

“Fortifying the internal front to address the ramifications of Central Council decisions”

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Introduction:

The Palestinian people and their cause are currently up against major challenges, especially with the continuation of the popular revolt (*habba*) and the increasing summary killings carried out by Israeli forces against our people. In addition, they face continued illegal settlement expansion and a deadlocked peace process. In light of these developments, it seems urgent and necessary to fortify the internal front and address the ramifications of implementing the Palestinian Central Council decisions taken during its 27th “Session of Steadfastness and Popular Resistance” held on March 4 and 5, 2015. The Council’s decisions include: obligating Israel as the occupying authority to assume all its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people in the occupied state of Palestine, according to international law; halting security coordination in all its forms; rejecting the notion of a Jewish state, or a [Palestinian] state with temporary borders; continuing with the boycott of Israeli products as one form of popular resistance; instructing the PLO Executive Committee to follow up with the Higher National Committee regarding the International Criminal Court in a bid to pursue Israeli war crimes and hold those responsible accountable; assessing and reformulating the economic, political, security and legal relationship with Israel.

Discussion:

The participants confirmed the need to adhere to the decisions of the Palestinian National Council pertaining to obligating occupation authorities to uphold all its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people according to international law, as the occupying power. They reconfirmed the need to fortify the internal front and place priority on getting the Palestinian house in order. The participants also said the leadership must be called on to assess the security, economic and political relationship with Israel and to reformulate this relationship by setting a strategic plan for its gradual implementation. They said, however, that Arab and international conditions today must be taken into consideration. They also called on the PLO to reclaim its role in confronting the occupation and its policies, in addition to rehabilitating the role of the Palestinian security forces, thereby linking this role with political achievements on the ground, first and foremost, ending the occupation and regaining Palestinian rights.

They indicated that halting security coordination with Israel first necessitates a reconsideration of the Oslo Accords, given that this is one of the most outstanding articles in the agreement. They noted, however, that security coordination had been conditioned on political achievements that forward the national goals of the Palestinians. They said the security services implement policy but do not create it and that the security establishment is a product of a political decision that carries out instructions. Still, they said, this establishment must never harm or do anything that puts the lives of Palestinian citizens in danger.

Recommendations:

One: fortifying the internal front

- Unifying political and media rhetoric and avoiding the use of incitement and accusations of treason or apostasy
- Working towards ending the internal division and adopting a unified program with clear media and political ramifications so our people do not remain hostage to external agendas.
- Adhering to Palestinian constants and affording exclusivity to Jerusalem; providing security and safety for citizens; refraining from resorting to violence in resolving internal disputes and differences of opinions, while reaffirming the right to differ; unifying the official political and media discourse and the tools for resistance on the ground.

Two: security coordination

- Halting security coordination requires a review of the entire Oslo Accords given that there are articles in this agreement and its protocols that stipulate security coordination between the PA and Israel.
- At the present time, security coordination is harmful to the interests of the Palestinian people because Israel has offered nothing in return to achieve the Palestinians' goal of an independent state and regaining their legitimate rights. Therefore, the continuation of this coordination must be linked with the final goal, which is an end to the occupation.
- Halting security coordination requires clear political decisions and at the end of the day, "security implements a policy but does not create it." That is, the decisions of the Palestinian leadership and the PLO are implemented by the security establishment.
- Reaffirming the essential point that security coordination cannot lead to harming any citizen or putting any of their lives in danger.
- When discussing the halt of security coordination or any other political decision, the Palestinians' internal situation, Arab and regional conditions and international receptiveness must all be taken into consideration.
- Linking combatting terror with ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.
- Rehabilitating the role of Palestinian security and reformulating the Palestinian security doctrine.
- Setting a timetable and an action plan to carry out a complete boycott of the occupation not confined only to security coordination, which is a decision to be taken by the political leadership.

Three: The PLO

- Calling on the PLO leadership to reevaluate its political positions and to set an action plan for implementing the decisions of the Executive Committee and its branch institutions.
- Focusing efforts on addressing the internal Palestinian situation; affording special importance to reconciliation in order to reach a unifying political program for all national forces.
- The PLO need to adopt a resistance program for a calculated confrontation with the occupation, given that the decisions taken until now do not constitute a sound platform for this.
- Calling on the PLO to regain its identity as one national front in confronting the occupation and starting a more in-depth discussion of its current state, including the Central Council decisions.
- A call on the PLO to reformulate and evaluate its economic, political, security and legal relationships with Israel based on the interim agreement, which cannot drag on indefinitely and which has already expired; to take decisions with a political dimension such as withdrawing recognition, turning to international institutions and behaving like a state under occupation, which means the rehabilitation of the PA including its security services.
- Abandoning – without any official protocols – the notion of achieving a state through negotiations with Israel. That is, taking action on the ground in this direction without any official announcements.
- Working towards rehabilitating the internal front without fear from the surrounding environment; having confidence in the people's ability to endure and remain steadfast.
- Warning that the latest Central Council decisions for an all-out confrontation with Israel in the security and political fields have begun to have adverse results, even though these decisions can have two possible approaches: first, to immediately begin to implement this strategy, or second, to shake up the political situation given that it is the central option for moving these stagnant waters.
- Adopting a political, security and national program that transcends the geographic borders imposed by the Oslo Accords.

Four: a comprehensive Palestinian strategy

- Promoting collective awareness through broad participation in popular resistance everywhere, including promoting and reviving the international boycott of the occupation.
- International accountability must be a sword brandished at the popular and international levels, with mock trials held for the occupation.
- Stripping the occupation of international legitimacy through developing the positions of friendly political parties, human rights organizations and international parliaments.
- Good governance in the system through PA institutions and through promoting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people, namely by providing job opportunities for youths.

- Developing collective awareness towards ending the occupation and achieving independence.
- Conducting a field review of strategic decisions which will ultimately achieve our national goals through popular, regional and international means.
- Behaving like a unified national leadership, a return to front-based action, adopting a political program for resistance and promoting the popular revolt (*habba*)