

Palestinian Vision for Resolving the Current PA Crisis

I. Introduction

The Palestinian people are considering all possible avenues to re-establish and re-invigorate our partnership with the international community on the basis of international law and legitimacy. A Palestinian national unity government that adheres to Quartet principles is the best way of resolving the current crisis. However, in the event this option is not possible, it is in the Palestinian interest to consider and plan all possible options. This paper considers the following options and assesses them in the context of an action-oriented plan with a set timeline:

- National Unity Government (NUG)
- Government of “Technocrats”
- Caretaker Government
- Emergency Government
- Early Presidential and Legislative Elections

II. Process and Timelines

1. Deadline for NUG / Technocrat Government (End November?)

Efforts to form a government that adheres to the Quartet conditions (NUG or technocrats) cannot go on indefinitely. Therefore we intend to establish a process to resolve the impasse, in the event that no agreement is reached on a NUG or a technocrat government by the **end of November**.

2. Timeline for Emergency / Caretaker Government

After that date, and failing a resolution that meets the Quartet principles, our plan is to publicly announce a state of emergency. Within **???** of the declaration of a state of emergency, the President will formally dismiss the present cabinet and **immediately** thereafter exercise one of two options, pursuant to his legal powers under the Basic Law:

- Form an emergency government (which would govern for 1 month without PLC vote of confidence) **[this scenario is problematic as it does not resolve the issue – what will happen after one month?]**
- Call for early elections. In the interim period, the present cabinet would function as a caretaker government pending the elections. Under the Basic Law, the caretaker government can only perform executive functions and cannot take political decisions, which would be exercised solely by the President.

3. Timeline for Early Elections (mid-2007)

In order to lay the groundwork for successful elections, we need time to implement several action-streams during the coming months. As the status quo will not hold much longer, elections must take place by the **middle of 2007**.

III. Action Plan Leading to Early Elections

1. Presidential Guard (PG):

The PG is currently the most respected and professional security apparatus in the Palestinian security sector and is directly answerable to the President. Its loyalty and integrity are beyond doubt, in part thanks to a rigorous vetting process and a solid basic training program. The PG has been deployed successfully on numerous occasions, most significantly at Rafah Crossing, where a PG taskforce was able to take over security and supervision functions quickly and efficiently. It has been commended on its performance by all parties, including the USSC Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton and Israeli officials.

In order to maintain law and order, protect Palestinian institutions and interests, and provide overall security, especially in the Gaza Strip, PG personnel need to be increased to at least **7,000 servicemen** as soon as possible. This will be done through existing training facilities, along with all possible assistance and funding of the international community.

Without the proper funding and equipment, the PG will not be able to deliver. In particular, there are serious shortages of weapons and ammunition. The force will need sufficient automatic weapons and ammunition in order to be able to deploy successfully. Without these basic needs, the PG risks losing its credibility; its failure would result in, the breakdown of law and order and perhaps even chaos and total security collapse.

The technical details of PG needs and deployment objectives are currently being assessed by senior officers of the PG. As the international community has a significant role in helping make this plan a success, we propose forming a **joint working group with the Office of the USSC** to urgently evaluate the needs of an expanded PG force. Efforts of the international community will also be required to secure funding and procurement of needed equipment.

2. Internal Reform of Fatah

The revival and rejuvenation of the Fatah movement is a key priority in our preparations for elections. Given its commitment to democratic principles, Fatah is taking measures to hold primary elections in all 16 governorates. These primaries will pave the way for a party conference to appoint a new Central Committee for the party ahead of the elections.

3. Empowering Presidential Institutions

In order to avoid the collapse of Palestinian institutions and the economy before the holding of elections, the President's Office has taken significant steps to stabilise the situation. There are three elements that the President intends to address in the next several months leading up to elections:

a. Reform of Governorates

The President intends, and has taken initial steps, to reform and re-organise the function of governors and governorates in administering services in the occupied Palestinian territory. He has appointed a Governorates Advisor who acts as a liaison between the governors and the President's Office. The terms of reference for a study on administrative reforms are being developed to assess what can be done quickly to improve the situation.

b. Financial Administration

As a temporary measure, the President's Office is developing an ad hoc mechanism to manage the flow of aid. This mechanism will supplement existing institutional arrangements with the short-term objective of relieving the heavy burden on Palestinian society.

c. Broadcasting and Television Commission:

As part of the plan to set the stage for successful democratic elections, the President intends to revive this Commission. The Commission, which is an independent administrative body, does not follow any ministry or government department. As in any democratic society, free and accessible media is a key component of successful and representative elections and transparent political process. At present, the Commission has severe shortages in funding and expertise, and is in dire need of development.

4. Judicial Reform

The President intends to work closely with the judiciary to improve the function and authority of judicial institutions and the rule of law.

5. Engagement with Civil Society: NGOs, Businesses, Universities

In the lead-up to elections, civil society will be regularly consulted and invited to participate in the public debate over a political platform and vision that can unite the Palestinian people in its quest for freedom and independence by peaceful means.

IV. Required Process- International and Regional

Following the issuance of the Presidential Decree calling for presidential and legislative elections, the following measures should be addressed by Israel and the international community before the elections are held:

- **Immediate resumption of aid by the international community through the President's Office.**
- **Immediate release of clearance revenues illegally withheld by Israel to the President's Office.**
- **Release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. (Those who spent 20 years and more, women, children, the sick, and political leaders).**
- **Restoration of situation which existed prior to September 28 2000, and full implementation of the AMA by Israel.**
- **Revival of a meaningful process toward a clearly-defined political end-game within a reasonable timeframe to empower moderates and restore hope among the Palestinian people.**
- **The appointment of an empowered Quartet envoy to oversee and assist the process.**