



معهد مواطن للديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان
Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights

Concept Note Muwatin 27th Annual Conference

“The Political Economy of Hegemony and Liberation in Palestine”

To be held on Friday and Saturday, 1-2 October 2021

The conference will be held both at Birzeit University and online

The Palestinian question remains unresolved despite the recession of colonialism globally following World War II, the centrality of the question in the agendas of international institutions, the major global transformations starting from the late 1980s onwards, and the collapse of the socialist camp in the 1990s. Recent years have witnessed a wide and renewed discussion on the nature and prospects of the Palestinian national project and the need to build a renewed vision for it. Within such discussions, one can clearly see that part of the difficulty of renewal is the need to return to a proper diagnosis, related to the nature of the hegemonic powers, their alliances, conditions and tools of hegemony, as well as the nature, energy, contradictions, and tools of the forces of liberation.

The 27th Annual Muwatin Conference aims to touch on these issues with the goal of diagnosing the situation based on a deeper analysis of the existing realities in order to come to a better understanding of the roles of its various elements and their current and potential impact, as well as defining and delineating the active forces that constitute the colonial condition and their interactions. With a focus on the political economy of the abovementioned forces and phenomena, the discussions at the conference shall tackle these issues on three different levels: the conflicts and coalitions of hegemonic forces; the conflicts and coalitions of emancipatory forces; and the antagonisms between the hegemonic and emancipatory forces, as well as the existence of colonial and neo-colonial proxies amidst the colonized, and the existence of emancipatory forces amidst the colonisers. The conference rubrics shall attempt to cover the antagonisms, agonisms, interactions, and coalitions in their political, economic, legal, and social manifestations.

Conference Rubrics

The 27th Annual Muwatin Conference will tackle these issues maximising the utilisation of the political-economic perspective in the analysis of the various phenomena that constitute central elements of the Israeli colonialism, the Palestinian liberation struggle, and the overall factors that play a significant role in the conflict under three rubrics:

Rubric 1: The nature of Israeli colonialism and the interests it serves, including those interests that enable Israel to escape accountability under international law and build alliances around the world. This may include recent shifts in alliances within the context of the recent normalisation agreements between Israel and a number of Arab countries, and alliances built with countries historically allied with the Palestinian people. Within this rubric, participants can discuss the political-economic viability and feasibility of the settler project, its rentier component, its convergence with the requirements of neoliberalism. It can also include a discussion of the role of the “security and surveillance industries” that characterize the Israeli economy and

constitute a major reason for the positive relations built with Israel despite the violations and crimes it commits.

Rubric 2: The nature of the anti-colonial forces in the Palestinian society and their allies in Palestine and abroad. This can include the diversity of these forces in the different places where Palestinians are present, the peculiarities of these forces, ways to build a stronger Palestinian front to resist colonialism, and reasons that can impede their viability, including corruption and narrow political and economic interests. Moreover, the feasibility of using various tools in the process of resisting colonialism, such as the nature of the organizational structures of the Palestinian people, especially the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Palestinian National Authority, the Palestinian parties and factions and their coordinating bodies. The nature of the legal and economic structures, and the policies adopted by the Palestinian elites, the degree of their alignment with the emancipation project, and their possible role in impeding it.

Rubric 3: The nature of the battle between the Palestinian emancipatory forces and their allies on the one hand, and the colonial powers and their allies on the other. The nature of the “battlefields”/“frontlines”, their tools, and strategies. This includes a discussion of the forms of popular Palestinian resistance (as well as popular international solidarity), paramilitary, and diplomatic, and the scope of this resistance locally, in the Arab region and globally, and the networks of relations and organizational structures necessary for it, including the roles of Palestinians outside Palestine, who are currently marginalized, and how to activate them in an organized struggle effort. Moreover, under this rubric we aim to see a discussion surrounding the principles and inalienable rights versus the mechanisms for achieving rights that can be regulated, and the importance of the international (non-bilateral) nature of negotiation, its terms and conditions. In addition, we aim to highlight the tools utilized by colonial forces to curb and frustrate the Palestinian struggle by stigmatizing it as terrorism, anti-Semitism and the like. Furthermore, this rubric encompasses the economic mechanisms employed by colonial powers such as siege, obstruction to production, conditional international aid, and economic peace projects, and the impact of the aforementioned tools on the structures of the Palestinian national liberation movement.