim brothers, the Palestinian Christians suffered the same injustice, tyranny and expulsion. They participated in the Palestinian national movement since the British occupation of Palestine and had represented a model of solidarity and national unity in the face of the Zionist Israeli occupation. They participated in defending of the Arab identity of Palestine, with word, pen and on the battlefield. They asserted their cultural belonging to the region with its identity, language and heritage.

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Loving one's country and defending its land, people and holy sites are a religious duty and a human right. Whereas patriotic feelings and love of people and family are natural human tendencies as long as it doesn't contradict the fundamentals of Islam and doesn't diminish the right of others. Working for Palestine, whether in the national, Arab, Islamic or humanistic levels, is working in focused, harmonious and integrated circles that must not be conflicting.

On the other hand, the efforts to solve society's problems, to attain civilizational development, to establish a Muslim state, to strive for an Arab and Islamic unity and to liberate Palestine; are all integrated efforts that serve each other and may coexist without conflict.

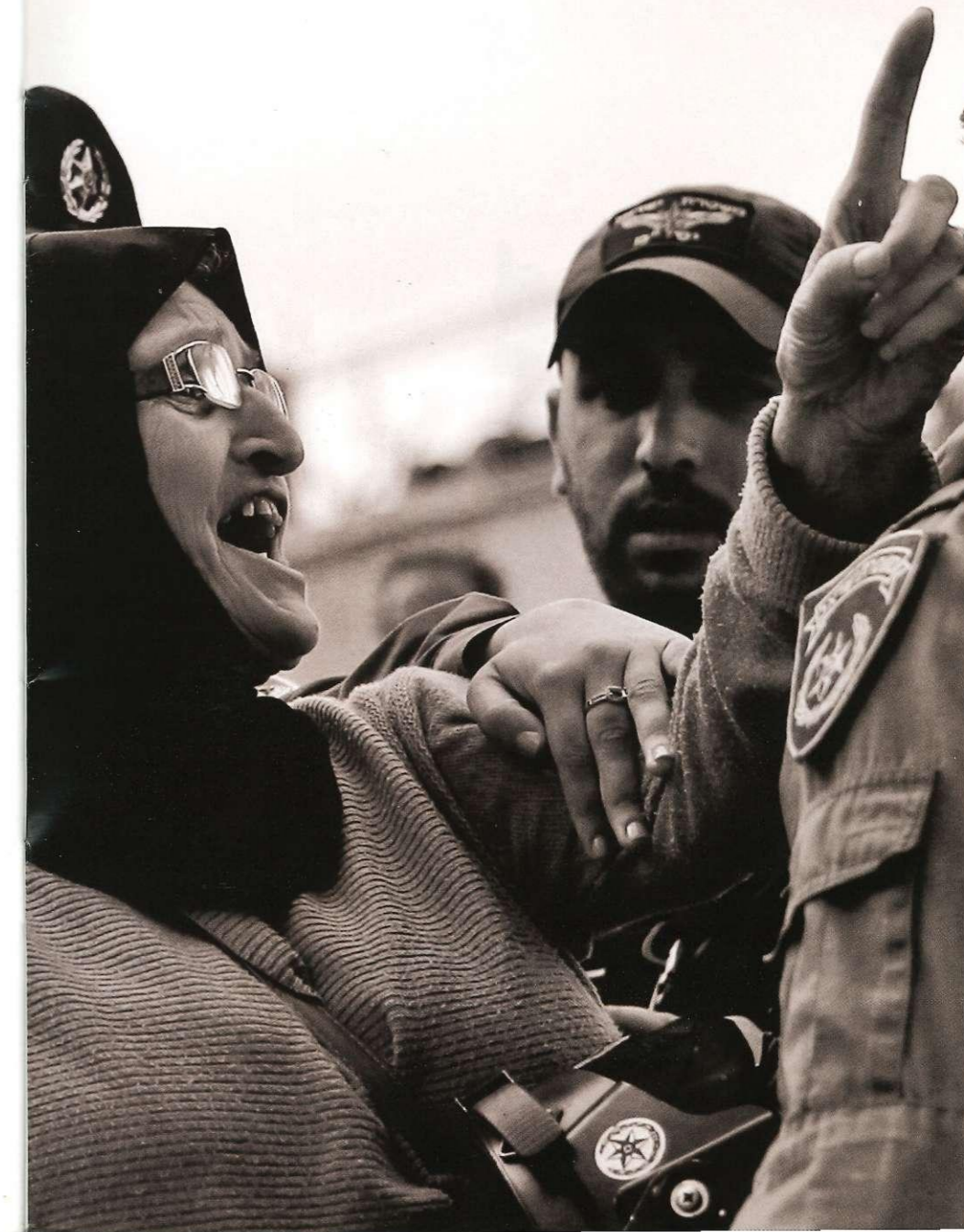


Islam is a religion of peace. Based on Islamic understanding, Allah is Peace, and the Muslim salutation is that of peace. Paradise is the abode of peace. The relationship between Muslims and others is based on religious tolerance, acquaintance and peaceful coexistence where dialogue prevails. Consequently, Islam is against "terror" and the killing of the innocent. At the same time, Islam is the religion of righteousness, justice and liberty. Its followers refuse to oppress or to be oppressed or humiliated because of their religion. In the defence of their dignity, land and holy sites, Muslims are willing to strive to resist to the maximum of their capacity. No "peace" in Palestine can prevail if it is built on the oppression of its people, usurping their rights and expelling them from their land. Imposing the conditions of the despotic usurper on a weakened people may lead to a temporary "settlement", but it will not lead to peace. Struggling to liberate Palestine will remain a duty, an honour and a badge on the chest of every sincere individual. This is said with total disregard of the strong Zionist and pro- Israeli media that manipulate the terms "terrorism" and "peace."

Historically, Muslim relationship with all Ahl al-Kitab (the Peoples of the Book, i.e. Jews and Christians) or Ahl al-Dhimmah (the Protected Peoples) had been exclusively based on justice and benevolence, and they enjoyed full freedom as well as religious and citizenship rights under Muslim rule. Indeed, the "Jewish Question" and Anti-Semitism started and gained momentum in Europe. The Muslim world, that has nothing to do with this prejudice, had provided a safe haven for the Jews against European religious fanaticism and ultra-nationalism. Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims fight the Zionist aggressors simply because they usurped the land of Palestine, expelled its people from their homeland and transgressed their sacred places. It is, of course, orderly and legitimate for oppressed peoples to resist any oppressive force that seeks to occupy their land, irrespective of its religion or nationality.

Undoubtedly, the Palestine Question has profound and far-reaching humanitarian dimensions. It represents the cry of the oppressed in the face of those who proclaim human rights. It exposes the double standards and sinister character of the “new international order”. It derides the hypocrisy of a “civilization” that lays claim to advancement, knowledge and technology, and the protection of animal rights; while it accepts the eviction of more than seven million Palestinians from their land into the wilderness, after they inhabited it for many centuries, in order to settle groups of Jews from all over the world under the pretext of claims that do not match the logic of history, the values of civility, or international laws.

The result of the Zionist project is to destabilising the regional and international peace and to shed blood in the Holy Land, which is supposed to be the land of love and peace. The Zionist movement and its occupation of Palestine is one of the last remaining outposts of traditional western European colonialism that was obliterated from all parts of the world, and must, sooner rather than later, be expunged from Palestine. The mission of liberating occupied Palestine is essentially a humane and civilized mission in which all nations and countries should contribute.

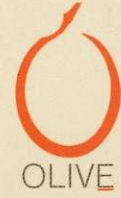




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