

MIFTAH Conference Closing Statement

February 11, 2026



MIFTAH recently held its conference entitled: “Participation and Complementarity as a Strategy of Governance amid crises”, attended by a wide spectrum of government representatives, local councils, civil society institutions, popular committees, researchers and academics, in addition to representatives from international institutions.

The conference addressed how the Palestinian people’s existence is being targeted along with their ability to survive and remain steadfast amid the genocide in the Gaza Strip, escalating settlement policies and forced displacement from the West Bank, including Jerusalem. It showed how these complex crises exposed the diminishing effectiveness of the Palestinian institutional structure, the limitations of a centralized model of governance and its inability to singularly respond to the needs of society and protect the social fabric.

The participants reiterated that participation and complementarity between the government, civil society, local councils and popular committees is no longer an administrative option or a procedural improvement, but a national and structural necessity to ensure steadfastness and the ability to manage crises, and preserve social unity and Palestinian geographic integrity in the face of the escalating colonialist onslaught.

They indicated that the absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) prompted CSO’s to reconsider public policies and contribute to the development of perspectives on governance, provide practical alternatives that promote national unity and reorganize the relationship between the state and society on the basis of participation and complementarity.

The participants reiterated that experience in the field in the West Bank and Gaza Strip proved that local councils, popular committees and grassroots organizations, played a pivotal role in protecting citizens and providing basic services during times of government capacity collapse. They stressed that ignoring these roles or administratively confining them exacerbated fragility rather than hinder it.

The conference concluded with general agreements over the following points:

One: Adopting participation and complementarity as a National Government Policy

1. Adopting the principle of “complementary participatory governance” as a public policy for this stage: a unifying national framework, not a closed executive plan.
2. Reaffirming the institutional and legislative structural unity between the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a fundamental and legal reference, and the rejection of any permanent formula of fragmentation.
3. Complementarity calls for the adoption of official-civil partnership in planning emergency priorities and ensuring services and societal oversight, while respecting roles and not replacing them.
4. Considering social protection and preventing expulsion as a central government function, managed at the official/civil level and according to a clear rights-based logic.
5. Establishing permanent national red lines, the right to self-determination and statehood, the right to protection of society, refusal to depoliticize the cause and rejection of any arrangements that cancel out or fragment national representation, while strengthening international solidarity on this basis.

Two: Accountability and societal trust

1. Promoting the mechanisms of societal accountability as a complementary element of participation, ensures justice in the distribution of resources, protects civil action from politicization and polarization and contributes to rebuilding trust between society and institutions of governance.
2. Adopting a declared and binding policy that determines the framework and shape of partnership between CSOs and public institutions, reaffirming the role of civil society in contributing to the formulation of public policies and decisions pertaining to public affairs.

3. Empowering and building the capacities of CSOs in public policies and rules of good governance, and promoting and developing tools for societal accountability.

Three: Promoting the role of local players in crisis management

1. Recognizing the pivotal role of local councils and popular committees in refugee camps, especially in emergency contexts, and developing the experiences of the Gaza Municipality and popular committees in the Jenin camp as two national models that can be evaluated, developed and circulated.
2. Moving from impromptu responses to sustainable and participatory crisis management, based on planning, resource integration and linking social interventions with fair and transparent spending plans.

Four: From the concept of governor to the strategy of governorate

1. Calling to redefine the role of governor and move from a model of “governor” as an individual central authority to a modal of ‘governorate’ as an institutional, participatory and complementary body that constitutes a platform for coordination between government and community.
2. Adopting the model of governorate councils as a unifying institutional framework that includes elected representatives of local councils, CSOs, popular committees and the private sector, to promote popular participation and protect Palestinian geographic unity from fragmentation.
3. Organizing the relationship between central and local levels on the basis of functional complementarity and the distribution of authorities, to prevent placing the burdens of the state on society. At the same time, this prevents decentralization to be used as an instrument of fragmentation, in the service of the colonialist project.

The conference closed by emphasizing that confronting the escalating colonialist onslaught cannot be achieved through closed, centralized instruments or top-down approaches. Instead, it requires a model of national governance grounded in participation and complementarity. This model should be based on mutual recognition of roles and the revival of social structures. It must operate within a unifying national framework that protects the unity of society and geography and promotes Palestinian steadfastness.

MIFTAH reiterated its commitment to continuing this discussion, based on its interest in contributing to the promotion of national dialogue. In this regard, MIFTAH does not position itself as an alternative to any legislative or executive body, nor does it seek to replace the role of any political player. Nonetheless, given the significance of the current context and dangers facing our causes, MIFTAH is keen on its commitment to a unifying national approach that promotes dialogue between Palestinians.

MIFTAH looks forward to building on the outcomes of this conference and turning them into sustainable policy and dialogue pathways. The ultimate goal is for the Palestinian government to adopt a policy of participatory and complementary governance. This would lay the groundwork for a model of local governance that reflects the will of society and protects its unity, at one of the most dangerous and complex stages in contemporary Palestinian history.

