

TEXT OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL ACCORD ADOPTED BY PRESIDENT ABBAS, MAY 2006

On May 10, 2006, the official Palestinian news agency (Wafa) announced that President Mahmoud Abbas had adopted a new "national accord" outlining the formal Palestinian stance on a number of key issues. The web announcement included the text of the accord, drafted by representatives of various Palestinian factions. Following is an English version of Wafa's original Arabic announcement, as translated by BBC Worldwide Monitoring.

Ramallah, 10 May (Wafa)—President Mahmud Abbas this evening announced his adoption of the National Accord Document issued by the leaders of the Prisoner Movement in the Israeli occupation jails. The president said that this document is very important and reflects the highest sense of responsibility by those heroes. He added that this is a realistic political vision, which is "to a large extent in harmony with what I am thinking".

The document was signed by Fatah Secretary deputy prisoner Marwan al-Barghuthi; Shaykh Abd-al-Khaliq al-Natshah, of the Supreme Leadership Committee of Hamas; Shaykh Bassam al-Sa'di, one of the leaders of the Islamic Jihad Movement; Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, a PLO Executive Committee member and deputy secretary-general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and Mustafa Badarinah, one of the leaders of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The document called on the Palestinian people to show unity, close ranks, support the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority - president and government - enhance steadfastness and resistance in the face of aggression and siege, and reject interference in Palestinian internal affairs. The document also called for renouncing all manifestations of division and everything that leads to sedition; condemning the use of weapons to settle internal conflicts, regardless of the excuses; and banning the use of weapons against the sons of the one people.

The document underlined the inadmissibility of shedding Palestinian blood, and called for compliance with dialogue as the only means to solve differences. It called for the expression of opinion through all means, including opposition to the authority and its decisions, based on the law and the right to peaceful protest, and through marches, demonstrations and sit-ins, provided they are peaceful, no weapons are used during them and no attacks are mounted on citizens and public property.

"Text" of document

Following is the text of the National Accord Document:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate; "And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves [Koranic Verse]."

Out of a high sense of national and historical responsibility; in view of the dangers facing our people; in order to enhance the domestic Palestinian front and safeguard the national unity and the unity of our people in the homeland and in exile; in order to confront the Israeli enterprise, which aims to impose an Israeli solution, destroy our people's dream and right to establish a fully sovereign Palestinian state - the Israeli government intends to implement this plan during the coming stage by completing the construction of the racial wall, Judaizing Jerusalem, expanding the Israeli settlements, seizing the Jordan Valley, annexing large parts of the West Bank and preventing our people from exercising their right to return; in order to preserve the accomplishments of our people, which they achieved during their long march of struggle; in loyalty to the martyrs of our great people and in recognition of the woes of their prisoners and the wounded; based on the fact that we are still in a liberation stage the main feature of which is national and democratic, which necessitates a struggle and political strategy commensurate with this feature; in order to render the comprehensive national dialogue successful based on the Cairo Declaration and the urgent need for unity - based on all that, we present this document to our great, steadfast people, to Prime Minister Isma'il Haniyah, to the Palestine National Council chairman and members, to the Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker and members, to all the Palestinian forces and factions, to all the non-governmental and popular institutions and organizations, and to the leaders of Palestinian public opinion in the homeland and in exile. We hope they will consider this document as an indivisible whole, and we hope it will be approved and supported by everyone and mainly contribute to reaching the Palestinian national accord document:

State

1. The Palestinian people in the homeland and in exile are seeking to liberate their land and gain their rights to freedom, return, independence and self-determination. These include their right to establish an independent state with holy Jerusalem as its capital on all the territories occupied in 1967, the right of the refugees to return, and the liberation of all prisoners and detainees. This is based on our people's historical right to the land of the fathers and forefathers, the UN Charter, international law and international legitimacy provisions.
2. Expediting the implementation of what was agreed upon in Cairo in March 2005 with regard to developing and activating the PLO and the entry of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad into the PLO being the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people wherever they are. This should be in harmony with the changes in the Palestinian arena and based on democracy in order to entrench the representation power of the PLO and enable it to shoulder its responsibilities in leading and mobilizing our people in the homeland and in exile and defending their national, political and human rights at all international and regional

forums. The national interest requires the formation of a new National Council before the end of 2006 in a manner that guarantees the representation of all the forces, factions, national and Islamic parties, the assemblies of our people everywhere, and all institutions, activists and personalities on a proportional basis in terms of representation, influence and popular, social, political and struggle effectiveness. This is in order to preserve the PLO as a broad front, a comprehensive national coalition and a highest political authority which brings the Palestinians in the homeland and in exile together.

"Concentrating resistance in the territories occupied in 1967"

3. The right of the Palestinian people to resistance; adhering to the option of resistance through various means, and concentrating [Arabic: tarkiz] resistance in the territories occupied in 1967, in addition to political, negotiating and diplomatic action; continuing the popular resistance to all forms and policies of the occupation; and expanding the participation of all groups, sides, sectors and the masses of our people in this popular resistance.

4. Drawing up a Palestinian plan for comprehensive political efforts and standardizing the Palestinian political discourse based on the Palestinian national consensus programme, Arab legitimacy and the international legitimacy resolutions that are fair to our people. [These efforts] should be spearheaded by the PLO and the National Authority - president and government - the national and Islamic factions, the non-governmental organizations and public figures in order to elicit and enhance the political, financial, economic and humanitarian Arab, Islamic and international aid to our people and National Authority. This is also in order to support our people's right to self-determination, freedom, return and independence; confront Israel's plan to impose an Israeli solution on our people; and confront the unjust siege imposed on us.

Cooperation between presidency, government

5. Protecting and enhancing the Palestinian National Authority being the nucleus of the coming state. This authority was built by our people through their struggle, sacrifices and the suffering of their sons. The higher national interest requires respect for the temporary constitution of the authority and the applicable laws; respect for the responsibilities and powers of the president, whom the Palestinian people willingly elected in free, democratic and honest elections; and respect for the responsibility and powers of the government, to which the Legislative Council granted confidence. It is important for the presidency and the government to have creative cooperation, to work jointly and hold joint periodic meetings to settle differences through a brotherly dialogue based on the temporary constitution and the higher national interests. A comprehensive reform in the National Authority institutions, especially the judicial system, should be carried out. There should be respect for the judiciary on all levels, and its decisions should be implemented to enhance and entrench the rule of law.

6. Achieving national unity in a manner that guarantees the participation of all the parliamentary blocs, especially the Fatah and Hamas movements and the political forces wishing to participate. This should be done based on this document and on a joint programme to boost the Palestinian position on the domestic, Arab, regional and international levels and to deal with challenges through a strong, national government that enjoys the popular and political support of all the Palestinian forces as well as Arab and international support. This government should be able to implement the reform programme, fight poverty and unemployment, and offer the best care possible to the groups who bore the burdens of steadfastness, resistance and intifadah and were victims of the Israeli criminal aggression, especially the families of martyrs, prisoners and the wounded; the owners of the property and houses demolished by the occupation; and the unemployed and graduates.

Negotiations

7. Running the negotiations is the responsibility of the PLO and the National Authority president based on adhering to and achieving the Palestinian national goals. Any crucial agreement should be presented to the new Palestine National Council to be ratified or to hold a referendum on it wherever possible.

8. Liberating the prisoners and detainees is a sacred national duty, which should be done by all means by all the Islamic and national factions and forces, the PLO, the National Authority - president and government - the Legislative Council and all the formations of the resistance.

9. Increasing efforts to support and take care of the refugees and defend their rights. Efforts should be made to convene a popular conference that represents the refugees. The conference should form follow-up committees the duty of which would be to affirm and adhere to the right of return and call on the international community to implement Resolution 194, which stipulates the refugees' right to return and be compensated.

10. Working to form a unified resistance front called "the National Resistance Front" to lead and engage in resistance to the occupation, unify resistance acts and create a unified political authority for the resistance.

11. Adhering to the democratic approach and holding periodic fair and honest presidential, legislative and local council elections in accordance with the law; respecting the principle of peaceful [transition of] power; pledging to protect the democratic Palestinian experience; respecting the democratic choice and its results; respecting the rule of law and the essential and public liberties; respecting press freedom and equality among citizens in rights and duties without discrimination; and protecting and developing the gains of women.

12. Rejecting and condemning the unjust siege imposed on our people by the United States and Israel; calling on the popular and official Arab circles to

support the Palestinian people, their steadfastness and national cause on political, financial, economic and media levels; and affirming that the Palestinian National Authority is committed to the Arab consensus and joint Arab action.

Call for unity, dialogue

13. Calling on the Palestinian people to unite, close ranks and support the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority - president and government - enhancing steadfastness and resistance in the face of the aggression and siege; and rejecting interference in internal Palestinian affairs.

14. Renouncing all manifestations of division, which leads to sedition; condemning the use of weapons to settle internal disputes, regardless of the excuses; banning the use of weapons against the sons of the one people; affirming the inadmissibility of shedding Palestinian blood; showing commitment to dialogue as the only means to resolve differences; expressing opinions by all means, including the opposition to the authority and its decisions, based on the law and the right to peaceful protests and through demonstrations, marches and sit-ins provided they are peaceful, no weapons are used during them and no attacks are mounted on citizens and public property.

15. The national interest requires looking for the best means for our people and their political forces in Gaza Strip to continue, under the current circumstances, the battle for freedom, return, independence and the liberation of the West Bank and Jerusalem. This is in order to make the steadfast Gaza Strip a real source of power for the steadfastness and resistance of our people in the West Bank and Jerusalem. The national interest requires a re-evaluation of the methods and the best means of struggle against the occupation.

16. The need to reform and develop all the branches of the Palestinian security institution on a modern basis and in a manner that makes it more capable of performing the duty of defending the homeland and citizens in the face of the aggression and occupation, preserving security and public order; implementing the laws; and ending the state of chaos and lawlessness which is severely harming the resistance, distorting its image and threatening the unity of the Palestinian society. There is a need to coordinate and organize the relationship with the resistance formations and forces and to organize and protect their weapons.

17. Calling on the Legislative Council to continue issuing laws organizing the work of all the branches of the security bodies and to issue a law that prevents the personnel of these bodies from exercising political and party action and that ensures their commitment to the elected political authority as defined by the law.

18. Working to expand the role and presence of the international solidarity, peace-loving committees to support our people's steadfastness and just struggle against the occupation, the settlement activity and the racial segregation wall on political and domestic levels. This is in order to implement the decision of the

International Court of Justice in The Hague, which considers the wall and the settlements illegitimate and calls for their removal.

[signed] The Palestinian National Liberation Movement, Fatah, by Fatah Secretary Deputy Marwan al-Barghuthi; Hamas, by Shaykh Abd-al-Khaliq al-Natshah of the Supreme Leadership Committee of Hamas; the Islamic Jihad Movement, by Shaykh Bassam al-Sa'di; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by PLO Executive Committee Member and Deputy PFLP Secretary-General Abd-al-Rahim Malluh; the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by Mustafa Badarinah.

Note: The Islamic Jihad Movement expressed reservations about the point related to negotiations.