Palestinian Non-Violence

Examples in facing internal disputes

Within the project

The Palestinian Consortium for Non-violence: towards a regional movement on Non-violence

Preparation

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Palestinian Non-Violence Examples in facing internal disputes

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Introduction

Throughout history, Palestinian non-violence culture was based on a large historical stock of tolerance and coexistence within the Palestinian community. Over time, the Palestinian people have been shaping one nation; they share the same culture, civilization, and political environment as well as equal shared prospects and future. For fifteen centuries, Muslim, Christian, Jewish Palestinians lived together. Usually, their different beliefs were not a reason for dispute or schism. Coexistence and a culture of respect were demonstrated in the Palestinian community. Thereby, it appears in numerous aspects of their lifestyle .For instance, they lived in the same neighborhoods, villages, and cities. Historically, population distributions showed non-religions-based demographics; they were even integrated into social, educational, and political institutions[1]. Contemporarily, Palestinians are one body. They are all related to one land where they share and cooperate on social, cultural, political, and economic levels.

In 1988, in Algeria, The Palestinian Declaration of Independence that has been ratified by the Palestinian National Council in its nineteenth meeting sat rules for all Palestinians. It included tolerance and non-violence Culture as one of the main characteristics of the Palestinian people and their culture with its constitutional reference for all Palestinians. It has concluded that: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful; Palestine, the land of the three monotheistic faiths, is where the Palestinian Arab people were born, on which they grew, developed and excelled. Thus, the Palestinian Arab people ensured themselves an everlasting union with their land and history. The State of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be. The state is for them to enjoy their collective national and cultural identity, theirs to pursue complete equality of rights. It will be a safe haven for their political and religious convictions, as well as their human dignity through a parliamentary democratic system of governance based on freedom of expression and the freedom to form political parties. The rights of minorities will be duly respected by the majority, while minorities must abide by the majority's decisions. Governance will be based on principles of social justice, equality, and non-discrimination in public rights of individuals on grounds of race, religion, color or sex, and the aegis of a constitution which ensures the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Thus, shall these principles allow no departure from Palestine's age-old spiritual and civilizational heritage of tolerance and religious coexistence.[2]

Purpose

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[1] Al-Qasrawi Barakat, Jamal Khader, 2011, Principles of Dialogue between Religions in time of Disputes (Palestine model), Bethlehem University, Palestine, http://blog.amin.org/najeebfarraj/2011/01/09 /

[2] Palestinian National Information Center (Wafa),2011, Palestinian Declaration of Independence, 1988, http://www.wafainfo.ps/atemplate.aspx?id=3741

This research aims to shed light on the Palestinian culture of non-violence. With regard to the actual expression of the society that is characterized by its tolerance and non-violence on the longer term. Also, the Palestinian community's approach in resolving its internal disputes, specifically, social problems. Additionally, facing concerns with the non-violence culture which has preserved the social fabric and peace.

Non-Violence Culture

Non-violence is no longer a luxurious ideology. It became an essential destiny, and an initiation to close the lethal violence cycle. Thus, an initiation to peaceful development and democratic transition path .There is no way for this culture to be distributed and maintained without taking painstaking efforts in society, and hence reveal it over violence culture rubble; at home, in school, within political parties, at intellectual events, and in all governmental institutions. When violence thrives, the worst instinctive impulses and selfishness is going to grow as a replacement to sound thinking. Meanwhile, violence grows in communities where inherited conflicts, contradictions, and infringements would be held closely. It keeps destroying all values of humanity such as civilized communities, culture, spirituality, tolerance, and love. Therefore, it festers on[3].

Violence can be defined with several definitions. The best definition in our perspective is: It is the use of aggressive force. On the other hand, the culture of non-violence is based on the fact (the other is me), and that the only way to address the problems of marginalization, negligence, hatred is Social Justice. Which is to know and respect others and to stop abuse and violence[4]. The United Nations defines non-violence as "way in which people who reject negativity and submission, and who argue that struggle is necessary, can wage their struggle without violence. Non-violent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict. Rather, it is a response to the problem of how to work effectively in politics, especially how to use capabilities effectively.[5]"

In another word, it is a set of efforts that individuals and groups take to reject an order, to amend it, or to replace it with a new better situation; by using peaceful approaches, that comply with democratic values. Also, in accordance with the democratic freedoms, giving by the country's governing constitution, and it may be certainly contradict it.

Non-violence is a concept of "resistance". It encompasses a refusal to counter violence with violence, and thus, leaving a chain of a conflict that relies on violence and reactionary violence, which is the manifestation of humanity because it embodies a real and severe reluctance through non-cooperation to all forms leads to injustice. The refusal of proceeding violence means the refusal to submit to its logic and responding to it

[3] Al-Makhlafe, Mohammed,2010, State of Tolerance in Arab Countries, Arab Network for Tolerance, 1st copy, Ramallah. P.12-38

[4] Al-Jaroshe, Salah Al-Dein, 2011, Proposals to measure Tolerance Indicators in Arab Countries, Arab Network for Tolerance, Ramallah, Palestine, P.9

[5] United Nations, International Non-Violence Day, https://www.un.org/ar/events/nonviolenceday/background.shtml

with violence. Consequently, leaving the cycle of reactions means moving toward an advanced level of logic and a higher understanding of social relationships.[6]

Coercive Violence

In this paper, coercive violence does not mean when people defend their rights and fate. Instead, it is the violence within one society, and among its structural components; violence is not limited to intellectual or political parties. All intellectual and political parties can be converted to violence when there is a beneficial reason behind the crises and repression that society is going through from one time to another. Thus, ends logical dialogue and reasoning cuts its roots off and consequently drives violence.

If the use of force is not an attack, so it cannot be considered violence. Therefore, defending a homeland against an enemy's brutal attack is not violence according to international standards. Instead, it is not only legitimate but rather necessary. It cannot be considered a manifestation of violence in any way. Violence is acceptable in many places, including when responding to violence itself. For instance, a brutal occupation cannot be tolerated.

Social Violence

The presence of social contradictions does not justify violence, nor violence is a consequence of its existence; Indeed, there is another source of violence, which is the culture of violence. Whether this culture is based on pre-existent theories (such as revolutionary violence and theories of atonement), or it came through a sporadic flow of ideas with multiple sources such as, tribal, sectarian, and national fanaticism. The culture of violence plays a decisive role in changing the peaceful social contradictions into violent contradictions. Correspondingly, it does not stop until it destroys the energy of society and its people. There is a dialectical relationship between the tringle of justice, security, and freedoms, in which each party reflects on the other. As a result, freedoms cannot be launched in a society without sufficient security, and security does not take place without the presence of justice. Violence does not solve problems, but rather complicates them and generates more violence, but peace only leads to more peace, even at the far time level[7].

State Violence

State violence was born with the birth of the political system. It monopolizes the legitimate physical violence. While the state was monopolizing violence mechanisms, laws that regulate individuals' relations have emerged. The state, as a political system, has a primary function to provide security for individuals and to use violence when it is necessary to do so. This is evident in the policeman when he uses a pistol to settle a traffic accident. Besides, within any country in the world, the state exercises, if necessary, the armed force to enforce the laws inside it and to defend itself when attacked from outside in wars[8].

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[6] Kredeia, Marwa, 2008, Non-Violence Resistance is an Option too, Elaf Magazine, https://elaph.com/Web/ElaphWriter/2008/8/357991.html
[7] Al-Makhlafi, Mohammed, Previous Reference, P.120
[8] Al-Jaroshi, Salah Al-Dein, Previous Reference, P.160

The Non-Violent Struggle

The non-violent struggle defines by taking into consideration its integrated set of concepts, attitudes, strategies, and tactics that have its own logic. Its also a strategical choice that people choose for its viable, effective, and availability in objective conditions of powers. Moreover, it suits their needs, as it shifts the battle from the military confrontation (where the enemy possesses a clear superiority in arms, training, supplies, and control of the land, etc.) to a moral confrontation of another kind. The moral confrontation is based on faith, values, morals, law, courage, willingness to sacrifice, and the recruitment of solidarity and internal strength; with a belief that it shows a clear advantage over the enemy, who mainly relies on military strength and oppression[9].

In other words, we can conclude that the Non-Violent Struggle is a method for controlling conflict by using psychological, social, economic, and political psychological weapons. It includes three methods of struggle[10]:

- Symbolic methods and forms of non-violence allegation, such as protests, marches, and flags.

- Non-cooperation, includes social and economic boycott, workers' strikes, and lack of political cooperation, which ranges between denying legitimacy to civil disobedience and insurrection

- The non-violent attack, it ranges between Hunger-strikes to the non-violent occupation, setting up barriers, and establishing sufficient institutions until founding a competitive government and parallel to the authority.

Civil Resistance as a Form of Non-Violent Struggle

The civil resistance adopted by several nations and resistance movements in the world. Gandhi in the Indian experience, Mandela in the South African experience, and Martin Luther in the democratic struggle in the United States are the most prominent international experiences in the non-violent struggle. They have succeeded in performing essential roles in promoting human rights, democratic governance, and reducing corruption. Due to its sense of enthusiasm and popular initiative as well as the non-interference of external parties, they were essential factors in addressing the causes of human suffering, reducing lethal violence in the world, and contributing to peacebuilding. Nonetheless, external actors can play a vital role in expanding the political space within different societies, discouraging the capabilities and actions of repressive opponents, and responding to the needs expressed by movements. The external

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[9] Guanthon, Book, 2012, Popular Resistance/ Non-Violence, Palestinian Initiative to support International and democratic Dialogue, Miftah, http://miftah.org/arabic/Display.cfm?DocId=13481&CategoryId=2

[10] Sharib, Jeine, 1989, Struggle without Violence, Palestinian Center for Non-Violence Studies, Bethlehem, Palestine, P2

parties' actions of sympathetic can be considered as an extension of the movement's success in reaching its goal[11].

Palestinian Non-Violence Models

Palestinian history and its reality are full of models that have always succeeded in facing violence Culture in Palestinian society. Despite the harsh living conditions of Palestinian that include Displacement and fragmentation of social structure, Palestinian people succeeded in implementing peace in their societies. They have been always searching in their cultural and historical aspects for means and guarantees to preserve civil peace inside their society. Their strong belief in themselves and capabilities provided Palestinians solidity and endurance. As a result, it has developed insightful suggestions for them to use capable tools to deal with social and political crises peacefully. We observe successful Palestinian Non-Violent models in conserving the cohesion of the Palestinian community here:

• Arbitration and Mediation in the Face of Violence as an Effective Alternative to the Colonial Laws and a Guarantee of Civil Peace

The objective Palestinian conditions, that are resulted from the sequential occupations of the Palestinian people. Similarly, without developing its legal system that had to be followed for dealing with their internal problems and disputes, that might arise in society, as the case with other societies. Palestinians had always had absolute refusal to deal with the British mandate and the Israeli occupation legal systems. Subsequently, it shaped for Palestinian what we can call a "psychological rejection", which is filing a complaint against one Palestinian to another who under the colonial police.

Our Palestinian society has already experienced several manifestations of violence, abuses, and hatred resulted from various circumstances cultivated by reckless people, stakeholders, or occupation. However, the Palestinian social structure throughout history, which confirms the peace and cooperation, contributed to developing appropriate alternatives to face social violence without resorting to the occupier. Hence, Palestinian society created from its cultural heritage the term *Arbitration and Mediation*, which is based on cultural, religious, and moral inheritance. We might also call it *The Private Palestinian Social Contract* in dealing with violence and social disagreements. Despite the defects and imperfections that follow it, it was in multiple stages of Palestinian history, that it was a relative guarantee of civil peace.

At the same time, it is an effective alternative to the colonizer laws, and it became a social contract between all Palestinian people of different perceptions[12].

• Dialogue Culture in Facing Structural Imbalances in Society

The Palestinian society, like all other societies in the world, was exposed to structural imbalance. It has affected the essence of its non-violent culture on June 14, 2007 events which resulted in political division and social disintegration, that we still suffer on national and social

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[11] https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/for-policy-community-landing/
[12] Palestinian News & Info Agency (Wafa), Tribal jurisdiction in Palestine, http://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=9238

levels. However, the culture of dialogue succeeded early in recovering its health through local Palestinian initiatives by Palestinian civil organizations that believe in the culture of non-violence. For example, *Pal-Think for Strategic Studies* was among the first to succeed in bringing the Palestinian parties to the discussion table amid the efforts of other regional countries and political forces to do so. A long chain of talks began to achieve national reconciliation, but it still suffered ebbs and flows from time to time. Also, *Pal-Think* succeeded in presenting a paper to address the employees' file within reconciliation rounds which was known as *the Swiss Paper*.

Nevertheless, what is important here is to highlight the ability of Palestinian civil organizations in various fields to return the Palestinian compass in the right direction through dealing with the imbalance, stop flowing blood, and restore dialogue as a culture and a means to challenge crises[13]. On the other hand, Palestinian NGOs have succeeded in addressing the effects and residues of the division. It concluded an endless series of community initiatives, effective activities, and systematic interventions as an attempt to perpetuate a culture of tolerance within Palestinian society. It is the most appropriate alternative to non-violence culture in society to face the discourse of hatred that results from political congestion.

Art in Facing Violence

Some people believe that in times of wars and disasters, the role of art in facing violence, blood, and death diminishes. However, historians and critics of art have a different opinion, given that times of wars and disasters coincide with major developments and signs in art. Palestinian has succeeded in fixing several social and cultural crises. They implemented art that became an effective tool in facing different phases of violence. The Palestinians have employed art to preserve their identity and confirm their national narration through songs, poems, and drawings. They returned with a new millennium to face social crises and violence growth in society through music and drawings, so the murals spread throughout Gaza streets. Thus, build community awareness in facing violence culture. Furthermore, they built up interactive theater as an effective means of facing the culture of violence. For example, *Edward Said Conservatory of Music* through which young people seek to impose a new mood in the Palestinian situation, especially in Gaza Strip. Due to the blockade imposed on it for 13 years, it suffers from deteriorating humanitarian conditions. The throats of young men and women appeared in rare public parties that have held in *the Sea and Freedom Festival* for the sixth year. Yara Ayoub, a singer, and songwriter, who is one of the participants in these events, believes that their message is to deliver a contrasting image of Gaza. Furthermore, confirms the ability of young women to create music and art which contributes to promote and spread the culture of music among the residents of Gaza Strip who suffers from the blockade[14]. There are several other experiences and art galleries such as *the Professional Windows for Contemporary Art*. Also, other artistic means simulate violence issues in Palestinian society

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[13] Pal-Think for strategic Studies, Consortium NGOs for Palestinian Reconciliation, http://cbo.palthink.org/

[14] Al-Arab, 2019, Youth Impose a New mood in Gaza, The Sea and Freedom Festival Celebrates the Heritage and Beauty of Gaza in Bilateral Initiatives,
https://alarab.app/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%A8-
%D9%8A%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%B6%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A7-
%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9

and trying to promote a culture of tolerance and non-violence in society. Recently, the community has begun to interact positively with these high-end artistic means, especially with the disperse of social media.

On the other hand, Palestinian art in its various forms has also succeeded in showing a real image of the Gaza Strip. It represents a picture of the reality of the Israeli siege and destruction in the Gaza Strip to the world. The experience of Muhammad Assaf in the famous Arab competition, *Arab Idol*, might be considered as one of the strongest messages by the Palestinians. In which Assaf succeeded in uniting the Palestinian people, regardless of their whereabouts where politicians failed to achieve so. Also, he presented to the world the life in Gaza differently from the one portrayed in international news broadcasts. In recent times, *Sol* Band succeeded in drawing the attention of everyone inside the Gaza Strip to art as one of the finest methods that can be used to restore and revive the national heritage and social values[15].

Art as a Means to Express the Aspirations of Vulnerable Groups in Society:

The Palestinian community in the Gaza Strip did not submit to the successive humanitarian crises that ravaged all its political, social, and economic structures. Due to the unjust Israeli policy of the blockade, the internal Palestinian division, the high rates of unemployment, and poverty in society, Palestinians invented from art a means to express the aspirations of all social groups. The youth employed art to express all social and economic issues. They have also transformed the wreckage of houses destroyed by the Israeli aggressions into artistic paintings to document Israeli crimes in a sophisticated human image. Moreover, *the Red Carpet Festival* aimed in reviving cinematic and cultural life in Gaza, through films focusing on human rights[16] and youth issues and rights. The music bands such as *Sol* and *Edward Saied Conservatory* were two effective tools in developing children and youth musical skills and stimulate their social issues.

Also, advocacy campaigns with all its strategies were used as creative tools that society worked on to address its social crises, such as unemployment, poverty, immigration, violence, etc. Palestinian people innovated special campaigns and mobilized citizens to advocate for human rights. They also hired art murals on the walls, used fine paintings art, and signing petitions as tools for making a change. The artistic movement was an active tool for defending human rights. Accordingly, some documentaries discussed human rights issues, whether related to women's rights or young people. Also, films that demonstrated violations against Palestinian farmers who live close to border areas, or fishermen in the sea. Art in all its aspects reflected the daily life of Palestinian people, and it attempted to address all their issues especially the intellectual level.

• Sports Fixes what Politics has Corrupted

A negative stereotype prevailed about one another in the two parts of the homeland, The West Bank and Gaza Strip after their division. The occupation greatly helped to redraw it

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[15] Al-Baiari, Mo'en, 2013, Mohammed Assaf Unites Palestinian, Nawa Network, https://www.nawa.ps/ar/post/4179

[16] Red Carpet Festival in Gaza, http://hadfnews.ps/post/62563

through preventing communication between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank policy. Nevertheless, Palestinian sport allowed their teams which are geographically divided to reconsider the situation. For example, in the Palestine Cup final between the Hebron team and the Shujaiya team, the hospitality and mutual respect between the two were great opportunities to fix the negative image that has been left by the division and occupation policy. The sport succeeded in demolishing the roots of the culture of violence, which has become entrenched in the absence of social unity and lack of communication. Hence, Palestinian sport is a means for creating national unity and fixing stereotypes about Palestinian reality[17].

Conclusion

Politics has affected the Palestinian society in various aspects. It has weakened the social stability and civil unity, and thus it helped violence culture to grow with its forms of political and social discrimination. Indeed, there is a state of nonnormative that profoundly attacking the structures of Palestinian society, which has become subject to that normative in dealing with issues. This situation is the result of a clear decline of tolerance and dialogue culture that is based on diversity and pluralism. However, the Palestinian society still has the means to challenge the culture of violence. Previous models have demonstrated the ability of the Palestinian society to build special methods to deal with its crises and issues, especially addressing the culture of violence with effective No-Violent means. Palestinian people need to believe in their ability to succeed and reach safety over violence. Numerous civic organizations are trying to shed light on the importance of promoting a non-violence culture and tolerance. They believe in this approach's ability to restore hope in unity and to end the division as well as to build a developed society that can handle its crises without using violence.

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[17] Shurrab, Mohammed, 2019, Sport unites Palestinian Parts, Youth from Hebron in Gaza for the first time, Watan News, https://www.wattan.net/ar/news/280218.html

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