

Wanted: A Palestinian Front for All Seasons

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The Palestinian political scene remains bleak. The status quo in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continues to be backed by the international community at the behest of the the Zionist regime, which is [comfortable](#) with having its cake and eating it too, and why shouldn't it be? In March 2015, then Israeli economy minister Naftali Bennett even proposed the racist status quo as a political platform.

In Ramallah, there are faltering and pathetic “explorations” (most notably through webinars on “Alternatives and Options” organized by [Masarat](#): The Palestinian Center for Policy Research & Strategic Studies).

I call such attempts pathetic, not as a reflection on the organizers themselves, all honorable men—certainly walking a tightrope without a safety net, even if it is academic in nature, is preferable to passive acceptance of the status quo. What I mean is that such challenges to the Palestinian political status quo simply highlight the rabbit hole of our political reality.

In a situation where [revolutionary struggle](#) is the only possible logical path to achieving a just resolution in Palestine, we are confronted, as Palestinian writer and activist Khaled Barakat put it in an Al-Akhbar opinion [piece](#) recently, with “ignorant traditional leaders who only know one thing about Russia, Mr. Bogdanov, and know little about China other than it is a ‘very important country’ ... They are fighting in the name of defending this or that axis, at a time when international and regional [activists] are cooperating at all levels.”



(Conference of the Alternative Palestinian Path): Towards a new revolutionary commitment, Madrid, Spain, October-November 2021 (Source: <https://masarbadil.org>)

Barakat adds:

“It is unfair to drop our past experience [with liberation struggle] from the reality of the new world, or to invoke old balances of power as if they still existed (as some talk about Russia and China). The easiest thing is to be defeated and live outside the era, outside of action and influence. The easiest thing is to blame others or hand over your cause to them. The easiest thing is to turn into a mouthpiece for an Arab regime or a major country. To be insulted and rejected or applauded and accepted. Ghassan Kanafani says: Nothing is easier than absolute acceptance, except absolute rejection.”

Recently, Nasser Al-Kidwa, President of the [National Democratic Forum](#), participated in a [workshop](#) organized by Masarat within the “Alternatives and Options” program mentioned above. He fielded several observations addressed to him, most importantly regarding the mechanism he envisions by which the Forum’s initiative for change would begin to see the light of day in the political arena. His answer was this:

“The starting point for implementing the initiative proposed by the Forum or similar others could begin to happen if Hamas or the Palestinian Authority or one or more of

the other smaller blocs such as the Popular Front commits to it.”

He added that the National Democratic Forum has tried but failed to engage any of the blocs in the Forum’s initiative for change.

Masarat continues to invite Palestinian politicians, academics, researchers, activists and youth to express their “views and visions to get out of the current impasse.” If nothing else, such efforts could raise awareness, especially among Palestinian youth trapped in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, that alternatives and options do exist and that our situation is not hopeless in both theory and implementation, as Israeli propaganda would have us believe.

Regarding change, Khaled Barakat’s voice is the clearest and most sobering. In the Al-Akhbar [article](#) I quote above titled “Palestine and the conflicted discourse between yesterday and today,” he concludes (my translation):

It is ... the siding of Hamas with its people, and the initiation of building a united national front that will make the world reconsider its calculations and force the countries to recognize a new revolutionary Palestinian project.

Armed resistance in the Gaza Strip, led by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, constitutes one of the most important elements of Palestinian power that must be supported, developed, and its comprehensive capabilities strengthened. The movement’s leadership must exert greater effort in establishing relations with liberation movements and popular struggle forces in the world, and not with the “big countries” nor on the basis that it should replace “Fatah” and take its place.

Rather, we need to present a different and opposite model. What is required is to draw on our century-long Palestinian experience and build a united Palestinian national front that catches up with the times and is aware of all the people, all Palestine, and all rights.

We need to drop the Madrid stage—Oslo—and restore consideration to the spirit of Palestine, its identity, its people and its position in the struggle ... in accordance with the Palestinian popular will. [We need a front] that charts in depth the new Palestine’s relations with its Arab and international community, a front in which all the people participate and that celebrates political, intellectual and religious pluralism and transforms the project of liberation and return.

There are glimmers of hope that “a different and opposite model” has been emerging—one that de-legitimizes Israel and legitimizes the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

From the beginning, the story of the Zionist state in Palestine has deployed legitimization strategies (in the sense of condoning, licensing, validating and justifying Zionist violence and inhumanity in Palestine), first through political machinations in Great Britain and the US, and then through a relentless [campaign](#) of misinformation and propaganda, in my opinion the ultimate and most successful and enduring engine of fake news in the history of the world.

The propaganda strategies the Israeli regime has used to rob Palestinian property and eviscerate their history have always been rooted in legal warfare, as it pertains to [international law](#) (Israeli lawyers are still mulling over whether the West Bank and Gaza Strip are occupied or not) and getting [Israel’s highest court](#) to quash Palestinians’ attempts to

obtain rights or resist their subjugation, however non-violently.

Add to that the charade of military [kangaroo courts](#) that Israel uses to make prison a revolving door for Palestinians and that the Palestinian's own [legislative body](#) functions only according to the whim of the occupier, and the picture is complete.

To emerge loudly and fully, a different and opposite model as envisioned by Khaled Barakat above must bypass not only the political control in the western world Israel has managed to exert, but also the legal control that now dominates [social media](#) as well as [academia](#) through the misapplication of "community standards." These continue to be blind to the complex political and historical context of the Palestinian struggle for liberation and situate it as an exception to all such struggles in the world.

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