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The Day After: paper # 8



The Role of Local Government Bodies in the Case of the PNA's Collapse or Dissolution

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This paper is one amongst ten such papers prepared within the Palestinian center for policy and survey research's initiative titled, "The day after". The initiative aims to study the circumstances that would face Palestinian politics and society in a situation in which the PA becomes unable to carry out its role. These papers examine the consequences of the dissolution or collapse of the PA on a number of central issues that concern the Palestinians, which include: security, economy, education, health, judiciary, telecommunications, basic services such as water and power, local government, political and civil conditions, as well as the future of the two-state solution.

These papers examine the significance and implications of PA's absence as well as possible options that could be adopted to mitigate the negative effects of such an absence and develop specific recommendations for the sector in question. Two experts have commented on each of these prepared papers. Each paper was presented and discussed in a workshop attended by policy makers, parliamentarians, experts, and academics.

This initiative has been organized in cooperation with the U.S./Middle East Project and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre.

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Summary:

Talk about the dissolution of the PNA is tied to three scenarios: Either the dissolution of the PNA through a decision taken by the PLO, its collapse due to a myriad of factors to do with the policies of the Israeli occupation, or through a joint Israeli-American decision in an attempt to find an alternative leadership, more prone to negotiation with Israel and more accepting of submissive solutions. Although there is a large number of disadvantages and advantages to the dissolution of the PNA, this would be a diversion from Palestinian interests.

In order to avoid an Israeli decision to dismantle the PNA, or its collapse, the Palestinians have the option of either maintaining the status quo, or empowering the PNA as one of the PLO's tools of liberation.

The experiences of 1976 and 2000 were important in emphasizing the role of municipalities in the life of Palestinian society. This is with the condition that they restrict themselves to providing daily humanitarian needs, and that their role does not exceed this and move into the realm of political functions, which are taken care of by other parties with the consent of the PLO.

In the end, we cannot speak of the role of local government away from civil society organizations and the Palestinian leadership in every governorate and city.

In the case of the disappearance of the PNA, municipalities would be able to play a prominent role, they could even perform other functions, so long as they do not hinder their primary services. This would be according to a group of conditions, and with the cooperation of institutions and the leadership which lead the first Intifada. Therefore, municipalities could fulfill the role of the PNA without getting involved in politics and security, which should be taken care of by international organizations and donor states.

There is a group of internal and external factors that must be taken into consideration in order to guarantee the success of local government bodies. The internal factors include the Palestinian people in all its segments, the political elites, and civil society organizations. External factors include international community organizations, as well as donor states and the sponsors of the peace process in the middle east.

In order for local government to be effective in the case of the disappearance of the PNA, some recommendations must be taken into account:

- 1- Development of legislation in a way which is appropriate with the coming phase, to ensure the expansion of local government bodies' abilities to achieve financial and administrative independence.
- 2- Spreading the concept of democracy in the local government sector, through periodical elections for local councils. This would result in an increase of citizens' trust and support for local bodies.
- 3- Consolidation of group work between local councils, taking into consideration that smaller local bodies cannot undertake major tasks alone.
- 4- Consolidation and merger of local government bodies, taking into consideration that the Palestinian local government structure is loaded with a large number of local government bodies. This has been an impediment to the development of the local government sector.
- 5- Work on increasing the qualifications of municipal leaders in some financial, administrative and technical skills, and training them on how to administer their municipalities, enabling them to face all potential future challenges.
- 6- Change the traditional view regarding the relation between the central authority and local government bodies, so it moves from a place of domination to a place of partnership.
- 7- Solidification of the local government concept that is based on 5 dimensions (professional, financial, geographic, electoral and political). This is the basis for creating central and influential municipalities, able to lead Palestinian society.

Prelude:

There has been debate recently on the point of having the PNA at a time where many PNA and PLO leaders are getting increasingly frustrated with the idea of the PNA being the method to achieving an independent state. This was brought up by the fact that Israel has rendered settlement endeavors worthless. Discussion has increased lately about the possibility of PNA collapse, in the light of the continuous acute financial crisis, especially now that –at the time of preparation of this study- Israel has ceased transferring tax returns to the PNA (100,000 million USD). Consequently, the PNA became completely unable to pay its army of public servants, estimated at 150,000.

Introduction:

This paper will address many issues and concepts that have to do with PNA collapse within an array of options and scenarios regarding this collapse. The research is divided into a group of chapters and units, beginning with the introduction, which will be a general overview that will also discuss the significance of the PNA's existence; it will also tackle the concept of collapse itself and its repercussions, as well as the used methodology.

This research is split into several chapters, first of which tackles the subject matter, problem, goal and *modus operandi*. The second chapter addresses the options and scenarios leading to a situation where the PNA is unable to operate, while the third one is regarding the options available in facing a situation where the PNA is unable to undertake its tasks, which would lead to a decision of self-dissolution or Israeli measures to incorporate local government bodies (LGBs). The fourth, and final, chapter focuses on recommendations and measures that could be resorted to in order to reduce the consequences of PNA disappearance on the Palestinian Cause.

The units and recommendations of this study will examine the role played by LGBs in a situation where the PNA disappears from the Palestinian political radar. They will also examine the possible fields they can cover through surveying similar situations where the PNA did not exist, similar to the 1976 elections, or in the presence of a devastated weak authority similar to the situation during the second Intifada (uprising).

Goals:

1. Determine the significance of PNA collapse through highlighting the nature, size and seriousness of the problem. As well as examining the challenges it would bring to Palestinian society, leadership and factions, including the impact on the Gaza Strip alongside the West Bank, and relations with Israel.
2. Set aside a group of options that can be used to counter challenges, reduce the size of the problem and minimize damages to Palestinians, as well as utilize lessons from past and similar experiences.
3. Set recommendations for the PLO and different factions, parties and civil society organizations, which incorporate measures to prevent PNA collapse. If such an occasion were to arise, the question would be: what role would LGBs play in Palestinian society? Could they face the chaos and insecurity following the disappearance of the PNA? What would the position of the PLO be?

Significance of research:

The significance of this research stems from addressing an issue, which due to its sensitive nature, has not yet been discussed:

The existence of a vacuum in the Palestinian political system if the PNA collapsed or disappeared. What would the alternatives be? Would LGBs have the ability to replace it? Were they even able to do before the existence of the PNA?

Such discussions now, tell us that there are impediments against the PNA's ability to perform tasks optimally and according to the agreements signed with Israelis. The importance of this research also stems from it providing a group of options and scenarios to face this possibility, and how to maintain the cohesion of the people in light of the difficult circumstances arising.

Subject matter and questions:

The primary subject matter is the confusion between studying the main concepts of the research regarding the PNA collapse scenario, in addition to the failure to pinpoint the body that is going to run the Palestinian territories if the PNA became unable to fulfill its commitments, and at the same time, Hamas refraining from being a PNA alternative. There are some questions on the subject that need answers in order to deduce the reasons and outcomes of PNA disappearance, not to mention the options that must be taken following these outcomes to prevent chaos and provide services to the Palestinian people, services which used to be provided by the PNA. These questions include:

1. Differentiate between the PNA's collapse by the decision of the PLO, and that resulting from a combination of reasons relating to Israel's wish to wipe the PNA off the map, or at least restrict its function through withholding tax funds. This would affect the PNA's functions and cause chaos that would envelop the Palestinian territories similar to the situation during the second Intifada (uprising).
2. Has the Palestinian leadership –represented by the PLO- arrived to the conclusion that the PNA has become a heavy burden, and that it –directly or indirectly- serves Israel? Does it provide the legitimate cover for Israel to carry out plans and actions on the ground? Would Israeli measures not take place without the pretext given by the PNA to change facts on the ground? What are the advantages of the PNA and the disadvantages of its absence? Adversely, what are the advantages of the PNA's absence and the disadvantages of its existence?
3. How could we face the PNA's absence from the political arena? How possible would it be to provide basic services to the public as well as services regarding identity? What are the official bodies that would express the needs of Palestinian society in all fields?
4. What would the role of the PLO be in the case of PNA absence? What would the roles assumed by civil society organizations and LGBs be? What is the role that these institutions can play to fill the vacuum of PNA disappearance, besides the provision of services to the Palestinians? Can municipalities replace PNA service provision from all sides? What role would international organizations play if the PNA collapsed?
5. How could we coordinate between the service provision concept and maintaining the operation of these bodies? More specifically, what does the future of the two-state solution hold, in light of the progress to the Palestinian Cause represented in the UN's acceptance of Palestine's statehood bid?

Anticipated Scenarios for PNA Disappearance:

1. PNA dissolution by the PLO: there is quite a lot of debate about this scenario because of the failure to reach a peace agreement with the Israelis. The Palestinians are trying to achieve peace with the Israelis, but simultaneously the latter are changing the *status quo* of the Palestinian territories, which makes agreement between them impossible, weakens the PNA's position and renders it unable to keep up before the Palestinian public opinion.
2. PNA collapse by a number of factors associated with Israeli occupation policies: whether through pressure on PNA using chaos, or failure to progress with negotiations, which negatively affects the PNA's vision. The first methods incorporate the PNA's inability to fulfill its commitments to public servants, as well as economic hardship in Palestinian society, resulting in chaos and unorganized protests. It is expected that these manifestations would resurface and affect the stability of Palestinian society.
3. The third scenario is related to the US and Israel's conclusion that the PNA cannot offer more compromises, which in turn pushes Washington and Tel Aviv to the conclusion that the PNA should be dismantled and another leadership that accepts negotiating with Israel should be instated. This means that an authority would be established on the Palestinian territories that would embrace both autonomous ruling (discussed before and refused by the Palestinians) and the civil administration. This would guarantee that Israel would not reoccupy the Palestinian territories on one hand, and not addressing the service provision duty in all basic life aspects on the other hand, especially education and health. This also means that a new method should be devised in order to handle daily life issues (passports, representation abroad). This scenario resembles the conditions of Palestinian society before the advent of the PNA, albeit with adding some tasks regarding the matters mentioned above.

Significance of the PNA's Collapse & Available Options:

First: PNA collapse

Despite the limited political, economic, social, cultural and psychological effects of the PNA on the Palestinian context, the collapse of the PNA would be a negative diversion from Palestinian interests. Especially following the hopeful and optimistic atmosphere of liberation and independence that accompanied the establishment of this entity as a prelude to the upcoming State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital. The following are key advantages and disadvantages of PNA collapse for the foreseeable future:

Disadvantages:

This option would cause a new confusion to the Palestinian people and national/Islamic movements. Before hasty acceptance, it should be considered thoroughly. It is needless to say that this scenario would greatly harm the Palestinian people, and would bring frustration for all future partial or total political solutions regarding the entire Palestinian Cause, in all its political, economic and psychological aspects, and as a central issue at the Palestinian, Arab, Islamic, regional and international levels.

The PNA's collapse would set us more than three decades back, specifically to 1974 when the ten points program was first suggested. This program laid down the idea that a Palestinian authority would be established on any part of Palestine, whether liberated, or evacuated by the Israeli occupation. If applied, this decision would lead to the laying off of about 180,000 public servants (civil and military),

where the fate of another 30,000 civil and military pensioners –who sustain one and a half million Palestinians- would be unknown. Therefore, unemployment would be widespread in Palestinian society and would cause massive losses to the Palestinian economy and make daily life even harder.

This scenario would lead to the appearance of pro occupation militias formed out of groups and clans, exactly like the died out villages associations, which tried to rise and represent Palestinians, plus revive the civil administration with US/EU support according to Israeli vision and strategic plans.

This would lead to the reoccupation of the Gaza Strip, with accompanying tragedies to its 1.5 million population. Such an occupation would contribute to chaos, lack of security and an escalation in Israeli influence on the local community, and, in turn, lead to domestic conflicts with casualties in the streets and alleys, the injured in hospitals and kidnapped everywhere. There should be planned decisions which are prepared before the collapse to mitigate PNA commitments, such as laying off tens of thousands of public servants, loyal to non-Palestinian parties and other suspicious structures. The PLO should then be reinforced as the Palestinian framework that combines all Palestinians nationwide and abroad, in addition to national and Islamic factions as part of an inclusive political agreement.

A further disadvantage of PNA dissolution would be the growing desire of Palestinians to leave the territories. The new Palestinian Diaspora should be stopped by coordinated movement restrictions with the Egyptians and Jordanians.

Advantages:

1. The dismantling of the executive, judiciary and legislative arms would put the Palestinian people in a new situation where they would adapt to new unprecedented resistance (revolution or uprising) on the military, political and economic levels, but at a higher pace. This would also lead to the emergence of a popular tribal judiciary system. The absence of the PNA's three arms would restore respect to PLO bodies locally, regionally and internationally.

2. This scenario would put the Israelis in a difficult position. This would entail international, political and legal responsibilities, such as finding a new administrator for the Palestinian territories. The PNA's collapse might push the Israelis to remove or reduce the amount of checkpoints to facilitate Palestinians' movement between cities, and access to al-Aqsa mosque would be easier.

3. The PNA's collapse would positively impact Palestinian resistance and would cause a breakup in the current Israeli government's coalition, and would instigate a new uprising.

It must be said here that a new uprising within the current conditions would be devastating in light of the already deteriorated conditions, only this time new Arab powers would join the arena. The strongest candidate to support the Palestinians would be Lebanon's Hezbollah, which pulled off a victory against the Israeli army that still has internal and psychological consequences on Israelis.

4. Closing of Palestinian prisons where political prisoners are held, whether in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. This means that all prisoners would end up in Israeli jails only. Israel would most likely increase the pace of arrests against tens of thousands of Palestinians from all factions, either arbitrarily or selectively.

5. Reunification of all Palestinian movements within a new program of struggle and resistance and the end of the deepening internal strife beginning in June 2007.

Second: Maintaining the *status quo*

This would mean that the PNA would remain as the framework unifying national/Islamic factions and movements. It would also mean that the two Palestinian governments would stay in effect, but other Palestinian movements and fronts that are not represented in the existing government could be introduced. There would be a preparation for the upcoming stage of raging conflict and a failure to hold new presidential/legislative elections, which have been delayed for many years. All of this might contribute to the outbreak of a new uprising, thus it would help increase Arab/Islamic popular, and then official, sympathy for the Palestinian people, as well as a reduction in the financial siege, as this could not last forever. The upcoming transitional phase is unknown, where the public sector is maintained

and salaries are reduced or even stopped. It would be better to lay off thousands of public servants instead of everybody and restructure the PNA. The inflated number of public servants and the inability to pay them all is not good whatsoever, and maintaining the *status quo* as is –with a new uprising– would have better effects than total collapse or termination.

Who would dissolve the PNA?

There are several scenarios including:

1. Israel: this would be possible with or without cooperation with the US and Europe. There are two methods for this; the crude direct method: outbreak of a new war in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the reoccupation of them, similar to what happened during the ‘defensive shield’ operation in late March 2002. This method remains a possibility especially in light of threats of war against Iran. The military and political decks in the region would be reshuffled, and a new context would emerge. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians would be expelled to nearby Arab countries. The other method would be Israel’s marginalization of the PNA and keeping the no peace-no war status in Greater Palestine, which is the most accepted and favored for the Israeli public opinion in the coming few years.

2. Self-collapse:

Self-dissolution: due to internal division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Internal self-collapse: the two governments dissolve themselves and a third Intifada (uprising) is declared. One of them could willingly dissolve itself without prior notice. This is the least likely for many actual and practical reasons, but still valid nevertheless.

Another applicable scenario: A regional war would break out between Israel and US on one hand and Iran and its allies on the other hand, or a new state of war between Arab countries and Israel, where Palestine would be the stage of war and would be affected extensively.

What follows the PNA’s dissolution?

There are many options for what the internal conditions would look like following the collapse of the PNA and the return of Israeli occupation:

1. Displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, complete control over the West Bank, reoccupation of the Gaza Strip and putting Israeli direct administration into action again.
2. Formation of an international trusteeship body that would comprise the UN, US, EU, with or without Arab and Islamic countries.
3. Re-annexation of the West Bank by Jordan and attachment of the Gaza Strip to Egypt as was the situation before the June 1967 war.
4. Establishment of an interim Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and some settlements-free areas of the West Bank, as an autonomous entity to manage the people, but not the land. This would incorporate the formation of a new Palestinian entity with new leaders holding US and European passports, with unprecedented pro US and Israel policies.
5. Annexation of the West Bank by Israel, whereas Israelis call it ‘Judea and Samaria’ and the extensive construction of settlements. With this option, residents of West Bank (2.5 million) would be given Israeli nationality, which would undermine the Arab-Jewish demographic balance in Greater Palestine and would accelerate the mass transfer policy against the natives.
6. Palestinian declaration calling for a bi-national state, with an initial Israeli rejection followed by reluctant acceptance to that, along with racist laws that would deprive Palestinians from voting and running for elections, and the return to martial laws as was the case between 1948-1967. This is a political and economical possibility that comes last in likelihood, due to the difficulty in coexistence between the Palestinians and Israeli newcomers, but remains a possibility nonetheless.

Delving into the history of the PNA’s advent mechanisms will not change anything, the fact remains that we cannot go back in time. This does not however mean we are restricted to only two options, one

being the dissolution of the PNA and the other maintaining the status quo, which would relieve Israel from the consequences of its occupation and keep it politically and economically comfortable.

3. The third option is the enhancement of the role played by the PNA as a PLO liberation tool:

This would mean not remaining under the mercy of the Oslo Accords as long as they do not bring anything but taxes, security coordination, settlement-infested territories, a statehood declaration (according to Edward Said), and crying out loud at every meeting of the donor countries to keep us alive and keep paying us salaries, while at the same time paying the Israeli occupation to prolong it.

Palestinians should not necessarily push towards PNA collapse, but rather toward its reform and its return to its historic track; to establish a free state and to stop thinking of itself as an independent state, but rather as a tool capable of transitioning into one. However, the challenges ahead (both political and in services) might cause it to collapse service-wise, and to flourish politically. Here it is necessary to summon some examples:

- The appeal to international organizations, more specifically the UN, in an endeavor to receive full membership in the international community. The US attitude, culminating in the severance of financial support, while the Israelis did the same with tax funds, leading to a disruption in Palestinian service-providing bodies.

The central question is: Taking into consideration the PNA's existing structure, public sector, and economic policy which are all highly dependent on donations, and therefore the mood and conditions of donor countries, the growing financial deficit reaching upwards of one billion USD; would the PNA be able to break free of all this? Would it be able to play its primary role, and what it might entail from fierce diplomatic encounters and popular resistance that might spread everywhere?

The Role Played by LGB's:

The role played by LGBs during the Israeli occupation

When we talk about jurisdictions and role played by municipalities during the Israeli occupation period, we cannot ignore the many considerations associated with their subsistence, as Palestine witnessed subsequent invasions and various laws, all of which for the benefit of the foreign central authority. LGBs are supplementary to this authority, and that affected the role that they were supposed to play. Legal, political and economical restrictions were a hindrance, so their role was different from other LGBs around the world. By reviewing a study on the role and performance of LGBs during the occupation, it is evident that the political/administrative dimension was one of the impeding factors to their performance. The traditional political view, legal restrictions, absence of financial autonomy and administrative drawbacks limited LGBs professional role to the provision of basic services to residents (water, electricity, road paving, garbage processing). Additionally, the Israeli occupation limited LGBs duties to basic services.

Another specialized study recognizes that LGBs role during the occupation was represented in two main aspects:

1. The role originating from the advent of Israeli occupation, which added new duties and responsibilities, which are normally part of the central government's responsibilities. This is what is known as extra role performance.
2. The political role they played during the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

To demonstrate LGBs operation under occupation, the study takes the experience of the Nablus Municipality as an example of LGBs role and duties:

1. Media presence: due to the absence of a central authority following the 1967 war, LGBs took the initiative, especially after the 1976 elections that resulted in LGBs consisting of Palestinians and PLO representatives. They took on the responsibility to express public opinion and convey their message to the world through contacting the media. Later, the national guidance committee was established, in which mayors took a political part.
2. These bodies provided services to prisoners, such as clothing and some necessary requirements.
3. Many different roles, such as helping Palestinians abroad to return back home as well as secure the salaries for employees in Jordan.
4. Generate electricity for some of the nearby villages and maintaining the water sources owned by the Municipality and other limited services.

By observing the nature of the relationship between the central authority, represented in the Israeli occupation, and LGBs since the very first days of occupation, we can deduce the Israeli desire to take over Palestinian society and territories, in order to realize their vision; complete control over Palestine. Following the military occupation, Israel restricted the mandate of LGBs so that they became a subsidy of the central administration of occupation, and issued tens of military orders to that end. The elections held in the West Bank in 1972 and 1976 were an Israeli attempt to strengthen its influence inside Palestinian society. However, after their failure, they adopted a different approach; combating elected LGBs refusing to cooperate with occupation authorities and their goal to impose the civil administration project in early 1980s. Israel used the iron fist policy and tried to deport some mayors like what happened to Bassam Al-Shaka'a, and then moved onto assassinations such as Nablus' mayor Bassam Al-Shak'a, and Ramallah's mayor Karim Khalaf. Others deported include Fahid Qawasmi, mayor of Hebron, and Mohammad Milhem mayor of halhul. Eventually, after its failure to control the Palestinian elite, Israel dissolved the municipal councils and appointed committees. It also tried to create an alternative leadership, culminating in the villages' associations, to undertake plans aimed at reinforcing Israeli influence inside rural Palestinian society in particular.

The role played by LGBs after advent of the PNA

The ministry of Local Government (MOLG) increased the number of municipalities and village councils, as well as merged a number of smaller ones to become parts of larger communities. On the other hand, the MOLG formed the 'joint service and regional planning councils', whereas they included the nearby LGBs sharing the same social, cultural and economic features. This is all in an effort to develop them further so that they would be one consolidated into one municipality in the future. The Ministry also established joint service councils in the countryside, whereas there are currently 49 of these councils in the Palestinian territories, 18 of which are multipurpose, and handle solid waste disposal and water networks maintenance.

However, this quantitative development was not accompanied by a qualitative development in ways of administration, size of budgets and the democratization of the local government sector in terms of expansion of authorities and diversity of political/social representation. The jurisdiction LGBs enjoy remain very limited. By referring to the law, it is clear that these authorities are mainly relevant to the organization of construction, markets, traffic and public parks. LGBs do not enjoy actual authorities in education, social affairs or health. In addition to the limited administrative authorities, law number 1/1997 does not give a reasonable margin of independence when it comes to taxes and fees.

The outbreak of the second Intifada (uprising) brought along with it repressive Israeli measures and atrocities, and the reoccupation of main cities and villages. This had a very negative effect on LGBs, as Israeli forces destroyed the majority of paved roads, took over and damaged many schools, and destroyed sanitation, power and water networks. Reports given by the Mizan center could be referred to in this regard in order to explain the extent of damages inflicted on people and establishments, which undermined the PNA's ability to face the consequences of this invasion. This in turn put a heavy

pressure on LGBs as they had to fill the vacuum left by the PNA's absence. On occasion, international financial aid ceased or slowed down, which added to the financial/administrative problems, and led to LGBs being unable to pay their staff, such as the case of the Gaza Municipality. LGB's financial returns have dramatically dropped due to the difficult economic conditions the Palestinians live under, caused mainly by the Israeli siege.

Conclusion and recommendations:

In light of previous experience, represented by the role played by LGBs in Palestinian society before and after the PNA's advent, it is evident that they managed to support the PLO and PNA through the provision of humanitarian services such as education and health. This was both during the Israeli occupation and after the establishment of the PNA. The arising question is: can LGBs provide services to the Palestinians without any financial/moral support from the PNA or the PLO, as the situation was previously?

Ultimately, we cannot talk about the role played by LGBs in isolation from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the local leaders in each province. Municipalities provide basic services, while other bodies such as CSOs provide security, solve problems and produce official documents. Municipalities should be supported by the international community as well as other bodies in order to avoid a vacuum in public administration and other citizen needs.

Past experiences, both in 1976 and 2000-2004 are important stages in the life of the Palestinian people, which tell us that the role they play should be limited to daily humanitarian services, far from any political responsibilities, responsibilities that other bodies would assume with the PLO's consent and support. The elections of 1976 were an important experience for the Palestinian Cause and people, but this stage was marred by the fact that municipalities played political a role, which negatively affected their existence and the services they provided. On the other hand, the 2000 experience was different, whereas the focus was concentrated on the provision of basic services. What is more, is that they succeeded in filling the vacuum left by the PNA when it was staggering under Israeli occupation attacks.

In the case of PNA absence under any scenario, municipalities could play a fundamental role and undertake other services as well. This would not impact the basic services provided, according to a number of conditions on the ground, and the cooperation of other bodies and Palestinian leaders who orchestrated the first Palestinian uprising. Therefore, this vacuum could be filled without being involved in political/security matters, that should be undertaken strictly by international organizations, such as the UN and other international donors.

If LGBs rose up to the occasion and acted as a replacement for the PNA, there are a number of domestic and foreign factors that should be taken into account. Domestic factors include all Palestinian groups, political elite and CSOs. The foreign factors are the international community organizations such as the UN, and donor countries sponsoring the peace process in the Middle East. LGBs can undertake their responsibilities without any issue, while other duties undertaken by the PNA should be carried out by international organizations, such as security, foreign relations, and the production of birth certificates and passports.

There is no doubt that popular support for LGBs would definitely help them in the future, whereas expanding their mandate and support by donors would improve provided services. Security chaos is a key issue for donors, in addition to problem-solving mechanisms, which contribute to increasing stability and enhancing the position of LGBs.

Features of the Palestinian local administrative organization have not yet developed to a fully-fledged local government, through which municipalities can expand their authorities as stated by law of 1997. The law should be amended so that municipalities could practice new and important authorities for the upcoming stage. Despite this, the Palestinian local government experience has developed and expanded since the last century. Municipalities became the focus of attention for the previous governments that ruled Palestine, and received the support of Palestinian society. Municipalities are well-experienced, especially during the absence of a stable central authority in Palestine, and would be able to provide new services such as issuing passports, birth certificates, and organizing social affairs and courts, in coordination with PLO.

Palestinian municipalities were able to fill the vacuum caused by the absence of a central authority, whether before or after the PNA's advent. There has been a shift in action for the Palestinian municipalities in 1976, when elections were held and won by national powers, resulting in municipalities becoming the political front that led Palestinian society. In 2002, they were able to act on behalf of the central authority, which was destroyed by the Israeli occupation.

If financially and administratively supported, Palestinian municipalities could play a central role. However this role would still need the coordination and cooperation of local/foreign institutions, whereas their success depends on domestic and foreign factors. However, there are doubts about the likelihood of their success on their own, despite that these municipalities are experienced and knowledgeable, through international projects and infrastructure/capacity building projects.

Important and concluding recommendations

1. The development of appropriate legislations for the upcoming stage, including an expansion in the powers of LGBs and financial/administrative independence. These legislations would also include regulations and ordinances, enabling municipalities to undertake their functions without restrictions.
2. The authorization of more powers for LGBs, enabling them to act on behalf of the central government as an introduction to the concept of local government based on more freedom and resilience, and a wider range of authorities.
3. Democratization of the local government sector through regular elections, increasing confidence and support amongst the public.
4. Consolidation of group work between local councils, taking into consideration that smaller local bodies cannot undertake major tasks such as solid waste disposal or sanitation services, therefore, this would have a positive effect on service provision.
5. Group work and cooperation between local bodies has led to all kinds of joint service councils, whether for development, planning or joint councils for solid waste. Many of those councils have been established in each province, which reduced the risk of numerous landfills and disorganized joint councils. At the same time, joint councils for development and planning were formed to serve a number of LGBs, which has led to the development of collective planning.
6. Consolidation and merger of LGBs, taking into consideration that the Palestinian local government structure is loaded with a large number of LGBs. This has been an impediment to the development of the local government sector since the great number means that serving the public would be impossible. Many strategies have been initiated in order to solve this, such as the consolidation of small LGBs into one big community. However, we cannot judge this experience due to the recentness of their implementation.
7. Work on increasing the qualifications of mayors in some financial, administrative and technical skills, and training them on how to administer their municipalities, enabling them to face all kinds of challenges in the future, similar to what happened in 1976 and 2000. Moreover, investing in manpower, as it is the main propeller for LGBs improvement.
8. Change the traditional view regarding the relation between the central authority (MOLG) and LGBs, so it moves from a place of domination to a place of partnership. This would be good for the performance of LGBs in the future, enabling them to lead Palestinian society in the future.

9. Enhancing LGBs in all possible ways, whereas they cannot currently provide all services to Palestinians such as foreign representation, passports, birth certificates and security. Therefore, there must be other bodies alongside municipalities like CSOs and international organizations (the UN, etc..)

10. There are many details that need to be clarified regarding LGBs support during the current phase, which I call the 'transitional phase'. This phase is paving the road to a political solution in which Palestinian and international parties take part in. Therefore, municipalities would not be alone, as other bodies would be formed to help them overcome this phase, as has happened before.

11. Solidification of the local government concept that is based on 5 dimensions (professional, financial, geographic, electoral and political). These dimensions form the basis for creating central and influential municipalities, able to lead Palestinian society. On the other side of things, it is important to have an idea of other peoples' experiences on how to support the local government sector.

Comments and Discussion:

Comment by Mr.Khalid Al-Oseili: the former mayor of Hebron's Municipality, a businessman

The study talks about the issue of dissolving the PNA, the suggested scenarios, the role of municipalities in a historical account of incidents as reactions of the expected scenarios away from clear vision of future and national strategy that must take into consideration local, regional and international changes. It should also cope up with political, economic and social changes that have been widely increasing due to the development of information technology, social communication network and mass media which exceed social, cultural and economic changes on the ground accompanied by lack of the Palestinian leadership's performance in setting national strategies to keep up with geo-political change and demographic growth, too.

The objective of the Israeli occupation in the 1976's elections was creating an alternative local leadership for Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) especially after the Arab League's recognition of the PLO as a sole legitimate representative for the Palestinian people.

At that time, the Palestinian municipalities played the role of institutional leadership in improving services and providing them to the Palestinian citizens, since Israeli occupation put obstacles in front of local development. Municipalities also co-operated with other social institutions such as Red-Crescent Society, Patient's Friends, Postgraduates' League, Ladies' Society...and others in providing the essential services including healthy, educational and social services to fill the gap that resulted from Israeli occupation.

Therefore, Palestine Liberation Organization supported the 1976's elected municipalities that raised the PLO's flag as a representative of the Palestinian people through twinning programmes with Arab cities in Gulf states to carry out projects to develop the infrastructure. That programme was headed president Mahmoud Abbas at that time.

However, that national orientation of the elected municipalities and their support to the PLO made Israel feel unpleasant, so it created an alternative entity to these municipalities; that is Rawbit Al-qurra. It also fired, retired and exiled many of the elected mayors and appointed others whose loyalties were for Israeli occupation. This policy continued up to the establishment of the PNA, but the national elected personalities continued their support to the PLO.

In fact, the role of municipalities is defined according to legislations as basic municipal services. There is no indication of a political role for them. Moreover, when the PNA became weak- this happened during Al-Aqsa Intifada- municipalities played a supporting role for the PNA in providing services, not an alternative role because they are not able to afford all the needed service for citizens and this applies for the integrative role of other national institutions.

As for the suggested question, the answer from my point of view is that there is no interest for any side to dissolve the PNA. I am also convinced that there is no possibility of dissolving it and creating an alternative body like municipalities since they - through my own experience- can do their service role through providing the infrastructure. Here I particularly mean municipalities of big cities on the condition that funding these services and providing security forces to protect these achievements. In fact, it not possible for municipalities to do their jobs without an existence of authority that imposes law and order.

The state, the rule or authority is a set of integrated system and municipalities are part of this system that integrate with other parts including governmental institutions, security forces and civil society organizations. Therefore, there must be local and international support to institution as well as providing financial and human resources' support as I mentioned.

Workshop:

Dr. Abd Al-Nasser presented a summary for the study that had introduced to the center titled (the role of the institutions of local government if the PNA collapses or dissolved) as follows:

1. The study aims at studying the ability of local bodies to do their role and sitting recommendations.
2. There is a difference between dissolving or the collapse of the PNA since every concept had determiners, causes and effects.
3. Local bodies in Palestine played a political role after 1976, but this role became a service one especially during the second Intifada ans Israeli invasions.
4. Multiple and numerous bodies deepen the problem of these facilities and have become a burden on the Palestinian people and its national authority as well.
5. There is a problematic between the concept of dissolve and collapse. Collapse happen as a result of external factors in different ways political, security, economic and social. As for “dissolve”, it is a decision that is taken by the Palestinian leadership for a particular purpose. It is better to dissolve the PNA and prepare for it especially after the peace process reached a deadlock.
6. What is the role of the PLO and civil society institutions after the collapse? There are issues concerning the foreign representation and transactions. Can local bodies do this job?

There are several scenarios of the PNA's disappearance as follows:

1. Palestine liberation Organization dissolves the PNA.
2. The PNA's collapse due to a group of factors co-related with Israeli Occupation policies either by a pressure on the PNA or huge chaos.
3. The third scenario : The United States of America and Israel come to a conclusion that the PNA will not waive which lead both countries to take a decision of dissolve the PNA and try to create an alternative leadership to negotiate with (Israel and cope up with submissive solutions.
4. The most important advantage of dissolving the PNA is uncovering the Israeli occupations in the international forums.
5. The most important thing is what follows the PNA's dissolves.

Does the Israeli occupation go back? Or will an international mandate through the United Nations take place? Or what else?

6. Is it possible to activate the PLO? What can the PLO do after using up all possible means?

7. A local government means that a central authority gives up its power to local facilities to do administrative, political and legislative tasks. In other words a local government inside a central one that has five dimensions (geographical, electoral, financial and political). This subject is connected with the role of the local government in the development process.
8. Municipal elections took place twice the first was (between 2004 and 2005), and the second was (between 2012 and 2013), but before that time, members of municipalities had been appointed.
9. There are some municipalities such as Nablus, Hebron and Gaza differ from the other municipalities. It is not possible to call the latter ones local government's institutions.
10. Developing specific legislations concerning local bodies to give municipalities more strength or permission in order to be in harmony with the concept of local government.
11. There should be more collective work between municipalities and the Union of municipalities.
12. There should also be participation between local governments and the central authority.

Comment by Khalid Al-Oseili:

He reviews his comment as follows:

1. I don't see any chance to dissolve the PNA because if they intended to do so, they wouldn't establish it.
2. The 1976's election was a progressive stage of the national action on the local government's level.
3. Israel aimed at creating an alternative leadership to the PLO from that elections, whereas there was a Palestinian and anti-goal, that is aborting the Israeli project.
4. Municipalities have a service and developing role. They don't have any political role now, but at that time they had a political role.
5. After the PNA had been established in 1994, municipalities lost their political role.
6. Big municipalities have the ability of providing a lot of services to the people because they have enough money.
7. Municipalities depend on foreign funds in their developing projects.
8. Municipalities can't do their job without implementing security, imposing order and law.
9. Some municipalities have big budgets and huge human resources like the Municipalities of Hebron that has a big budget and about 1500 employees.
10. Municipalities are exposed to pressure from both the PNA and political factions.
11. The majority of municipalities have limited abilities.
12. There are excellent steps to build on; that is the joint service councils.
13. There are two institutions interested in local councils. They are Municipalities' Fund and the Union of Municipalities. Take Municipalities' Fund, for example, it plays a very positive role. However, the problem is in its component that includes just three municipality members and the rest of the administration council's members are from the PNA institutions headed by the Minister of local government, so it becomes as an administration in the local government although the purpose of its establishment is to be separated from the local government.

Discussion:

The participants review group of ideas and inquiries as follows:

1. Elections give legitimacy to local government to play a political role, but can anyone who won in the last elections play this role in the light of Hamas's boycotting.

2. It is difficult for municipalities to do their job, while funding and security are absent.
3. After dissolving the PNA, how will the common culture affect revenues of municipalities if Israel re-occupies the Palestinian territories especially if we adopt the option of the popular resistance that calls for no taxes' payment?
4. If Israel occupies our land, municipalities will co-ordinate with the de facto authority. How does this affect the popularity of municipalities' Mayors? How will people look at them?
5. If the PNA collapses or dissolves, many of the first and second row leaders will not find any position for them except the fight on the post of municipalities mayor.
6. Can big municipalities do their jobs in the light of people's accumulation of debts? In millions and no debt payments
7. It will be easier for Israel to deal with the status quo. Many things will help Israel. Laws and legislations that allow Israel do this through replacing the Minister of local government with an officer of civil administration. Israel also has a long experience with municipalities in contrast the weakness of the PLO and its institutions. In addition, Israel's wish to get rid of the population's burden as well as its wish not to leave political emptiness after the PNA's collapse. There for, municipalities are a proper alternative.
8. The integrated will be greatly affected; furthermore, a complete collapse will take place and may lead to a conflict between villages.

Day After - Workshops' Participants

#	Name	Organization
1	Mr. Abd Alnaser Masoud	National Sec. Forces - NSF
2	Dr. Abd Alrahman Altamimi	Head of Palestinian Hydrology Group
3	Dr. Abdelnaser Makky	JICA/Birzeit University
4	Ms. Abeer Albatma	PENGON
5	Mr. Abulmajeed Melhem	PALTEL
6	Mr. Ahmad Hindi	PWA
7	Mr. Ahmad Qurei "Abu Alaa"	Adisory Board/Fatah
8	Mr. Ahmad Surghally	PALTEL
9	Mr. Alaa Lahlouh	PSR
10	Mr. Alaa Yaghi	PLC
11	Mr. Ali Hamoudeh	JDECO
12	Dr. Ali Jarbawi	Minister of Higher Education
13	Mr. Ali Nazzal	President office
14	Mr. Ali Omar	National Sec. Forces - NSF
15	Mr. Amin Maqboul	Sec. General, Fateh Revol. Council
16	Mr. Ammar Dwaik	Birzeit University
17	Mr. Anwar Abu Ammash	Welfare Association
18	Dr. Ayman Daraghme	PLC
19	Mr. Aziz Kayed	PSR
20	Dr. Azmi Shuaibi	AMAN
21	Mr. Basem Tamimi	Popular Committes
22	Mr. Basri Saleh	Ministry of Education
23	Mr. Bassam Alaqtash	National Sec. Forces - NSF
24	Ms. Buthaina Hamdan	Ministry of TLC
25	Ms. Covadonga Bertrand	UNDP
26	Mr. Daoud Darawi	Adala law
27	Mr. Eyad Zeitawi	PMA
28	Mr. Fadel Hamdan	PLC Member
29	Mr. Fadi Qura'an	Alhaq
30	Ms. Fadwa Barghouthi	Revolutaionary Council/Fatah
31	Dr. Faisal Awartani	Researcher
32	Mr. Fajr Harb	Carter Center
33	Mr. Faris Sabaneh	Supreme Judicial Council
34	Dr. Fathi Abumoghli	former minister of Health
35	Ms. Florence Mandelik	NOREF
36	Mr. Florid Zurba	Ministry of TLC
37	Dr. Ghassan Khatib	Birzeit University
38	Dr. Hanan Ashrawi	PLO
39	Dr. Hanna Abdalnour	Alquds University
40	Mr. Hasan Abushalbak	Ramallah Municipality

41	Mr. Hazem Gheith	Egyptian Embassy
42	Mr. Henry Siegman	US/ MIDDLE EAST PROJECT
43	Mr. Ibrahim Barghouthi	head of MUSAWA
44	Mr. Ihab Shihadeh	Ministry of Justice
45	Mr. Jacob Hoigilt	NOREF
46	Mr. Jamal Zakout	FIDA
47	Mr. Jamil Rabah	Negotiations Support Unit - NSU
48	Dr. Jihad Albadawi	MOH
49	Mr. Jihad Alwazer	PMA Governor
50	Mr. Jihad Harb	PSR
51	Dr. Jihad Mashal	Expert
52	Mr. Jihad Shomali	UNDP
53	Mr. Khaled Alosaily	Business man
54	Mr. Khaled Shtayeh	UNDP
55	Mr. Khalil Rifai	Deputy Ministry of Justice
56	Dr. Khalil Shikaki	PSR
57	Mr. Mahmoud Haroun	Military Intelligence
58	Mr. Mariano Aguirre	NOREF
59	Dr. Mashhour Abu Daka	Former Minister of Communication
60	Mr. Mazen Sinokrot	Private Sector
61	Mr. Mohammad Alfaqih	PNC
62	Mr. Mohammad Aref	PMA
63	Mr. Mohammad Attoun	Wassel co.
64	Mr. Mohammad Daraghme	Journalist
65	Mr. Mohammad Hadieh	Ministry of Justice
66	Dr. Mohammad Odeh	MOH
67	Dr. Muatasem Alhmod	MOH
68	Mr. Munib Masri	Private Sector
69	Mr. Munir Barghouthi	Ministry of Education
70	Dr. Munther Alsharif	NAS
71	Mr. Musa Haj Hasan	QIF
72	Mr. Mutaz Abadi	PWA
73	Mr. Nabil Amr	Fatah
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76	Dr. Naim Abuhommos	Birzeit University
77	Dr. Naser Abdelkarim	UNDP/Birzeit University
78	Mr. Naser Yosef	Adisory Board/Fatah
79	Mr. Natasha Carmi	Negotiation Aff. Dep.
80	Mr. Nayef Swetat	Revolutaionary Council/Fatah
81	Mr. Omar Assaf	Return right committee
82	Mr. Peter Krause	Boston University
83	Mr. Qaddora Fares	Prisoner's Affairs

84	Mr. Qais Abdelkarim	PLC
85	Mr. Radi Jarai	Alquds University
86	Mr. Reda Awadallah	PPP
87	Mr. Roland Friedrich	DCAF
88	Dr. Sabri Saidam	President consultant
89	Mr. Sadam Omar	National Security Forces
90	Dr. Safa Nseraldin	Minister of TLC
91	Mr. Said Alhmouz	PMC
92	Mr. Said Zaid	PLC
93	Mr. Salam Zagha	NEDCO
94	Mr. Saleh Ra'afat	Former Head of FIDA
95	Mr. Samer Farah	Welfare Association
96	Mr. Sami Alsaedi	AI Bank
97	Mr. Samir Abdallah	MAS
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107	Mr. Tayseer Zabre	HURRAT Center
108	Dr. Ummaya Khammash	UNRWA
109	Dr. Wael Qa'adan	PRCS
110	Mr. Waleedd Ladadweh	PSR
111	Dr. Walid Aburas	HWC
112	Mr. Walid Hodali	JWU
113	Mr. Wisam Atwan	National Security Forces
114	Mr. Yousef Adwan	UNDP
115	Mr. Zafer Milhem	PERC

The Day After: How Palestinians Can Cope if the PA Ceases to Function

January-October 2013

PSR, in cooperation with the USMEP and NOREF, has initiated in January 2013 a policy research project that aims at exploring Palestinian conditions and options in the day after the PA ceases to function. The initiative seeks to produce a series of expert papers focusing on 10 main challenging areas of “the day after” in Palestinian political, social, financial, economic, and security life.

The initiative’s point of departure is that the PA may collapse or may decide to dissolve itself in the near future under the heavy weight of various financial and political pressures. Three scenarios are conceivable: (1) Israel and the US may impose on the PA severe or crippling financial and political sanctions; (2) the PLO leadership may conclude that the two-state solution is no longer practical and may begin to search for other means to gain Palestinian rights leading it to dissolve the PA; and (3) a series of economic, financial and political crises may lead to popular demands for change expressed in mass demonstrations against the PA and a widespread demand for regime change leading to chaos and eventual collapse.

The initiative goals are three: (1) explore the implications of such a development on various critical dimensions of Palestinian life and government, elaborating on the magnitude of the problems and challenges that might arise as a result of PA demise; (2) debate various policy options to respond to such a development, to contain the damage, and to capitalize on potential benefits, if any; and, (3) recommend a course of action for Palestinians to pursue in response to the expected complications.

PSR has gathered a team of 30 experts in the areas of finance and economics, internal security and law enforcement, health, education, communication, justice system, local government, water and electricity, civil and domestic political affairs, and the future of the two-state solution. Experts have been asked to write 10 papers in their various areas of expertise examining the implications, policy options, and recommendations. Each paper has been reviewed and critiqued by two experts. Drafts of the expert papers have been discussed in small specialized workshops attended by policy makers, parliamentarians, experts, and academics.

A final report will be prepared based on the expert papers, workshops/focus groups, interviews, and background research. The report will summarize the main findings, examine the overall policy implications for the PA and the international community, and provide policy recommendations for the various relevant parties.

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