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On the Official Arab Position on Operation Aqsa Flood and the Subsequent Israeli Offensive on Gaza

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Introduction: After the Shock

Operation al-Aqsa Flood, carried out by the Palestinian resistance at dawn on 7 October 2023, shocked the Israeli occupation army and the settlers of the so-called Gaza envelope, stunning the entire world, including the Palestinians themselves. This shock was justified by the sophistication of the operation, the military tools and tactics employed, and the successful takeover of Israeli military sites. The sight of Palestinian resistance fighters crossing the fence between the Gaza Strip and Israeli settlements was reminiscent of Egyptian soldiers crossing the Bar Lev Line, set up along the eastern banks of the Suez Canal following Israel's occupation of Sinai in the 1967 war. Almost exactly fifty years separates the two crossings – 6 October 1973 to 7 October 2023 – but the shock was not felt in the same way. By the evening of the first day of al-Aqsa Flood, it had mutated, taking on various forms.

For the Israeli occupation state, it sparked a psychological trauma that initially crippled the state (for days, the Palestinian resistance continued to hold Israeli military positions, launch attacks, and engage in clashes deep inside the Gaza envelope). That trauma then transformed the occupation into “a wounded, dangerous monster,” in the words of Azmi Bishara, leading it into a rampage that has levelled residential neighbourhoods and their infrastructure, and wiped entire families from the registry.

This war is unprecedented in scale, an orchestrated genocide carried out to ethnically cleanse northern Gaza of its inhabitants and expel them to the south, shelling and killing them even as they sought refuge. The situation resembles medieval warfare in many respects, with the complete cut-off of water and electricity, not only for the population, but also for hospitals. Even the hospitals have been bombed along with their patients, paramedics, and the displaced people who believed themselves to have found refuge in its courtyard. The occupation is behaving like a gang of bloodthirsty bandits, killing for killing's sake, raiding the village, massacring its inhabitants, and burning it to the ground – in full view of the world, while acting as though the same world neither sees nor hears. And despite the fact that millions around the globe do in fact bear witness to these atrocities thanks to traditional and new media, like the Middle Ages, no one protects the victim of the attack, and no one holds the aggressor accountable.

An observation must be made here, though it is unrelated to the subject at hand. There is a widespread notion that the ferocity of the occupier's reaction can be explained – and for some, is justified – by the humiliation of al-Aqsa Flood. It is thus seeking to restore its stature, locally and internationally. This explanation is inadequate. What explains the occupation state's behaviour is simply that it is an occupying, colonial state in both its identity and conduct. This is the nature of the Israeli state, and this is what it does as a state built on occupation. Did colonial France commit atrocities in Algeria – its scorched earth policy, genocide, massacres, internment camps, and forced displacement – in an effort to restore its lost domestic or international stature? Not at all. Rather, it was simply acting like a settler colonial state.

Returning to the state of shock that followed al-Aqsa Flood, the astonishment of the United States and the West in general, with rare exceptions, became a kind of insanity, a mental disorder that entails a complete loss of the functions of perception, discrimination, memory, and other faculties. This insanity then propelled the West towards a bottomless moral abyss. Its lexicon was suddenly emptied of every word remotely related to the principles of international humanitarian law, the Middle East peace process, or calm and restraint. It spoke only of “Israel’s right to defend itself” and the need for a “Swift, Decisive, Overwhelming,” response while demonising the Palestinian resistance and equating its offensive with a terror attack on par with 9 / 11. Western officials lost the mental faculty of perception and discrimination, and so made no distinction between action and reaction in response to al-Aqsa Flood. First they stripped the operation from the context of the occupation – or, more accurately, settler colonialism – then isolated it from an extended series of actions and reactions, the first being the Nakba of 1948, and then tore it from its most immediate context as a direct reaction to the violations of the occupation, army, and settlers, during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot (29 September-6 October 2023).

The West’s memory function was similarly disabled, wiping out its herculean efforts to counter the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The support it had previously mobilised for occupied Ukraine against the Russian occupation instead flowed more broadly and bluntly, to bolstering the Israeli occupation against occupied Palestine.

The shock of Arab officialdom devolved into a severe state of disorientation, losing any sense of its own identity and all its temporal and spatial bearings. Al-Aqsa Flood threw the official positions of individual Arab states into disarray, in ways that varied from one state to the next. There is no need to describe these differences by cataloguing responses to the operation, a meaningless process given that, as expected, no response was articulated in support of the operation. The usual schema for categorising positions – that is, some states support the operation, others oppose it, and some have reservations – is thus useless in this case. Arab states have issued successive official statements that are available on the websites of foreign ministries, official news agencies, or news websites; which need not be reviewed here.

Instead, this paper is concerned with an examination of the disorientation evident in official Arab responses (plural) to Operation al-Aqsa Flood and how and in which respects these morphed into an official Arab position (singular) following the Israeli assault on Gaza. This position is articulated in Resolution 8987 issued by the Council of the League of Arab States at the level of foreign ministers.

To diagnose the state of disorientation evident in the official Arab position – meaning the loss of those in power in Arab countries of any awareness of their identity, status in the global system, and the moment they were witnessing – their rhetorically expressed positions must be compared to at least three other positions: the Arab popular position, expressed spontaneously on social media and subsequently in demonstrations and popular stances; the Israeli position, expressed



rhetorically and militarily; and the official Western position, expressed rhetorically, politically, and in the media (and militarily in the US case). It takes no great effort to conclude that the official discourse reflected in the statements of those in power in Arab countries, although they were not expected to support al-Aqsa Flood for reasons that are immaterial here, kept its distance from the popular Arab position – which saw the operation as a victory for Palestinian resistance and steadfastness and a message of hope for the Palestinian cause – and drew nearer and nearer to the official Western position, which saw it as a “terrorist” operation launched by “militants” against “civilians” in “Israel.” While it was not labelled as terrorism in the official Arab discourse, it was not denounced in the statements of some Arab countries. Rather, the operation was portrayed as a trigger for “escalation” that requires “calm” and “restraint” from “both sides.” In consequence, the “condemnation of the killing of civilians on both sides” is a condemnation of al-Aqsa Flood itself.

I. Early Official Arab Responses: A Reading of the Terms of Discourse

I distinguish individual, official Arab responses from the official Arab position, by which I mean the mainstream position. As noted above, I will not review official Arab stances on al-Aqsa Flood one by one, but will instead calculate the frequency of certain phrases in official statements that articulate their positions. This allows the identification of rhetorical or discursive patterns that are repeatedly, rarely, or never found in official statements without pausing to categorise each state’s position. In turn, this helps to chart the path towards Arab League Resolution 8987, which was issued four days after Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent unprecedented Israeli war on Gaza. But more importantly, monitoring the frequency of phrases also allows reflection on the components of the official Arabic discourse and its prevailing language and lexicon.

The data corpus used to analyse the frequency of phrases includes official statements issued on 7 and 8 October by Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Iraq. After reading the texts, I identified a set of phrases indicative of the position on al-Aqsa Flood and then manually calculated their frequency. These phrases and their frequency are as follows: expressing concern (seven times); calling for restraint (seven times); appealing to the international community (six times); calling for de-escalation (six times); calling for the protection of civilians (five times); holding Israel responsible (four times); referring to the Israeli occupation (four times); calling for an end to violence (three times); referring to attacks on holy sites (twice); referring to Israeli provocations (once); referring to racial discrimination (once); referring to the blockade (once). I have illustrated the frequency of phrases in a word cloud.

Figure 1: Word cloud of the main phrases used in official Arab statements following Operation al-Aqsa Flood



Source: Author's preparation using worldclouds.com, based on a set of official statements from several Arab states

1. Recurrent phrases

a. Expressing concern

Official Arab statements were dominated by expressions of “concern” about “developments” in the Gaza Strip. It is a phrase often, if not always, used by UN secretaries-general. The UN secretary-general expresses concern about international crises because his role is to “bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security” (Article 99, UN Charter). Simply by uttering this phrase, “We express our concern about such-and-such”, they bring it to the attention of the Security Council and the international community as a whole, while lacking the authority to take a position on an issue and express it on behalf of the United Nations. Above all, the United Nations itself is an intergovernmental organisation with no authority independent of member states, neither in decision-making nor in the execution of decisions. The structures and dynamics of UN resolutions are well known, particularly the right of permanent members of the Security Council to veto resolutions. It is, rather, sovereign states that possess the authority to decide and express and implement a decision or resolution. The expression of “concern” as found in official Arab statements is thus a language alien to state discourse. We need only compare the language of the official statements issued by Western countries, large and small, with that of their Arab peers to see that the former expressed clear,

uncompromising, unequivocal support of the occupation state and condemnation of al-Aqsa Flood, while the latter articulated no concrete position, with the exception of the phrase “stand with the Palestinian people,” which was found twice in the statements.

b. Calling for restraint

A “call for restraint” was mentioned as frequently as the expression of concern (seven times). At first glance, it may be unclear whether this call is addressed to the occupation state or to both the occupation state and the leaders of the Palestinian resistance. However, looking at the correlation between the call for restraint and the phrase “both sides” (or, in one statement “all parties” and, in another, “by any party”), it becomes clear that the call for restraint is addressed to both the occupation state and the Palestinian resistance. The frequency with which this phrase is repeated may be understandable given fears about the fate of the large number of captives (in the resistance discourse) or hostages (in other official and unofficial discourses) taken by the resistance during al-Aqsa Flood, including civilians and non-Israeli foreigners, but the equivalence between the two parties that it assumes, in calling on both to exercise restraint as if they were equally matched, is not. The way that official Western discourse decontextualises the term “restraint” is also understandable – after all, it strips Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the resistance as a whole from its context and this is typical of Western political and media discourse, and even epistemological discourse. What is not understandable is for official Arab discourse to blindly fall in line behind its Western counterpart.

“Restraint” is not merely a linguistic expression, but also a political term that emerged in a specific context, and it should be situated within this context. The term emerged in Concert of Europe era in the first half of the nineteenth century; it meant, among other things, that the major powers should refrain from taking advantage of opportunities to expand territorially (what was then called territorial opportunism). Inspired by the concept, researchers argued that the United States, as the existing superpower should exercise restraint if it sought a stable world order by, for example, giving ascendent powers consideration commensurate with their growing power, refraining from treating US interests as a permanent priority, and abandoning short-term political victories at the expense of others. This is restraint in context: the obligation of the stronger party to restrain its behaviour towards the weaker party as commensurate with the weaker party’s demands for recognition and the right to exist. It did not denote, as it has come to be understood, the commitment of both parties to “calm,” “good judgment,” “prudence,” and other such terms that are wholly unrelated to the context of an existential struggle between a brutal, colonial occupation and a steadfast resistance movement representing a people who struggle daily for survival and the restoration of their land and rights. It seems clear that the official Arab discourse is calling on the Palestinian resistance to exercise “restraint” and “prudence” without an understanding of the meaning of restraint.

c. Calling for de-escalation and an end to violence

A call for de-escalation was repeated six times, only slightly less frequently than calls for restraint (the phrase is similar to calls for an end to violence, which was mentioned three times), and as in case above, it was closely associated with the phrase “both sides.” In fact, the term “de-escalation” itself legitimises the use of the term “war” to describe military hostilities between the occupation state and resistance factions. The same is true of “asymmetric warfare,” a term that dominates military analyses, Arab and non-Arab alike. I will not pause to further consider the concept, not only because of space considerations, but because it obviously requires focusing on longer periods of the Israeli-Palestinian “conflict” rather than brief periods in which the Palestinian resistance responds to a non-stop, daily series of Israeli attacks in which no distinction is made between civilian and military, whether in defining the aggressor or the victim of aggression. Parenthetically, I note the incoherence of the argument that the conflict in the Middle East began as an Israeli-Arab conflict and then, after the first wave of normalisation, became an Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as if the dynamics of the conflict remained the same and what changed was the parties to it. The extensive use of the term “de-escalation” in the context of resistance to colonial occupation serves rhetorically to recast Israeli aggression as asymmetric warfare – not a war *with* armed resistance groups, but rather *against* an unarmed people harbouring “terrorist groups” or “militias.” This is the definition of asymmetric warfare, or at least the form of asymmetric warfare that is invoked in Israeli and Western discourse to describe what the Israeli occupation state is doing.

Regardless of the appreciation expressed for the Palestinian resistance and its ability to inflict harm on the occupying enemy – for some, this appreciation was expressed as pride in the resistance while for others it was expressed in awe in its ability to develop its capabilities despite enemy besiegement and abandonment by allies – this is no way equivalent to an “escalation” and, subsequently, an assumed parity between this escalation and that of the occupation state, both the army and settlers. Here we need only briefly quote the director of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in the midst of the Sword of Jerusalem battle of 2021: “The intensity of the conflict is something we have not seen before, *with non-stop airstrikes in densely populated Gaza and rockets reaching big cities in Israel. As a result, children are dying on both sides.* For people in Gaza, access to hospitals and other vital infrastructure has become very complicated because of *the incessant airstrikes and major damage to roads and buildings. Actors on the ground must stop this cycle of violence.* The rules are crystal clear: Civilians must be protected at all times. Sadly, that is not the case today” (emphasis added).¹ This is just one rhetorical instance in an ostensibly neutral statement that strives mightily to establish that there is an “escalation” between “two parties.” Yet, the expression betrays it, not because of some fault in the linguistic signifier, but in what it signifies. Of course, what was

¹ While the English text urges for the end of this “cycle of violence” it does use the term “escalation”. The Arabic translation however states “We call on all parties involved to proactively protect civilians, de-escalate and allow us to help people.” See: International Committee of the Red Cross, “Israel and the Occupied Territories: The Escalation between Gaza and Israel Must Stop and Urgent Humanitarian Action Must Begin Immediately”, 16/5/2021, accessed 26/10/2023 at: <https://tinyurl.com/3jmuwbw>

expected from the occupation state in the aftermath of al-Aqsa Flood, and what in fact happened, was far worse than anything the Gaza Strip witnessed in 2021 and before that, but the official Arab discourse continued to call the brutal act of occupation and the limited response by the resistance an “escalation” by “both sides,” calling for an end to it, in line with the Western position.

d. Calling for the protection of civilians and an appealing to the international community

A call for the protection of civilians was also frequently mentioned. Here, the reference was at times to Palestinian civilians and at other times to “civilians from both sides” or “from any side.” With the exception of one statement, it was not clear whether the call for the protection of the Palestinians or Palestinian people was directed at the occupation state or the international community, but we will pause at the former – that is, the demand that the occupation state and its army protect civilians. This rhetoric is based on Israel being the de facto and de jure occupying power. Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949), for example, states that civilians “shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threat thereof.” There is no need to expand further on this point, whether to explore the implications of civilians living under an occupying power or to recount the history of the Israeli occupation state’s violations of these terms. Indeed, in the wake of al-Aqsa Flood, day by day, the occupation state is regressing further into medieval practices, unbound by customs, laws, or regulations. That official Arab discourse continues to call the occupation state an “occupying power,” in an invocation of international humanitarian law, is meaningless, putting it into alignment with the discourse of supine international organisations. Even Western powers, which themselves minted this law, have trod it underfoot as they give free rein to the occupation army in the Gaza Strip.

I will not comment on the call to protect civilians “on both sides,” for its obtuseness is laid bare by Article 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states that “If the whole or part of the population of an occupied territory is inadequately supplied, the Occupying Power shall agree to relief schemes on behalf of the said population, and shall facilitate them by all the means at its disposal.” Which “Palestinian side” is asked to do this? Under what circumstances? As for the “civilian prisoners” in the hands of the resistance, they have become part of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, who have been targeted by genocidal airstrikes that hit everyone. As for the phrase “appealing to the international community,” which was mentioned as often as the call for de-escalation (six times), it also needs no commentary, unless the international community to which those who hold the reins of power in Arab states refer is different from the international community we know – or indeed different from the community as it defines itself.

In any case, “international community” is a contentious concept when it comes to representation (who represents it?) and the functionality of its standards (who implements them? And for whom?). Commenting on the impunity of the United States and Israel, Noam Chomsky has pointed out that the so-called international community is used to denote the United States and its allies and clients;

parties other than these do not represent the international community. Do those who hold power in Arab countries and appeal to the international community mean Colombia, which expelled the ambassador of the occupation state in protest against its aggression on the Gaza Strip?

2. Infrequent or rare phrases

Only four statements held the occupation state responsible for the human casualties, including deaths, injuries, and prisoners, inflicted by the occupation army and its settlers during al-Aqsa Flood. Just as frequent (four times) was the reference to the Israeli “occupation” of the Palestinian territories. Although recent Israeli assaults on the holy sites in al-Aqsa Mosque were referenced only twice, it reminds us that al-Aqsa Flood was a reaction to an original act – namely, the colonial occupation and its provocative practices, both recent and cumulative. One reference was made to each of the following: “Israeli provocations,” “the occupation’s continued policy of harassment and persecution of the courageous Palestinian people,” “racial discrimination,” and “blockade.” Because of the infrequency of these phrases, they do not appear clearly in the word cloud (Fig. 1). These phrases were exceptions, laudable though infrequent, in the official Arab discourse that took shape around al-Aqsa Flood. They were references necessary to maintain the essence of the Palestinian cause and properly contextualise it as an existential conflict between an expansionist, brutal colonial occupation and a resisting occupied people subjected to expulsion, denial, and extermination in conditions of killing, siege, and displacement for seven decades, with no regional or international position on the horizon that seeks to end this.

3. Phrases not mentioned at all

The military option or threat thereof is no longer an Arab option. Without delving into the debate about the sources of support received by the Palestinian resistance factions in the Gaza Strip – which in any case, is not based on sufficient data – it seems that supporting the resistance factions with weapons, or even threatening to do so, in order to influence the balance of power between them and Israeli occupation forces is no longer an Arab option as well. None of this was expected to appear in any official Arab statement, and we need not recount what has become of the Arab regional order over the last decade after some Arab Spring countries have slid into civil war, counterrevolutions, and the acceleration of the second wave of Arab normalisation with the Israeli occupation state.

Many topics that were expected to be found in the individual official Arab statements did not appear at all. For example, no statement contained any decision or threat to sever diplomatic relations with the occupation state or to suspend steps towards normalisation in the case of those states engaged in normalisation talks. Why emphasising normalisation? Because it facilitated and encouraged the recent violations committed by the occupation state and its army and settlers in

al-Aqsa Mosque, including taking steps towards enforcing a temporal and spatial division of the mosque, to which Operation al-Aqsa Flood was a direct response.

There was similarly no comment made about the absolute, unconditional Western support for the occupation state, including military, political, and media support. Even when an appeal was made to the international community, states, and international organisations to intervene to protect the Palestinian people, there was no call for Arab coordination, especially between the region's most powerful countries, to pressure the major powers or the Security Council, or even the goal of lifting the brutal siege on the Gaza Strip. The absence of any such phrases in the early official Arab statements on al-Aqsa Flood was reflected on two levels: Arab discourse, as exemplified in the Arab League resolution four days later, and subsequent Arab action.

II. Council of the League of Arab States Resolution 8987: Equivalency between Criminal and Victim, Occupation and Resistance

It is now clear that the text of the resolution of the Council of the League of Arab States, which convened on the ministerial level on 11 October 2023, echoes the same language and terminology found in official statements issued by individual Arab countries, starting with the distinction made in the preamble between “the dangerous escalation” “in the Strip and its environs” and “aggression against the Gaza Strip.” The first concerns the occupation state and the resistance alike, while the second refers solely to the occupation state. This is made clear in the first paragraph, which calls “on all parties to exercise self-restraint” and “warns of the catastrophic humanitarian and security consequences of the escalation.” Thus, the resolution holds the resistance partly responsible for the repercussions of the escalation. The second paragraph is more explicit, as it “condemns the killing and targeting of civilians on both sides and all acts contrary to international law and international humanitarian law” and “stresses the need to protect civilians, in accordance with shared humanitarian values and pursuant to international law, as well as the need to release civilians and all prisoners and detainees.”

This is, in fact, an explicit condemnation of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and an implicit condemnation of the Palestinian resistance. Moreover, it draws an equivalence between occupation and resistance and thus between the criminality of the Israeli occupation, as a colonial occupation engaged in persecution, land confiscation, displacement, siege, genocide, and ethnic cleansing, and the *victim*, the Palestinian people, which represents the incubator of armed resistance and from which the resistance derives its legitimacy. Four states registered reservations on the substance of this particular paragraph, but the resolution was passed without any vote of no or abstention. The reservations were recorded in the margin of the resolution.

In addition, the eighth paragraph of the resolution “underlines the necessity of reviving the peace process and of initiating serious negotiations between the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and Israel to achieve a just peace” and “warns

that the continued lack of real political prospects for achieving this just and comprehensive peace will only perpetuate despair, fuel conflict, strengthen extremism, increase tension and violence, and undermine trust in the peace process as a means of resolving the conflict and achieving security and stability for all States and peoples of the region.”

This is a clear call to eliminate armed Palestinian resistance. It is as if the hand of the occupation state is extended in peace to the PLO – the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” which nevertheless suppresses Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank who sympathise with their brethren in the Gaza Strip – and the rest of the armed resistance factions are disrupting the process; as if the Palestinian National Authority, which was born out of the Oslo negotiations, is just now in view of a just peace with the occupation state, but need only revive the political process and initiate serious negotiations.

The Arab Peace Initiative (2002) explicitly proposes “the establishment of normal relations in the context of a comprehensive peace with Israel” in exchange for “full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, in implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, reaffirmed by the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the land for peace principle, and Israel’s acceptance of an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.” Arab states say they are still “committed” to the Arab initiative, but the recent wave of normalisation agreements and the discourse on resistance contained in Resolution 8978 paints a bleak picture of Arab commitment to the Palestinian cause. The countries that have normalised relations with the occupation state, or are on the verge of doing so, seem to be telling Palestinians: You must resolve your cause in negotiations with Israel, but we will not wait – every man for himself! The Arab commitment to a resolution of the Palestinian issue has thus transformed into efforts towards dissolution. Instead of healing the Palestinian peace process they are trying to euthanise it.

Later, when it became clear that Israeli occupation forces were engaged in a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, to say nothing of a despicable siege designed to starve the population, there was a burst of Arab positions articulating a rejection of expulsion – not with the chief aim of rescuing the population of Gaza from siege, aggression, and occupation, but rather to underscore the rejection of the displacement of Palestinians to neighbouring countries. The explicit statement: “If there is an idea for transfer, there is the Negev Desert in Israel. The Palestinians can be transferred there until Israel completes its declared mission of eliminating the resistance in the Strip and then return them if it wishes.”

Palestinians undoubtedly share neighbouring countries’ rejection of expulsion and displacement, which for them means a Nakba on top of a Nakba, but this official Arab discourse raises concerns about the priorities of those who hold power in neighbouring and other Arab countries. They should not give the impression that the stability of the region depends on the Palestinians not being displaced to neighbouring countries, while the Palestinians themselves are left to their fate in the hands of the “occupying power”. Only here can it be understood how those power in Arab countries understand the term “occupying power.”



Conclusion

In this article, I have offered a reading of individual official Arab positions on Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the official Arab position on the subsequent unprecedented Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, as articulated in Resolution 8987 of the Council of the League of Arab States. This resolution equates the occupation with the resistance and so comports with the official Western position, which favours giving the Israeli occupation a free hand in the Gaza Strip and eliminating the Palestinian resistance. This reading may be coloured by emotion, but it is justified by the overwhelming sense that the Palestinian people in Gaza have not only been left to stand alone, but have also been abandoned to a grim fate in the hands of brutal occupation forces.

The resolution of the Palestinian cause can be understood in several ways. Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the ensuing Israeli aggression has injected new life into the Palestinian cause in the Palestinian, Arab, and international arenas. But in complete contrast, the official Arab discourse, with notable exceptions and in light of the unwavering official Western support for the Israeli occupation, contributes to the de-legitimisation of the Palestinian resistance and even to the swift release of the occupying power's unbridled force upon the occupied territories and its inhabitants. This sort of resolution is a bone-chilling prospect.