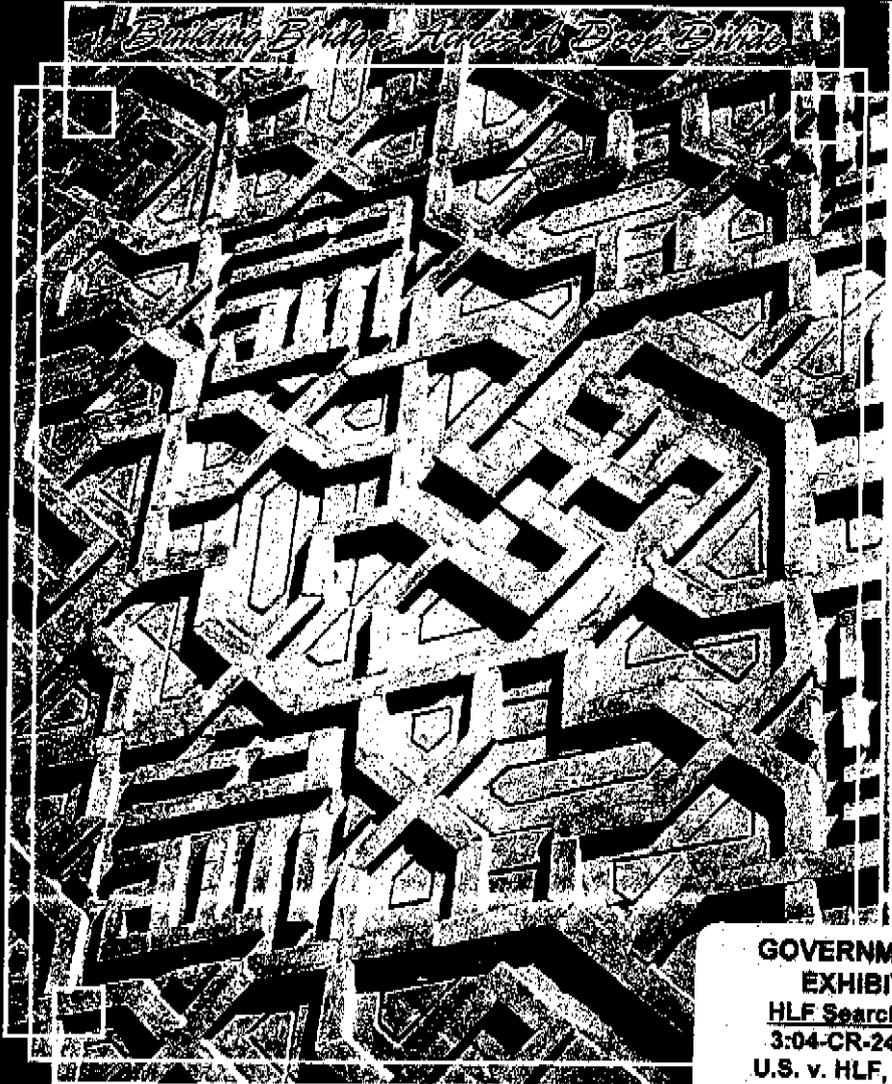


Middle East Affairs

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**THE BITTER HARVEST:
REALITIES OF LIFE IN PALESTINE AFTER OSLO**

Communiqué from the
Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) in Palestine

August 17, 1998

Five years have passed since the signing of the Oslo agreement. This signing symbolized the PLO's acquiescence to the Zionist Labor Party. The past five years have been years of great hardship and suffering for the Palestinian people, the question of Palestine has been obscured by issues of Israeli security, and Palestinian unity has been jeopardized.

This agreement has struck a deep blow at the very heart of Palestinian society.

We in the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) feel the hardships and the destructive effects of this agreement as do all of the people of Palestine. Hope for peace has lessened as we are continuously victimized by the conditions of increasing Israeli oppression, the continued changes on the ground that are sweeping away the Palestinian birth right and identity, the settlement projects on our holy land, side by side with the Palestinian National Authority's failure in every respect. The following facts and evaluation of the status of our nation, *Ummah*, and our Palestinian people on this fifth anniversary of the signing of the Oslo agreement is given in an attempt to shine some small light of truth on the situation in Palestine and the peace process.

ON THE POLITICAL FRONT

- Through the Oslo agreement a "Palestinian Authority" was established in some of the Palestinian lands. This authority is well connected to the Israeli occupation authority and has no sovereignty, or authority, especially over security, borders, water, natural resources, or foreign relations. It is so closely connected to the Israeli occupying entity that the

people of Palestine have come to understand that the sole purpose of establishing the "Authority" was to convince the world that "occupation" is no longer a reality and that the Palestinians under the "Authority" have been granted liberty. This illusion attempts to change the very premise of our political discourse from the rights of the Palestinian people to be free, to the rights of the Authority. Any discussion of Palestinian politics in respect to the abuses of the PA is now deemed an internal "Palestinian" discussion, when the reality is that Israel calls the shots and the PA, under extreme pressure from the United States and Israel, must yield to Israeli demands which have increased the hardships of our people.

- The Palestinian territories that were given "self-rule" remain under direct and indirect Israeli occupation. The land has been divided into different regions (A,B,C, and D) as stated in the latest Zionist proposal to transfer a percentage of the territory classified (C) into "Natural Reservations." This territory is under direct Israeli control and this proposal will turn the territories into geographically disconnected islands. This proposal leaves the largest part of the Palestinian territories under direct Israeli control, and increases the Palestinian population's hardships in terms of their movement in and between these areas. The rest of the occupied Palestinian lands that were confiscated by Israel after the 1967 war have been made available for annexation, settlements, and highways under the claim that the future of such territories is postponed to the "final status agreement," making it legal for such actions to take place.

- The Israelis have benefited tremendously from the Palestinian Authority's grave mistakes. The most serious of these mistakes was allowing the fragmentation of the Oslo agreement into temporary and final stages of negotiation and implementation. This alternate method has made it possible for Israel to escape its obligations. Israel has also benefited from the ambiguity surrounding the agreement and has consistently offered representations that serve its interests. It has also used exaggerated security issues to change articles of the agreement or ignore their implementation. The Israelis have been continuously able to impose their will upon the Palestinians, given the current balance of power and the Clinton Administrations "unconditional" support and bias toward Israel.

- The Palestinians have been denied the right of sovereignty. We have no control over our land, seaports, airports, highways, or our natural resources. We have no armed forces. The Palestinian Authority has failed tremendously in accomplishing any of these requirements needed to further its demands for an independent Palestinian state. Furthermore, efforts have been made intentionally to distort the meaning

of "Palestinian State." The declaration of "statehood" from one side without the required elements of statehood is an empty step. Meanwhile, the two largest Israeli parties, Labor and Likud, oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Even if Labor agrees on some amount of Palestinian autonomy it will never agree upon an independent Palestine.

- Jerusalem has been subjected to a most ferocious campaign toward Judiazation since the Oslo agreement. The objective of this campaign is to empty Jerusalem of its Palestinian population and culture, making the final negotiation on Jerusalem's status meaningless. Every political party in Israel unanimously agreed to declare Jerusalem the "eternal" and "unified" capital of Israel. This Israeli insistence on determining the final status of Jerusalem without negotiation or agreement is considered a serious blow to the PA slogan "rescue what can be rescued." This was the slogan utilized by the PA in its "political agreement" campaign.

In the December, 1996, elections Palestinians from Jerusalem were banned from running for seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council unless they possessed a permanent address in another city. The political campaigns have also been restricted to only Jerusalem candidates. The polling places were in post offices, giving the impression that these were foreign national Palestinians voting for elections in a foreign country. Furthermore, the process of sorting and counting votes took place outside of Jerusalem.

The Israelis, especially the current Likud government, concentrated their efforts on settlements in Jerusalem and the adjacent areas, as a prelude to final status negotiations. Furthermore, the Israelis started the Abu Ghneim settlement project which is by far the largest settlement project in East Jerusalem.

Many steps have been made to restrict the Palestinian presence in the city, such as revoking the residency rights of the Palestinians, going after the socio-political organizations, and expanding the demolition of houses claiming that they were built without license. The PA stood powerless to challenge such Israeli efforts. In the meantime, the PA continued to demand what is called "East Jerusalem." Israel dismissed such demands and suggested the establishment of a "new Jerusalem" in Al-Azarya and Abu Daiss, maintaining that "Unified Jerusalem" must remain under the full authority of Israel. Strangely, the PA seems to be accepting this proposal.

- Israeli settlements have expanded tremendously on Palestinian land under the Oslo agreement, both through building new settlements and expanding existing ones. The Oslo agreement, which imposed no restrictions on settlement building and postponed this issue to the "Final Status" negotiations, has given encouragement to the Israeli side to

expand its settlement building to the extent that it has swallowed more than 60% of the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Zionist efforts have concentrated on building housing units under what is called the Israeli Peace Now Movement. The goal is to build buildings, or 42,000 units, on the Palestinian land. Furthermore, the PA agreed to the Israeli right to build highways around the settlements. Such efforts have escalated lately, creating a false justification for land-seizure.

- In addition to the political failure of the PA to stop or even weaken the occupation and illegal settlement building, it has also failed in managing Palestinian internal politics and guiding Palestinian efforts toward resistance. It has ignored the sincere efforts of the various Palestinian opposition groups to manage Palestinian political differences. The PA has dealt with dialogue only between and with itself. Furthermore, the PA refused to engage in common-ground-building ventures among Palestinian groups seeking to establish consensus on the issues of Palestinian/Israeli peace and statehood in an effort to prepare for negotiations with Israel under the Zionist Netanyahu government. Strangely, the only concern of the PA has been its prompt responses to all Israeli security demands even when they call for striking out against the Palestinian national unity, hitting hard against the resistance movements and the resistance efforts that have been considered an advantage to our people. Resistance is our only source of power and our only effective instrument in dealing with the continued Israeli offensive against our people. If it were not for the wisdom of Hamas and the other Palestinian opposition groups who refused to respond to the provocations of the PA under Israeli direction, the results of such Israeli directed strikes could have been fatal for our people. This is what happened in the November 11, 1994, massacre in Gaza.

- The PA has also failed to respect the public and political freedoms of the Palestinian people, including their right to a free press. The PA has used torture, imprisonment, and the banning of opposition movement activities. It has used various intimidating measures against journalists and newspapers, which include arrests, closures, and the burning of newspaper offices. Its efforts to weaken the Palestinian Legislative Council, which have included seizing its oversight powers, intimidation of its members, and bribery, have so far failed, but these efforts have not gone unnoticed by the people, who realize that the PA has little respect for the freedoms that the Palestinian people desire and have died for. After excluding an important portion of the Palestinian people from participating in Palestinian social institutions, and by tying these atrocious actions to the Oslo agreement and the authority conferred upon the PA through this agreement, the PA has minimized the role of leading Palestinians who have tried to bring change through engagement. The

result is that the resistance movements have been isolated from the political workings of Palestine and left either to face a ferocious Israel alone or to succumb to the unjust process that the PA has agreed upon.

• Israel has succeeded in limiting any input from Palestinians who have left and received advanced education, and who have experience and are qualified to help chart the road to peace. They have done this by limiting participation to only "Domestic Palestinians," excluding Palestinians in diaspora, even though Jews from all over the world, particularly the United States, are involved in the highest levels of American government and are supporting and guiding Israeli participation. One Clinton Administration cabinet member became an American citizen simply so that he could participate in the peace process negotiations between Israel and Palestine as an "American Jew." The problem faced by the Palestinian refugees and their right of return has also been ignored under the claim that this issue will be dealt with in what is called "the final status agreement." Meanwhile, the Israelis continuously state that the only solution to the Palestinian refugee problem is for the refugees to settle where they are and accept what will be token compensation only. They lobby the American administration very hard seeking their support in implementing this "cleansing solution." The PA contributed to these efforts by ending the role of the PLO, by limiting its executive meetings with the PA, and merging the two agendas. This eliminated a separate PLO entity that was able to represent the Palestinians in Diaspora. This elimination in turn split the PA into "Domestic Palestinians" and "External Palestinians." It divided the domestic Palestinians into groups, and ignored more than 60% of the Palestinian people, forcing them to live at the mercy of their enemy, who will not let them come home and has ignored the Palestinian people's struggle for their homeland.

SECURITY

The past four years of the PA's reign have proved that transferring territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Police Force would make no significant positive difference in the lives of the Palestinian people. In fact, their lives have worsened. In addition to the PA's efforts to crush the Palestinian resistance, it proved that the security of the Palestinians is the least concern of either the Oslo agreement itself or of the PA. The sole purpose of this agreement is to provide an Israeli/Palestinian internal apparatus that will serve Israel's security interests, while completely ignoring the rights of the Palestinians and their even greater need for security. Palestinian deaths at the hands of the Israeli security forces, settlers, and now the PA far outnumber Israeli victims of Palestinian violence. This fact can be grasped through a review of the following:

1) Arrests

The process of arresting Palestinians in-mass has never ended. The PA has adopted the techniques of the Israeli security forces, arresting hundreds of innocent people in attempts to punish innocent and civilian Palestinian people collectively for the military strikes carried out in resistance to the occupation. Its first arrest-campaign took place in Gaza on the 14th of August, 1994, one month after the return of the PA's president, Yassir Arafat, to Gaza. This mass arrest tactic was repeated after every operation taken against the occupation authorities. The largest arrests of Palestinians took place on the 25th of February, 1996, and lasted six months. Two thousand Palestinians were arrested, most of whom were supporters of the resistance movements, including Hamas.

Human Rights Watch decried these PA raids as collective and oppressive, adding that in most cases these political arrests take place "without arrest warrants, without appearance before a judge, or an attorney."

Arresting Palestinian mothers, wives, and fathers of wanted Palestinians by the intelligence agencies has not stopped. Police harassment against suspects of resistance went beyond the common person on the street all the way to the political leaders, such as Abdulaziz Ranteesy, Ibraheem Maqadmeh, Mahmoud Mosleh, and Jamal Mansour. It included academicians like Abdassatar Qassem, and human rights activists like Bassim Eid, Iad Sarrag, and Muhammad Dahman. The PA has arrested journalists like Mahe al Alamy and Muhammad Jadullah. Up to this moment in August, 1998, it has detained more than 200 activists without charges, some being arrested and held from more than two years ago. The incarceration process not only included political opponents of the PA but reached normal people based on disagreements between the PA officers and others on personal matters. Reports indicate that some security and intelligence agencies actually kidnap merchants and refuse to set them free unless they pay a ransom. Such actions have convinced the Palestinian people that the PA is not interested in protecting our rights to freedom, let alone our rights to a fair trial under a just law.

Arrest techniques include illegal home searches in the late hours of the night and busting into homes and suspect properties without warrants or consent.

The following are some such cases:

2) Institutions

a) On December 12, 1995, the PA representatives entered the Labor Studies Center, tampered with its possessions, and seized some of them without a warrant or prior permission from any legal or judicial entity.

b) Two hundred members of the PA security and intelligence broke

into the Islamic University of Gaza on the 7th of March, 1996. The search process lasted six hours during which gun shots were fired to open locked buildings.

c) On the 30th of March, 1998, members of what is called the "Palestinian Navy" attacked Najah University, arresting 55 students who were protesting. The homes of innocent people were also attacked by the PA who claimed to be looking for suspects. The tactics of the PA are no different from those of the occupation authorities.

3) Torture

Despite the continuous PA criticism of Israeli occupation forces for the torturing of Palestinian activists, the PA's prisons have witnessed the torture of 20 who were detained and tortured to death according to statistics made available by The Palestinian Human Rights Group (PHRG). The most recent case was that of Waleed Mahmoud Al-Qawasmy (age 45) who died on the 9th of this month (August) in the Jericho prison of the General Intelligence. The PA claimed he died because of the hot temperature. But representatives of the Palestinian Human Rights Group, after participating in his autopsy, concluded that the reason for his death was torture. The PA intelligence forces had beat him to death with repeated blows to his head. His skull was fractured in several places and his family has stated that his body was covered with bruises.

Previously detained Palestinians report that the means of torture include soaking and detaining in water, beating, fracturing bones, pulling head-hair, pulling beard-hair, bastinado, hanging detainees up side down, electric shock, etc. Several reports have indicated that torture is used as a routine instrument to secure confessions and information. It is also used as a personal instrument to get revenge. This was the case of Mahmoud Jameel, a Fatah activist who was tortured to death on the 30th of June in 1996.

4) Assassinations

In addition to its failure to protect the Palestinian people from assassination by various elements of the Israeli security apparatus, the PA itself has encouraged and committed assassinations of Palestinian people. Furthermore, the PA security agencies have made no effort to protect the Palestinians or to punish Israel and their agents in the territories under its jurisdiction who carry out such acts.

Israel was very successful in assassinating a number of Palestinian resistance activists despite the presence of the PA's security agencies. Among the most notable operations are the assassination of Nasser Salloha, on the 23rd of June, 1994, Haani Abbed, on the 2nd of November in 1994, Ibraheem Yagi on December 22nd, 1994, Kamal Kahel and

Hattim Hassan and Saeed Addis and Billad Add on April 2nd in 1995. Mahmoud Khawajeh was assassinated on the 22nd of May, 1995, Ibraheem Alnaffar, on September 12th, 1995, Yahya Ayash on December 5th, 1996, and Mohie Adden Ashareef, on February 29th, 1998. In most cases, these assassinations were not carried out solely by Israeli agents. There is evidence to support the fact that there was direct involvement of the PA in the assassinations and in the crimes committed against the resistance movement. These actions are a part of an overall strategy to destroy the resistance movement, especially Hamas. It has been a source of pride to the PA, which keeps bragging to the United States and Israel that it is capable of ending resistance to the occupation, and is demanding various rewards for its actions.

5) Massacres

In spite of its short life, the PA has committed massacres against its own people. Its first massacre was the Palestine Mosque Massacre in Gaza City on November 8th, 1994, only a few months after the arrival of the PA's president, Yassir Arafat, to Gaza. Fourteen martyr worshipers were killed by the bullets of the Palestinian Police Force. Furthermore, mass demonstrations demanding the release of innocent Palestinians in the PA's prisons were met with bullets in Nablus and Tulkarem in August of 1996. Live ammunition used against peaceful demonstrators killed Ibrahim Alhadayda, a youth resident of Tulkarem Camp, while many others were seriously injured.

These actions do not represent the personal acts of a few bad people in the security agencies. They represent a broad, systematic, and well planned strategy managed by the highest levels in the PA. The proof of this is found in the agreements on security between the PA and Israel, negotiated both with and without American supervision.

THE ECONOMY

The West Bank and the Gaza Strip remain the second largest market for Israeli goods after the United States of America. These imports are estimated to be \$2.4 billion annually. The U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce has indicated that ending Palestinian imports from Israel would lead to a crisis of employment in Israel. Political analysts in Israel praised the Israeli negotiators who managed to have the Palestinians agree on the Paris Economic Agreement with the PA which restricted the freedom of the Palestinian side to trade with Arab countries.

- The PA's debts have reached \$500 million, which represents 17% of the Palestinian domestic product. This means more and more suffering for the Palestinian people. It will be impossible to pay back such debts or the interest. This debt has come at a time of decline in the Palestinian

economy. The deficit has reached such a high point as a result of a decline in exports and an unemployment rate that reached 40%-55% of the Palestinian labor force. The 15% difference between the two figures can be attributed to Israel allowing Palestinians to work in Israel.

- The large government bureaucracy consumes most of the budget. Out of \$963 million, which is the budget for 1998, 185 million is earmarked for salaries to be paid to the police force, and \$465 million will be spent as salaries to other government employees (87,000). Only 32.5% of the budget is devoted to the development of the Palestinian infrastructure, fighting poverty, education, health care, resettlement of refugees, and social security for the 2.8 million Palestinians in the West bank and Gaza.

- Revenues from customs, gasoline, income tax, beverage tax, and cigarettes taxes, which are collected by the Israeli customs authorities, are transferred to a private account in Leumi Israeli bank in Tel Aviv that belongs to Yasser Arafat, the head of the PA. None of these revenues go to the Palestinian treasury. Furthermore, there is no supervision of this account by the Ministry of Treasury or the Ministry of Economics in the PA. An Israeli internal memo estimates the secret deposits to Yasser Arafat's account to be about \$300 million annually.

- The Palestinian oversight agency estimated that the sums of money that are wasted or mismanaged by cabinet members totaled around \$326 million in 1996. This amount, which represents 37.6% of the budget, was used to cover the personal expenditures of cabinet ministers and high ranking PA officials. This was made clear in a report prepared by the Palestinian Legislative Council. The report says that these large sums of money were used to purchase private villas, cell phones, communication systems, international calls, etc. Despite the involvement of five PA cabinet ministers in this scandal, which was of such magnitude that the PA itself was forced to appoint a committee to look into the allegations, no further actions were taken against these ministers. On the contrary they were rehabilitated in the eyes of the community and appointed members of the new cabinet.

- The PA has not taken a single step toward the implementation of law, let alone dealing with the problems of wasted public wealth and the widening gap between those who have and those who have nothing. The PA has done nothing to stop the growth of some financial circles and private interests that are gaining in power at the expense of the people. Eleven percent of the 1998 budget is devoted to the PA's office, which consists of 12 bureaus, all given special missions. When a proposal was introduced in the Palestinian Legislative Council to reduce this 11.5% to 8.5%, the speaker refused saying, "We shouldn't touch the budget of the President," referring to the sums of money devoted to Arafat's office.

• Since 1996, the intelligence and security agencies have collected taxes directly from the people without any effort to transfer such amounts of money to the Ministry of Finance. The media has reported that the security agencies, headed by Ammen Alhindi, Tawfeeq Tirawy, and Gabriel Rjoub, are competing among each other to see who can collect the most taxes.

SOCIAL

In spite of thirty years of continuous efforts made by the Israelis to ruin the Palestinian character through the deliberate spread of drugs and pornography, the Palestinian people have stuck to their Islamic, Christian, and Arab morals and ethics. The PA came and within a few years managed to destroy Palestinian ethics through beauty pageants, model contests, and Western style rock bands, all paid for with Palestinian tax money. The PA didn't stop there. It has continued to provide the Israelis with an environment conducive to recruiting agents among those who attend these parties and night clubs built with Palestinian money. Furthermore, the PA's president, through his economic advisor Khaled Salam, "declared war" against Islam's principles of morality by establishing one of the largest gambling clubs in the entire region in the city of Jericho, despite both Christian and Islamic opposition to such a project. Despite the deficit, the unemployment, and the growing poverty among Palestinians, PA president Arafat has managed to secure the needed money to work with the largest companies that manufacture and export gambling machines. This project, according to the PA's plans, will consist of 35 gambling tables, 220 gambling machines, a restaurant, parks, exotic-night clubs, swimming pools, and 220 hotel rooms. Amazingly, the Israeli government refused to build such gambling clubs due to pressure from the Jewish religious parties, since gambling is prohibited by the laws of the Jewish religion. Strangely, it is not enough for the Palestinian people to suffer from unemployment, hunger, and poverty. The PA now wants to destroy Palestinian Christian and Islamic morality and destroy our youth. Some suspect that this is a deliberate plot to prevent the people from engaging in their moral duty to resist the occupation and to demand liberty.

CONCLUSION

Looking back over the past five years, we see that the results of the Oslo Agreement on the Palestinians have been devastating. It has been a setback in almost every way for our people. On the other hand, the Israelis have made unimaginable political and economic gains. Israel achieved a victory with the end of the Arab economic boycott. It established diplomatic ties with most of the Arab states. Among our biggest

losses is the loss of Jerusalem and most of the Palestinian territories, making the Israeli enemy appear to be the final arbiter of our destiny.

We say to our people in and outside of Palestine, our fellow Arabs and Muslims, that it is time to stop this process. The PA authorities must quit their posts and the protection of the Israeli and American officials and face our Palestinian people. They must be held accountable for their actions. We must open up a new chapter in our historical march toward liberty that will clarify all double meanings and reunite our people for the sake of resisting the enemy. We must stand for the full rights to our land and our holy shrines. We must allow the world to recognize our dignity, our humanity, and our natural desires to live as human beings in peace, prosperity, and security. The people have suffered enough under the PA and its oppression and destructive efforts. We have also experienced the actions of its symbols and its beneficiaries who danced on the Palestinian blood. Five years are enough to judge this experience and for the Palestinian people to decide to change our destiny.

*The Contending Realities of Religion
and Politics in the Holy Land*

**Hamas, Palestinian Authority, and
Israel: A Challenge For Change**

Dr. Ahmad Yousef

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December 1997

ISLAMIC-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN
PALESTINE IN A CIVIL SOCIETY
"AN ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW"

Shaykh Jamil Hamami

Is there a real crisis in the relationship between Islam and Christianity in Palestine warranting investigation? Or is there a misunderstanding between the followers of the two religions, warranting efforts on our part to clear up the situation? Or are the different ideas of Islam and Christianity forcing some to believe that the relationship between them is very tense? Is there a complicated situation that can't be unraveled?

There are many answers that would require dialogue to clear up the picture. We are not talking about a real problem when we address the relationship between Islam and Christianity. We are not talking about misunderstandings on both sides that can't be reversed. These are normal and occur in all societies. The important question is: What can the intellectuals do in this situation to prevent adverse results? And what is the role of education in forming minds that can accept different ideas and opinions?

"When the believer — Muslim or Christian — lives a life of spirituality and godliness, the difference between people melt away, and life becomes a manifestation of God's greatness, a field for his blessings. All creations seem to be God's children. But one might turn one's faith inwards and concentrate on small technicalities until one sees someone on the other end of the faith spectrum to be a devil that must be avoided, an enemy that must be fought as a religious obligation. This is how ideas

Shaykh Jamil Hamami is one of the leaders of the Islamic movement in the West Bank, and is considered a voice of moderation within Muslim ranks. He was imprisoned more than once during the Intifada as well as after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. He is also a member of a higher Islamic Council of Palestine.

become convoluted, sometimes moving far away from the open godly spirit of those who are immersed in the love of God"¹

When we talk about Islamic-Christian relations, we must take a moment to talk about the historic aspects of this relationship in order to clarify the basis of this relationship and understand the nature of the future relationship that we would like to see in a civil society in Palestine. Such a future relationship would be built on ideas that come together to build a strong, unified structure.

We cannot separate Islamic-Christian relations in Palestine from Islamic-Christian relations in the East in general, although in Palestine there are certain idiosyncracies because of the situation there. Israeli occupation did not discriminate between the treatment of both religions, but it did play on the contradictions in each religion to make problems that sometimes lead to tense and unstable situations. It would have been worse if not for the intervention of the intellectuals on both sides who had a feel for what the occupation was trying to do and understood the role of the occupation agencies. Their interventions led to a state of psychological stability and cooperation best suited to build a relationship based on respect and appreciation on both sides.

When talking about this relationship one cannot deny that there are major differences in their conceptions of God, the universe, and life. But these differences are not the subject of this study. The issue was settled with the verse from the Qur'an, "Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error."² The relationship has been tainted with tension and misunderstanding at times. This is due to misconceptions of people on both sides who do not have a sufficient knowledge of religion or of the relationship among Palestinians.

When we lay the foundations for a future relationship between Islam and Christianity in Palestine, we cannot ignore the political and social differences between the two sides. But we can try to bring the points of view closer in order to build the relationship on a sense of mutual respect and to give a chance for differing opinions to be aired. This society must make room for all ideas as long as they are healthy and follow in the tradition of our Arab and Islamic heritage. To begin discussing specific ideas we must go beyond generalities by making two points:

The first concerns the historic dimension of this relationship in terms of Omar's Covenant. And the second concerns the rules governing the relationship between Islam and Christianity.

THE HISTORIC DIMENSION

Omar's Covenant is the basis for defining the relationship between Islam and Christianity in Palestine. It is the document that, in all clarity and respect, laid the foundations not only for the era of Islamic expansion,

but for the centuries after that and for the future. Anyone who studies this document finds that it contains fixed principles that apply to all places and times. In order to understand it fully, one must read the text carefully.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is the security that the servant of God, Omar, Emir of the Faithful, gives the people of Elia (the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem). He gives them security for their persons and their properties, for their churches and crosses, for their sick and innocent, and for all their followers. Their churches will not be taken over or destroyed. Nothing is taken from them that belongs to them, neither their crosses nor any of their money. They are not forced to change their religion, and none of them shall be harmed. No Jew shall live with them in Elia (no Jew had the right to settle on Christian land. Omar later changed this and Jews were invited by Umar to settle in Jerusalem). The people of Elia must pay the tax at the same rate as other cities. They must drive the Romans and thieves out. Those who leave, as well as their money, are safe until they reach their safehavens. Whoever stays is safe, and must pay the tax at the same rate as the people of Elia. Whoever among the people of Elia wants to leave with his money and join the Romans and leave their business and crosses is safe until they reach their safehaven. Whoever is from the people of this land can stay, and must pay the tax at the same rate as the people of Elia. Whoever wants to leave with the Romans can leave, and whoever wants to return to his family can do so. Nothing from their harvests shall be taken. This writing has the oath of God, His Prophet, the Caliphs, and the faithful as long as they pay their taxes.³

We should start with this historic treatise because I see the relationship between the two parties as based on respect and security, which in turn would lay the foundation for the society that we want. Any other behavior would be a deviation from this foundation and would violate the true understanding of the relationship. The main points we discern from the covenant are the following. There will be:

- 1) Personal and financial security;
- 2) Freedom of religion in belief and worship;
- 3) The right to be protected and for the state to come to one's defense to make sure one comes to no harm; and
- 4) Freedom of movement when and wherever one wants.

Omar's Covenant, which is a reference text when it comes to relations between Islam and Christianity, shows how positively the first Muslims saw the relationship between themselves and those of other religions. What Sir Thomas Arnold wrote in his valuable book, *Calling to Islam*, in the chapter on Christians under Islamic rule, is truly beautiful:

When the Christians lived in security for their lives and properties, reveling in such tolerance which granted them freedom of religious thought, they enjoyed a life of luxury in the early days of the Islamic Caliphate. Mu'awiya (A.D. 661-681, A.H. 41-60) was able to employ Christians as civil servants, as did others from the Umayyad house of Malik. Christians held high places in the Caliph's court. There was Al-Aftal, an Arab Christian who was the royal court's poet, and Abu al Qadees, a.k.a. St. John of Damascus, the adviser of Caliph Abdul Malik.⁴

This is the basic view of the relationship in a Muslim society. Any other situations are a deviation from the old path. By this simple introduction, I want the reader to understand how I see the basis of the relationship between Islam and Christianity not only in Palestine, and not only in the Arab world, but everywhere.

This is the basis for human relations in all societies: If they are not built on balance and respect, they become weak. "The Lord's justice manifests itself on the social level in calling for a humanistic, open society that has all faiths and opinions, or as Sayyid Qutub says, 'Where there is no force.' ... This must be a basic element of its being. ... It must not choke them, drive them from their homes, or bury them in the snows of Siberia. It must not assassinate them with cleansing movements. This is because it depends on faith and on every individual's voluntary defense of the order."⁵

"Any regime that does not allow dissenters to live in peace and security holds the seeds of its own downfall, even if it owns all the technologies of oppression. These techniques and technologies will protect it for a short while, but it will explode from the inside. Those of other religions who refuse to live under Islam will not be the enemies of Islam unless they begin aggression. So the relationship between Islam and Christians in society must be based on justice and charity, because it is a society based on a free contract calling for justice and equality in rights and obligations. Participation is based on merit and trustworthiness. Citizenry is based on equality."⁶

"The healthy society is that which is able to absorb others in it, where all are working to build a better life. [The society I'm looking for is one

where] the relationship between citizens is based on justice, mercy, and piety, not one where xenophobia, selfishness, and close-mindedness rule, and the differences between religion, gender, and color govern."⁷

The reader might think that this study will be limited to generalities and nice words that confront the issue of Islamic-Christian relations superficially, without looking to the desired future relationship. But clarifying the basis of the relationship might do away with many of the conflicts that come up in daily transactions between the two groups. It might also do away with the current argument — well-intentioned or not — about the status of non-Muslims in Islamic societies. The fear of some that the ideology-driven situation of Christians in an Islamic society must be harsh is unjustified if we look at the relationship that we have described.

The history of Muslim-Christian relations in Palestine is enough to guarantee the construction of a strong relationship based on mutual respect and clear understanding that everyone has full rights as members of a society that all are trying to build.

RULES GOVERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

The basis of the relationship between Islam and Christianity springs from texts that have proven themselves over time and that have been successful in forging strong relations. In the Holy Quran, God says, "God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just. God only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith and drive you out of your homes and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such who turn to them (in these circumstances) that do wrong."⁸

This is the basis of the relationship between the two parties. Long ago, Islam created a constitution guiding relations between its followers and the followers of other religions who agree to live under its governance. Islam gave them their full rights, and required from them obligations that are required of any citizen in any state. Here is a summary of the rights granted to people who agree to live in an Islamic society:

First: Political rights, meaning the rights of someone as part of a political group.

1) Right to employment. I see no reason why Christians living in a Muslim society should not be employed, especially if officials decide to give them jobs. This is based on the justice of Islamic *shari'ah* (law), which strengthens healthy practices and legislation in an Islamic society. The jobs that have to do with the Islamic religion are limited to Muslims.

Bukhari narrates as a correct saying: "Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari said, 'Two men and I came to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and one of the men said, "Oh Prophet of God, give us responsibility for some of what God has given you responsibility for." And the other said the same. So the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "We don't give responsibility to those who ask it, nor those who wish to retain it".'"⁹ Such are the rules of merit and fairness of employment in Muslim society. To reaffirm this Quranic, humanistic principle, we look to Islamic history, especially the era of ideal implementation of Islam. Muslims and non-Muslims were equal in everything that had no direct link to religion. Every citizen, regardless of creed, is allowed to attain any civil service job in the Islamic state.¹⁰

2) Right to candidacy and election. The right of nomination for office and to vote are rights of all citizens, without discrimination. Every group can choose its representatives to public assemblies. Each has the right to choose who represents it in expressing its special concerns. Currently, the position of head of state is not a religious position, so they have the right to choose the head of state just like other citizens. This is what Dr. Abdul Karim Zeidan wrote in his excellent work, "The Rules for Christians, Jews, and Asylum-Seekers [in the Muslim state]."

3) Freedom of religion and thought. God said, "Let there be no compulsion in religion,"¹¹ which is a rule that Islam brought regarding the followers of other religions in a Muslim society. They and their religions are left alone. Freedom of religion and thought is guaranteed for all citizens of the state. This is also found in the Sunna of the Prophet (pbuh) in the much-quoted saying of Najran: "Najran and its court live under God and have the protection of Muhammad, the messenger of God, for their wealth, religion, trade, and every small or large thing that they might own."¹²

4) Freedom of opinion and education. The basis of relations in civilized societies is respect for the other's opinion, and making education accessible to all citizens, allowing all to reach their potential and be the best they can be. As long as we accept Christians in the state and society, they have the right to express their positions in a civilized, constructive way. They also have a right to education and teaching, and even in explaining their religion under the Quranic rule: "Dispute not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation)."¹³ Debate and discussion in religious affairs is allowed.¹⁴

5) Right to access public facilities. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "People are partners in water, food, and fire." People is a general term that includes every member of society, Muslim or non-Muslim. So everyone enjoys public utilities fairly. They also have the right to what is called today "social security," which is known in Islam as "guaranteeship in the Treasury." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."¹⁶ This awesome system of social care

in Muslim society is an anchor of Islamic *shari'ah* (law). An example of how it works is found in *The Book of Money* by Abu Obeid. He narrates how the well-known Umayyad Caliph, Omar ibn Abdul Aziz, wrote to his representative in Basra, Uday ibn Artat: "There is one from the Protected People (Dhima) who has aged, weakened, and lost his income, so give him enough from the Muslim Treasury to better him." The state is obligated to tend its citizens without discrimination or favoritism.

6) Financial rights. All citizens have guaranteed financial rights, and they have the right to practice those rights according to the law. Non-Muslims and Muslims have the right to enjoy trade and ownership, and Muslim scholars have found that conducting business with Protected People is allowed, even though they allow the sale of alcohol and pork. Their money is protected just as Muslims' money is protected.¹⁷

OBLIGATIONS

The social relationship is a complementary one for all citizens in a state. The state gives them what they want and need, the law guarantees their public and private rights, and the individuals are asked to help improve society. Those who demand and receive rights must in turn perform certain duties. Rashid Ghanouchi says in his book, *Rights of Citizenship*, that "the Islamic state is a universal one. Every human in it enjoys the justice of Islam regardless of creed. Everyone has the right to citizenship as long as he or she obeys its premises. So citizenry is about rights and obligations."¹⁸

After presenting citizens' rights in general, we shall discuss obligations, starting with the financial ones: *jizya*, *kharaj*, and *ushoor*.

There is much confusion on this subject, because on the surface it seems like discrimination, oppression, humiliation and an indirect form of compulsion to require non-Muslims to pay the *jizya* tax.¹⁹ To be fair and clear, to build a healthy relationship in a civil society, *jizya* is a head tax taken from free, adult, working and able men. It is not assessed on women, children, the mentally disabled, and those who live a life of worship. It is taken from non-Muslims in a Muslim state to guarantee state protection, support state services, and defend the state. Defense of the state is an obligation of every citizen. Ghanouchi goes farther to say, "Part of the *jizya* tax is that these non-Muslim citizens, if they agree to work in the defense of the homeland, do not have to pay *jizya* anymore. The history of Islamic conquest in reputable history books holds many examples where Protected People have preferred to perform military duties."²⁰

Jizya is not a punishment for not converting to Islam, as some people argue. It is not a form of humiliation to force one to become a Muslim, for this would contradict the Islamic provisions for freedom of thought and

religion. The writings of the scholar, Hussein Fadlallah, are impressive. In a study he did for the Strategic Studies and Documentation Center in Beirut, entitled "Islamic-Christian Relations: A Reading into the Present and the Future," he writes: "What is meant by (Jizya) is a tax that they pay in return for state protection of their property, selves, reputations, and religion without being forced to go to war or pay zakat (as Muslims do). They actually have a better tax situation than the Muslims, without any part of their humanity being taken away."²¹ He also writes, "Some people talk about rejecting this special status, because it gives the impression of a lesser status of citizenship. In these cases, Islam doesn't prohibit them from voluntary payment of Islamic taxes and working in jihad in the framework of state defense — the new tax would not be an issue in these cases."²²

The Concept of Dhima (Protection) in the term "Protected People" raises the ire of many Christians, who see it as humiliating. It has been the subject of attack by many people with ulterior motives. But the principle of Islamic *shari'ah* is non-discrimination among people, regardless of color, gender, language, or geographic origin. Only one thing makes people different: how close or far they are from God and how much they believe in the heavenly message. The message of Islam is a universal one for all peoples in all times and places.

Dividing humans on the basis of Islam is, in the view of *shari'ah*, a very important differentiation that defines the relationship between individuals in an Islamic society, individuals who might be Muslims or otherwise. It also defines the relationship between the Islamic polity and others, which is known today as international relations.

So what does Dhimma mean? And who are Dhima people? What are its principles?

Dhimma in Arabic means "safety under covenant." In this context, it means the covenant given by the Muslim governor to the People of the Book. Under this agreement, they become citizens in the Islamic polity. They have full rights and obey its laws. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "The Muslims have one protection (dhimma) and the lowest among them respects it."²⁴ Scholars regard the dhimma covenant to be an acknowledgement that the People of the Book will retain their religion and live in Muslim society under their own religious laws in return for protection, security, *jizya*, and obeying the general laws of society. Today this is known as the "naturalization" process that some people go through to become citizens of other states. The only one who can grant it in an Islamic polity is the governor or Muslim ruler, and this is further proof of its importance as a concept.

The dhimma covenant is in no way, shape, or form a deduction from one's human dignity or rights. Rather, it is the opposite, namely, a form of respect for one's dignity, protection of one's rights, and guarantee for

one's peaceful and prosperous existence in a Muslim society. In the introduction to Ghanouchi's book, *The Rights of Citizenry*, Professor Taha Jaber al-Alwani writes, "The most misunderstood concepts of our time and in the past have been dhimma and the rules governing the word according to the Islamic view. In the past, many misunderstood these rules, and mixed the texts with things that God never gave permission for, especially in regards to God's word, 'until they pay the Jizya with willing submission and feel themselves subdued' (*Tawba*, 29). Modern scholars have digressed from its original, simple meaning of obeying the law and subduing oneself to the group. They write about humiliation, and this might have created a residue of skepticism that has led to questions about this law in our age." He adds, "Currently this law is subjected to the rage of secular temporal thought. It has been accused of all forms of discrimination and unfairness. If this law would be re-read carefully, it would have much to offer modern social science and could help create the kind of human society we want."²⁵

The Muslim's relations with others is not based on canceling the role of the other. Relationships are built on cooperation, respect, and appreciation. We must build, not destroy. The greater Islamic program is capable of providing a safe civil society in Palestine and elsewhere. Islamic-Christian relations in the future Palestine will be civilized if both sides understand each other equally, if real education is provided to both sides, and if we realize that citizenship in an Islamic polity is a right that is enjoyed by all individuals who accept the law and constitution that govern the Muslim community. The principle of equality in Muslim governance is fixed: there is no room for distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims except where religious differences govern it.

¹ *Islamic-Christian Relations*, Hussein Fadlallah.

² Qur'an: *Surah Baqara*, verse 56.

³ Omar's Covenant as reproduced in *The History of the Dome of the Rock and Aqsa Mosque*, Aref Aref.

⁴ *Calling to Islam*, Sir Thomas W. Arnold, p. 81.

⁵ *The Rights of Citizenry*, Rashid al Ghanouchi, p. 47.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 48.

⁷ *Non-Muslims in Islamic Society*, Yusuf al Qaradawi, p. 50.

⁸ Qur'an: *Surah Mumtahina*, verses 8-9.

⁹ Abu Musa al Ash'ari narrated this saying, and Bukhari documented it in the *Book of Laws*.

¹⁰ *The Rights of Citizenry*, p. 19.

¹¹ Qur'an: *Surah Baqarah*, verse 56.

¹² *Kitab al Ikhtaj*, Abnu Yusuf, p. 72.

¹³ Qur'an: Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 46.

¹⁴ *The Rules of Protecting People and Asylum Seekers*, Dr. Abdul Karim Zeidan, p. 101.

¹⁵ Saying narrated by Ibn Abas and documented by Ibn Maja in the *Book of Ruhoun*.

¹⁶ Saying documented by Bukhari, from Ibn Omar, in the *Book of Laws*.

¹⁷ *The Rights of Citizenry*, p. 90.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Islamic-Christian Relations*, p. 48.

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Al-Muheet Dictionary*, Fairouz Abadi.

²⁴ Saying narrated by Ibn Tamimi, from his father, from Ali, documented by Bukhari in the *Book of Jizya*.

²⁵ Introduction to *The Rights of Citizenry*, Dr. Taha Jaber al-Awani, p. 14.

Re-thinking the Yemen Civil War: The Dual Process of Unification and Democratization

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HAMAS COMUNIQUE
THE WYE RIVER MEMORANDUM: ITS INDICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

27 October 1998

After eight days of negotiations between Netanyahu's Government and the Palestinian Authority at Wye River, Maryland, the United States of America, the two parties, under the direct sponsorship of the U.S. Administration, concluded an agreement pertaining to the application of the re-deployment of the Israeli occupation troops in the West Bank as provided for in the former agreements. This agreement will be implemented in conjunction with a pledge by the PA to take strict and specific security measures against the forces of the Palestinian People that reject any relinquishments and that also resist the Occupation, in particular the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). The agreement was signed on Friday, 23 October 1998 at the White House.

In view of the dangers of this agreement and its negative consequences to the Palestinian Cause and to the present and future conditions of the whole region, we, in the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), would like to introduce this memorandum directly to our People and Nation as part of our duty to enlighten and warn them. In addition, we strongly encourage everyone to play their role in defending Palestine's Cause, its people and its holy places, as well as to work seriously to prevent the expansion of the Zionist project at the expense of the Nation's interest now and in the future.

First: The main comments on the agreement's provisions

1. The Wye River Memorandum tackles five subjects: the redeployment, security, economic issues, the final status talks and the unilateral activities. The agreement details the security issues making it, formally and practically, a non-political security accord.
2. The Wye River Memorandum considers the "Note for the Record" by the U.S. of 17 January 1997, which was annexed to the Hebron Agreement and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995, as an authority to the application of the agreement. One of the most serious ramifications of this Memorandum is the recognition of Israel's sole right to determine the percentage and time-schedule of the redeployment. As long as there are no maps attached with the new agreement, the Israeli enemy will, alone, determine the criteria for which the redeployment will be made.
3. Although the agreement talks about the reciprocity principle, it is free of any details or required guarantees from the Enemy. It was satisfied with what was mentioned in the prior agreements. However, the present agreement describes in detail a list of commitments and relinquishments that must be carried out by the PA.
4. The agreement states that the redeployment of the Occupation troops should be linked to the PA's commitment to the application of a time-schedule for the security measures that must be implemented in order to encounter the Palestinian forces that resist or call to resist the Occupation. While the provision concerning

the commitments by the PA are clear and specific, the commitments, by the Enemy are vague and general. Examples of the provisions regarding the different security measure that should be implemented by the PA according to the agreement are as follows:

- The ensuring of systematic and effective combat of "terrorist" organizations and their support structures along with the environment conducive to a support of "terror".
 - Combat should be continuous and constant over the long term, without pause in its implementation.
 - Security cooperation between "Israel" and the Palestinians as well as a continuous exchange of information, concepts and actions. The cooperation should be "bilateral, complete, continuous, intensive and comprehensive."
 - A U.S.-Palestinian committee will meet biweekly to review the steps being taken to eliminate "terrorism".
 - A U.S.-Palestinian committee will meet to review and evaluate information pertaining to the decisions on prosecution, punishment or other legal Measures to be taken against suspects. The PA will abide by this condition.
 - There must be professional cooperation in investigations between the two parties along with an exchange of information.
 - A U.S.-Palestinian-Israeli committee will meet not less than biweekly to assess current threats and to deal with any impediments.
 - The Palestinian side will fully inform the members of the committee of the results of its investigation of suspects.
 - Instant apprehension of 30 Palestinians wanted by the "Israeli" Enemy to try them under CIA supervision.
 - The Palestinian side will prohibit the importation or smuggling of illegal weapons in areas under Palestinian Jurisdiction.
 - The prohibition of all forms of incitement to violence or terror. A U.S. Palestinian-Israeli committee will monitor cases of possible incitement to violence or terror and exchange information in this regard.
 - The Palestinians will provide the United States with a detailed security work plan after the first week of the implementation of this agreement.
5. The agreement does not give specific meanings for some terms such as terror, violence and its support structures, and the concept of incitement. Instead, it leaves this identification to the joint security committees between the PA and the "Israeli" Enemy or between the PA and the CIA, or to a trilateral committee; this means that their definitions will be varied because the Israeli Enemy and the CIA will be the ones who will impose their meanings.
6. The gist of the agreement concerning the land is the agreement of the Israeli Government on a conditional redeployment of its troops that will be in conjunction with the implementation of strict and specific security measures by the PA. The redeployment will be from 13% of the West Bank area, excluding Jerusalem: 1% will be transferred to area (A) and 12% to area (B)-3% of the area latter will be allocated as Nature Reserves (the security of which will be controlled by the occupation forces). In addition, 14.2% will be transferred from area (B) to area (A). If these redeployments are implemented according to the specified percentages, the situation of the West Bank would be as follows:
- 18.2% area (A),(under PA's security and administrative control)
 - 21.8% area (B) (administration run by the PA but security by Occupation)
 - 60% area (C) (fully controlled by the Occupation).
7. In addition, the agreement mentions the operation of Gaza airport and the need to renew negotiations on the safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank. The parties also agreed to conclude an agreement to allow the construction and operation of Gaza port. Issues such as the settlement, the third phase of redeployment and other issues of the Interim Agreement were adjourned by referring them to negotiation committees.

8. According to the agreement, Netanyahu has obliged the Palestinian negotiators to nullify specific provisions of the Palestinian National Charter in a humiliating manner. The PLO's Executive Committee will start this work and the PLO's Central Council will ratify the nullification. Then a joint meeting will be held and attended by members of the Palestinian National Council, the Central Council and the Palestinian ministers to be addressed by President Clinton to reaffirm their support for the decisions of the Executive Committee and the Central Council regarding the nullification and the amendment of the Palestinian National charter.
9. The agreement does not include any specific or clear provision that restricts the settlements or strips the settlers of their arms.
10. Although the media talk about an Israeli pledge to release 750 detainees out of 4,000 detainees presently in the Israeli jails in stages, the agreement does not include a clear and specific provision regarding this issue. Instead, it refers this issue to the "prior agreements".

Second: Analysis of the contents and meanings of the agreement

1. The agreement reaffirmed Netanyahu's approach, which is to renegotiate on what was already agreed upon with the aim of increasing the Palestinian commitments while at the same time reducing the Israeli ones. He agreed last August to the redeployment from 13% of the occupied territories, however, he took many Palestinian relinquishments at Wye Plantation using this as a bargaining chip.
2. The Palestinian Authority introduced new relinquishments, the most important of which are as follows:
 - Responding to Netanyahu's approach by accepting new negotiations on what was already agreed upon.
 - Accepting the 13% redeployment but with the added condition of using the formula of (10+3) that was imposed by Netanyahu even though the PA was initially demanding the redeployment from 40% of the West Bank as stated in the Interim Agreement, then only to turn around and agree on 13% as outlined by the American initiative.
 - The 4 May, 1999 deadline for the end of the final status negotiations was left undecided, which denies the PA its negotiating card of declaring the independent State of Palestine before that date. The reference to that date in the agreement is general and not binding.
 - Retracting from the comprehensive solution of the Interim period and accepting a partial solution.
 - Accepting the CIA's partnership and supervision on the implementation of the required security measures against the Palestinian forces that resist the Occupation. This puts the PA in a position unable to free itself from any commitments or room to maneuver, nor will be able to declare the independent State.
3. The agreement would not be signed without efforts exerted by all of the U.S. Administration in general and President Clinton in particular. Also, it will not be implemented unless under the supervision of the U.S. Administration through the CIA. This makes the provisions of the agreement decidedly in favor of the Israeli concepts because of the strategic alliance between Israel and the United States.
4. The agreement gives the U.S. Administration represented by the CIA a big role in planning, implementing and supervising all provisions of the agreement, which means that the PA has accepted its lowered status of merely an administrative authority, which is already undermined, to be confiscated in favor of the American party. Playing this role requires the CIA to expand activities, increase its cadres and to establish its own offices in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and perhaps in other countries.

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5. Although the agreement puts an end to the freeze that has been dominating the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation track over the past 19 months, the victory achieved by Netanyahu's way of thinking and the generality of the provisions pertaining to Israel's commitments enable Netanyahu, who already does not believe in Oslo Accords, to rid himself of the agreements under various pretexts conviction that the PA would meet its commitments or that he would not be able to convince his partners in the Government of the agreement that has just been signed. Because there are no guarantees to implementing the agreement by Israel and because there are many gaps that impede its implementation reason enough to aggravate the situation again.
6. The agreement includes a call to start the final status negotiations but it does not put any restrictions on the contents of these negotiations. This could make the Interim situation of the final status turn out the way Netanyahu's Government has already planned.
7. The Zionist negotiators persisted in the nullification of certain provisions of the Palestinian National Charter and in the way it is described in the agreement. This means that Israel was not satisfied with the PA's recognition of the occupation and that it wants it to condemn its history and past. It also wants to humiliate Palestinians by obliging them to change their convictions and ideology.
8. The agreement ignores the issues of settlement and the settlers' arms, which is a serious mistake and is proof that the PA is unable to protect its people and to provide them with security. Or it could mean that the PA does not care, which subjects the civilian Palestinians to the savage acts and atrocities at the hands of the settlers. Is this the security and the stability that will be achieved by the agreement?

Third: Consequences and dangers to the Palestinian situation

1. The agreement transfers the Palestinian Cause from a national liberation question to an Arab demographic minority in a Zionist State. It also poses an authority on this minority with a function to preserving the security of the Zionist entity and to suppressing the Palestinian "minority" in order to prevent them from resisting the occupation and even from expressing their opinions regarding the resistance and removal of occupation.
2. Because the PA is committed to the provisions of the agreement and because there is a mechanism to supervise the implementation of this agreement in participation with the CIA, the PA will be involved in a direct struggle with the Palestinian People, whether from Hamas, the Islamic Jihad or others because they have adopted a program to resist occupation. The PA will also suppress the forces that have views supporting the resistance under the pretext of incitement. It will even suppress the pro-PA forces when the PA starts collecting their weapons.
3. As a result of the PA's atrocities of combating the resistance program, silencing the opposition forces; suppressing the Journalists; arresting the Muslim scholars, notables, politicians and thinkers; breaking up the Zakat (alms) committees, social and charitable establishments under the pretext that they support the resistance; and destroying the mosques, media and culture , Institutions under the pretext that they incite people to resist the occupation, the Palestinian society is facing a state of confusion and instability as well as internal conflicts that may develop into a civil war that in the end only benefits the Israeli Occupation, which has been working on that objective and knows that the agreement is pushing the Palestinian people in that direction.
4. The unilateral implementation of the agreement will enable Israel to establish its occupation and superiority over the whole of the Palestinian territories and to close the file of the Palestinian Cause under the pretext that the Palestinian People have obtained an authority of administration and services in the highly populat-

ed areas, while the majority of the West Bank remains under the control of the Israeli Occupation to build more settlements. The fate of the Palestinian People in the West Bank will become the same as the Palestinian People in the territories occupied in 1948.

5. The expanded role of the CIA in the agreement, which includes participating in investigations, the monitoring of the courts' sentences, adding details to the concept of incitement, collecting information and performing their own investigations, makes the U.S. Administration a direct enemy in the eyes of the Palestinian People and another tyrant that has developed its previous role in supporting the Zionist enemy into a direct role of suppressing our People and hatching plots against them. This will complicate the situation more and undermine the stability to which the peace process supposedly aims.

Fourth: Consequences and dangers to the Arab and Islamic situation

1. The implementation of the agreement will open the region to the Israeli Enemy, because it undermines the steadfastness of the Palestinian People and their ability to resist the occupation by involving them with internal disputes causing the dismantling of their national unity. Consequently, the Enemy will be in a position to confiscate more Palestinian land, erect more settlements and Judaize the region before shifting to the expected procedure of expelling more of the Palestinians to the neighboring Arab countries. This agreement harms the Palestinian question and the Arab and Islamic interest as well.
2. The agreement encourages the isolation of the Palestinian question from its Arab and Islamic dimensions. It gives the American-Zionist alliance an additional card to separate the Palestinian track from the Syrian and Lebanese track while simultaneously pressuring Syria and other Arab countries to make similar agreements. The Israeli Enemy will be stronger in any future bilateral negotiations, especially with their unlimited U.S. support.
3. The agreement helps the Israeli Enemy and the United States to continue imposing regional security plans to protect the Zionist entity and to dominate the region. These plans will also prevent the countries of the region from procuring advanced technology of weaponry and atomic energy. The Israeli-Turkish military alliance could be the beginning in this regard.
4. As a result of the partnership between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority, which was boosted by the agreement, the PA, virtually and necessarily, will be involved in the alliances between Israel and some countries of the region. The Zionist enemy will also make use of the PA's relations with the Arab countries by making the PA an instrument for spying, pressuring or persuading them to achieve the Zionist interests, especially because the Zionist entity has already succeeded in planting its agents within the PA's services.
5. In view of the expanded role of the U.S. Administration in the implementation of the agreement, it will request, as it did before, the Arab and Islamic countries to stop the financial resources they give to the Palestinian People and their civil and social institutions under the pretext that they support what it calls "terrorism". The U.S. Administration, encouraged by the PA itself, will pressure these countries to sever their relations with the Hamas Movement although we are sure that the Arab and Islamic attitude will not yield to these pressures that do not serve the interests of our cause and our Nation.
6. As a result of this hostile effort to isolate the Palestinian question from its Arab and Islamic dimension, Jerusalem and the holy mosque of Al Aqsa will be the victims in the final status negotiations. The Muslims' first Qibla will remain under the control of the Zionist enemy whose future plans include demolishing Al Aqsa and building the so-called "Third Temple" on its present site.

Fifth: Conclusions and the required attitude

1. The agreement is of a security nature and yields to the Zionist conditions and demands. It should be considered an instrument used to destroy the capabilities and potential of the Palestinian People, along with their civil society, institution and national unity. It will cause instability in the region in a way that serves Zionist-American interests at the expense of the interests of the Arab and Muslim people.
2. The combating of the agreement and its consequences is not exclusive to the Hamas Movement, the other Palestinian opposition forces, or even the Palestinian People in general. It is rather the duty of the Arab and Islamic governments and people.
3. The PA began the implementation of the security provisions of the agreement from the first moment after signing the agreement. It arrested the journalists who visited Sheikh Ahmed Yassin to interview him concerning the agreement. The PA's security forces also started an arrest campaign against members and supporters of Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements. They also arrested Sheikh Hamed Al Bitawi, the *khatib* of Al Aqsa Mosque and President of the Palestine Ulama' League, after he gave a statement to a TV channel via telephone, and Sheikh Nafez Azzam of the Islamic Jihad after his speech in a rally in Gaza. The Palestinian Military Intelligence raided Fateh Movement's office in Ramallah to confiscate weapons and opened fire at a peaceful demonstration organized by Fateh supporters, killing a young Palestinian supporter and injuring others, causing increased tension in the city.
4. In view of the dangerous situation that makes it impossible to wait or to give a chance to examine the agreement, we, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), call upon our Palestinian People to be aware of the reality of the agreement, which destroys the present and future of our Palestinian Cause, and which destroys the achievements and attainments over the past decades. We also appeal to all popular forces and activists to unite their ranks to defend the rights of their people, institutions, security and national unity.
5. We call upon all Arab and Islamic government and popular forces to take the initiative to voice their views about the agreement and its dangers, and to press the PA, using all means possible, to prevent it from cracking down on the Palestinian *Jihadi* forces and from igniting an internal war, which would put the Palestinian People at the mercy of the Zionist ghoul. If the Palestinian wall of unity collapses, the Zionist flood would sweep the whole Nation.
6. On this occasion, the Hamas Movement is fully confident that no part of the agreement, or the Zionist enemy, or the Palestinian Authority will be able to uproot the resistance of our People or to prevent them from continuing their resistance program.
7. Finally, while we in Hamas condemn this agreement and warn of its dangers and consequences to our People, our cause and our Nation, if the PA insists on implementing its contents and playing the role of the servant and the instrument of the Occupation, we reiterate our stand prohibiting Palestinian-Palestinian fighting. We also reiterate our keenness to preserve National unity. We shall be firm in rejecting oppression and the Occupation while at the same time very positive in maintaining Palestinian unity and directing our People towards the resistance of the Enemy in order to build their present and future. We shall remain, by the Will of God, beside our People and Nation, and defend our legitimate rights, land and holy places until we achieve victory, liberation and the return of our People to their homeland.

Everyone should learn that the Right will triumph and the falsehood will no doubt be removed, even if it is bristling with arms and supported by all earthly powers.

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