



**Emerging from the present Palestinian crisis:
A Road map towards exit**

Pal-Think for Strategic Studies



GAZA

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Introduction:

Pal-Think for strategic studies presents its political policy paper titled “Emerging from the present Palestinian crisis a national necessity that can not be postponed”. This paper is the result of several brain storming sessions held in Gaza over a period of 3 months (August, September and October 2007) under the auspices of Pal-Think.

The participants in the meetings included representatives of Political parties, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, academics, representatives of the civil society and the private sector.

The participants discussed means and methods to emerge from the Palestinian crises and the aftermath of the Hams military Coup, that occurred in June/2007 and culminated in HAMAS controlling of the Gaza Strip.

This paper attempts to present logical and rational answers to the questions posed by the new reality. Pal-Think stresses that this paper presents a vision of how to emerge from this crises.

Finally I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to every participant who contributed to the final version of the paper.

Chairperson

Omar Shaban

Emerging from the present Palestinian crisis:

(Frame work for a solution)

Since 1967 the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been living under extremely tensed circumstances that affect every aspect of life. This crisis is basically because of the following:

1. The intensified strategy of separation, hostility and restriction adopted by the Israeli government to confront the integrity of the Palestinian society. This has been manifested in issuing permits and magnetic cards, restriction of mobility, isolation of Jerusalem, the construction of the separation wall and isolation of the Gaza Strip as “hostile entity”.
2. The intense dispute within the domestic Palestinian political structure, which eventually resulted in having the military take-over by HAMAS in June 2007.
3. Activation of self destructive mechanism manifested in military out-laws, corruption, absence of foresight and vision and failure of the process of political and social amalgamation.

While the Palestinian political regime suffers from several crises reflected in weak structure and poor performance, the outcome of the legislative elections of 25/1/2006, the HAMAS military take-over in Gaza Strip have initiated a new era of crisis, new challenges and major threats.

The indicators of this crisis can be specified in the following

- a) Focus on the internal conflict rather than on the central issue of resisting the Israeli occupation.
- b) Excessive use of violence and force when dealing with the domestic affairs, expansion of violent behavior as a trend, violation of human rights, assault multiplicity and democracy, aggravation of phenomena of elimination, accusation of infidelity and treason and reject the other.
- c) Fragility of the political regime that leads to widen the political, social, administrative, geographical, cultural and even psychological gap between individuals of the same community.

Due to the expected failure of the planned autumn conference in Annapolis on one hand and the increase of incompetence of HAMAS in Gaza Strip to meet the needs of administration, ruling and resistance at the minimum accompanied with current situation of separation, closure, siege and constant Israeli threat for complete incursion to Gaza Strip on the other hand, the current circumstances is a real threat to the national cause for it will leave it exposed and subject to the worst options.

Desired solution

- Emerge from the present national crises as soon as possible prior to the autumn conference.
- Overcome, discard and reject the repercussions of this critical period.
- Reform and reconstruct the Palestinian political regime based on partnership, multiplicity, respect of organic law and unified political stand.
- Reorganize the PNA conditions and affairs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and reconstruct the security, civil and public services institutes on basis of high competence and qualifications.

All the above points are pre requisite to:

- a) Reverse the policy of separation, confinement and restrictions adopted by the occupation and prevent it from becoming a strategy used to eliminate and destroy the Palestinian national scheme.
- b) Preparedness to face the merits, setbacks and consequences of the autumn conference regardless of their nature.
- c) Regain the exuberant spirit of the Palestinian national cause, international understanding and support and the Arab world sponsorship.

Undoubtedly, these are several obstacles hindering the peace process. It is obvious and there is a tendency and hidden desire to support and sustain the current situation post HAMAS military coup in mid June/2007 to delay any expected resolution. On the other hand the policy adopted by the Israeli occupation in all forms and shapes (restrictions, hostility, demeaning etc) that aborts every chance for domestic Palestinian recuperation. And finally the stagnant state of the public that they do not express any sign of refusal or revolt.

Therefore this proposed paper suggests the formation of a national democratic league on the basis of the Palestinian legal rights, renounce violence and reject military resolutions. This league adopts the strategy of rallying supporters to exert pressure on the parties to engage in a dialogue. The league will condemn and boycott any party that would break its commitment to the solution.

Strategic Resolution

The paper perceives and believes that a committed and responsible national dialogue is the only means for recuperation and ability to face challenges. It has become obvious that dialogue is the sole alternative to confront the current challenges and to improve the Palestinian situation; any other alternative will only result in disastrous consequences, destroy the Palestinian achievements over the past decades of resistance and struggle.

Prepare the atmosphere

- 1) Immediately cease every action that widens the gap and increases separation between parties.
- 2) Official declaration from HAMAS revealing its willingness to withdraw from the military coup and turn in all the seized properties to the legal authority.
- 3) Release all the political detainees in the West Bank and Gaza and stop all forms of chasing, persecuting, interrogating, and torturing.
- 4) Immediate stop to all forms of incitements, provocations, distrust of legitimacy and media campaigns. Expand dialogue to include all the political parties civil organizations and the national figures.

Proposed framework for the solution

Principles:

- 1) Underscore the fact that the major contradiction is with the Israeli occupation and we as Palestinians are still in the national liberation process.
- 2) Respect the Palestinian legitimacy, its institutions, the PLO, the Presidency and the Legislative Council.
- 3) Hold affirmatively to the organic law, rules and regulations and protect human rights.
- 4) Renounce the use of violence in every form and shape, under any circumstances, and stress on dialogue as the only means for resolution.
- 5) Respect democracy through legal elections and protection of the political and intellectual diversity.

Mechanism of solution

- 1) Agree with the Arab League Follow-up Committee to be a referential national committee.
- 2) Issue an official declaration from HAMAS revealing willingness to turn in all the seized property to the legal authority.
- 3) Monitor conducted by the national democratic league to measure the commitment to the dialogue framework by the dispute parties.
- 4) Set a work plan to treat all issues and matters to reach an agreement that facilitates dialogue.
- 5) Concurrent with the first round of the dialogue, all the seized properties should have been turned into the legitimate Palestinian authority. Also all the overt and covert behaviours displaying or depicting disputes vanish (i.e. provocative media campaigns, detention, hostility etc...).

Solution outputs:

I. Agree upon immediate political, administrative, economical and security arrangements:

- 1) Reactivate the elected national legislative council to resume work.
- 2) Designate a prominent national figure to form a transitional technocrat government, which has a remedial programme for a limited period and hold responsibility to arrange for the elections.
- 3) Determine and decide on an emergency economical plan to overcome the current catastrophe conditions.
- 4) Agree upon urgent security arrangements to guarantee discipline for restructuring other security departments.

II. Reforming the Palestinian security foundation as follows:

- 1) Reform the national Security Council in accord with the law and set a comprehensive security strategy taking into consideration the Palestinian domestic and national status.
- 2) Agree on the security configuration in respect to number of armed corps, number of members in each system, types of duties, roles and entitlements and the organizational tree for every branch and leadership.
- 3) Exclude the security institutions from any political and/or ideological allegiance and reorganize it. Re-evaluate the previous security system, members, and press charges against any improper behavior or felony committed previously regardless of the party or rank.

III. Reform of the Palestinian political system

- 1) Agree upon the independence charter, organic law, national accord, and democracy as monitoring references for the system.
- 2) Set preparations at appointed dates for the legislative council and presidential elections based on the election code.
- 3) Reconstruct and reform the juridical system and sustain sovereignty that is not aligned with any political and /or ideological party.
- 4) To evolve and reactivate the PLO on the basis of Cairo declaration especially the demand for Palestinian National Council (PNC) election based on the quota taking into consideration the geographical and political representation of the Palestinians wherever they are.

Steps of the solution

Following is the demands to each party

HAMAS:

- 1) Develop an official declaration emphasizing willingness to withdraw, retreat of the military take-over, and turn in all the seized properties to the legitimate Palestinian authority.
- 2) Cease promoting any act contradicting with the spirit of the dialogue.
- 3) Release all the detainees and abducted.
- 4) Stop the provocative and instigating campaigns in the mosques and media.
- 5) Turn in all weapons, ammunition, property and documents seized and confiscated especially after June 14, 2007.
- 6) To announce explicitly encouraging speeches that reinforces dialogue and stress on unity.

FATTAH

- 1) Stop committing any arrangements or procedures that may obstruct the course of the dialogue.
- 2) Stop the provocative and instigating campaigns and explicitly announce encouraging speeches that reinforce the dialogue atmosphere.

President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen)

- 1) Welcome HAMAS declaration and willingness to withdraw from the military coup and hand in all the seized properties in the West Bank.
- 2) Assign a committee to receive seized items and property according to a set transparent mechanism.
- 3) Issue a formal decree-law to form the national Security Council.
- 4) Express willingness to reconsider all the previously issued formal decree-laws (specially issued post June 14, 2007).
- 5) Official declaration for the referendum of the dialogue.
- 6) Order the security and police department in the West Bank to cease detaining members of HAMAS and release those who are still detained.
- 7) Permit all the barred societies to resume activity unless if there is any other reason to be barred.
- 8) Designate a prominent national figure to form the transitional government (technocrat), arrange for election and work on lifting sanctions.

Political parties, civil society and private sector

- 1) Rally for a public campaign to support and affirm the dialogue.
- 2) Present alternative forms to the dialogue to bridge the gap between the parties.
- 3) Assist in managing the domestic affair temporarily until resolution then agreement.
- 4) Nominate competent and professional national personage for ministerial positions.

The Arab league and the international community

- 1) Formal welcoming and acceptance of the Palestinian dialogue.
- 2) Create the appropriate atmosphere for the dialogue and guarantee protection from any external pressure.
- 3) Direct the total sponsoring for the dialogue (i.e. facilitate the sessions, offer legal and political consultation, exert pressure on parties when needed, bridge the gaps between parties and approximate views etc.)

Sustainability of the solution

Serious Arab sponsoring to manage the process of the dialogue, release official announcements for the outcomes, offer legal and political consultations, secure protection from any external pressure offer financial support and overcome hindrances.

Public Oversight: respect for the public intellect and enable them to participate, take part in dialogue and reach solution.

Sustainability of the national resistance: commit ourselves to the national creed, reconsider the priorities in the forms and means of resistance, generalize Bil'in model in resisting the wall and settlements in the West Bank, and present the outcome of negotiation and /or public opinion poll to the elected national council.

Manage the disputes and political multiplicity peacefully: abide by the sovereignty of the law, adhere to democracy, respect multiplicity, prohibit domestic struggle and press charges to out-law.

Ensure comprehensive national reconciliation: between parties, prepare for juridical, administrative, and civil arrangements to overcome the aftermath of the military coup and conduct national reconciliation expressed by performing public and media activities especially in the educational and religious institutes.

Autumn meeting: Agree on unified strategy to be able to deal with the outcome challenges and /or new political consequences of the autumn meeting.

Pal-Think For Strategic Studies

Who we are?

Pal-Think for strategic studies is an independent, self-financed and non-profitable research institute. It was established in 1995 immediately after the onset of the Palestinian National Authority, yet work in the institute has been reactivated in 2007. The Institute aims to enrich, reinforce, support and inspire brains storming debate, dialogue. Pal-Think believes in cooperation with local and international research institutes who are involved in Middle Eastern issues especially Palestinian issues.

Vision:

Pal-Think's goal is to become a leading think tanks institute in Palestine and the Middle East in the areas of research and debate.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the institute:

- Play a major and positive role in the process of intellectual reinforcement and lay the fundamental principles of scientific method of debate regarding public Palestinian issues.
- Present innovative and novel proposals to resolve economic, political and social problems and challenges to improve the quality of Palestinian life.

Research scope:

Pal-Think will abide by the principles of scientific research methodology by offering supportive consultancy and recommendations to the decision makers through the following:

- Set specific unbiased framework for the issues removed from any doctrine of ideology and the institute work be distinguished with integrity, neutrality and independence.
- Easy detection and identification of any new issues that affect Palestine, the region and the world and to tackle them systematically.
- Raise awareness of the public and especially decision makers of current and/or anticipated problems and empower them with appropriate advice and recommendations.
- Conduct studies and research related to major issues of relevance to the Palestinian people, the region and the world.
- Present scientifically analyzed studies regarding the current Palestinian issues and submit consultations and recommendations to decision makers.
- Cooperate and exchange experience with research institutes and centers worldwide.
- Organize forums, workshops and conferences regarding specific matters to come up with pragmatic and applicable solutions.

General principles:

- 1) Reinforce and consolidate interest in research.
- 2) Interaction and cooperation between the universities and international research centers to widen the scope of research.
- 3) Cooperation with international expertise in different fields of research (i.e. governmental, academic, civil society, private sector ...etc) to gain better understanding of research strategies.