



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

The Future of the Palestinian National Project Academic Symposium

14 - 15 November, 2015

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Introduction

More than 25 years have passed since the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) abandoned armed struggle and opted for a peaceful resolution that sought to end the occupation and create an independent Palestinian state. The peace process, however, has only served to deepen the status quo of occupation in the occupied Palestinian Territories, which Israel has held since 1967. In other words, the peace process has itself served to entrench and prolong the occupation, and to provide cover for the accelerated illegal confiscation of Palestinian lands and the construction of illegal Israeli settlements. The need to revisit the Palestinian national project is made more urgent by the crisis currently gripping Palestinian polity, specifically the conspicuous absence of a national agenda supported by the Palestinian grassroots and the established political factions. Additionally, these circumstances are further compounded by the political climate in the Arab world, where popular revolutions demanding liberty and justice were transformed into internecine conflicts and civil strife. Not only has the attempt to achieve a state through negotiations failed, but the Palestinian liberation movement no longer represents the multiple wings of the Palestinian body politic. In response to this dire state of despair, popular anger and disenchantment has made itself apparent in the latest uprising to erupt across Palestinian cities and villages, raising questions about which policy options are available to the Palestinian people in their bid to achieve their legitimate aspirations.

Exacerbating the present predicament of the Palestinian people is the disarray and in-fighting that plague the relationship between the two main political rivals, Fatah and Hamas, despite the nominal acceptance of both sides to form a unity government in mid-2014. The presence of both Fatah and other member factions of the PLO in the apparatus of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has reflected negatively on these groups' public standing and adversely affected all facets of Palestinian national life. These groups have now become implicated in the operations of an authority aspiring to

replicate an as-yet non-existent state, but which, through security coordination between PNA forces and Israel, has in effect become a vehicle for the preservation of the Israeli settler-colonialist project – actions that are completely at odds with popular sentiment among Palestinians.

Within this political climate, the option of a Palestinian resistance movement seems distinctly implausible and divorced from the reality of present-day political action. The other form of Palestinian political action— negotiated settlement— has moved so far away from the mode of active resistance to the occupation that the latter is now in a position of defending its very existence; no longer is resistance a strategic path for the liberation of the Palestinian people, but rather a tactical measure for self-defense of Palestinian lives. This change is also partly due to the increased impunity with which the Israeli occupation and illegal settlers behave towards the Palestinian civilian population, forcing the latter to adopt and improvise novel means of resistance. With such drastic measures of direct action likely to continue into the foreseeable future, Palestinian political factions must rise to the challenge of formulating a comprehensive and fully fledged political strategy for the achievement of Palestine’s national aspirations.

The recent events present a good opportunity to delve into and investigate the nature and future prospects of the Palestinian national project, while keeping in mind the following three distinctive predicaments faced by the Palestinians:

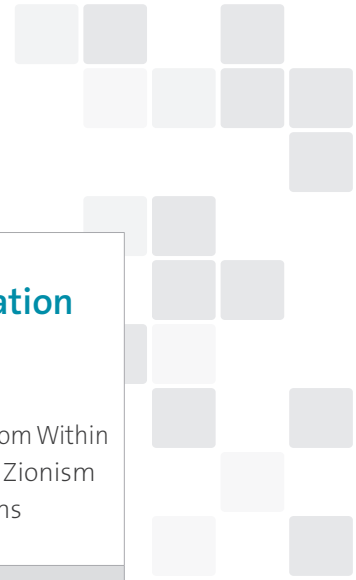
- The present impasse faced by the negotiations and peace process.
- The transformation of the armed struggle into a struggle of self-preservation.
- The impasse faced by Palestinian political factions and parties.



Time Table

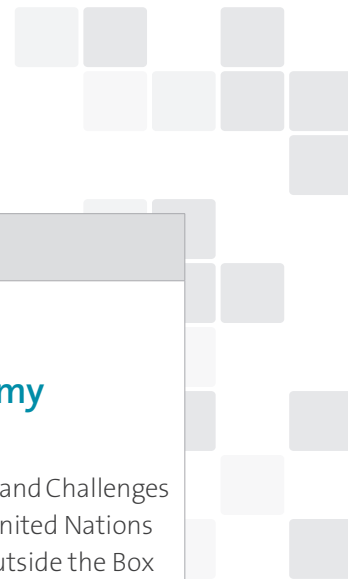
Day One: Saturday, November 14, 2015

09:30 – 10:30	Opening Remarks Azmi Bishara
10:30- 12:00	Session One The Future of Palestinian Resistance and National Struggle Chair: Tarek Mitri Anis al-Qasim: The Light at the End of Oslo: a Resurgent Palestinian National Project George Giacaman: If it isn't a Third Intifada, then What is it? What Future for Palestine? Mouien Al Taher: The Intifada: an Alternative Strategy? Ahmad Jamil al-Azm: The Dilemma of Palestinian Popular Struggle: Political Partisanship and Stateism
12:00-12:30	Coffee Break



Day Two: Sunday, November 15, 2015

09:00-10:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Session One Refugees and Palestinian Youth</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair: Mohammed Al Misfer</p> <p>Shafiq al-Ghabra: A Visit to Palestine: Testimonies from the Occupied Territories Oroub El-Abed: Excluding the included: What legal status for Palestinian refugees? Mjriam Abu Samra: Palestinian Transnational Student Movements: Analyzing the Past and Building the Future Ayat Hamdan: Youth Movements in Palestine: the Current State of Affairs in Palestine</p>
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00- 12:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Session Two The Centrality of Jerusalem and Possibilities for Statehood in Light of Israeli Policies</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair: Hessa Al-Attiyah</p> <p>Issam Nassar: An Alternative View of the Centrality of Jerusalem: Lessons from the History of the City Munir Nusseibeh: Israel's Exploitation of Security Anxieties in Drafting Colonialist Policies Alaa Mahajna: Law and the Legalistic Nature of Judaization Policies in Jerusalem Osama Abu Irshaid: The Prospects for a Two-State Solution in Light of the Constraints on a Palestinian State</p>





Participants

Participant	Biography
Ahmad Jamil al-Azm	Head of the Abu Lughod Institute for International Studies at Birzeit University in Ramallah. He was a Fellow at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge and spent nine years at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) in Abu Dhabi. Having published widely on issues of conflict management, Palestinian political affairs, and the social history of Jordan and Palestine, Al-Azm's research focuses on theories of conflict management and international relations. Al-Azm is also a columnist for Jordan's <i>Al Ghad</i> daily newspaper.
Alaa Mahajna	Associate Researcher at Mada al-Carmel: The Arab Center for Applied Social Research. He holds L.L.B. and L.L.M degrees from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he used to be a teaching and research assistant. Previously, Mahajna worked at Adalah Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel as a staff attorney, and as a legal advisor for the UNDP/Negotiation Affairs Department in 2010-2011.
Anis al-Qasim	Lawyer and member of the Jordanian Bar Association since 1993. He holds a doctorate in law from the George Washington University, and has worked as a legal advisor to the Palestinian delegation at the Madrid and Washington negotiations. He is a Palestinian member of the defense panel in the International Court of Justice on the case of the Apartheid wall.
Awad Abdelfatah	Secretary General of the National Democratic Assembly political party and one of the former leaders of the Abna' al Balad movement. Between 1995 and 1997, he was the Editor of the NDA's weekly Arabic language newspaper, <i>Fasl al-Maqal</i> . During his career as a journalist, he penned many articles addressing the political situation in Israel and Palestine. Abdelfatah continues to write frequently about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Palestinian minority inside the Green Line.
Ayat Hamdan	Assistant Researcher and Editorial Secretary of academic journals <i>Ostour</i> and <i>Istishraf</i> at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS). Prior to joining the ACRPS, she was an instructor at Birzeit University in the Department of History and Archaeology. She has also worked as an assistant researcher in a number of university departments including the Democracy and Human Rights Department and Political Science Department. She holds a Master's in Arab-Islamic History from Birzeit University.
Faleh Al-Hajri	Deputy Editor-in-Chief at Qatar's <i>Al Sharq</i> newspaper. He holds a degree in Mass Communication from Qatar University.

Participant	Biography
George Giacaman	Professor of Philosophy and Cultural Studies at Birzeit University, where he is also a Professor in the doctoral program in social sciences. Giacaman earned his PhD at SUNY at Buffalo in 1976. His research focuses on contemporary philosophy and Islamic Philosophy as well as on issues of democratization in developing countries. His latest book, on the political transition within the Palestinian Intifada following the death of Yasser Arafat, was published in 2011.
Hessa Al-Attiyah	Research Assistant at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Her research interests focus on linguistics and identity formation in Qatar. Before joining the ACRPS, Al-Attiyah graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Affairs, Cum Laude (With Distinction), from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, majoring in Culture and Politics (CULP). Her Honors Thesis was titled “Reviving the Local Dialect in Qatar: An issue of Linguistic Concern or Identity Politics?”.
Issam Nassar	Professor of Contemporary History at Qatar University, and Professor of Middle East History at Illinois State University. He is Co-Editor of Jerusalem Quarterly, and a Research Associate at the Institute of Palestine Studies. His writing focuses on the Great War in the Middle East, as well as the social history of Jerusalem and on early photography in Palestine. He is the author of <i>European Portrayals of Jerusalem: Religious Fascinations and Colonialist Imaginations</i> (2006); and Co-Editor with Salim Tamari of <i>The Storyteller of Jerusalem: the Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh: 1904-1948</i> (2013).
Khalid al-Jaber	Assistant Professor of Political Communication in the Gulf Studies Program at Qatar University. Al Jaber was previously the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of <i>Al-Sharq</i> , and later the Editor-in-Chief of the English language <i>Peninsula</i> , a part of the same newspaper group. Al-Jaber is a scholar of Arab and Gulf studies whose research focuses on media, political communication, and international relations.
Khalil al-Hindi	Professor of Management Science at the American University of Beirut. He was also the President of Birzeit University in Birzeit, Palestine, from 2010 to 2015.
Khalil Shaheen	Political and media analyst and researcher. He is a member of the Board of Trustees at Masarat: the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies. He was the Senior Editor of the Palestinian newspaper <i>Al-Ayyam</i> and Editor of the Arabic <i>Le Monde Diplomatique</i> in Palestine.
Mahmoud Muhareb	Associate Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. A Palestinian academic, his publications cover Zionism and Israel, the Palestinian Cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Muhareb earned his PhD in Political Science from the University of Reading in the UK.

Participant	Biography
Marwan Kabalan	Associate Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, Qatar. Kabalan was previously the Dean of the Faculty of International Relations at Kalamoon University in Syria. He is the author of several papers on foreign affairs and international relations, in both academic and non-academic journals. Kabalan earned his PhD at the UK's University of Manchester.
Mjriam Abu Samra	Doctoral researcher in International Relations at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom. Her work focuses on Palestinian Transnational Student Movements and their contribution to the broader Liberation Movement through different political periods. She had previously completed her Master's in Middle East Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, UK. Abu Samra is currently based in Amman, Jordan, where she has lectured in Theories of Development at the Faculty of Politics and International Studies at the University of Jordan.
Mohammed Al Misfer	Professor of Political Science at Qatar University. He is a regular columnist for both Doha-based and pan-Arab newspapers, and writes widely on Arab nationalism and related issues. Al-Misfer earned his PhD in Political Science from New York University.
Mohsen Saleh	General director of al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations in Beirut since 2004. He is also Associate Professor of Palestine Studies. Saleh received his PhD in Modern and Contemporary History from the Lebanese University.
Mouein Al Taher	A former military commander and student leader. In addition to being the commander of Fateh's "Student Brigade", he was also a former member of the group's Revolutionary Council; of the Palestine National Council; and the Higher Military Committee. Al Taher earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Philosophy from the University of Jordan in 1991. His memoirs of life in the Fateh Student Brigade were written in cooperation with Elias Khoury and Michele Noufal. A second of his published books deals with controversial figures in Islamic and Arab philosophy.
Mtanes Shehadeh	Coordinator of the Israeli Studies Program at Mada al-Carmel: The Arab Center for Applied Social Research. He received his PhD in political science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with a specialization in political economy in Israel, focusing on the economic impact of globalization on political culture and voting patterns in Jewish society from 1992 to 2009. He has published papers on issues such as Israeli economic policies toward Palestinians in Israel, Palestinian voting patterns in Israel, and economic policies of Israeli colonialism in the West Bank.
Munir Nusseibeh	Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law at Al Quds University. He holds a PhD in International Law and Transitional Justice from the University of Westminster in London. Nusseibeh is interested in issues of forced migration and transitional justice. He is also the Director of the Jerusalem Legal Aid Clinic and the Community Action Center.

Participant	Biography
<p>Nadim Rouhana</p>	<p>Professor of International Relations and Conflict Studies at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts. He is also the founding Director of Mada al Karmel: the Arab Center for Applied Social Sciences in Haifa. Rouhana is a widely published author whose research focuses on the conflict between Zionism and the Palestinian national movement; on Palestinian identity in the territories behind the Green Line; citizenship and democracy; ethnic states; Zionism, colonialism and transitional justice.</p>
<p>Oroub El-Abed</p>	<p>Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for British Research in the Levant (British Academy grant). El-Abed earned her PhD in Development Studies from the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 2014. She has been a consultant for several UN agencies and international NGOs, and has published in the areas of political economy of development and forced migration, particularly Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. She is the author of <i>Unprotected: Palestinians in Egypt Since 1948</i> (Institute for Palestine Studies in Washington, DC and the International Development Research Centre, in Ottawa, Canada, 2009).</p>
<p>Osama Abu Irshaid</p>	<p>Non-Resident Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Abu Irshaid earned his PhD in Politics and Philosophy from the UK's Loughborough University, and an MA in Political Science and International Relations from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, Illinois. Two of his published Arabic titles focus on Hamas and the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.</p>
<p>Said Arikat</p>	<p>Palestinian author and political analyst. He is the Washington, DC Bureau Chief of Palestine's <i>Al Quds</i> newspaper, and a weekly columnist for <i>Al Araby Al Jadeed</i> English, and was a UN spokesman in Iraq from 2005 to 2010. Arikat is also an Adjunct Professor at the American University in Washington, DC, where he teaches a course titled "The Role of the Media in the Arab World".</p>
<p>Salma Karmi-Ayyoub</p>	<p>UK-based criminal barrister and legal consultant. She qualified as a barrister in 2007 and from 2009 until 2012 carried out international litigation for the Palestinian rights organisation organization, Al Haq. She is currently a consultant for Al Haq, as well as other NGOs and solicitors firms, on issues related to international law. Karmi-Ayyoub is co-chair of the legal charity Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights. Her articles have appeared in publications such as <i>The London Review of Books</i>, Reuters and <i>The Nation</i>.</p>
<p>Samih Shabib</p>	<p>Palestinian writer and Editor-in-Chief of Shuun Falastiniya, a journal published by the Research Center of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. He holds a PhD in History from the University of Saint Petersburg.</p>

Participant	Biography
Shafiq al Ghabra	Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University since 1987. He earned his PhD in Political Science, with a focus on comparative policies, from the University of Texas at Austin. Al Ghabra was the recipient of Kuwait's highest academic award in the social sciences and humanities, granted by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science.
Suhaim Al-Thani	Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, Qatar. A number of his research papers have been published in peer-reviewed journals since he gained his MA from Royal Holloway, University of London.
Tariq Dana	Researcher and a faculty member at Birzeit University's Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute for International Affairs. He is also a policy advisor to Al Shabaka: the Palestinian Policy Network. He was also previously a Visiting Scholar at SOAS, University of London and at Geneva's Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.
Tarek Mitri	Director of Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and Former Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Libya. He is also a member of the Strategic Board of Lebanon's Universite Saint-Joseph; the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Palestine Studies; and a Member of the Board of Directors of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Mitri has also been a cabinet member in four successive Lebanese governments, having been Minister of Environment; Minister of Administrative Development; Minister of Culture and Media; and Acting Foreign Minister. He has lectured in a number of universities in Lebanon, Europe and North America.
Toufic Haddad	Author of the forthcoming <i>Palestine Ltd.: Neoliberalism and National Liberation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory</i> (Center for Palestine Studies, SOAS and I.B. Taurus, 2016). He completed his PhD in Development Studies at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 2015, where his thesis focused on the political economy of neoliberal approaches to conflict resolution and state building in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Prior to his doctorate, Haddad worked in a number of roles in the OPT, including as a journalist, researcher, editor, and publisher. His research interests include political economy, development, social movements, and cultural production.

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P.O. Box 10277

Street No. 826, Zone 66,Doha,Qatar

tel. +974 44199777

fax +974 44831651

www.dohainstitute.org