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## **Conflict Between Fatah and Hamas Movements: Clash of Ideologies and Interests**

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*The article discusses one of the key issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict stemmed from the disagreement between Palestinian movements Fatah and Hamas, as well as the obstacles and opportunities to overcome them. The basis of these disagreements is the radical difference between Fatah and Hamas' approaches to the principles proposed by the international community for negotiations and settlement with Israel - the other party to the conflict. This has become more important since Hamas won the Legislative Council elections in 2006 and was entitled to form a government. While the purpose of these movements is the same from the point of view of conflict settlement, the overcoming of and disagreements between Fatah and Hamas is a necessary condition for achieving an outcome.*

### **Keywords**

Split, Hamas, Fatah, Palestine, Palestinian-Israeli conflict

### **Introduction**

As a result of the parliamentary elections, held in Palestine earlier in 2006, a drastic polarization occurred between the largest Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas movements. It grew into a general - geographic, political, social and institutional split. The roots of disagreements and the reasons for split should be sought in the differences of ideas, interests and agendas that led to disagreements over the methods of resistance, as well the relations with the neighboring countries and Israel. Fatah represents and guides the "Arab national" wing, whereas Hamas is a "modern" religious wing. Fatah, being one of the PLO factions, is waging its struggle more generally, as it is closer to secular mentality and shares the same view with the PLO's other institutions, as opposed to Hamas, which has

religious ideology, inconsistent with the approaches of other national groups. Hamas rejects the idea of peaceful settlement, refuses to negotiate with Israel, continuously rejects the resolutions on the Palestinian conflict, offered since 1948 till today. It sees the solutions only through armed struggle. The notions of the Fatah and Hamas movements on the peace process and Palestinian autonomy are fundamentally at odds. This has led to continuous political disagreements that have arisen with the formation of Hamas in 1987, since the Stone Intifada. The disagreement was deepened in 2006, when Hamas won in the Palestinian Legislative Council<sup>1</sup> elections, but the movement was not allowed to take the lead in power. It is true that with the disagreement between the two Palestinian factions mentioned above, the Palestinian goal remains the same and unites all Palestinian groups, including Hamas. But will the unity of purpose stimulate the Palestinians to reach a reconciliation?

### **The Disagreements between two Movements**

**Ideological disagreements.** The political thought of the Fatah movement is based on the national essence of the conflict with Israel. It considers itself to be a national Palestinian movement without any clear ideological orientation. It gives the movement flexibility and allows for many changes to be made, depending on the requirements of the specific stage of the conflict and the circumstances surrounding the Palestinian issue. This is evident from the comparison of the principles and programs of the pre-Oslo Accords and the program adopted at the Sixth Conference in 2009<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Legislative Council, according to the Oslo Accords, can only adopt laws with the consent of Israel. It is considered the Palestinian Authority's parliament and is elected by the Arab population of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the East Jerusalem. 132 deputies of the Legislative Council automatically become part of the Palestinian National Council, which consists of 600 deputies and is the representative body of all Palestinians, including those living in the diaspora and occupied territories.

<sup>2</sup> - بشير موسى صالح نافع. الإسلاميون الفلسطينيون والقضية الفلسطينية 1950-1980 □ مركز فلسطين للدراسات، والبحوث، غزة 1999 هـ. 149-151.

The political thought of the Hamas movement is based on the religious principles<sup>3</sup>, as reflected in the statute of the movement<sup>4</sup>. It also defines Palestine in purely religious terms: "The land of Palestine has been an Islamic Waqf throughout the generations and until the Day of Resurrection, no one can renounce it or part of it, or abandon it or part of it"<sup>5</sup>. The movement sees the current situation in Palestine as the continuation of Crusades campaign in the Islamic territories<sup>6</sup>. Based on these principles, Hamas refused to accept UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 on recognition of the State of Israel, continued resistance and refused to participate in the negotiation process, insisting that the international congresses and peaceful solutions to the Palestinian conflict contradict to Hamas' principles and they cannot lead to the results reflecting interests of the Palestinian people<sup>7</sup>.

The rejection of the Oslo Accords, the resulting treaties and the peace process further complicated the problems between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Hamas, on the one hand, opposes Israel, denying the existence of that state and expanding its military operations against it both in the Palestinian Authority and in Israel. On

- عمر رشاد سليم ناصر. حركة فتح الإشكاليات والتحديات. أطروحة لنيل درجة الماجستير جامعة النجاح الوطنية. 2015. ص. 25-27.

<sup>3</sup> **Brown Nathan J.**, The Hamas-Fatah Conflict: Shallow but Wide. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*. **34**, 2, summer 2010, 41-56.

<sup>4</sup> The 11<sup>th</sup> Article of the Charter, <http://palestine.paldf.net/Uploads/pdf/%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9->

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> **Nüsse A.**, Muslim Palestine: The Ideology of Hamas. Routledge Curzon. London. 2002, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> حركة المقاومة الإسلامية حماس: دراسات في الفكر. التجربة و تحرير: دمحمس محمد صالح. الطبعة، الثانية 2015. صفحة 51-52.

-ميثاق حماس- المادة 3. 4-5.

<http://palestine.paldf.net/Uploads/pdf/%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9->

<http://palestine.paldf.net/Uploads/pdf/%D9%85%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B3.pdf>

- وثيقة المبادئ والسياسات العامة لحركة حماس 2017.

the other hand, it opposes Palestinian Authority, its orientations, ideas and actions. Because of Hamas' position, a number of difficulties arose between the Movement and the Autonomy, which faced a unique challenge and deviation from the policies of the PLO and its groupings in the Movement's actions, especially in the armed struggle against Israel. It forced the Autonomy to declare Hamas as an outlaw organization in 1996. Widespread arrests were made within the movement, numerous institutions and unions belonging to the group were closed down, and their assets were frozen. Several leaders were arrested, and in 1998, even Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the founder of the Movement, was put under house arrest. As a result, the relationship between the Autonomy and the Movement has become increasingly tense and divisive. After the parliamentary elections, they had reached to an armed confrontation, resulting in the Palestinian split and the establishment of Hamas' power in Gaza, which led to the creation of a Palestinian state project on the West Bank and Gaza.

**Conflict of Interests.** There were many disagreements between the Fatah movement and the Muslim Brothers in Palestine even before the creation of Hamas, which is considered as a continuation of the Muslim Brothers<sup>8</sup>. In particular, in 1985, the Palestine Liberation Organization, seeking to establish control over the Palestinian institutions, attempted to form a board of trustees of the Islamic University, the base of Muslim Brotherhood at that time. Therefore, it proposed the presidency of Palestinian physician, public and political activist Haidar Abdel-Shafi, but it was rejected by the Islamic Council and the public front of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza.

Since the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1987, the PLO has sought to concentrate on controlling the activities with the participation of all factions. In order to manage the intifada's public struggle, it created the United National Leadership and sought to involve in it Hamas as well. However, Hamas refused to get involved

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<sup>8</sup> **Filiu J.-P.**, Origins of Hamas: Militant Legacy or Israeli Tool? *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 41, 3, Spring, 2012, 54-70.

and preferred to act separately. It attempted to become a new stream proposing an alternative program to the one of the PLO<sup>9</sup>.

The rivalry between Fatah and Hamas during the Intifada became dangerous. Therefore, the two movements had to resort to dialogue and coordination of actions. This agreement actually recognized Hamas's acceptance on the "Palestinian street". However, the relations between the Fatah and Hamas movements were deteriorated after the PLO adopted Resolutions N 242 and 338 in 1988 and the independence document. Hamas perceived this as a deviation from the struggle. However, in July 1992, a "Document of Honor" was signed, which included the basis for establishing relations between two factions, the right of each one to ideological and political activity, and proclaimed the start of a constructive dialogue to resolve disagreements between Hamas and Fatah. Soon another step in solving the problem followed. In early 1993, in parallel with the Madrid public talks and the Oslo secret meetings, a Charter was convened in Khartoum under the auspices of prominent Sudanese intellectual and politician Hasan al-Turabi aiming at establishing dialogue between the PLO and Hamas leadership. It was an attempt by the PLO to establish the right of being the only representative of the Palestinian people. But that dialogue did not produce tangible results. Hamas movement urged the PLO to leave Madrid summit, secure 40% of seats in the National Assembly and make substantial changes to the PLO program. There was an apparent disagreement between the two movements over the representation of Hamas in the PLO structure<sup>10</sup>. But the confrontation did not end there. Hamas refused to accept the Oslo agreement signed in 1993, citing it as a concession to the Palestinian rights. It also refused to confirm the PLO's being the representative of the Palestinian people, which, according to Hamas, did not reflect the Palestinian reality. Although the movement adopted the principle of coexistence with the Palestinian Authority created by

<sup>9</sup> Usher G., The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 35, 3, Spring, 2006, 19-36.

<sup>10</sup> عواد جميل عبد القادر عودة، اشكالية العلاقة بين حركة فتح وحركة حماس ... ص. 137.

the Oslo Accord, it publicly declared that it disputed the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority and considered its creation as violation of Palestinian rights. The response of the other side was not delayed. Fatah, assuming the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, exerted pressure on Hamas at various levels, leaving a limited scope of activity, which allowed it to use the latter as a tactical card in negotiations with Israel.

Following the failure of the Camp David Conference (1999-2000), the Israeli actions aimed at suppressing the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 and the intensification of Israeli operations, Hamas and Fatah had to forget about disagreements. The two movements united to resist Israeli forces. But that atmosphere has opened the way for foreign pressure on the Palestinian Authority to make it involved in the roadmap talks in 2003.

The death of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on November 11, 2004 was a turning point. Because of his authority, even the organizations that had disagreements with Arafat were not largely opposed to him<sup>11</sup>. In order to strengthen the PLO's negotiating positions, President Yasser Arafat used the Hamas's stance and avoided clashes between the latter and Fatah political platforms. Whereas, President Mahmoud Abbas's position was clearer on both the adoption of means and the refusal of hostilities against Israel. Although President Abu Mazen had sought to involve Hamas in the Palestinian Authority's political system and institutions, he failed to reach compromise with the organization. This situation subsequently reflected on the relationship of the two movements when Hamas entered into the Palestinian political system following the parliamentary elections.

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<sup>11</sup>سمير الزين، تحولات التجربة الفلسطينية "المشكلات البنوية للنظام السياسي"، مركز الغد العربي للدراسات، عمان،

## Further Contradictions between Movements

Just two months after Abu Mazen's victory in the 2005 presidential elections, Hamas announced its decision to run in the legislative elections. During the election campaign, the movement called on political forces and factions to form one government and one legitimate way of struggle<sup>12</sup>. Soon after, on January 25, 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary elections, gaining 76 out of 132 seats to form a single government.

Conflicts between the two movements were further exacerbated when President Abu Mazen called on Hamas to announce in a government statement that it recognizes the authority of the PLO and adheres to all the agreements signed by the organization. In response, Hamas stressed the need for the PLO to be restructured so that it could include various Palestinian forces. Hamas declined to recognize the terms of the International Quadrilateral Commission, the Oslo Accords and the State of Israel. Israel, the USA and the international community had put the Hamas government in financial blockade.

The blockade of Hamas government has led to severe financial crisis as a result of which salaries of Hamas officials were not paid. Many Palestinian Authority officials, especially security services, refused to cooperate with Hamas government, mainly in forming a legislative body composed of its representatives<sup>13</sup>. This situation was further aggravated by the relationship between the three ruling powers of the Palestinian political system due to the ambiguity of the texts and the lack of clarity in the definition of authority<sup>14</sup>. However, few months later, in May 2006, the declaration of the "Document of National Accord" on Prisoners aimed at stopping tensions in the Palestinian political arena, calling for the formation of national united government with all parliamentary groups, establishment of

<sup>12</sup> **Bhasin T., Hallward M. C.**, Hamas as a Political Party: Democratization in the Palestinian Territories, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2013, **25**, 1, 87-88.

<sup>13</sup> **Usher G.**, Op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> إسرائيل تزيل أعلامها وتنسحب وأبناء القطاع يحتفلون بالمستوطنات. صحيفة القدس العربي، العدد 5069، 2005/9/12، ص 1.

cooperation between the government and the president, reform security services and limit the power to negotiate giving it to the PLO and the President of the Autonomy. The document called for national unity to withstand the blockade imposed by the United States and Israel<sup>15</sup>. Despite the Declaration of the Prisoners' Document, which became known as the "Document of National Accord" after its editing, it failed to achieve reconciliation, but it did affirm the principle of national unity government. Another step towards reconciliation was made few months later in January 2007, when Fatah and Hamas signed an agreement on forming a national unity government in Mecca, shortly after President Abu Mazen again instructed Ismail Haniyeh to form a national unity government. The Mecca Agreement also emphasized the need for Palestinian "sanctity of blood" and all possible measures and steps to prevent armed operations. Ministerial portfolios were distributed and ministers of government of national unity were appointed<sup>16</sup>. Although the Mecca Agreement added additional details to the previous agreements on the formation of a unified government, the main difficulty was its failure to accept its political program and the demands of the international community. This meant that the blockade of Gaza would continue. Hamas was mistaken in rejecting international decisions and Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338<sup>17</sup>.

Despite the formation of government of national unity under the Mecca Agreement, the scope of street clashes was expanded and included the whole Gaza strip. The Egyptian security delegation intervened several times to reach to cease-fire agreement, but Hamas asserted complete control over Gaza and set a deadline of 15 June 2007 for weapons to be delivered to security services. When President

<sup>15</sup> علاء الدين خليل محمد المشهوروي. الآثار السياسية والأمنية للانسحاب الإسرائيلي من قطاع غزة. (دراسة تحليلية للنواحي السياسية والأمنية لواقع الانسحاب الإسرائيلي في أيلول 2005) بحث تكميلي للحصول على درجة الماجستير في العلوم السياسية 2013 صفحة 47-63.  
<sup>16</sup> إعلان القاهرة، مركز المعلومات الوطني الفلسطيني. 2005

<https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2005/03/17/18737.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Price D., Sacred Terror: How Faith Becomes Lethal, Praeger, Santa Barbara, CA, 2012.



Abu Mazen declared state of emergency on July 14 and signed a decree to dissolve the unity government and create a new government under the leadership of Salam Fayyad on the West Bank, Hamas refused to accept the president's decision. However, Israeli military actions in Gaza in late 2008 prompted Fatah and Hamas to resume dialogue after more than a year of disruption. Palestinian groups held a meeting in Cairo on February 26, 2009 under the auspices of Egypt, and agreed to form five committees to discuss five sets of issues: security, elections, the PLO, transitional government and public reconciliation. During the dialogue, the Fatah movement focused on the need to form government capable of dealing with international demands to ensure the lifting of the blockade and the holding of Legislative Council and presidential elections. Whereas the Hamas movement was focused on reconciliation, resolving the aforementioned five issues, accomplishing all that would be agreed upon, releasing its members arrested by the Autonomy and rejecting the quadrilateral commission pressure. The discussions resulted in the "Egyptian Document", which was published on October 15, 2009, and offered details that were not included in any of the previous agreements. It was considered a breakthrough compared to the previous arrangements, as the six main articles addressed the process of implementing the general principles, resolving most of the disagreements between the two movements. At the same time, Fatah and Hamas movements were required to sign the document without making any changes.

The first article focused on the activation and development of the PLO, the second - on holding legislative, presidential and parliamentary elections, and the third article was on security, on the basis of a number of general principles that make the security authorities professional rather than militant. This article also addressed the mission and functions of those authorities. The fourth article was on the issue of national reconciliation in terms of defining the objectives and the mechanisms for achieving them. The fifth article concerned the establishment of a joint commission for the

implementation of the National Accord Agreement and the merging of autonomous institutions in the West Bank and Gaza. The sixth article prohibited arrests on political grounds and included mechanisms for dealing with prisoners on both sides<sup>18</sup>. The Hamas movement's reservations about the document hampered its signature, and Egypt organized a new round of dialogue to discuss them. The first session was convened in Damascus on September 24, 2010, during which an agreement was reached to form an electoral commission and electoral court and to form temporary governing body before the PLO would be reconstructed. Even the next meeting in Damascus did not agree on the issues of the committee responsible for security services and restructuring. In another series of meetings, which took place in March and April 2011, Hamas and Fatah signed the Egyptian document establishing committees, but the main disagreement over the Unity Government's political program remained unresolved.

In September 2011, the petition of the Autonomy to the United Nations for full membership of the Palestinian state, and the completion of the Hamas prisoner exchange deal, created a positive atmosphere for a resumption of dialogue. On November 23, a meeting was held in Cairo between President Abu Mazen and the head of the Hamas Political Bureau, Khaled Mashal, in which the two parties announced about collaboration as partners<sup>19</sup>. The two movements also agreed to set up a Central Election Commission at the next meeting in Cairo. The next step was taken in February 2012, when two committees met, one on the West Bank and the other in Gaza, to address issues of public freedom and trust building, activation of the legislative council. However, the disagreement over the government's plan continued to hamper reconciliation, forcing Qatar's Emirate to hold a meeting in Abu Dhabi with President Abu Mazen and Khaled Mashal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, which reached an

<sup>18</sup>صراع الصلاحيات وغياب المسؤوليات في السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية، تقرير المؤتمر السنوي الثالث للانتلاف من أجل النزاهة والمساءلة أمان، 2007/3/4، ص 25.  
<sup>19</sup>وثيقة الأسرى للوفاق الوطني 2006، مركز المعلومات الوطني الفلسطيني.

agreement on forming a national consensus government led by Abu Mazen. This was seen as way out of the crisis of agreeing on a political program<sup>20</sup>. But that government was also not brought to life.

New problems arose during the Syrian crisis. Hamas refused to support the Syrian regime, the movement's leadership left Syria and closed its headquarters. In June 2013, after the overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the new Egyptian authorities resorted to harsh measures against Hamas as they supported the Brotherhood. The blockade of Gaza became even tougher, the movement was in severe crisis, and the moderate forces seeking reconciliation intensified. As a result, Hamas lost many of its most important allies and supporters for many years, Syria and Egypt. And on April 23, 2014 the "al-Shati" agreement<sup>21</sup> was signed between Fatah and Hamas<sup>22</sup>. The announcement on the agreement and the start of reconciliation was warmly accepted by both the people and the factions. Agreement was reached on many practical steps. In order to implement the al-Shati agreement<sup>23</sup>, President Abu Mazen took steps to form the government on which an agreement was reached. Musa Abu Marzook said that if the president made such a decision, Hamas would not be against anyone elected by mutual agreement, referring to Prime Minister Rami al-Hamdallah<sup>24</sup>. Finally, in June 2014, an announcement was made on the creation of national consensus government, the elimination of divisions between movements and the restoration of unity<sup>25</sup>. Israel strongly criticized the agreement and announced that it intended to take punitive measures against the

<sup>20</sup> **Sawafta A.**, Palestinian rivals agree to form unity government, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-government-idUSTRE8150KU20120206>

<sup>21</sup> The agreement has been called al-Shati because the negotiations took place at Ismayil Haniye's house, located in the west of Gaza city, in the refugee camp "Al-Shati"

<sup>22</sup> نص اتفاق مكة، مركز المعلومات الوطني

[http://www.wafainfo.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=3654](http://www.wafainfo.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=3654) الفلستيني

<sup>23</sup> إعلان بنود المصالحة الفلسطينية من قطاع غزة

[http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/04/140423\\_hamas\\_fatih\\_talks](http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/04/140423_hamas_fatih_talks)

<sup>24</sup> الورقة المصرية للمصالحة، مركز المعلومات الوطني الفلسطيني

<sup>25</sup> الورقة المصرية للمصالحة، مركز المعلومات الوطني الفلسطيني

Palestinian Authority. But the US administration confirmed that it would continue assisting the Palestinian consensus government<sup>26</sup>. Although the formation of that government had been agreed in advance, the reconciliation process continued to be hampered by lack of trust and conflict of interests, which led to a contradictory interpretation of the provisions of the agreement. The main disagreement at various stages of the split was over the government's political agenda. According to the Fatah movement's stance, any Palestinian government must adhere to the agreements and treaties signed by the PLO, given that the checkpoints are under Israeli control and that it manages the revenue of customs duties that are the part of Palestinian Authority Revenue. Hamas, meanwhile, refuses to recognize Israel, and that position is an integral part of the movement's adherence to the charter and ideological beliefs, though in its view, the intersection point of the Fatah and the PLO and the overall plan is the acceptance the Palestinian state along the borders of 1967.

The security issue and its underlying questions are the main reasons for the failure of previous conciliation agreements. The Egyptian document on reconciliation envisaged the creation of an Arab and Palestinian commission which would oversee the process of restructuring security services in the West Bank and Gaza after the forming the government. The complexity of the security problem arises in a number of issues, the most important of which is the definition of the powers and responsibilities of security services and lack of clarity in the form of management of those services. Gaza's security services are under Hamas control and run by the Abu Mazen-led government<sup>27</sup>. Western security services are under the control of the Fatah movement, they have broad powers and strictly monitor compliance with their obligations under the agreements with Israel. As for the future of the Palestinian military factions, President Abu Mazen has demanded to dismantle their combat brigades and armed

<sup>26</sup>أبو مرزوق: لن نعارض ترؤس أي شخصية توافقية للحكومة، وكالة صفا، 2014/4/28

<sup>27</sup>أبو مرزوق: لن نعارض ترؤس أي شخصية توافقية للحكومة، وكالة صفا، 2014/4/28

[http://www.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=KKddPUa642850142814aKKddPU](http://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=KKddPUa642850142814aKKddPU)

units, including al-Qassam brigades. Hamas insisted that they should remain independent, contrary to the international agreements and obligations.

The problem of new employees in Gaza has not yet been resolved, even in the most recent al-Shati agreement. Hamas had more than fifty thousand security personnel and civil servants after the split. The movement refuses to remove them and demands to include them in the Palestinian Authority's staff. Fatah has made no commitment to this during al-Shati talks. Hamas perceives this as compensation for marginalizing Palestinian movement representatives for many years and forfeiting government posts under the name of "security". Hamas pays the salaries of these employees from the Hamas government budget, which is its biggest financial burden<sup>28</sup>. Palestinian Authority suffers from a budget deficit and fears it will not be able to pay its employees if Israel refuses to transfer tax revenues.

The Hamas movement stresses the need for the National Assembly elections to be held simultaneously with the legislature and the presidential election, fearing of repeating the split, as Fatah movement controls the PLO and the Palestinian decision<sup>29</sup>. The decision of the PLO's Executive Committee to ratify the National Assembly election bill has caused disagreement between Fatah and Hamas movements. Hamas considered that it violated the agreements signed by the Egyptian-backed Cairo factions, and that ratification was not the authority of the executive committee, but the interim governing body that had agreed on forming it and which included the secretaries of Palestinian factions<sup>30</sup>.

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واشنطن<sup>28</sup>: سنعمل مع الحكومة الفلسطينية الجديدة وسنواصل تقديم المساعدات وكالة، وفا 2014/6/2

[http://www.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=OHxbzra643112826642aOHxbzr](http://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=OHxbzra643112826642aOHxbzr)  
<sup>29</sup> The term "Palestinian decision" means the sovereignty of the Palestinian people to their own destiny without any coercion or dictation by Arab countries, in particular Syria, Egypt, Jordan and the Arab League.

<sup>30</sup>الرئيس يعلن إنهاء الانقسام واستعادة وحدة الوطن، وكالة وفا، 2014/6/2  
[http://www.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=EHZKyxa643068094251aEHZKyx](http://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=EHZKyxa643068094251aEHZKyx)

## **The Future of Reconciliation**

A number of regional and international factors have obviously contributed to the Palestinian split and its delay, which has had a negative impact on the resolution of the Palestinian problem. In particular, the American factor is the most important of the international factors, as the US administration seeks to dictate its approaches when dealing with the Palestinian issue. The US is pursuing policy that is in line with Israeli policy in this regard and is trying to resolve the issue in its favor. Trump's decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem is an obvious proof of it. The regional factors include the negative effects of the "Arab revolutions" and the wars that followed, as well as Qatar and Turkey's influence on Hamas, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan's influence on Fatah.

The reconciliation is the only way for the Palestinians to get the problem back on track. A real reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas can only happen if there is agreement on Palestinian political plan that will allow solving all the complex issues, such as security, the PLO, elections and other issues deriving from it. The success in completing number of issues by the Freedom Committee in the al-Shati agreement is simply a goodwill initiative. The agreement succeeded in permitting the exchange of banned Palestinian newspapers, resolving the issue of passports, giving Fatah staff freedom of movement, which was banned after the split in Gaza. After the formation of the government, an agreement was reached on release of nineteen Gaza prisoners and twenty-one political prisoners from the West Bank prisons; after the split, the victims of Israeli attacks in Gaza were recognized as martyrs.

At the meeting in Cairo in 2011, Palestinian groups agreed to set up committees to monitor freedom and public reconciliation issues. Under the control of Egypt, two committees were set up on the West Bank and Gaza in order to monitor freedom and trust building. However, after several meetings they suspended their sessions and resumed work only after signing of the al-Shati agreement. The Public

Reconciliation Committee follows up at the issue of families who lost their children during Hamas's infiltration of the Gaza Strip during the civil war. Since the start of the dialogue in Cairo, the issue has been brought to the forefront of monitoring the financial means for paying “blood price” to victims. The Committee has been active since the creation of the al-Shati agreement and the establishment of Compensation Fund of sixty million dollars.

## **Conclusion**

The research of the contradictions, opposition and attempts to overcome the Palestinian movements of Hamas and Fatah shows that

- The struggle between Hamas and Fatah is much deeper than just an ideological struggle over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hamas is a religious-political movement that has chosen religion as its lifeblood and constitution. His political program "rejects the idea of negotiation with Israel and peaceful settlement, whatever the cost would be. Because of all this, Hamas has refused to be part of the negotiation process because they were aimed at peaceful resolution of the Palestinian issue. The movement sees the solution of the problem through armed struggle. The movement considers itself responsible for defending Palestine, which contradicts the Fatah movement, as it is one of the PLO's formations and shares the PLO's policy on conflict resolution.
- According to the Hamas essential documents, the movement sees the solution of the Palestinian issue not in peaceful settlement with Israel, but in non-recognition of Israel and military confrontation. Fatah, meanwhile, considers peaceful solution to the problem, peaceful resistance of the people and negotiation with Israel for the sake of creating a state along the borders of 1967.
- Hamas believed that after the elections in 2006, a conciliation government headed by Hamas and Mahmoud Abbas should be formed in order to achieve reconciliation, end political persecution and establish concurrent and complete freedoms

throughout the Autonomy, while Fatah did not accept the election results and demanded new elections without preconditions.

- Hamas is opposed to coordinating security issues between the Autonomy and Israel, which deals with the prevention of any armed aggression against Israel, the exchange of security information and the persecution of all supporters. It called for an end to it and support for the confrontation, while Fatah finds that the coordination is the part of the Oslo Accords, which cannot be stopped and must be continued under the agreement with Israel.
- The parties are making mutual political arrests: Fatah on the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. The accusations made by the parties further deprive them of the possibility of dialogue.
- Hamas demands to liberalize the West Bank by implementing reconciliation agreements, not obstructing its political activities and opening of social institutions, not harassing its members, and giving everyone the freedom of expression. The Fatah demands the same with Gaza, but the parties do not have enough will to do so.
- Fatah considers Mahmoud Abbas as the leader of the PLO and the Autonomy as opposed to Hamas. This movement calls for the development of effective empowered leadership which would include everyone, unlike all other former bodies.
- Efforts to eliminate the split and its consequences have not been long-lasting, although a multi-stage reconciliation process has been undertaken and various committees have been created. However, despite the disagreements between Fatah and Hamas, the Palestinian goal continues to be one, and it unites all Palestinian groups, including two abovementioned movements.