

# Declaration of The Movement for One Democratic State in Palestine

**W**e, the people of Palestine and our descendants, call on all those who value justice and peace to join us in a movement to establish one democratic state in Palestine that can serve all its people equally.

In making this call, we draw insight and guidance from the past, especially the following:

After World War I, even though Great Britain and France colonized and divided the Arab world into spheres of control whereby Palestine was denied independence, the League of Nations, reflecting the will of the occupying European powers, established a mandate that was intended to culminate in the independent sovereign State of Palestine.

The Zionist movement that originated in Europe brought to Palestine Jewish settlement, Jewish labor and the ideology of a Jewish national home that included intentions to exclude and/or expel the indigenous population from its ancestral home in Palestine in order to create a Jewish-majority state.

In 1939, Britain responded to Palestinian popular resistance to Zionist settlement by issuing a White Paper clarifying that neither the Mandate nor British policy to support a Jewish national home in Palestine was ever intended to support Palestine's partition into two separate states.

In 1947, the Palestinian people and their representatives, together with all the Arab and Muslim States members of the United Nations, unanimously rejected the partition of Palestine and called for all of Mandate Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River to be established as a unitary democratic state that would prohibit any discrimination on the grounds of religion and serve all of its citizens equally, and warned that the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state would lead to bitter, endemic and unending conflict.

In 1948, the State of Israel was carved out of a major portion of Palestine through partition and then expanded to 78% through ethnic cleansing in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forcefully and deliberately uprooted from their homes, their towns and villages razed, their property

confiscated, looted or destroyed, and, when the hostilities ended, were denied their right to return; while those who remained under Israel's control found themselves deprived of equal human, economic, political, and legal rights, their land and natural resources expropriated, their culture co-opted, and their history falsified and maligned.

In 1967, Israel seized what remained of Palestine, namely, the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, all of which are held under brutal military occupation to this day. Israel has consistently refused to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 242, which calls on Israel to withdraw from these lands, and regularly and extensively violates the protections provided by international humanitarian law with respect to the civilian Palestinian population, especially through the construction of Jewish settlements that expropriate Palestinian land and resources and which are progressively confining Palestinians to enclaves alarmingly similar to South African Bantustans.

Despite all subsequent efforts of the international community, including numerous resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly, the creation of Israel as a Jewish-only state has continued to generate wars and invasions that have caused immense suffering to the Palestinian people as well as people in neighboring States, while disturbing the peace and security of the entire world due to the conflict's religious and ethnic sensitivities and the involvement of foreign powers.

Israel's measures to build and consolidate Jewish demographic domination of greater Jerusalem and Jerusalem proper have progressively eradicated the historically Arab character of the city, depriving Palestinians of their historic capital, severing Jerusalem's vital social and economic connections to the rest of Palestinian society, and restricting access by Muslim and Christian Palestinian communities to holy sites where they have worshipped since antiquity.

The legal, political and ideological systems inside Israel have methodically discriminated against its non-Jewish citizens, and Israel's courts along with its government and security forces have regularly rejected and harshly repressed the ongoing demands of Palestinian citizens for democratic reform and equal rights with Jewish citizens, including the right to return to lands and homes in Israel from which they were expelled after 1948.

Palestinian resistance to decades of military occupation, expulsion, land confiscation, resource depletion, and denial of basic rights has sometimes caused regrettable suffering to Israeli civilians, although Israel's attempts to

justify its violations of Palestinian rights by citing this resistance is wholly to be rejected, based as it is on distortions of fact and disparity of distress.

Israel's actions and policies point inescapably to the calculated intent of permanently annexing most of the West Bank and all of East Jerusalem, contravening all accepted international principles regarding de jure occupation. The inevitable conclusion is that Israel is pursuing a policy that amounts to nothing less than settler colonialism.

Israel's systematic discrimination against Palestinians, which includes practices such as forced transfer, segregation, ghettoization, and/or denial of citizenship and basic human rights and freedoms, is alarmingly consistent with the crime of Apartheid as defined in international law, while the actions of Israeli leaders intended to secure the ethnic, religious and demographic purity of Israel increasingly recall the fascist regimes of Europe's past.

Israel's refusal to allow the return of Palestinian refugees in violation of General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948; Israel's continuing military occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, which has involved massive Jewish settlement and land confiscation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in violation of international humanitarian law; the ruinous closure on the Gaza Strip that has created a humanitarian crisis among the Palestinian population; and a plethora of policies such as the building of an Apartheid wall- all indicate that Israel intends indefinitely and irrevocably to deny the Palestinian people their human and civil rights in their own country, including their right to self-determination.

On this basis, we conclude the following:

- The ongoing conflict along with its pain, anger, and fear originated in the deliberate colonization and ultimately wrongful partition of Palestine in 1948 and in the injustice, expulsions, inequality and segregation that the State of Israel has enforced on the indigenous Palestinian population to effect and maintain this partition.
- International diplomacy and mediation and United Nations resolutions directed toward a two-state solution have been and are misguided due to the obfuscation and subsequent misapprehension of the true origins of the conflict, which arose from the Zionist ideology of colonization, ethnic cleansing and ethnic segregation. The facts on the ground, especially the massive expansion of Jewish settlements and the movement of hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jewish citizens into East Jerusalem and throughout the rest of the West Bank have nullified any hope of such diplomacy ever being effective.

- The division of the people and territory of Mandate Palestine based on the antiquated notion that claims an exclusive birthright to the land for the entire Jewish people alone is inadmissible and violates the human and political rights of the Palestinian people as well as norms expressed in United Nations Covenants on human, social, cultural and political rights.
- Partition of Palestine into two states only perpetuates conflict, based as it is on sustaining beliefs and practices that foster conflict, especially ethnic domination and discrimination, forced separation, ghettoization, and land confiscation that reproduce practices of colonialism and Apartheid and offend the conscience of humankind.
- The claim that Jews, Palestinians, and all the people of Palestine cannot live together peacefully in one country is just as false and fundamentally racist as were similar arguments about black Africans and white people promoted by the Apartheid regime in South Africa.
- Endorsing equal rights for Jews and Palestinians is not and cannot be equated with anti-Jewish racism, which is adamantly to be opposed in all its forms.
- The people in all of Palestine can never know peace, security, prosperity and freedom until we annul the wrongful partition of the country, fully recognize the historic injustices inflicted on the Palestinians, restore the inalienable rights of all Palestinians, including their right to return, defeat all doctrines that separate and discriminate among the people, and ensure that all citizens enjoy equal rights, freedoms and opportunities.

We therefore declare our position to be that:

1. Only a united and genuinely democratic state in Palestine, without distinction of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin, can provide liberty and security for all.
2. The entire land of Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River is to be established as one country that belongs to all of its citizens.
3. This country must be constituted as one independent and democratic State in which all its citizens enjoy equal rights and can live in freedom and security.
4. The citizens of this State shall include all those who live there and all those who were expelled over the past century and their descendants.

We therefore commit ourselves to building an international movement, based on universal principles of peace, equality, justice and human rights, to establish one democratic State in Palestine. This State will be built on the following pillars:

1. Reunified Palestine shall be constituted as a democracy in which all of its adult citizens shall enjoy equal rights to vote, stand for office and contribute to the country's governance. This democracy shall be based on the following principles:

- a. No State law may discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, religion, language, nationality or gender.
- b. No political party may base its platform on ethnic, religious, cultural or racial segregation, discrimination or supremacy.
- c. No organ of State may be created to administer a group separately or provide special rights on the grounds of race, religion, ethnicity or nationality.
- d. All citizens of the State shall enjoy full human rights and freedoms as enshrined in all relevant United Nations Covenants, with special attention to freedoms of expression, religion, language, movement, residence and assembly.
- e. The rights of all minorities shall be protected from any form of discrimination or inequality stemming from governance by the majority.
- f. The courts, police and administration of justice shall represent all the people of the land and shall defend, protect, and preserve the ideals of equality and democracy.
- g. The laws of the State shall provide all citizens with equal access to security, housing, public lands, education, health care, leisure, cultural expression and all the basic requirements for living in dignity and freedom.
- h. The State shall operate a transparent and non-discriminatory immigration policy and provide a safe haven for those seeking asylum from persecution and especially for those in peril of racial or ethnic persecution.

i. Schools and curricula shall teach the country's youth to understand the history of their country and region so that they may grasp and respect the origins and historical experience of their fellow citizens, reject racism and doctrines of segregation, honor human rights and protect human freedoms, and guard the peace, rights and security of all the people in the country and the world.

2. The State shall not establish or accord special privilege to any religion and shall provide for the free practice of all religions.

a. All residents of the State shall be free to practice their religion and to worship at sacred sites without impediment or discrimination.

b. The State shall ensure that all religions enjoy equal standing before the law and that no religion impede the practice of another.

c. All citizens of the State may freely choose whether to abide by religious law and traditions and shall never lose the protections of State civil law.

3. The public land of the State shall belong to the nation as a whole and all of its citizens shall have equal access to its use.

a. No physical barrier or law may create enclaves or restrictions that divide people and communities on the grounds of ethnicity, race, religion or nationality.

b. The land, natural resources and public infrastructure of the country shall be administered to benefit all citizens equally and equitably.

c. Private property expropriated from Palestinian refugees, Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza shall be restored or reparations made if the original owners or their descendants consent.

4. The State shall provide the conditions for free cultural expression by all of its citizens.

a. The constitution and government shall ensure that all languages, arts and culture may flourish and develop freely.

b. All citizens shall have equal rights to use their own dress, languages and customs and express their cultural heritage free of insults or discrimination.

5. Citizens shall have equal access to employment at all levels and in all sectors of the society.

a. Employment shall not be determined or restricted by language, race, religion, gender, or nationality.

b. Education and vocational training shall not be segregated or specialized in any way that impedes equal access of all citizens to employment and other opportunities to fulfill their talents and dreams.

c. Equal access to work, public facilities and other amenities for citizens living with disabilities shall be provided in accordance with international standards and practices.

6. The State shall uphold international law and at all times seek the peaceful resolution of conflicts through negotiation and collective security in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

a. The establishment of one democratic state in Palestine shall be accompanied by the return of the Golan Heights to Syria and any Lebanese territory occupied by Israel to Lebanon, in order to achieve a comprehensive regional peace based on justice and international law.

b. The people of a unified Palestine shall reject racism wherever it occurs and promote anti-racism throughout the world.

c. The State shall seek to build an international order in which all people can enjoy their essential social, cultural and political rights as set out in relevant United Nations declarations and covenants and international human rights law.

d. The State shall seek and contribute to the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East that will also be free of all weapons of mass destruction. All of Israel's present weapons of mass destruction (including but not limited to its arsenal of nuclear weapons) inherited by the State will be dismantled or destroyed under the auspices of the United Nations within one year of the creation of the new state.

## CALL TO ACTION

We call on all those who cherish freedom, justice, equality and democracy and who reject racism and segregation to join us in building this movement.

a. We call on Palestinians everywhere to undertake free democratic debate about the goals and principles of this Declaration in order to reunify the people and direct the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination into establishing one democratic state in Palestine.

b. We call on Jews in Israel and throughout the world to look beyond the entrapping illusions of Jewish statehood, which can only rest on discrimination and thereby lead to endless conflict and insecurity, and channel their dreams for peace into establishing one shared country in all of Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, in which Jewish aspirations, whether religious, cultural or ethnic, can be fulfilled without dominating others.

c. We urge individuals and groups active in the Campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions and the entire Palestine solidarity movement to adopt the principles of this Declaration and add its goals openly to their platforms and campaigns.

d. We call on civil society organizations that oppose racism and racial discrimination throughout the world to join us in building this movement, on the conviction that racism anywhere is a threat to equality and justice everywhere.

e. We urge civil societies in the Arab and Muslim worlds to support a unified non-ethnic democracy in Palestine by building public consensus and issuing public statements to embrace it and by formalizing platforms that promote ethnic and sectarian equality in their own countries.

f. We call on Muslim, Jewish and Christian religious scholars and philosophers to draw on and disseminate wisdom from the holy and treasured texts that can guide the faithful to seek and support a shared state in Palestine with full hearts and spiritual resolve.

g. We call on the United Nations, the European Union, the Arab League, the African Union, the Organization of American States, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group (ASEAN), the

Commonwealth, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and all regional organizations and governments of the international community to abandon diplomacy directed toward the illusory two-state solution, which is only perpetuating the conflict and human suffering, and adopt the goals of this Declaration, which are based on universal human rights as codified in UN instruments developed to ensure international peace and security.

h. We welcome additional statements that expand and clarify the goals expressed in this Declaration, as long as they are consistent with its goals and principles, especially its commitment to universal human rights, anti-racism and the fundamental equality of all people in dignity and rights. We urge those who share the vision and goals in this Declaration to set aside their differences in order to build a unified and historic movement to realize the ideals of one democratic state in Palestine.

On this platform, with our international friends and allies, we commit ourselves to restore justice to the people by establishing a unitary democratic state in Palestine in which all citizens can live in security, peace, equality and freedom.

We firmly believe that this great accomplishment will stand as a monument to humanity's capacity to overcome the legacy of bitter strife; move all peoples of the world to reject beliefs of ethnic supremacy and separation; and inspire people everywhere to work with new hope and energy to create societies, nations and states that defend and secure equality, dignity and human rights for all.