

The Actualization of Independent State of Palestine: Palestine Liberation Organization's Contribution and the Emergence of HAMAS

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ABSTRACT

There is much of intra-Arab rivalry in the region of the State of Palestine, fueled majorly by conflict of personal interests and less of collective interest. The aim of this study is to assess the efforts made by the Palestine Liberation Force (PLO) to build an Independent State of Palestine despite the obvious challenges, and identify the efforts made by Palestine Islamic Resistance's Movement (HAMAS) to fill the socio-economic structural gap created by the failure of PLO and the impact of external influences. The study uses the structural conflict and human needs as well as power sharing theories to provide the intellectual pillars on which the discourse stands. The study outlines the problems of the Palestinians to include corrupt practices among the then government officials under the Fatah party, unemployment, poverty, decaying infrastructure, insecurity, and intra-Arab rivalry: religious fundamentalism, challenges of power sharing, mistrust of unrestricted authority of individuals and of the concentration of power in one office, existence of socio-economic as well as political and religious challenges. Based on the foregoing, the study opines that democracy and good governance are the twin tools with which structural conflict and human needs crises can be resolved. Democracy is possible among the Palestinian-Arabs- a highly homogenous society where one religion (Islam) is practiced, one language (Arabic) is spoken, and Arabic patriotism is cherished. The paper proposes that the Palestinian-Arabs should exploit their homogeneity as a tool for nation building by erecting democratic structures where the hand of everyone will be seen, and the voice of everyone will be heard through a democratically elected representative.

Keywords: *Palestine, democracy, good governance, HAMAS, Fatah, Intifada*

INTRODUCTION

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the umbrella body for the struggle against Israel's continued occupation of the Arab Home land. HAMAS, the Gaza wing of the Egypt based Muslim Brotherhood, established the Islamic Resistance

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Movement, with the Arabic acronym, "HAMAS". The Palestine Liberation Organization and HAMAS represented two sides of a coin once upon a time. The former held the opinion that both Israel and the Palestinian State can live side by side, while the latter had vowed to eliminate the State of Israel. Hitherto, HAMAS saw violence and the one state solution as the only way to resolve the Palestinian crisis. Fatah, the political arm of PLO, has long renounced violence and had opted for the two States solution for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis (El-Minskin, 1989).

The victory of HAMAS at the polls in 2006 however signified a change of policy - from that of uncompromising fundamentalists to democrats - having been accepted by the Palestinian electorates. This was possible because of the corrupt practices among the then government officials of the Fatah party whose maladministration had bred unemployment, poverty, decaying infrastructure, and insecurity in the West Bank. The charitable work of HAMAS popularized and presented her as the new liberator of the Palestinian people in Gaza, supported by other Arab countries as well as militant groups. HAMAS was in touch with the needs and interests of the people. The Palestinian leadership in Ramallah, in contrast, is quite detached from the masses. Arafat and most of the men surrounding him, spent the better part of their lives in exile, and did not return to the occupied territories until the peace process started in the early nineties. This absence, especially during the first *Intifada*, combined with a highly privileged living standard led to a detachment from the Palestinian public (Dyllick-Brenzing and Mauersberger, 2006). *Intifada* (meaning, "resistance" or "throwing back") was the name given to the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation and repression in the West Bank and Gaza (The Guardian, 2006).

Although HAMAS suffered some setbacks, in that she had difficulty forming a government in the aftermath of her electoral victory, and at the same time, her government was not recognised by Israel, the United States, and the West in general (Guardian, February, 2006). In 2009, the rivalry between the PLO and HAMAS came to a point where the latter froze her relationship with the former. It was argued by HAMAS that Fatah, the largest faction of the PLO, did not act decisively when Israel assaulted Gaza. Consequently, the Chief of its Political Bureau, Mishael Khaled, speaking on behalf of HAMAS, called for the replacement of the PLO with another body. However, by 2011 when the Arab Spring 'reared its good head', the leadership of both Fatah and HAMAS subsumed their differences, and jointly responded because their interests were at stake (Tuastad, 2013).

Tuastad further describes the situation thus: "Palestinian leaders were faced with a public outcry over their pursuit of parochial goals rather than national interests." When demonstrators in Gaza and the West Bank gathered to demand political reforms and Palestinian unity, HAMAS and Fatah leaders equally feared that they could be the

next victims of popular discontent. "If we fail to respond to the will of our people, we will go the way of others," a HAMAS leader in Cairo told the International Crisis Group (ICG). The fear of "going the way of others" led the way to the April 2011 Cairo agreement, in which HAMAS and Fatah agreed to have new Palestinian elections, including, significantly, elections for the Palestinian National Council (PNC) - the parliament and supreme political body of the PLO. Thus came the birth of a new working relationship by circumstances of the Arab spring, for HAMAS had for about two decades made attempts to join the PLO during which she repeatedly adjusted her political line to be more conciliatory towards the PLO, which eventually blurred the thin line between secularism and Islamism, bringing about election modalities. It should be noted that HAMAS had refused to accept previous deals that the Palestinian Authority had made with Israel. That is why the Western powers had to freeze out aid, which the Palestinian Authority depended on, to any HAMAS-led Palestinian Authority. Increased tensions between the PLO and HAMAS eventually escalated into outright war between the two factions, which ended up with HAMAS governing Gaza independently from the West Bank-based PLO. Unfortunately, there were different failed attempts to reconcile HAMAS and the PLO. The implication was that there was no unified Palestinian Authority, a factor that compelled both sides to agree on an interim government.

This study takes a look at intra-Arab rivalry among the Palestinians as depicted by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and HAMAS (Arabic acronym) for the Gaza wing of the Egypt based Muslim Brotherhood that established the Islamic Resistance Movement. PLO was challenged by a multitude of problems, including self-inflicted ones such as corruption, unemployment, and infrastructure decay. HAMAS created platforms to fight and cater for the material, spiritual, and physical needs of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. HAMAS carried out charitable activities by building schools and providing food and shelter for the less privileged in the Palestinian territories, the Gaza strip, and the West Bank, with a population of 3.8 million people. The study identifies the efforts made by HAMAS to fill the existing socio-economic structural gap created by the failure of PLO, and outlines the problems of the Palestinians to include corrupt practices among the then government officials under the Fatah party, unemployment, poverty, decaying infrastructure, insecurity, and intra-Arab rivalry: religious fundamentalism, challenges of power sharing, mistrust of unrestricted authority of individuals and of the concentration of power in one office, existence of socio-economic as well as political and religious cleavages, and the impact of external influences. As sub-national actors in international politics and domestic actors in national politics, the role of Fatah, the Palestinian Authority, HAMAS and other coordinated groups cannot be overemphasized in resolving the conflict.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are three major theories that have provided intellectual pillars for the appraisal of the PLO's contribution to the actualization of an independent Palestinian State and the emergence of HAMAS. These theories are the Structural conflict, Human needs, and the Power sharing theories espoused by different scholars to ease the understanding of related academic discourse. The Structural Conflict Theory holds that "conflict" is a function of how societies are structured and organized; and that the society's mode of production and distribution determines social relationships (Adagbonyin and Akpotor, 2007). The Theory has two schools of thought: the radical structural theory of the Marxist, and the liberal structuralism. The radical structural theory school of thought was espoused by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Joseph Lenin. Taking a cue from "historical materialism", the "Radicals Structuralists" blame capitalism for being an exploitative system that creates division between owners of means of production (the bourgeoisie) and the workers (proletariat). The exploitation of the workers and, indeed, the low income earners under capitalism perpetuates conflict.

All of these can be resolved with good governance, improved health care, quality education, social security, equality and justice; in which case, conflicts caused by the "mode of production and distribution" would have been resolved. Transformative peace-building advocates social liberation because when there is social justice, the system that breeds conflict will be changed. Once that is achieved, trust building, relationship building, and conflict transformation will create emergent and transformative social change in an environment in which "projects" can be delivered effectively and sustainably.

The Human Needs Theory says that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict (Rosati et al cited in Faleti (2006). This study is of the view that the Human Needs theory, because of its similarity to the Frustration-Aggression and Relative Deprivation theory, underscores the imperative of transformative peace-building. These basic human needs include physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs. Faleti (2006) says that to provide access to one of the needs- for example, food - and deny access to others - for example, freedom of worship - would amount to denial and would probably result in violence. Therefore, the provision of these needs for the Palestinian masses in itself is likely to change the people's attitude from one of violence to one of peace because the deprivation that created frustration and aggression has been eliminated (Gurr, 1970).

The Power Sharing theory in homogenous and non-homogenous societies was espoused by Arend Lijphart and Gerhard Lehmbruch cited in Theodore (2008). It

holds that States should learn to live with diversity, give it political expression, and go beyond forms of separating powers to sharing power. It says that majority does not rule, rather all communities, whether defined by ethnicity, language, religion, or even ideology; participate in government on the basis of proportional or equal representation. Important decisions can be taken only by mutual agreement and that each community has a right of veto. Interestingly, the Palestinian society is a homogenous one, given the prominent role being played by the Islamic religion and Arabic language. However, much of its diversity has stemmed from ideological differences engendered by religion and politics, subjected to foreign influences of the sponsors of the various groups. For instance, the cessation of hostility and acceptance of Israel as state by the PLO was a welcome development by Egypt, the US, and the West at large. However, it led to increase in the spate of bombing and killing of the Israelis by HAMAS within and outside the occupied territories. The study is of the opinion that much of the ideological differences that plagued the Palestinian territory were fostered by foreign influences whose activities merely worsened the conflicts. Therefore, a focus on the homogenous features of the Palestinians and the application of political diversity skills for power sharing is a key factor that can be harnessed.

Historical Analysis of Palestine

The name Palestine is derived from Philistia, which is the land of the Philistines. What was originally the name of the south-western region came to be applied to the entire land. In the Old Testament, it is generally called the land of Canaan or the land of Israel. The Israelites were said to have come into Palestine from the south of Jordan and conquered the territory of the Canaanites west of River Jordan. Having formed a loose federation of the twelve patriarchal tribes, the Israelites merged their territories together with the Canaanites (Mordi and Aboribo, 1992). They further say that the Philistines, who had so many ethnic groups, have long disappeared from History. They have left nothing but their name in modern English form of "Palestine" derived from the Latin "Palestine".

The Arabic speaking people who are today known as Palestinians are a mixture of Arabs, Crusaders, Turks, and Egyptians, together with the descendants of some biblical Jews who converted twice, first to Byzantine Christianity, then to Islam. Even the descendants of the Arabs and the Israelis are traceable to Abraham through Jacob and Ishmael. Israel's own tradition agrees that its ancestor came into Palestine as an alien and that the foundation of their religion was established outside its borders. But history has it that before the appearance of the Philistines, the Israelites have been living in this homeland some 3,000 years ago. A compendium of books known as the Bible testifies to this fact. The Moslem Arab Conquest of Palestine took place in the

7th century. Thus the Moslem Arab Conquest of Palestine in AD 637 was the starting point of their occupation of Palestine (Cattan, 1969). The analysis above is on dispersion and migration occasioned by either search for greener pasture, war, acquisition of territories, and in some cases, absorption of smaller and weaker groups by bigger and stronger ones or vice versa. This is a general phenomenon in the history of migration and dispersion. However, in the cases of both Israelis and Palestinians, ancestral lineage and religion have played a dominant role. On the one hand, the Arabs are traceable to Ishmael and the Islamic religion, while on the other hand the Israelis are traceable to Jacob and Judaism. However, the moderate Arabs and Israelis are the few Christians in Israel, and among the Palestinian Arabs in the disputed territories. But they are a minority group whose voice is too weak to be heard, and whose strength cannot pull a political string of any consequence.

Background to the Formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization

The future and status of Palestine and the respective places of the people who live in Palestine have been opened to questions. This has been so, since the establishment of the British Mandate over the territory at the end of the First World War in 1918; a mandate that expired in 1948. For a budding Palestinian national movement, the first task was to thwart the Balfour Declaration and even limit Jewish immigration. In the same vein, the Palestinians reacted sharply against the influx of the Jews into Palestine when Germany set the anti-Semitism ball rolling. Thus, the great reprising of 1936-1939 marked a radicalization of the struggle which culminated in the rejection of the two states solution by the Palestinians later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November, 1947. However the Israelis accepted the two States solution.

The conflict of rejection and acceptance of the two States solution culminated in the 1948, 1956, and 1967 wars, but it was not until the Palestinian awakening, the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964, and the development of Yasser Arafat's Fatah, that Palestinian Politically began to evolve (Gresh, 1983). Thus the events of the time gradually made the PLO assert itself as the authentic representative of the Palestinian people; a role HAMAS has positioned itself to play after the near demise of Fatah.

The pivotal role of PLO finally made other Arab movements to become subsumed in it under unity agreement signed on May 6, 1970. However, it must be critically emphasized that intra-Arab rivalries played a dominant role in whatever feat that has been achieved by the Palestine Liberation Organization. A Palestinian National Congress (PNC) was convoked in Jerusalem from May 28 1964 during which two basic texts were adopted - the National Charter and the Basic Constitutional law of

the Palestine liberation Organization. The stress in the Charter was laid, above all, on the definition of Palestine as an Arab homeland bound by ties of nationalism to other Arab countries, which together with Palestine, is the greater Arab homeland - that the Palestinian Arab people possesses the legal right to its homeland and of course this homeland is an inseparable part of Arab Nation (Gresh, 1983). Basically, the aims and objectives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, according to Smith (1984), were:

- To secure within its power an independent nation state of Palestine.
- To make sure this Palestinian state is created in the West Bank of the Jordan and Gaza.
- To raise a standing army known as Palestine Liberation Army.
- To express their right to self-determination.
- To retrieve from the Israelis all the properties and places they forcefully occupied during the various years.
- To defend the territorial integrity of those Arab nations, such as Jordan, whose sovereignty is over the West Bank, and Egypt, which controls Gaza and Syria that annexed Himmah.

The Implication of Diverse Palestinian-Arab Political Thought

A comparative analysis of the achievements of the Palestine Liberation Organization reveals that the Palestinian Islamic Resistance's movement (HAMAS) shares almost the same features, one of which is the degree of acceptance by the Palestinians. The former initiated the Course of Unification of the Palestinians and presented a common force as their liberator. Indeed, the PLO did appear to be the only hope of the Palestinian Arabs, the sole reason why other Pan-Arab bodies ceded their control to the PLO. But PLO's acceptance of the two-state solution made the Arab leaders to turn the Palestinians against the PLO using the Islamic religion and material gifts to influence the Palestinians. This is why HAMAS had to appear as another liberator that will replace the PLO; and since then, Palestinians have proven their acceptance of HAMAS through the ballot in January, 2006 (Goddard, 2006).

Did The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) unify the Palestinians before the emergence of HAMAS?

The Original Plan of the PLO was to destroy the state of Israel and consequently establish a secular, democratic state where Jews, Muslims, and Christians can co-exist peacefully. The Arabs were against this notion and this brought about the great diversity in Palestinian political thinking among the different movements that made up the PLO (Gresh, 1983). While the unification of the different Palestinian and Arab

groups appeared to be an achievement, it is an illusion, upon which Fatah, the political wing of PLO, walked away from popularity. The opposition of the Arabs to the creation of a secular democratic State as well as the two States solution is a fundamental decision that has stood as a stumbling block to the peace process as represented by HAMAS. The Arabs funded the Palestinian Liberation Army which was responsible for military incursions from Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon into Israel. In fact, the period between 1980-1982 was the height of strike and counter military strikes between the Palestinians and the Israelis, around the Israeli-Lebanese borders. PLO guerrillas fired several hundreds of rockets at the Israelis. An Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Mr. Argov, was shot and critically wounded by Palestinian gun men in London which precipitated artillery duels between the guerrillas and Israelis along the Lebanese border. Thus the western nations and the Israeli government described the PLO as a terrorist group. This event is only one of the series of military encounters between the Israelis and the Palestinians at the instance of Arab leaders (Eban, 1993).

Strength and Weakness of PLO

In a nutshell, the achievements of the PLO include gaining global recognition as typified by the United Nations Resolution 242 which says that "Israel should not acquire land by force or military might but by dialogue." Other resolutions includes, 422 (1967) and 338 (1973). These two resolutions confirm the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries and ignore the earlier U.N. positions calling for self-determinations for Palestinians. These resolutions were in addition to different peace agreements and accords signed in Camp David, Sharm el Sheikh, and the Oslo accord in 1993 whose consequence was the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhat Rabin by an Israeli fundamentalist. The recognition of PLO by the Non-aligned movement, OAU, and EU must be acknowledged (The Guardian, 1999). In 1995 an Educational Research and Scientific Centre was also established in Beirut for the purpose of research, development, and the production of weapons. There were also trained Arab Poets who left Israel to work for the PLO in New York and PLO research centre in Lebanon. The climax of PLO achievement is the declaration of the Palestinian State in Exile, with East Jerusalem as its capital in 1988 and its recognition by many countries. Nigeria was among the first countries to recognize PLO (Zureik, 1979).

The failures of the Palestine Liberation Organization gave rise to the first *Intifada* and the birth of HAMAS in 1988 in the West Bank and Gaza. The declaration by the PLO in December 6, 1988 that the survival of the Palestinian people does not imply the destruction of the State of Israel only helped to fuel the *Intifada*. Hitherto, the

Fatah party led by Yasser Arafat had been perceived to be apathetic towards the problems of unemployment and corruption among Fatah party officials. Fatah has been accused of corruption and being incapable of improving the lives of Palestinians. In addition, the Algiers declaration of 1988 was a significant shift from the PLO charter of 1968 because in a sense, it accepted the principles of 1947 partition plan, thus it provoked much anti-PLO sentiments among the Palestinians and other groups (El-Miskin, 1989).

The *Intifada* and the Emergence of HAMAS

The *Intifada* is an unprecedented and continuous mass uprising of military resistance to Israeli State terror and violence in its continued efforts to keep Palestine under occupation perpetually. The *Intifada* no doubt represents the extent to which revolutionary forces of Islam have been unleashed across the region. Thus, it was very difficult to separate the *Intifada* from the Islamic factor because of an increase in Islamic awareness and Islamic political activity in the West Bank and Gaza. Indeed the growing strength of Islam was reflected in occupied Palestine by the number of mosques which has doubled on the West Bank in twenty years and has increased from 200 to 600 on Gaza strip. In their slogans and activities, Islam rapidly replaced other ideologies as the unifying force for Palestinians that are living under Israeli subjugation.

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which recently won an impressive number of seats in the Egyptian Parliament, spread its organization and activities to the Gaza strip when the latter was under Egyptian administration (1949-1967). Under Israeli occupation, the Gaza wing of the Egyptian based Muslim Brotherhood established the Islamic Resistance Movement, or HAMAS, the acronym of its Arabic name. Thus, Sheikh Ahmad Ismail Yassin, assassinated by the Israeli occupation forces, was the "moving spirit" behind the December 1987 establishment of HAMAS - regarded as the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. That was at the beginning of *Intifada* (meaning, "resistance" or "throwing back"). That was the name given to the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation and repression in the West Bank and Gaza (The Guardian, 2006).

HAMAS, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), could be described as an armed Palestinian liberation movement inspired by Islam. It is a grassroots Palestinian organization, fighting to cater for the material, spiritual, and physical needs of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. These Palestinians have been colonized, dispossessed, and permanently harassed; most of whom were refugees in their homeland (The Guardian, 2006). Thus, the aims and objectives of HAMAS as a grass roots movement was to practise charitable activities by building schools and

providing food and shelter to the less privileged in the Palestinian territories, the Gaza strip, and the West Bank, with a population of 3.8 Million people. This is the reason why HAMAS endeared itself to the Palestinians. The strength of HAMAS actually stemmed from the weakness of the ruling Fatah party coupled with its charitable activities in Gaza and West Bank. The wide spread corrupt practices for which Fatah was known is a sharp contrast of what HAMAS stands for (Dyllick-Brenzinger and Mauersberger 2006). Samer Lulu, an electorate, said he voted for HAMAS because he was tired of corruption. The point was further buttressed when Samaha Sidhi, a mother of three who resides in Gaza said, "We want to try something new, we are done with insensitive government" (Tell, 2006). It was a matter of strategy for taking over the political structures and leadership of the Palestinians.

The military wing of HAMAS, Izzedine al Qassam, launched several attacks against Israeli civilians both in Israel and in the occupied territories of Gaza. Indeed there were instances where the Palestinian Authority led by Yasser Arafat had to curb anti-Israeli activities masterminded by Mr. Ibrahim Hamad, the leader of the Izzedine al-Qassam brigades, who was imprisoned by the Palestinian Authority and released in 2002, having been declared wanted by Israel since 1998. HAMAS also lost its founder and leader to the Israeli; sheikh Ahmad Ismail Yassin as well as Abdal Aziz al-Rantissi. In the same vein, Mr. Ahmed Saadat, leader of PFLP, was also declared wanted by the Israeli Authority for killing the Right-wing Tourism Minister, Rehavam Zeevi, in 2001 (The Guardian, 2006). The victory of HAMAS at the polls in the January 2006 elections in which HAMAS fielded candidates for the first time, secured an outright majority in parliament by winning 76 seats out of the 132 seats. Fatah went down with 43 seats. This was a third strategy of HAMAS to secure political structures and leadership through elections, having endeared itself to the Palestinians through provision of food and shelter. But the history and activities of HAMAS have not endeared the group to western nations and Israel, since the elections. HAMAS have been warned to abandon terrorism (Tell, 2006).

The Intra-Palestinian Crisis and HAMAS Inability to Form Government

Whereas the Palestinians saw HAMAS as its hope towards building a people oriented government and Palestinian state, the philosophy of HAMAS on the 'annihilation' of Israel made the quartet, except Russia, to cut ties with the Palestinians. Analysts with more sympathetic voice had opined that HAMAS' participation in the election signified acceptance of the two-state formula, but they have been proved wrong by HAMAS. The HAMAS - led Palestinian government on Sunday, 4th June, 2006 rejected a deadline to accept a proposal that implicitly recognizes Israel. In fact, HAMAS had

argued through its Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, that President Mahmoud Abbas' plan for a referendum on the matter is illegal.

The reasons are simple, HAMAS refusal to recognize the supremacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization is a costly mistake. It was the PLO, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat that brought together not only the 3.8 million Palestinians of the West Bank, Gaza strip, and East Jerusalem, but the 4.8 million Palestinians in diaspora. It was the PLO that negotiated the formation of the Palestinian Authority, a platform upon which HAMAS is set to govern. HAMAS' refusal to endorse the PLO is the main factor behind the refusal of other Palestinian factions, such as Fatah and the Popular front for the liberation of Palestine, to join the HAMAS-led government. HAMAS has no machinery or structure for governance on ground except the ones that have been laid by the Palestinian Authority (Nidal, 2006).

Another problem is that there is a conflict of philosophical objective and principle between Fatah and HAMAS. Whereas Fatah seeks a negotiated two-state deal to end the conflict with Israel, with the objective of creating a Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank, and Arab East Jerusalem, HAMAS on the contrary, wants Israel to be annihilated; a call that was once re-echoed by the then Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmedinajad, saying Israel should be wiped off the face of the Earth.

A third problem is that despite its political face and a fragile truce with Israel, HAMAS is still wearing the face of terrorism, a reason the European Union and the United States have insisted that forces loyal to President Mahamoud Abbas should take control of the Palestinian-run border from the HAMAS-led interior ministry. HAMAS could not proceed to form a stable government without a regular source of fund. Hitherto the Palestinian Authority is heavily dependent on foreign assistance. The bulk of the annual budget of about \$1.7 million comes in the form of Western aids and, with the European Union contributing the highest. According to the aid profile as provided by the Palestinian Authority's finance ministry, the EU and individual European nations donate \$570 million annually. The United States gives \$300 million for development and infrastructure projects; Saudi Arabia gives \$46 million. Additional income on custom duties and value added tax collected by Israel stands at \$660m. The total revenue projected for 2005 was \$396 million (Punch, 2006). But these funds were cut-off with a simultaneous isolation of HAMAS by the US and the EU. That is why HAMAS has embraced Russia, a gesture seen by some in the West as a chance to push HAMAS into embracing more moderate views (Punch, 2006).

However, HAMAS reverted to the status quo of violence against Israel by firing rockets into Israel from Gaza, thus breaking the 16 months truce with Israel since February, 2005. HAMAS accuses Israel of killing seven civilians including three children who were caught in an explosion as they relaxed on a Gaza beach (Vanguard, 2006).

Most likely, HAMAS was also reacting to Israel's raid of Jericho Prison for the arrest of a militant leader, Mr. Ahmed Saadat. He was arrested in connection with the killing of right-wing Tourism Minister, Rehavam Zeevi, by PFLP gunmen in 2001. That attack itself was to avenge the assassination of Mr. Saadat's predecessor by Israel. The resumption of violence by HAMAS is also not unconnected to the capture of Mr. Ibrahim Hamad in Ramallah by Israeli forces. He has been accused by Israel, of masterminding a string of suicide bombings, including attacks on Cafes and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Mr. Ibrahim Hamad was made leader of the Izzedine al-Qassam brigades in the West Bank in December 2003 (Vanguard, 2006).

Impact of HAMAS-led Palestinian Government

The success of HAMAS at the parliamentary polls in 2006 marked a turning point in the Palestinian struggle towards the attainment of nationhood. Among other things, it facilitated the Cairo agreement in 2011, in which HAMAS abandoned her demand that the PLO charter must be changed before joining it. The Israeli government depicts the HAMAS-led Palestinian government as a dictator, an argument that is absurd to the average Israeli citizen who feels that the Palestinians should stage a civil protest to demand for their rights. Similarly, the people of Gaza supported HAMAS in its war against Israel because they perceive it to be part of their war for independence. That psychological boost given to the Palestinians by Israeli activists strengthened the spirit of nationalism among the Palestinians because of the effort of HAMAS. The Israeli promise that an end to armed struggle will bring freedom has never been trustworthy, as the experiences of the past years have shown. It simply never happens. It should be noted that the quiet years in the West Bank did not bring the Palestinians any closer to an independent state, while the truce in between wars in Gaza did not also bring about a relief from the siege. HAMAS had told the Palestinians that freedom comes at the cost of blood and the tragedy is that HAMAS usually provides the evidence. For instance, the Oslo Accords came after the first *Intifada*, and the evacuation of settlements in Gaza came after the second *Intifada*; none of these was achieved as a result of negotiations. It should be recalled that before the first *Intifada*, Israel turned down even the convenient London Agreement between Shimon Peres and Jordan's King Hussein (Sheizaf, 2014).

The perception of the Palestinians is that the Israelis are out to colonize them, and after every war, the siege against them will be reinforced. Given the level of support enjoyed by HAMAS as it relates to fighting for the political and territorial independence of Palestine, the resistance put forward by the HAMAS-led Palestinian government has yielded some level of acceptance among Palestinians, and recognition in the international community. Through the pressure mounted by HAMAS, in 2010, the

representatives of Fatah, HAMAS, and other active Palestinian stakeholders, met in Ankara and Istanbul in Turkey during which reconciliation and the reform of the PLO were discussed. Basically, it was agreed at that meeting that the PLO should adopt the proportional representation electoral system for the election of the representatives of different Palestinian communities into the Palestinian National Congress (Tuastad, 2013). One important fact is that the series of reconciliatory and political meetings held by Fatah and the PLO, between 2005 and 2011, have made HAMAS to opt for "popular resistance" than "armed struggle". This is because a good number of the Palestinians have blamed HAMAS for the lack of progress, yet the Arab Spring has conveyed a message to the people that the Palestinians must learn to deal with their domestic problems. HAMAS helped to emphasise the importance of religious values, and the influence of religious players are more pronounced in Palestinian society than in Israeli society. It must be noted that Palestinian society is less secularized, and because of the power HAMAS wields through its paramilitary organization, with a wide base of popular support, she has made some useful impact on the Palestinian society. The important role that these conditions play in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict demonstrates the great degree to which religion functions as a substantive contributor or, as a barrier to resolving the conflict (Yaacov, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian crisis is dependent on the resolution of the intra-Palestinian, or the crisis of supremacy between HAMAS and the PLO. This is in addition to the need for the Arab States to reduce their level of interference in the politics and governance of the Palestinian State. When this has been achieved, the Palestinians can close ranks, forge unity, and confront the course of creating an independent Palestinian state that exists side by side with Israel. To all intents and purposes, the occupied territories will be given back to the Palestinians through the mediation of the Quartet - European Union, United States, Russia, and the United Nations. Of course, this must be preceded by total renunciation of the act of terrorism by the militants. If elections are conducted and democratically elected government is put in place, there will be need to demilitarize the society. A post-conflict programme would have to be in place which will entail counseling, infrastructural development, employment and other related needs to heal the wounds and pains caused by the conflicts.

Based on the foregoing, this study submits as the way forward that democracy and good governance are the twin tools with which structural conflict and human needs crisis can be resolved. Democracy is possible among the Palestinian Arabs, a highly

homogenous society where one religion (Islam) is practiced, one language, (Arabic) is spoken, and Arabic patriotism is cherished. The work proposes that the Palestinian Arabs should exploit their homogeneity as a tool for nation building by erecting democratic structures where the hand of every one will be seen, and the voice of everyone will be heard through a democratically elected representative. There should be a power sharing formula for proportional and equal representation, where the representatives of the Palestinians in government will make policies that are in alignment with the needs of the people. The leadership of the Palestinian people should imbibe the concept of good governance.

More explicitly, good governance means "bringing public policy in alignment with the social needs" of the masses. The features of good governance include quality leadership, sound management of the economy, a strong judicial system, an independent and responsible media, education, participation in the political process, rule of law and transparency, constitutional guarantee, and the fight against corruption. In addition, the concept of nation building should also be explored in the course of building the Palestinian state. Ndolo (2005) defines Nation building as the process of politically socializing the people into becoming good citizens of the political order and making the citizens feel they have a stake in the community worth fighting for. Erundu and Obasi (2000) have posited that nation building is a process of mobilizing available resources - human, materials, and financial - for socio-economic and political development of a given nation state. It was the desire to establish and build the Nigerian nation that led to the nationalist struggle. Nation building involves the transformation of existing structures through the collective efforts of the citizens of the state (country). Indeed, it is the humble submission of this study that good governance and nation building will contribute to building and consolidating on the existing democratic gains in the Palestinian territory.

Finally, the concept of consensus should be applied to resolve the intra-Palestinian conflicts because the conflict is as a result of the struggle for access to, control, and management of political power. The concept of consensus building among the stakeholders should be applied. The option of the two-state solution will simply be an "icing on the cake." Consensus is a collective opinion expressing acceptance of a middle ground in a dispute. Accordingly, Onuoha (2011) as cited in Abia (2016) describes consensus as "a position of no winner, no victor, no vanquished; and better still, a give and take situation in the African parlance, which has been employed in the intractable socio-political crises and conflicts in Africa." Consensus is an 'elicitive' process of conflict resolution in which appropriate models for conflict resolution are built from cultural resources with attendant implicit knowledge. In this case, the cultural/traditional as well as Islamic resources of the Palestinians are likely to contribute largely to the resolution of the crisis.

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