

Palestinian Resistance Running in the New Legislative Elections Simulates Insanity

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“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results:” this quote is wrongly attributed to Einstein, but regardless of who said it, this is what best describes the Palestinian resistance participation in the new Palestinian legislative elections. The new elections are being sold as the way for reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. However, the Palestinian division occurred in the light of the results of the 2006 legislative elections, and as a direct result of the contrast between Hamas and Fatah strategies towards the Palestinian cause.

The strategies of the Palestinian factions have not changed since the previous elections. On the contrary, the Palestinian Authority (which in fact represents Fatah) has become entrenched further with the occupation, and the foreign actors’ stance against the Palestinian resistance has become more rigid. And it stands to reason that a significant change in at least one of these two factors is a prerequisite to expect different outcome of any new elections

So, away from the slogans of the reconciliation between Palestinian factions and the accompanied PR campaigns, what does each of the Palestinian factions hope to achieve from these elections? And more importantly, what is the solution to break the siege imposed on the Palestinian resistance in Gaza?

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

In January 2020, the former U.S. administration [announced the ‘deal of the century’](#); this deal in fact exposed the hidden intention of the successive U.S. administrations. This announcement was preceded by the Zionist Entity revealing its intention to [annex the West Bank](#). Add to this, the [‘Jewish nation-state’](#) laws which the Zionist Entity passed in 2018 that may lead to transportation of the Palestinians in the 1948 territories out of their homes.

After all these developments, Mahmoud Abbas declared [Oslo Accords dead](#) and the end of the security coordination with the occupation. With this, a glimmer of hope within the Palestinian factions that the PA had finally benefited from its disastrous experience over the past 30 years has emerged.

It was said at the time that it was possible for Fatah to agree with the other Palestinian

factions on the basis of civil resistance to the occupation. And a [meeting of the Secretaries-Generals of the Palestinian factions](#) was held in Beirut on this basis. However, soon the hope of any change in the performance of the PA evaporated. The PA continued to coordinate fully with the 'Israelis' forces in order to thwart any attempt to resist the occupation and continued to suppress any popular movement on the ground, no matter how peaceful it was. The PA relentlessly suppressed Even the peaceful popular demonstration of solidarity with the [hunger-striking detainee Maher al-Akhras](#) at the time. Then came the shocking statement of Hussein al-Sheikh, the PA Civil Affairs Minister, when he announced [the return of the PA diplomatic relations with 'Israel'](#) to how it was, including the security coordination- which in truth never ceased.

It has become clear to most observers that the PA function has become limited to two tasks: first, collecting financial aid; and second, paving the way (knowingly or unknowingly) for the occupation to accomplish its aims of annexing what little that remains of the West Bank.

By stifling any form of Palestinian movements, peaceful or otherwise, to resist the occupation's changing the facts on the ground, the Pa has become de-facto complicit of the occupation. Hence, all PA talk still possessing a Palestinian national project becomes no more than empty rhetoric. Because even he who believes in the negotiations as the only path to attain Palestinian rights does not strip himself of all negotiation leverages as the PA has indeed done. The PA has become a mockery of itself. It now mimics the French government of Vichy or [the South Lebanon Army](#); with the difference that the last two had a project, regardless of our view of their projects, whereas the PA no longer has a task to speak of. These are not labels that can be given lightly or as a matter of populism, nor it is a call for internal fighting which must be avoided at all cost, especially in the presence of the occupation. But this is a description of the current situation that must be taken into account when assessing any future Palestinian strategy.

Thus, it can be reasoned that the goal of Mahmoud Abbas and the PA from the elections is to renew their legitimacy, or more precisely to take allegiance from Hamas and the rest of the Palestinian factions, and then to return to the vortex of what they call peace process and with no horizons in sight, of course.

Hamas and the Palestinian resistance factions

Hamas and the Palestinian resistance are going through an evident crisis, because of their limited options and their failure to lift the 15-year siege imposed on the Gaza Strip. It can be argued that the origins of the blockade were Hamas's strategic miscalculations to run in the 2006 legislative elections- which did not secure Hamas any immunity nor protected it as it had hoped. Notwithstanding this argument, the occupation remains the prime source of the blockade. The Zionist Entity is the holder of the blockade keys and no one else. This is the primary fact and must not be ignored when formulating any strategy to dismantle the blockade.

It is not a secret that Hamas is hoping that running in the upcoming elections will lead to lifting the blockade or at the very least easing it. This presents two assumptions: either Hamas competes against Fatah to win the majority in the legislative elections or runs with Fatah on the same party list. Suppose it is the former, and Hamas wins the election. In that case, Hamas will face a repeat of the 2006 scenario if there is no change in the Palestinian

faction's policies nor any change in the key international players' stance towards the Palestinian resistance.

But if Hamas runs in the elections on a party list with Fatah, and it agrees to be a minority in the legislative elections, it will become an opposition party within the Oslo system. At which point, they will be obliged to play according to the Oslo rules. We observe the emergence of two parallel lines on the Palestinian scene- that can never converge. One represents the PA which has become linked to the occupation (and part of it, in reality), and which does not believe in any form of confrontation with the occupation, even a peaceful one; whilst the other believes in Resistance to restore Palestinian rights. As a result, the resistance factions will find themselves facing the same current dilemma. With the difference that this time they will have given to the opposite side new ammunition to use against them.

The Palestinian resistance will be required internally and internationally to respect the elections' results and hand over the Gaza Strip to the PA before any easing of the blockade takes place. And because the blockade keys are with the occupation, the Palestinian resistance will have to follow the Zionist Entity's definition of handing over control of the Gaza Strip. And that means the disarmament of the Palestinian resistance and nothing else.

The solution to break the siege on the Palestinian resistance

It must be recognized first that finding a solution to the Gaza crisis is not a simple task, because the blockade is linked first and foremost to the occupation itself and is only one of its symptoms. Nevertheless, what deserves attention is that the Occupation Entity has allowed a lot of financial aid to the PA in Ramallah and even to the Gaza Strip, whenever the status quo nears the point of collapse in the West Bank or Gaza. This indicates that the Zionist Entity fears an explosion in either of these arenas. For instance, Netanyahu retreated from his decision to announce the West Bank's annexation [fearing the break of a third intifada](#) based on the estimates of his security advisers and nothing else. This casts doubt on the idea that the West Bank is not ready for a popular movement and a third intifada. It is true that starting a popular movement is not without many obstacles, first of which is the presence of the PA intelligence services, who are now directly coordinating with the Shin Bet. Nevertheless, is it really possible that the Palestinian factions are short of the means to motivate people and move onto the street if they put their mind to it?

In addition to what has been said, if we put the blockade imposed on the Palestinian resistance in its broader context as part of the economic war imposed on all resistance forces in the region, movements and states alike, the lifting of the siege on Gaza clearly becomes a common interest for all these actors. And this calls for the Palestinian factions to try to formulate a unified strategy with all the resistance forces in the region (i.e. the Axis of Resistance) to lift the blockade. It is, of course, obvious that this requires rounds and rounds of discussion, and that any strategy to break the siege with the support of the Axis of Resistance will be a medium-term strategy, but this remains the more productive option. Engaging in uncalculated adventures such as new elections will only lead to more time-wasting, even according to the most optimistic estimates.

Conclusion

The siege imposed on the Palestinian resistance in the Gaza Strip is a vital component in the overall strategy of the Zionist Entity, and any counter plan to break the siege that does not take in account this fact will be bound to fail. Therefore, steps that can change the

equations on the ground and the development of a comprehensive national Palestinian strategy are paramount for dismantling the siege. Today the Palestinians have a realistic opportunity to impose withdrawal of the occupation from the 1967 territories through a third intifada. This would undoubtedly change all the existing equations on the ground.

What is put forward in this article are only thoughts for deliberation. The formulation of a complete future Palestinian strategy needs the participation of many minds. But what this article has tried to avoid is sugar-coating the reality, simplifying the status quo, and providing solutions that appear attractive on the outside but bear the seeds of their own failure in the inside.

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