

Strategic Report of the Palestine Strategy Group (PSG)

Relations between Palestinians across the Green Line

This report of the Palestine Strategy Group (PSG) on the *Relations between Palestinians across the Green Line* presents the conclusions of joint sessions and discussions held over two years between politicians, intellectuals and activists on both sides of the Green Line. It does not necessarily represent the personal opinions of each participant.

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Executive Summary

The Palestinian 'Nakba' of 1948 resulted in the division of the Palestinian people in their homeland. This disrupted the development of a collective national and political identity for the Palestinian people in their various locations, urban and rural. This fissure developed from the imperialist settlement project which attempted to break up the Palestinian people, their national identity, and their national and political plans. A separation was created between those who stayed within the borders of the state of Israel, which was established on the rubble on Palestinian land, and those in the remaining territories of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and among the diaspora. The remaining Palestinian territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) were then occupied in 1967 which brought the two groups of Palestinians under Israeli colonialist control even though the system differed within the Green Line from that implemented in the territories occupied in 1967. The relationship between the two Palestinian communities has since been strengthened in every respect, culturally, socially, politically, economically. This was demonstrated in the 2000 Al-Aqsa *Intifada* in which Palestinians in the 1948 territory engaged following its outbreak in the occupied territories in 2000. Over several days, Israel faced popular protests on both sides of the Green Line. The same thing happened during the events provoked by the Praver Plan and, more recently, during the demonstrations organised in support of Palestinian political prisoners. These conditions invite a fresh reflection on new strategic options, or rejuvenating the *status quo*.

Given there are a number of distinct political projects, national cohesion among Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line is key to creating a unified, collective umbrella that allows networking, empowerment and development. While it would not abolish political difference, this umbrella would seek to integrate these political projects, each one supporting the other in realising their respective demands, be that ending the occupation of the 1967 territory, the return of refugees, full citizenship, or individual and collective equality inside the Green Line.

This report proposes scenarios of potential relations between the different Palestinian groups. However, a particular focus is placed on the relations between Palestinian on both sides of the Green Line. This was the focal point of discussions held by a group of politicians, intellectuals and activists on both sides of the Green Line over the course of two years.

The report is premised on the following hypotheses:

1. Differentiation between the national and the political. In this regard, the report envisions an inclusive Palestinian national project that brings together all Palestinian people and which is distinct from political projects. This inclusive Palestinian national project comprises three core tenets: unity of the Palestinian people; a sense of belonging to the Palestinian homeland; and Palestinian national identity with all its historical, cultural and political dimensions. These three tenets form an inclusive national system for all Palestinians regardless of the historical and political contexts in which each Palestinian group and its respective political interests evolved. Palestinian groups will come together for such a project, particularly the unity of the Palestinian people in all the places where they live.
2. Viewing political interests and perceptions adopted by different Palestinian groups as complementary rather than contradictory. This means that difference should be dealt with as a feature of development and of the specific history and journey of the Palestinian people. A case in point is the development of the citizenship project and collective rights by Palestinians in Israel as opposed to the idea of statehood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Within this perspective, such different political perceptions will be treated as complementary, dynamic concepts which fall within the inclusive national project, enriching and consolidating it rather than undermining it. This is the main challenge for the Palestinian national project.

This report seeks to propose scenarios informed by these hypotheses.

It is important to note that support, networking and joint action have always been in place. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and party leaders inside the Green Line have coordinated and supported each other since the birth of the modern Palestinian national movement. However, coordination was always outside any inclusive strategic or institutionalised framework, mostly periodic and generally related to individual effort and good intentions. Participants highlighted this point in their discussions.

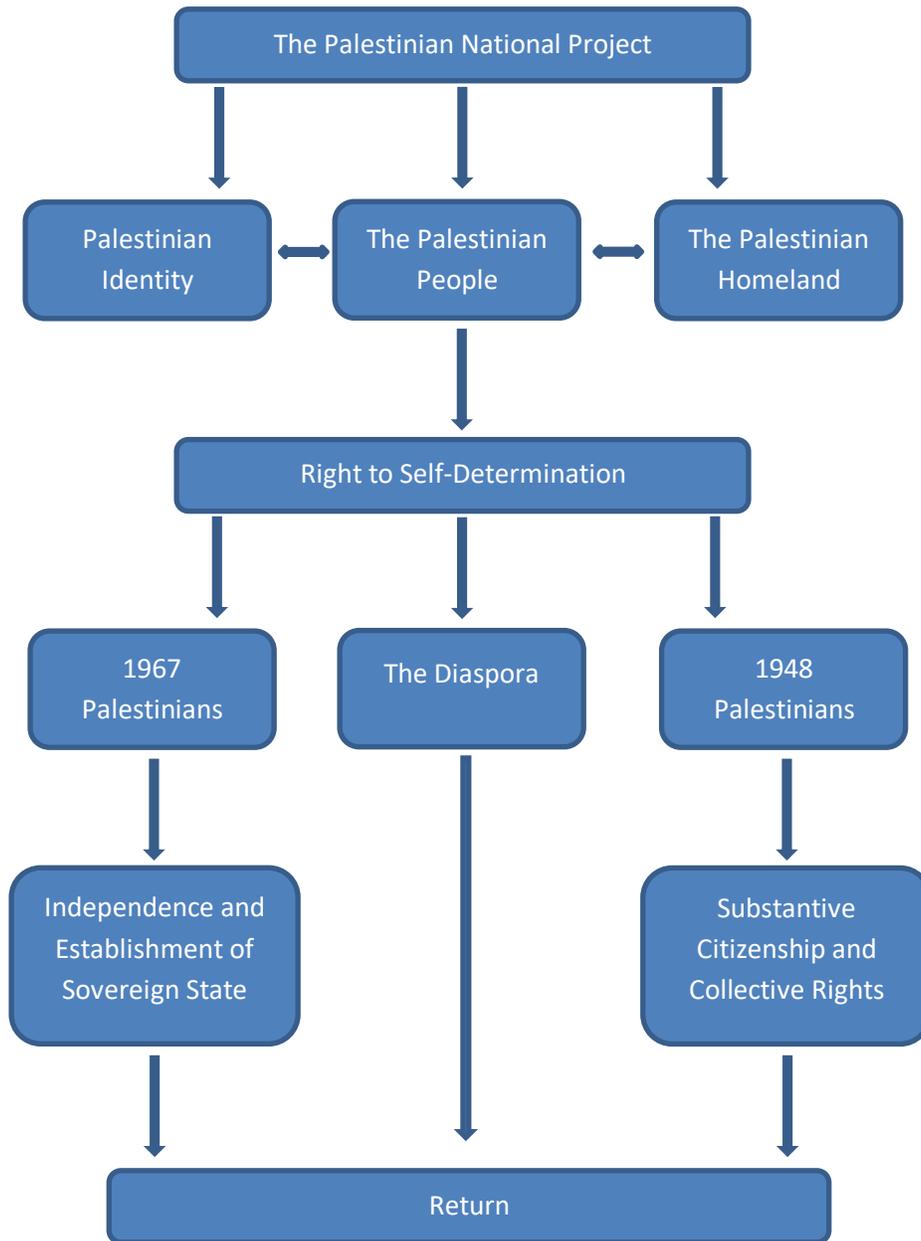
In this context, namely the lack of continuous and institutionalised networking, PSG participants proposed several potential options to institutionalise relations between Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. Each option has its pros and cons. One option is for Palestinians inside the Green Line to join the PLO alongside the rest of the Palestinian people. According to the majority of workshop participants, not only is this option undesirable, but it could risk weakening the status of Palestinians, particularly in Israel. Another option is consolidating the *status quo* with regards to reciprocal coordination while striving to institutionalise it. A third option is the creation of a new inclusive institutional body via the PLO as the sole legal representative of the Palestinian

people to complement the role of the PLO as the national political decision maker. This proposed body could provide an inclusive and non-political national framework. The PSG group discussed this third option at length.

The report proposes three main potential scenarios, each with its own strengths and weaknesses:

1. Improved *status quo*: This scenario presumes that the *status quo* is good. Many political achievements have already been made by Palestinians. When the *status quo* is improved, namely by promoting strengths and minimising weaknesses, this scenario can consolidate the Palestinian national project.
2. Strengthening the representational status of the PLO: In this scenario, Palestinians in Israel will have proper and fair representation in PLO institutions. They will also play a political role in the decision-making process and in determining the PLO vision. This scenario arises from the need for a realistic and political interpretation of the PLO as an inclusive framework and as the mouthpiece for the Palestinian people as a whole, representing its interests.
3. Creating an inclusive, non-political framework for all Palestinians: This would be part, or a subsidiary, of the PLO. This scenario is premised on the need to avoid the weaknesses of the first and second scenarios. It envisions the creation of an inclusive, non-political framework that brings Palestinian groups together. This framework would strengthen the Palestinian national project and deepen relations between Palestinian groups, taking into account their different political interests and laying the foundations for integration.

Figure 1: Components of the national project and political projects



The Report

Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line: the critical situation

Discussions held over two years (2015-17) by a group of politicians, intellectuals and activists on both sides of the Green Line highlighted two main political projects for Palestinians either side line. The first, the plan of the PLO, is to end the occupation, establish an independent state on the 4 June 1967 border with Jerusalem as its capital, and return Palestinian refugees. The second, associated with Palestinians inside the Green Line, aims at achieving full and equitable citizenship and maintaining individual and collective rights in Israel.

The group discussed various options at length, but reached a consensus on two main issues:

1. The PLO, which enjoys international and popular legitimacy as the Palestinian representative, should not be undermined in spite of currently inefficient functions and challenges, which need to be addressed and overcome.
2. Palestinian groups are distinct because of the contexts in which they have developed, along with their expertise and experience. In particular, the specific status of Palestinians inside the Green Line should be taken into account as they operate within the political complications associated with their citizenship in Israel. The dominant political project of Palestinians inside the Green Line therefore is to accomplish individual and national equality. In this sense, these Palestinians cannot be part of a body that sometimes has to make definitive decisions - as the PLO, for example, can - such as pursuing armed struggle or severing relations with Israel, and at the same time be involved in official parliamentary activity in Israel. This was pointed out by several politicians who participated in PSG group discussions.

Taking account of these risks and parameters, PSG sessions were organised against the backdrop of a growing feeling that Palestinians in the places where they live, particularly on both sides of the Green Line, face a real dilemma as to how to confront Israel and its policies. Political projects that Palestinians have sought to realise over decades are thwarted by major obstacles at the present time.

In this context, some scholars indicated that the citizenship project of Palestinians in Israel (or the majority of them at least) has virtually come to a near standstill after it had gained some momentum in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords. The citizenship project is premised on one main hypothesis: the inferior status of Palestinians in Israel derives from

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Israel's status as a Jewish state, established on Palestinian land and by means of the *Nakba*. This means that dealing with individual and collective citizenship equality is a particular project that falls within the framework of the right to self-determination of national groups. It necessarily incorporates the struggle to change the Jewish and Zionist nature of Israel.

However, this citizenship project has reached an impasse with the rise of the far-right wing and New Right in Israel. These movements have placed a particular emphasis on promoting the Jewish nature of the state from both an ethnic and religious perspective at the expense of the civil and citizenship perspectives. The recent rise of the far-right and New Right has marked a decline in the trend towards openness which was seen in Israel in the 1990s after the Oslo Accords. In reality, the citizenship project was obstructed by the solid barrier of the Jewish state after the outbreak of the Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa *Intifada*. In Israel, the New Right¹ used this paradigmatic shift to constrict citizenship to the realm of law. Hence, bills that have incessantly targeted Palestinian citizens in Israel over the past few years are part and parcel of the project, which seeks to consolidate the ethno-religious status of Israel as a Jewish state. Accordingly, the law restricts discourse on citizenship, preventing the expansion of the space for political action.

At the same time, the project of ending the occupation and achieving statehood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has come to a major historical and political impasse. It has become clear that Israel across most of its political spectrum, is neither ready nor willing to reach a two-state solution in such a way that realises self-determination for the Palestinians. Instead, Israel refuses to grant Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip political and civil rights even in the way the Old Right would have understood them. It has effectively created a discriminatory, colonial, apartheid reality. In some relevant literature, the Old Right proposed annexation, but was willing to give certain rights to Palestinians of the occupied territory. Conversely, in the aftermath of the second *Intifada*, the New Right has been inclined towards an annexation and separation project. This project entails a creeping annexation on one hand, and expansion of settlement activity on the other and is completely detached from Palestinian political and civil rights. The New Right is different from the Old Right in that the latter was obsessed with land even if the price was annexation and granting limited rights to the Palestinian population. The former is obsessed with annexing land without having to pay any price to the Palestinians

¹ The New Right comprises all ultra-orthodox Haredi parties, national religious parties, settlers, hardliner Knesset members of the Likud party, extremist national groups affiliated with the Yisrael Beiteinu [Israel is Our Home] party, and semi-fascist movements, such as Im Tirtzu [If You Want], and other Zionist civil society organisations that promote the New Right ideology.

in the territories occupied in 1967, maintaining their current political and citizenship status.

With the New Right's stable government and growing dominance over decision-making in Israel, the crisis situation for the two-state solution - which the PLO accepted and which became an internationally endorsed basis for a solution - has worsened. Israel is creating facts on the ground through settlement activity and changing the demographic landscape. It is shaping Palestinian land in ways that cannot be altered. If it is forced to enter into negotiations in the future, Israel can, therefore, start off from the "reality" it has deliberately created for colonial purposes. In contrast, the Palestinian leadership's approach to internationalising the question of Palestine has so far not borne fruit. It has not forced Israel to accept the two-state solution in a model the Palestinians would like, namely, an independent, sovereign Palestinian state within the 4 June 1967 border.

The internationalisation strategy faces a greater predicament in light of regional and international shifts which have been more convenient for Israel. Donald Trump came to power in the United States of America, and the far-right in Europe has gained more power (see International Context section below). The Arab world has also been engulfed in the bloodshed of domestic conflicts. Traditional alliances grounded in relations with Israel have given way to the emergence of Sunni-Shiite sectarian alliances, the focus of which is not Israel. Furthermore, when Netanyahu talks about the two-state solution (assuming he is serious), he does not mean the two-state solution according to the Palestinian understanding, nor does he refer to the minimum requirements of the political project of the Palestinians in relation to the territory occupied in 1967. Netanyahu speaks of a sub-sovereign Palestinian state, surrounded and fragmented by settlements and besieged by military occupation.

The impasse of the Palestinian political project is deepening, further affecting Palestinians in general, and those in the territories occupied in 1967 particularly, in light of the continued and worsening political and geographical separation of the West Bank from Gaza. One political entity has now become two and the mechanisms for representation and diplomacy have been fragmented. The Palestinian position has been strategically weakened by this divide. Further to this, Israel's policies - grounded in the political and geographical separation and fragmentation of Palestinians - have produced three groups of Palestinians with different rights: Residents of Jerusalem with blue identity cards who enjoy some rights; residents of the West Bank who hold green identity cards and are under the authority of the PA for their civil affairs while Israel remains the sovereign occupying power controlling their movement; and the residents of the Gaza Strip who live under a stifling siege and are isolated from Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and

inside Israel. In addition, there are Palestinians inside the Green Line who hold Israeli nationality and are effectively in touch with Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank, albeit with Israeli checkpoints and other difficulties associated with getting around.

To sum up, the Palestinian national project today is at the edge of an abyss in light of the bloodshed across the region, the Arab schism, the collapse of pivotal states, and the transformation of the political axis from an alignment based on relations with Israel to an alignment based on a Sunni/Shiite affiliation. The international arena has seen the rise of the Right and of Islamophobia across Europe and the United States. Israel has seen a move towards the New Right, a tightening of control over the elites and a pursuit to put an end to the two-state solution, amid continuing fragmenting of the Palestinians.

These conditions threaten the political project of Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. It also threatens the achievements made over recent decades of Palestinian struggle through various means. In contrast, the Israeli and Zionist political enterprise continues to be the only project that attempts, and is able in the current political context, to strengthen itself. It seeks to settle the Palestinian question in a way that ties in with the Zionist project of the New Right. In Israel, a change in this trajectory is unlikely unless Israel is forced or coerced under local, regional and/or international pressure.

On both sides of the Green Line, the Zionist project, that is, the ethno-religious Jewish state that disregards the Palestinians in Israel, is making progress. The project of annexation without rights (apartheid) and settlement without regard for the Palestinians in the territories occupied in 1967, however, bears intrinsic contradictions and problems which are worth noting:

- **First**, the Israeli political project implements policies of separation and annexation that target Palestinians both sides of the Green Line. On the one hand this disregards the Green Line, but on the other, it simultaneously isolates Palestinians from one another by creating a hierarchy of rights, status and location. It is true that Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line circumvent the line whether practically, mentally, politically or culturally. However, the right-wing project with its ethnic and religious facets plays its role in eliminating the Green Line by unifying mechanisms of control over the two groups of Palestinians, and by annexing large swathes of the West Bank, bringing them under Israel's sovereignty.

Israel's project to separate Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line is implemented through:

- a. Legislation: For example, in the early 2000s, the Citizenship Law was amended with the intention of preventing humanitarian and social contact between Palestinians. There is another set of laws that serve the same goal, namely to limit communication among Palestinians. Of particular note, having been recently passed, the Counterterrorism Law incriminates any act of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and restricts the space for political action by Palestinians in Israel.
 - b. Military separation: Israel prevents Palestinians of the 1948 territory (as well as Palestinians of 1967 territory) from entering the Gaza Strip, as it is considered a closed military zone. Between 1949 and 1966, Israel imposed military rule on the Palestinian population of Gaza, cutting them off from the rest of the Palestinian people. Then in 1967, it imposed military rule in the occupied territories. This limited interaction and communication among Palestinians within Palestine.
 - c. Political separation: Israel politically delegitimises all forms of communication with the Palestinian people and the national political movement. Accordingly, political borders are delineated in line with Israel's perspective. Delegitimation has turned into suppression on the ground. For example, the Islamic Movement was banned on grounds of its contacts and role in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque.
 - d. Separation at the level of consciousness: This has been carried out through the mechanism of Arab education in Israel which has witnessed a concerted effort over the past few years to create the "new Israeli Arab" who is not affiliated with and has no part in a Palestinian national project.
- **Second**, the New Right project cannot resolve the Palestinian question on both sides of the Green Line. On the one hand, the New Right is incapable of exercising full sovereignty over the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967 as this would constitute a clear case of apartheid were they not to grant political rights to the Palestinians living there. On the other hand, the New Right cannot endorse the two-state solution as the international community requires because this may trigger civil war, internal unrest or, at the very least, a split that could threaten the stability of Israeli society and the Jewish state. In Israel, settlers have become a central power, both ideologically and in numbers, in the state mechanisms, particularly the army. They will not readily accept withdrawal from what they consider to be "the Land of Israel". Indeed, according to them, the legitimacy of the state of Israel depends on keeping hold of "the Land of Israel". From this perspective, the state of Israel is a colonial movement and a new chapter of the

Zionist project of regaining Jewish control and sovereignty over the "Land of Israel". The new driver in the Zionist project with regard to realising these aims is religious settler Zionism.

- **Third**, building on the previous point, the ethno-religious right-wing Zionist political project which currently governs Israel cannot resolve the question of the Palestinians in Israel by curtailing the scope of their citizenship and limiting the political platforms available to them. It is true that it has succeeded in specific areas in recent times, including banning the Islamic Movement and enacting certain laws such as the Expulsion and Anti-Boycott Laws, along with others related to political prosecution and detention. However, Palestinians have responded to such policies by consolidating the discourse around citizenship and internationalising their cause, exposing their situation to the world and increasing the interest of international organisations. This has been the case over the past few years, particularly after the Joint List was formed.

The Palestinian project and its challenges

The Palestinian projects of ending the occupation and acquiring independence, for those in the 1967 territories, and individual and national equality for those in the 1948 territory, have hit a wall and are in crisis. This situation requires at least exploring ways of empowering and strengthening the different groups of Palestinians in their various locations. As the current project envisions, it also requires relationships between Palestinians either side of the Green Line. Although it has been on the table for a long time, this discussion has not been approached systematically or in depth. Firstly, this entails providing an academic, research-based and intellectual platform to discuss the topic.

The following issues formed the basis of the PSG participants' discussion:

1. The reality of fragmentation, as well as different contexts and levels of interaction in the places where they live, have produced distinct characteristics for the various Palestinian groups which is a reflection of their needs, requirements and choices. These characteristics have become part of the culture of daily and political life for the groups. In other words, fragmentation is the primary cause of the emergence of these distinctive characteristics and features.
2. The different needs, requirements and parameters of Palestinian groups have resulted in the creation of distinct parallel social worlds which are disconnected

- and have no collective framework. Israeli policies seek to consolidate this unusual situation.
3. Within their own social worlds, different groups have developed parallel political projects and legal rhetoric as well as their own tools for the struggle. As such, the Palestinians of the 1967 territories have concentrated on achieving statehood and adopted forms of struggle oscillating between a popular and armed. In contrast, Palestinians of the 1948 territory focus their attention on citizenship through the political tools provided by the Israeli political system. Palestinians in the Diaspora have shifted their focus to return using the tool of boycott.
 4. Each parallel political project was born out of the power relations and the given context within which it was developed and with which it must engage. These projects have not had any institutional link to coordinate them aside from fleeting attempts or partial collaborations. Although it is growing and increasing on all levels, such cooperation is not coordinated. In other words, each area of cooperation is separate from the others.
 5. The current state of fragmentation is not final but dynamic and changing. The separation of Gaza from the West Bank is being entrenched and we are seeing a growing separation of Palestinians in the diaspora in general, and refugee camps in particular, from the collective Palestinian political body.

On the basis of the above, the PSG saw a particular need for academic and practical discussion centred on knowledge and research that offers decision makers and general Palestinian discourse alternatives and proposals. The group believes that the creation of a non-political inclusive national framework is needed to collate and institutionalise relations between different Palestinian groups. This framework would focus on:

- **First**, establishing relations among Palestinians and strengthening an inclusive national identity and affiliation with the Palestinian homeland.
- **Second**, an attitude of integration rather than incompatibility, regarding the various political projects of different Palestinian groups. This proposed framework could be called an *Inclusive Non-political Palestinian Framework*, and would not view the distinct political projects as contradictory or in conflict with the collective national project, but rather integral to it.

Initial premises for joint action

Separating the national from the political, and the homeland from the state

This section of the strategic report discusses the PSG group's conclusion that it is important to separate the inclusive national project for all Palestinian people from political projects. All Palestinian groups in their various locations need to agree on the national project. The national project rejects the idea of particularity within the collective national project. It views it as a colonial instrument, which is designed to tear the Palestinian people apart. Hence, the central mission of the national project is to restore unity to the Palestinian people by reaching a consensus on the national identity and homeland. In contrast, political projects express the political interests of various Palestinian groups. A breakdown of these projects is provided in the following sub-sections.

The national project

'Palestinian national' refers to a shared existential 'national', which is associated with the people, a spiritual entity, the meaning the Palestinian collective gives to its existence, historical experience and journey. By this, the group expresses its shared feelings and view of events, personalities and symbols. This meaning constitutes the core of the national group's overarching narratives, including its self-perception, and fundamentally reflects its definition of the collective sense of *we*. Culture is the main carrier of meaning. It integrates and reformulates meaning into celebrated products, such as folktales, literature, poetry, art, etc. In this context, cultural figures and intellectuals are the agents who produce cultural meaning and play a key role in shaping, guiding and disseminating the values of society. They are the gatekeepers who determine those values and symbols which must be respected, and those which must be denounced.

It can be noted that Palestinians everywhere in the world share a set of basic meanings, which make up the essence of their understanding of the collective *we*. They also share an understanding of various events in modern history. In this vein, cultural figures and intellectuals, particularly poets and literary figures, have played the most significant role in formulating and articulating the sense of *we* by means of symbols and meanings that stir up sympathy and a sense of belonging among all groups of Palestinians, regardless of their location.

In this context, the *Nakba* is the point in the collective timeline and the knot that binds together all the threads of divided groups into a single narrative containing shared

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cultural elements. Regardless of the subsequent geographical affiliation of the author, be it inside or outside the Green Line, in Haifa or in the Diaspora, Palestinians can feel sympathy and solidarity towards the *Nakba* and feel that it expresses their innermost being. In this sense, the *Nakba* was the catalyst that produced a collective national identity and brought Palestinians together. Hence, we can understand why Sameeh al-Qasem, Mahmoud Darwish, Tawfiq Ziyad, Rashed Hussein and Hanna Abu Hanna are not considered poets of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, but Palestinian poets. The same applies to Naji al-Ali, Ghassan Kanafani and Muin Bseiso. These are a continuum, not a new case. They should necessarily be positioned within, not in parallel to, the chronology of the Palestinians.

What is meant here by the single whole or *collective we* is the group of people – along with their descendants - who lived in Palestine before 1948 and shared several distinctive features: first and foremost living in one geographical area, but also ethnic affiliation, language, history, customs and traditions. These distinctive features played a role in developing a common national identity which at its core has a sense of a united future and the call for the right to self-determination. In part, this national group has been shaped and strengthened by the existence of common enemies, namely Zionism and the British Mandate, and continual confrontation with them on the ground. Regardless of the political views and projects proposed before 1948, belief in the unity of the people and their shared future have been the dominant feature of the Palestinian national existence, hence the importance of the *Nakba*'s role in national culture as a radical moment of dispossession.

All Palestinian people are involved in the national project regardless of current geographical and political fragmentation. Without ignoring a level of self-responsibility, it can be said that the fragmentation of the Palestinian people is mainly a consequence of the settler colonialism.

Fragmentation of the Palestinian people requires a consensus on a national project which will bring the Palestinian people together and reproduce Palestinian unity around a national project. The Palestinian national project, which must be renovated, and possibly even recreated, will restore meaning to the questions "What does it mean to be Palestinian?" and "How can I be Palestinian?"

The national project is premised on the fact that, in spite of division and partition, all Palestinian groups are part of the Palestinian people. They are part of a people displaced by a Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine aimed at uprooting the Palestinian people and establishing a political entity on their land and at their expense. The settler colonial project reached a climax in the 1948 *Nakba*, a *Nakba* which continues to this day as its

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impact is still felt, most notably in the existence of Palestinian refugees, policies of displacement, and ongoing colonialism. This people group is tied to its homeland, Palestine. Regardless of political division, there is one homeland, from the river to the sea. It does not just represent some kind of nostalgia or longing for the past, recalling orange groves, cacti, orchards, cultural coffee houses, mosques and churches, but is rather an established reality that lives in the heart of the Palestinian people and is an indivisible part of their identity, narrative, affiliation and way of life.

For the Palestinian people, belonging to the homeland is the essential component of the national project. The national project rejects the state of particularity because as a product of power relations within the settler project. There must be a single vision that unites the Palestinian people. Following on from this, particularity should be overcome through a common narrative passed on from generation to generation.

The national project springs from the struggle against a settler colonial project, which applies various mechanisms in dealing with different groups of Palestinians. The national project is driven by the morality and legitimacy of the struggle against the settler colonial project. Resisting this latter project is a key component of the national project regardless of the mechanisms used, which are subject to the choices and interests of different Palestinian groups. The distinctive interests of different Palestinian groups must be preserved as they are an advantage, rather than a disadvantage, to the national project.

[The political project](#)

What we mean by the political project is a set of common perceptions, requirements and interests that a particular group is striving to realise within the parameters and restrictions of the present reality and according to its national vision. It is within this context that Palestinian groups in the different places they find themselves, have developed distinct political projects and made significant achievements. These achievements have contributed to the survival of the national project within the various historical contexts in which and through which they were accomplished. In addition, the political project is rooted in the understanding that preserving these achievements is in the interest of Palestinian groups on the one hand, and in the interest of the vitality of the national project on the other. The latter does not view discrepant political interests of Palestinian groups to be in conflict with the inclusive national project.

Although they disagree on many issues, the majority of Palestinians agree in their aspirations for freedom, justice and equality. Starting with these values and the desire to realise them, distinct groups crystallised their separate but intersecting political projects, namely:

- Ending the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital
- Return
- Full equality and justice for Palestinians in Israel

Before providing a detailed account of these political projects in the following paragraphs, it must be stressed that the only political project of the aforementioned Palestinian groups which is completely in line with the national project, that is, where in its nature it has no separation between the political and the national, is the right return of the Palestinian diaspora. It is not fair to deal with this justified request as a purely political project, because in its nature it is prone to expanding or diminishing in line with relevant historical and political conditions. For this reason, it should be highlighted that the right of return defies the boundaries that divide the political from the national.

Every political group has made many political achievements during the course of their journeys since the Palestinian people were dispersed in the *Nakba*. Palestinians in Israel have managed to maintain their presence in the homeland, and crystallise a Palestinian national identity despite 'Israelisation' efforts both in terms of consciousness and culture. They have established national institutions to organise collective work, as well as national political parties to raise and defend national issues and demands. Political thought among Palestinians in Israel has succeeded in connecting the civil to the national whereby civil issues contain national elements (such as land and housing), and national issues contain civil elements (such as the struggle for the recognition of unrecognised villages).

The political project of Palestinians in Israel was rooted in the framework of Israeli citizenship with a view to expanding and transforming it into substantive citizenship. This project has been shaped by the struggle for the recognition of Palestinians in Israel as a national group with collective rights, that is, the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian national group within the framework of Israeli citizenship. The political project of Palestinians in Israel evolved from a project of survival throughout the years of military rule when the threat of displacement was still looming. Palestinians resisted displacement during the period of military rule and then developed a discourse of equality, then of substantive equality and collective national rights. These are associated with the discourse around changing the character of Israel from a democratic Jewish state to a democratic one. The majority of Palestinians in Israel are not of the view that their right to self-determination falls within the framework of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Still, the majority of these Palestinians continue to support the two-state solution.

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The political project of Palestinians in Israel has been associated with the two-state solution. The one-state project was not developed among the Palestinians within Israel although a select group of Palestinians inside the Green Line support the notion and view it as the most just and achievable in current circumstances.

The political project of Palestinians in Israel, including perseverance, attachment to the homeland and pursuit of equality, has contributed to supporting the Palestinian national project in a broader sense. Palestinians have highlighted the risks to the national project posed by recognition of the Jewish state. No Palestinian group could have been more aware of the dangerous implications of the Jewish character of the state on the national project than that in Israel. The political project of Palestinians within Israel is based on an understanding that recognition of Israel as a Jewish state is dangerous to the inclusive national project as it: entails the moral acceptance of the Zionist project; revokes the right of displaced Palestinians to return to their homeland; and admits the Zionist narrative. It would therefore ultimately impact the project of equality, collective rights and right to self-determination for Palestinians in Israel. Recognising Israel as a Jewish state would render the discourse of citizenship meaningless, ineffective and limited to claims of partial rights. It would also create a barrier to the right to self-determination, by which Palestinians in Israel seek to be recognised as a national group with collective rights.

Within the framework of their political project, Palestinians in Israel have created representative bodies separately from those of the representative bodies of the Palestinian people (namely the PLO institutions) while not cutting contact with them. In fact, contact with the PLO has developed and increased since the 1970s and become clearer. Even though it has not had influence on the broader Palestinian stage, the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel played a particular role, such as an attempt to participate in the Palestinian reconciliation effort. The Committee also influenced the Palestinian leadership's rejection of the notion of the Jewish state, which was demanded by Tzipi Livni and maintained by Benjamin Netanyahu. It also played a formative role in thwarting the population exchange plan, which was proposed in several rounds of negotiations.

The political project of Palestinians in Israel generated the project of equality and collective rights and delineated tools for the struggle resulting from a framework of citizenship. For this group, political struggle is manifest in political activity in parliament as well as popular, resistance political work in the courts and outside of parliament. They stress that their struggle is nonviolent and governed by rules of the political system in Israel, that is, the framework of citizenship. For them, this was not just a pragmatic choice, but transformed into an organic component of their collective perception of the future.

Palestinians in Israel refuse to adopt the tools of armed or violent struggle, or engage in Palestinian resistance movements to attain their collective rights. On the contrary, they frame their struggle in parliamentary activity within the Israeli Knesset as well as in political, judicial, civil, protest and popular action outside. They have also built cross-cutting institutions that are national in nature, or aspire to be, such as the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel among others.

In light of the above, the political project of Palestinians in Israel does not derogate from the idea of the joint national project, which places the Palestinian homeland, people, national identity and narrative at the heart of the national project. The latter views political projects as additions and accompaniments, each one supporting the political project as long as its practices are not in conflict with the national project. Accordingly, the political project of Palestinians in Israel can be delineated along the following lines:

1. Preserving presence in the homeland and crystallising the Palestinian public space in Israel through Palestinian national identity.
2. Working towards materialising substantive citizenship, which can be accomplished by changing the nature of the Israeli political system.
3. Recognition for the Palestinian group in Israel as a national group that enjoys the right to self-determination within the framework of citizenship. This right can be attained by recognition of the collective rights of the Palestinian people.
4. Supporting the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to establish an independent nation state in the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967. This right is articulated through public political action, particularly in parliament, advocating for the right to self-determination on an international level, and through the activities of civil society organisations.
5. Accomplishing the political project of Palestinians in Israel requires engagement with the other political projects of the national project for the following reasons:
 - a. Because of Israel's Zionist infrastructure as a Jewish state, its practices, values, laws and institutions are determined accordingly. In this context, the identity and nature of the state in the 1948 territory are set against Palestinians as non-Jews. This is also the case in the occupied territory and towards the diaspora. The lack of full equality is a result of the insistence on the Jewish character of the state. Failure to end the occupation, establish an independent state and withdraw from Jerusalem is caused by loading the conflict with a nationalist, religious, historical, Jewish dimension. Israel's lack of compromise on the matter of return is linked to fear of a change in the infrastructure of the state and of it no longer being Jewish. In this context, we can bear in mind the demand that the PLO

recognise Israel as a Jewish state in contrast with the proposal of a new Israeli bill that defines it as a State for the Jewish People. Of particular note, different demographic statistics and studies indicate that Israel is continuously changing from a secular to a more religious and right-wing society. This means that insistence on the Jewish character of the state will further increase in the medium and long term.

- b. There are organic, familial and blood relations among the Palestinian people, especially in seam zones in the Triangle and Naqab. This effectively means that the suffering on one side bears an impact on the quality of life of the rest of family on the other side, restricting their freedom of movement and communication. For example, almost 50 percent of families in the Zimar villages comprise marriages mixed of people on both sides of the Green Line. Intertwined family relations are in place. We cannot imagine the realisation of full equality for Palestinians inside the Green Line in light of continuing occupation, control of family relations and the prevention of family reunification.
- c. A large number of Palestinians inside the Green Line are refugees who lost all their property and are referred to as refugees, internally displaced persons, present absentees, or other such names. Their case is therefore connected with resolving the problem of refugees in general. However, their issue is also one of citizenship and equality and, at the same time, on the agenda for negotiations. This is also the issue of every Palestinian in the diaspora who hails from areas inside the Green Line, such as a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon who is from Galilee, not the West Bank.
- d. The issues of full equality and citizenship if not taken in conjunction with resolving the matters of return or compensation create ethical and practical predicaments, which Palestinians inside the Green Line need to resolve. For example, dealing with the matter of state land which was originally the land of refugees being distributed among young Arab couples in Palestinian villages and areas to improve their living conditions. How can this issue be dealt with? Is it acceptable for land originally belonging to refugees to be set aside in our villages for the purposes of construction? How will this affect claims for compensation or the right of return?
- e. The current context is very dynamic with the high-speed age of the internet which opens up new means of contact, and with all the

complications associated with, and the methods to accomplish, political projects. As a result, classical borders and partitions disappear, increasing interaction across and between them. In relation to redefining and crossing borders, existential changes have produced overlapping spaces among the Palestinian people. We might be in the process of recreating the different groups of the population with a new form of identity that does not correspond with geographical and political fragmentation. Many Palestinian youths have turned to virtual communication and formed distinct identity groups that cross classical divisions. It is worth noting that various sociological studies are now discussing the emergence of new identities as a result of the changes in electronic communication, and are examining their long-term impact on the formation of identity. This will necessarily consolidate identification between various groups, and render separate solutions almost impossible. For the sake of argument, if the Palestinians inside the Green Line attained full equality, but the problem of Palestinian refugees was not resolved, the formation of overlapping identity will transform the matter of the refugee in a camp in Lebanon into one that cuts across the different groups. On top of that, there is a spiritual and emotional bond associated with the collective *we*, which requires all issues to be resolved in order to solve the issue of one group.

- f. The emotional bond and the existence of a *we* means that Palestinians identify with shared fundamental symbols, most notable of which is Al-Aqsa Mosque. Palestinians also identify with the achievements of successful personalities and of the resistance or struggle. The greater the achievements of one particular group, the greater the desire for others to identify with it and deepen their relationship with it. In this context, the demands of Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank and the Diaspora cannot be separated because these Palestinians will continue to be emotionally intertwined, thereby transcending that which is purely political.

The political project of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip started out as a struggle to liberate the occupied territories and undermine the colonial project. It then developed into a struggle for the right to self-determination with the establishment an independent state within the 4 June 1967 borders. This project has been the central political project of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the past three decades. The struggle for the right to self-determination has dictated the tools and mechanisms of resistance against the occupation and settler colonial project in the 1967 territory. This was exemplified primarily in armed struggle, negotiation,

internationalisation, building state institutions, etc. It has not been limited to a single tool, which delegitimises other tools. By contrast, since Israeli citizenships was imposed on them, Palestinians in Israel have reached a unanimous agreement on the tools of civil and peaceful action and have delegitimised armed, violent or illegal struggle among themselves.

This report is premised on the need to avoid the conflation of the political project of Palestinians in the 1967 territory with the national project. The statehood project (i.e. establishing a nation state on the 1967 border) is the political project of a Palestinian group that lives in a geographical area. It should neither be the essence of the national project nor replace it. Replacing the national project, namely the homeland project, with the statehood project would exclude Palestinians in Israel from the national project and limit their status to an Israeli political force within the existing Zionist political system, and at best a political lobby that supports the national project.

Without a doubt, the national movement abroad has shifted over time from a discourse that demanded the liberation of Palestine and return, to one that was satisfied with the two-state solution and a partial return, then to one that accepts a two-state solution with border adjustments. Despite these transformations in discourse, and the readiness of Palestinians to offer concessions with a view to reaching a historical compromise, the national movement is driven by the minimum requirement of historical justice. However, in spite all this, Israel has been neither willing nor able to reach a compromise with Palestinians. The same applies to the tools of struggle: the national movement progressed from the *Fedayeen* operations inside Israel, to armed operations, to the *Intifada*, ending up with popular action and diplomacy.

We cannot say the same about Palestinians in Israel. Their history is not one of offering concessions in order to reach a historical compromise, but one of escalating discourse. As such, it started out as steadfastness and immovability, shifted to calls to end military rule, then for equality and, finally, a state for all its citizens and cultural autonomy.

Building on the aforementioned reality and the state of crisis outlined in earlier paragraphs, as well as the urgent need politically and nationally to review the Palestinian situation and the matter of fragmentation which has been imposed and reinforced by the colonial project, the PSG laid out three scenarios which it examined in depth and which we outline and discuss in the following sections.

Scenarios concerning the relationship between Palestinians either side of the Green Line

Scenario 1

Improved status quo

The *improved status quo* scenario is premised on the perception that the current relationship between Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line and Palestinian national institutions could be the most preferable with some improvements that enhance its strengths and limit its weaknesses. The *status quo* is the product of a historical process, which was imposed on the two Palestinian groups. In this context, Palestinians in Israel have made many achievements on the national level and in the fields of politics and rights. From their position, they have contributed to the Palestinian national project without threatening their accomplishments over previous decades. This scenario is also based on the possibility of improving the *status quo* by enhancing communication, interaction, coordination and support, which Palestinians in Israel can offer to the political and national projects.

The *status quo* option is informed by the following considerations:

- **First:** The *status quo* does not represent a complete fissure between Palestinians either side of the Green Line. In reality, it is an artificial division as there is contact across the Green Line which is strengthening day by day. Similarly, political interaction and connection between the components of the two political arenas are ongoing and strengthening. This can be organised so that Palestinians inside the Green Line, as citizens of Israel, can provide significant political and national support to the political project in the 1967 areas.
- **Second:** Continuation of the *status quo* would preserve the achievements made by Palestinians in Israel. It highlights the increase of achievements made by Palestinians since the *Nakba*, starting with remaining, through to the discourse on equality, and ending with the right to self-determination as a national group.
- **Third:** The *status quo* allows Palestinians of the 1967 territory to benefit from the status of Palestinians in Israel on both the international and the Israeli levels. Palestinians in Israel have greater freedom of movement and stronger ability to raise the political agenda of Palestinians in the 1967 territory. Owing to their legal status, civil society organisations in the 1948 areas are dealing with many issues facing Palestinians of the 1967 territory.

The *status quo* is a good option for preserving the achievements of each group and for utilising the political experience of Palestinians in Israel. Furthermore, it does not presume a division between Palestinians either side of the Green Line, as mutual ties

between the two groups have strengthened over recent years. Benefits of this phase include:

1. A gradual melting of physical, dividing political borders thanks to new transboundary tools provided by ICT and the internet. In this new reality, contact and networking are carried out through social media platforms, establishing cells for contact and dialogue, exchanging ideas, and building spaces for mutual cultural activity. The Wall no longer poses a barrier.
2. Experiences of positive interaction on the ground have grown not only through solidarity against the occupation, but also through social interaction associated with recreation, art, literature, cinema and festivals, particularly in the city of Ramallah. Additionally, cultural activities have been held simultaneously in cities inside the Green Line, in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. These events have contributed to enhancing contact and opening up opportunities for cooperation between Palestinian young people, including students and political activists who lead an important part of the political movement and who view such events as safe spaces for interaction.
3. The Zionist project is framed within new concepts derived from the lexicon of apartheid and settler colonialism. As a result, it has helped pave the way to developing joint tools for the struggle to dismantle the ethnic hierarchy on grounds of citizenship and equality. Still, one needs to bear in mind that the discourse has shifted from one of freedom from the occupation to one that is rights-based.
4. Political cooperation is in place between leaders of both groups. Sometimes, political roles are integrated. Palestinians in Israel have been more involved in raising the issue of the right to self-determination on the internal Israeli level as well as on the international stage. Consultations between both parties are no longer concealed but rather public.

There are also some limitations and weaknesses within this scenario which we must point out and which call for some re-thinking:

1. The status quo cannot constitute a sustainable solution without a framework or establishment. The continuation of relations is susceptible to universal and individual developments without an agreed-upon coordinator to organise them, particularly in light of Israel's ongoing isolation of each group and infringement of their rights.
2. This scenario reflects a reality of fragmentation and separation which resulted in a fissure between the different groups of Palestinians within the national project.

- This fragmentation led to the development of numerous Palestinian narratives which are fractured and disparate.
3. This scenario is lacking organised, collective, institutionalised action. As a result, it is an accumulation of experiences of Palestinian groups and the enrichment of relationships between them and can mean that at times their interests are contradictory without collective institutionalised efforts.
 4. The limitation of this scenario is in breaking the political deadlock which the different political projects of the Palestinian people are facing.
 5. Accepting the status quo implicitly accepts the reality which Israel finds very comfortable in terms of its treatment of the different groups of Palestinians.

Scenario 2

Joining existent Palestinian national institutions

This scenario is informed by the significance of the PLO representing Palestinians in Israel, particularly the Palestinian National Council. It is based on the understanding that the PLO represents the Palestinian people as a whole and should, therefore, represent Palestinians in Israel. This scenario is based on the following considerations:

- **First:** This option reflects the position of Palestinian political elites in the 1948 territory who for decades have stressed the need for the representation of Palestinians inside the Green Line within PLO institutions, as an expression of the oneness of the Palestinian people in their various locations. Hence, this option is not alien to the political thought of Palestinians in Israel but has been deliberated on many occasions and in numerous theories in the past and to this day.
- **Second:** The definition of the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people requires it to fortify the status of Palestinians in Israel within its institutions, thereby transforming representation from something merely nominal to a reality.
- **Third:** Such representation would not be in conflict with, nor is it seen to pose a threat to, the achievements made by Palestinians in Israel within the framework of citizenship. This is particularly the case as Israel has recognised the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people, not to mention the international recognition it has received.
- **Fourth:** Throughout their history, Palestinians in Israel have demonstrated a significant political maturity and developed their own tools for struggle. They also have extensive political experience which can contribute to boosting the role and status of the PLO.
- **Fifth:** The PLO is responsible for making critical decisions regarding the question of Palestine. The PLO is the sole legitimate body authorised to make decisions

- concerning the Palestinian people. The PLO's decisions have a direct impact on all Palestinian people wherever they live, including those in Israel. For this reason Palestinians in the 1948 territory have the right to participate in this decision-making process, since it has direct and indirect consequences for them.
- **Sixth:** In addition to practices on the ground, the Israeli settler colonial project is in the process of erasing the Green Line through a series of measures, steps and laws. Colonial tools have adopted a consolidated approach in dealing with Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. If the Israeli project treats Palestinians as one group, Palestinians need to deal with themselves as one group, not through statements and slogans, but through representation by the PLO.
 - **Seventh:** Representation does not reject different tools for political action; the PLO represents Palestinian groups with various tools for struggle. Therefore, the representation of Palestinians in Israel would not require them to relinquish their specific political tools in the context of Israel, citizenship and politics.

Aside from the reasons and statements cited in support of this scenario, other considerations need to be taken into account which reveal the inadequacy of representing Palestinians of the 1948 territory through PLO institutions:

- **First:** Representing Palestinians in Israel through the PLO may threaten the political achievements they have made throughout their historical and political journey. These gains have been made thanks to Palestinians introducing institutional differentiation within discourse and engagement with the Palestinian national movement. These accomplishments were made within the framework of controlled political communication and not institutional affiliation with the national movement.
- **Second:** Representation will not transcend its symbolic dimension. PLO representation of Palestinians in Israel will remain symbolic as an expression of the oneness of the Palestinian people, however, the price the Palestinians pay may not be symbolic, but in the form of tangible reality.
- **Third:** Building on the previous point, Israel will view such representation as a hostile stance from its citizens. Israel has already reacted forcefully to Palestinians' small-scale contributions to joint struggles with Palestinians of the West Bank. The Islamic Movement paid a heavy price for the role it played in Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Democratic National Assembly (Balad) also paid a hefty price after member of the Knesset Hanin Zu'bi joined the MV Mavi Marmara flotilla. There are many other examples, and instances that could be considered less serious but which still triggered a hostile reaction from Israel. Palestinians are living in a period in which conditions prevent any semblance of participation in the

- Palestinian national movement in any of its branches or areas of struggle. Undoubtedly, Israel will react harshly to the option of PLO representation of Palestinians in Israel.
- **Fourth:** Representation might play into the hands of certain streams of Israeli right wing, and even left wing, that believes Israel should exchange Palestinian areas inside the Green Line as part of a final settlement, or waive these areas in line with a disengagement plan. Representation would provide ammunition for these kinds of projects: If Palestinians are part of the PLO, why not take that membership its full conclusion?
 - **Fifth:** The world distinguishes between the struggle of Palestinians in Israel and the role and struggle of the PLO and deals with Palestinians in Israel on this basis. They are seen as part of the Israeli citizenship system and their struggle takes place within that framework. Even when the world is listening to their position on the broader Palestinian question and on the solution of a Palestinian state in the 1967 territory, they hear them as an internal Israeli voice who can play an important role within that context. The world respects the position of Palestinians in Israel and allows them increased influence by means of a direct contact with them. This may change if Palestinians in Israel become part of the PLO. In the same vein, the world deals with the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people, with the exception of Palestinians in Israel. The world sees the struggle of Palestinians in Israel an internal Israeli affair. Hence, this option could undermine the PLO's legitimate status around the world and resonate with Israel's propaganda that the PLO continues to view the Palestinian homeland as a statehood project that includes the 1948 territory.

Scenario 3

Creating an inclusive, non-political framework

What we mean by the creation of an inclusive, non-political framework is the establishment of a representational, organisational, institutional framework for all Palestinian groups modelled on the idea of a 'congress' for Palestinians internationally, under the auspices of the PLO. This scenario is rooted in the existing collaboration between the two Palestinian groups either side of the Green Line. There is an institutional structure, which can give rise to individual and collective cooperation among the Palestinian people in the spheres of economics, society, culture, academia and the arts. These forms of cooperation provide important infrastructure for the national project by undermining the functional and geographical divisions imposed by the settler colonial regime on Palestinians in historic Palestine. This institutional infrastructure provides the

foundation for the scenario of a Palestinian inclusive framework which involves all Palestinians.

The institutional project requires extensive communication between the two Palestinian groups on the ground and on the level of infrastructure, so to speak. It seeks to develop a concept for establishing joint unions bringing together Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. This will organise engagement across and between them not as two separate sides but among one people in which each can preserve their own historical achievements and political interests. At the same time, it will seek to promote contact through institutional cooperation by building institutions, unions or syndicates. These establishments can provide a melting pot that transfers partnerships from individuals engaging in unorganised action, to an organisational groundwork that spans the sectors. This will restore unity among the Palestinian people on a grassroots level and abolish functional divisions imposed on the Palestinian people by the Israeli colonial regime. These associations will aim to achieve various goals of the inclusive national project. They will start with organising current partnerships within the framework of a joint national institutionalisation effort and end with removing the functional division imposed on the Palestinian people, which is preventing Palestinians from coming together in an inclusive project. Within the framework of the national project, the institutional project represents an initial expression of Palestinian unity in the framework of the national project by way of associations which bring together both sides of the Green Line.

Developing the institutional framework from its present condition into a situation of maximum institutional and functional engagement is impaired by many challenges, which face similar unions, syndicates, cooperatives and joint ventures. These challenges include:

1. The legal challenge: The proper legal formulation and description of such an shared association would need to be provided in terms of its registration, goals, membership, modes of operation and activities.
2. The challenge of particularity: Israeli colonialism has succeeded in creating a specific status for every group of Palestinian people both inside the Green Line and in the 1967 territory. Particularity has therefore run deep in Palestinian groups' thinking, consciousness and behaviour, thereby reinforcing the colonial project and its goals. This poses a challenge to partnerships and cohesion in the infrastructures of the Palestinian people.
3. The challenge of existing experiences: Proposed unions pose a challenge to existing experiences in almost every sector. What we mean by existing

- experiences is active institutions, societies and unions within both Palestinian groups in the fields of economy, education, culture, and health, among others. There are both old and new entities in the 1948 and 1967 territories that operate separately from their counterparts in either area. Rather than dealing with the organisation of joint unions as a negation of existing isolated unions, some of which already have a broader outreach on the international stage than in Palestine, the establishment of joint unions must in the end deal with, and identify the appropriate mechanisms for engaging with, existing ones.
4. The political challenge: The political factor is a significant challenge to the proposed project. This is because of the contrast in different Palestinian political projects' perceptions of the Palestinian political project, which could lead to partnerships that are either harmonious or at odds with one another. Political projects both inside the Green Line and in the West Bank view differentiation between Palestinians of the 1948 and 1967 territories as a cornerstone of their own political vision. In this context partnership might seem to them to be about agreeing on the grand political project, namely establishment of Palestinian state in the 1967 territory. They might consider these unions, or parts of them, in conflict with their own political vision while failing to separate their own political project from the national project of the Palestinian people, which seeks to promote national unity and reconstruction and has no relation to statehood or the political question.

This scenario is premised on the need to rebuild the Palestinian national movement, which needs to be organised by setting an inclusive Palestinian framework. The scenario is seen as a development of the current organisational and institutional landscape of the Palestinian national movement. The Palestinian framework is set and constructed by integrating Palestinians in Israel as an organic part of, not a subsidiary to, this framework. While Scenario 2 envisions the representation of Palestinians in Israel in the PLO, Scenario 3 provides that Palestinians in Israel are a constituent entity within the inclusive Palestinian framework just like all other Palestinian groups in their various localities. Scenario 3 is rooted in the following points:

- **First:** Since the Oslo Accords, the PLO has been in dire need of consolidating its capacity for representing political forces in the Diaspora, some political forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Palestinians inside the Green Line. The inclusive Palestinian framework will provide an institutional setting that brings together all Palestinians, taking account of their different political projects and preserving the national project. Furthermore, the PLO is announcing the creation of an inclusive

Palestinian framework to serve as the connecting link and institutional infrastructure for all Palestinian political projects, which are all grounded in the Palestinian national project.

- **Second:** The PLO is not able to represent Palestinians in Israel due to the historical context in which it was established and the role it has played in the Palestinian national movement and its the struggle against Israel. In light of its historical experience, the boundaries that have been set for the PLO’s scope in terms of representation cannot be expanded. Therefore, creating an inclusive Palestinian framework would reproduce an inclusive Palestinian institution under the aegis of the PLO which could accommodate Palestinians in Israel without bearing the political cost of representing them directly in the PLO.
- **Third:** The Palestinian group in Israel was absent from key roles in the development of the Palestinian national movement. This gap has existed from the outset, even when the PLO was at its peak. There are historical reasons for this situation, not least that it was illegal for Palestinians in Israel to be associated with any PLO faction, as well as the PLO’s stance since the 1970s when it “discovered” Palestinians in Israel and deemed them a political force that supported the Palestinian project in Israel. Many parties of the national movement maintain this perception regarding the role of Palestinians in Israel. Palestinians in Israel have since played a role in Palestinian politics and the national project, particularly after the Oslo Accords. For them and for all groups of the Palestinian people, the proposed inclusive framework would be an inclusive institutional framework.
- **Fourth:** Creating the inclusive framework would provide leverage for the Palestinian people, and unity between them and for the national project. It would represent a departure from the historical burden of political and factional conflict that institutions of the national movement have so far borne. Within this framework, Palestinian representation would be natural. An inclusive Palestinian framework would provide a new springboard from which political interests of various Palestinian groups could be reformed, taking into account their political projects. As such, the framework would recreate a sense of unity among the Palestinian people built on an understanding of their different interests. Unity would thus be built from a position of consensus on a national project on the one hand, and the integration of the interests of all the components, despite the discrepancies between them, on the other.

- **Fifth:** The inclusive framework presents an opportunity for Palestinians in Israel to articulate their interests on a platform that represents all the Palestinian people, political movements and social structures. Thanks to the experience they gained from political action, Palestinians in Israel can be an essential player in forming, constructing and institutionalising these efforts by the Palestinian people. This platform is an opportunity for them to recover their status in the Palestinian national movement and be represented in the establishment of a new national movement. It is also possible to better and more effectively market the idea of the inclusive Palestinian framework as a collective institution for all the Palestinian people as opposed to marketing the idea of PLO representation of Palestinians. That said, the PLO would oversee, support, and provide impetus for the establishment the inclusive Palestinian framework.

Conversely, this scenario faces many risks, of which we reference the following:

- **First:** As far as Palestinians in Israel are concerned, the establishment of an inclusive framework for the Palestinian people would bear the same risks as those associated with representation in the PLO. In addition to the traditional components of the PLO, the framework would include new ones, such as the Palestinian Islamic one. This will be a political encumbrance for Palestinians in Israel and the political achievements they have made over previous decades.
- **Second:** The notion of the inclusive Palestinian framework may not receive consensus among Palestinians in Israel in which case the idea of representation within the inclusive Palestinian framework may be another cause of internal fragmentation within Palestinian politics in the 1948 territory.
- **Third:** In relation to Palestinians in Israel, creating a new inclusive Palestinian framework that brings together all the Palestinian people, would contain the risk of losing the international achievements the PLO has accumulated since it was established, despite the preservation of the organisation and its oversight of the framework. Furthermore there may be conflict between the approach of the inclusive framework and that of the PLO.
- **Fourth:** As far as Israel is concerned representing Palestinians in Israel within the inclusive framework will be the same as representing them in the PLO, and would therefore bear the same risks described earlier in relation to Palestinian representation in the PLO.

The Palestinian context of the inclusive Palestinian framework scenario: The current Palestinian context, characterised by geographical and political fragmentation, could be considered an opportunity to reunite the Palestinian people by creating an inclusive

Palestinian framework. In spite of the division imposed by Israel's settler colonial project, this reality has been overcome on the ground through a unified consciousness of identity, homeland and affiliation with the national project. Also, despite fragmentation, Palestinians have managed to create essential infrastructure, part of which is institutional, through cooperation on all levels; cultural, economic, the arts, academic and community and civil society. Accordingly, the Palestinian context is conducive to transforming a unified consciousness into unity among the Palestinian people. The development of a unified awareness required enormous sacrifice and struggle from Palestinians inside the Green Line, the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in the Diaspora. As an institutional project, the inclusive Palestinian framework would progress the unity of the people on the level of consciousness to become unity on the ground through a Palestinian national project and the integration of different political views.

The Israeli context of the inclusive Palestinian framework scenario: the Israeli political project, led by the religious, settler and far-right wing, seeks to bring an end to, and settle, the question of Palestine. To do so, it entrenches the division of the Palestinian people on the one hand, and tends towards consolidating the colonial tools it is using against them on the other. Because of its unified approach, the Israeli project forces Palestinians to be united on the level awareness despite their different political projects. It unites the Palestinians' principal goal of the right to self-determination for all groups of Palestinian people. Hence, the creation of an inclusive Palestinian framework would be part of the struggle against the Israeli political project by integrating and coordinating the different political projects, and consolidating the Palestinian national project.

The international context for the inclusive Palestinian framework: The time is ripe to establish an inclusive Palestinian framework as transformations on the international stage have made it a significant arena for Palestinian political action on both sides of the Green Line. In conjunction with attempts to internationalise the solution, and to a lesser degree, the conflict, the PLO and PA have pinned their hopes on the international community to ensure establishment of the Palestinian state. To this end, they urge the international community to expand and promote Palestinian representation in international organisations, and look to the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council to pass resolutions that will contribute towards recognition and ending the occupation. The international stage has posed a key challenge to Israel, which refuses to internationalise the solution or the conflict. It strives to ward off every attempt of the PLO and PA to internationalise the solution and impose international resolutions on Israel. In this context, Israel is banking on the recent international developments mentioned above to disrupt the Palestinian strategy of internationalising the solution. The conditions and players which contributed to the internationalisation of the solution will change,

weakening the Palestinian strategy on the one hand, and isolating Palestinians on the international stage on the other. Furthermore, it would lead to the adoption of the Israeli approach to, and mechanisms for, a solution. Israel is counting on the aforementioned political developments to help it achieve these goals.

Although a decades-long effort to internationalise the status of Palestinians in Israel has gained more momentum, no clearly defined political strategy of action has been devised, nor any collective tools. Civil society organisations, particularly rights-based ones, play a major role on the international stage, including at the EU and UN agencies focused on rights. Nonetheless, the efforts made by these organisations have not fallen within a political strategy to internationalise the issue of Palestinians in Israel. Over the past two years, Palestinians in Israel have played a bigger role in the Palestinian arena. In addition to forming the Joint List, a chairman of the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel was elected, for the first time in an internal poll rather than through an agreement between components of the Committee. The collective political role of Palestinians in Israel on an international level was also enhanced. For example, Palestinians in Israel organised an International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, observed on 29 November every year. This is now in its second consecutive year. Contact also improved with international organisations and foreign countries thanks to establishment of the Joint List. Foreign ambassadors and international organisations view the Joint List as a representative of Palestinians in Israel. In addition, Palestinian Members of Knesset make visits and diplomatic tours around the world, raising issues related to Palestinians in Israel as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In conclusion, it can be said that the profile of Palestinians in Israel and question of Palestine has been raised on the international stage over the last few years. Reasons for each are different, however. With respect to the Palestinians in Israel, the increased momentum was down to the work of civil society, academic publications, cultural and academic activities, and long-term political contact with international actors. The formation of the Joint List has also been instrumental as it has shown the potential political power of Palestinians in Israel, who can influence the Israeli scene. However, there is another important reason that needs to be noted: the ongoing incitement of the New Right in Israel against Palestinians inside the Green Line has contributed to drawing international attention to their cause and increasing aid and support for them.

Conclusion

This report has presented a summary of the PSG's discussions which resulted in outlining three scenarios to address the current Palestinian state of crisis. It affirms that we can no

longer neglect to redefine and delineate the relationship across both sides of the Green Line for the reasons we have outlined. It also affirms that the time is now ripe to raise this question openly and honestly and grapple with all elements of it. This is what the PSG has attempted to do. At this point we can say that the majority of the PSG considers the third scenario a genuine opportunity and calls for decision makers, elites and the general public to put the option on the table for research and discussion in the Palestinian public arena.

Within this context, that is, the lack of continuous and sustainable institutionalised network, the discussions of the PSG indicated that there are a number of possible options to establish relationships, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Among them was the option of the Palestinians in Israel joining the PLO alongside the other Palestinians. However, most participants in the workshop pointed out that this option is not desirable and could serve to weaken the Palestinians, particularly those inside the Green Line. Secondly, we discussed the option of strengthening the status quo through mutual coordination, with the aim of institutionalising it. The third option was to create a new collective institutional body which would be decided on and formed by the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This new body would integrate with the PLO's role as the national political decision maker. The proposed body would represent a non-political collective national framework. This final option was one that the group explored at length.

Table 1: Summary of the different scenarios

	Improved <i>status quo</i>	Joining the PLO	Inclusive Palestinian framework
Strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining the achievements of every Palestinian group. 2. Keeping the unity of the national project while accommodating discrepant political interests. 3. Many political and national achievements have been made under the status quo scenario. 4. Strengths can be promoted and weaknesses identified and avoided with more effort within the framework of this scenario. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Translating the special power Palestinians in Israel have in an appropriate way in PLO decisions. 2. Introducing the interests of Palestinians in Israel as an institutionalised part of the PLO's work. 3. Transforming the PLO into a genuine representative of all Palestinian people without exception. 4. Ensuring the participation of all Palestinian groups in the national decision-making process in relation to the interests of the Palestinian people. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoiding the pitfalls of the first and second scenarios. It provides an inclusive framework for all Palestinians that does not threaten their political interests. 2. This framework reconsiders the Palestinian national project after its regression which gave way to various political projects of Palestinian groups. 3. Improving coordination, consolidating relations and strengthening collaboration between Palestinian groups in the national project. 4. Preserving the PLO's status and role, while at the same time increasing the representation of Palestinian groups in the national project. 5. Presents an opportunity to promote institutional cooperation between Palestinian groups in cultural, economic, academic and other areas.
Weaknesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of an inclusive institutional framework, which ensures the integration of different Palestinian interests of various Palestinian groups. 2. Limited capability to break the political deadlock of 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation of Palestinians in Israel within the PLO poses major risks to political achievements, particularly in the current Israeli context which views Palestinian citizens as enemies and seeks to frame them as such. In so 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a risk of transferring political conflicts and regional disputes into the framework. 2. Palestinians inside Israel could be accused by Israel of holding

	<p>various political projects of the Palestinian people.</p> <p>3. Acceptance of the status quo constitutes an implicit acceptance of the situation which Israel favours in dealing with various Palestinian groups.</p>	<p>doing, Israel attempts to undermine political and civil achievements made by Palestinians in Israel over previous decades.</p> <p>2. The PLO applies political rules of action that are often different from those embraced by Palestinians in Israel. This is because the PLO adopts a national liberation project, which aims to establish a Palestinian state as an embodiment of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.</p> <p>3. Palestinians in Israel have different views and perceptions about their representation within the PLO, which could have a negative impact on the unity of their struggle in Israel.</p>	<p>duplicate political identities and projects.</p> <p>3. The inclusive framework could be considered an alternative to the PLO.</p>
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