

El Alamein Meeting:  
What is Next; Consequences, Evidences, and Results  
**Palestinian Political Factions and Women Political Leaders  
Affirm the Necessity to End the Political Division**



**Ramallah, 8th Aug. 2023:** Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development- PWWSD, arranged, in parallel, two roundtables discussion in both Ramallah and Gaza Strip about the results of the Palestinian Political Factions meeting in El- Alamein- Egypt. Several political leaders (males/ females) participated in the roundtables that were arranged under the title: **“Reconciliation Meeting, what is Next, Consequences, Evidence, and Results”**. The meetings were arranged within the frame of the project:” Advancing women's rights through the implementation of peace agreements in Palestine, South Sudan, and Libya”. Scheduling the meeting on such a date was within the debate and arguing that accompanied El- Alamein meeting and the questions raised in the Palestinian street about the results of the mentioned meeting.

There were lots of hopes pinned by Palestinians on the meeting to contribute to ending the political division as well as expectations that the current meeting will lead to getting out of the bottleneck in which Palestinians are put as a result of the political division. The increase of debate and arguing as well as questioning among Palestinians, is a result of the fact that President Mahmoud Abbas declared forming a special committee to follow up the results of the meeting though there was no official statement declaring the details on which the participants agreed.

El- Alamein meeting was arranged upon an invitation from President Mahmoud Abbas, in which he scheduled the date for the meeting and decided the place to meet within the increased aggressions of the Israeli occupation against Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the risks that the Palestinian national question is facing recently.

The roundtable discussion witnessed the participation of a group of political leaders (males/females) including Ms. Majida Al- Masri, a member of the Political Office of the Democratic Front for Liberation of Palestine. Ms. Al- Masri was the only woman who participated in the given meeting in El- Alamein. Regarding participation, Ms. Al- Masri said: “We participated in the meeting based on the invitation of President Mahmoud Abbas who called upon the meeting to face the challenges imposed on the Palestinian question as a result of the policies of the occupation (according to what he said) and facing the impacts of the procedures of the occupation against Palestinian people and land such as invading Palestinian localities, military aggressions, and escalation of the settlements’ building. During the meeting, the president called for exploring the possibility of developing a unified Palestinian future political strategy initiative to face the occupation’s policies”.

Ms. Al- Masri added that “there were neither preparations for the meeting nor the clear image of the outcomes and results of the meeting”.

Ms. Rima Nazzal, a member of the General Secretary of the General Union of Palestinian Women, expressed astonishment regarding the recession in the participation of women members of the political parties. Ms. Nazaal expressed being shocked by excluding the representatives of the civil society (males/ females) from participating in the reconciliation negotiations that took place in

Egypt. She called upon intensifying the efforts to dismantle the internal paradoxes and to ensure including women in the political activeness as well as the necessity to eradicate the root causes that hinder realizing the national reconciliation. The speaker emphasized that there is a necessity to regain the confidence of people by implementing the agreements that were achieved, between the two conflicted parties, in the past. The speaker affirmed the necessity to achieve a real national reconciliation among the Palestinian political factions, taking into consideration that two of the political parties (Islamic Jihad and Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine- General Leadership) boycott the meeting; thus, there is a need to address the deficit within the efforts to end the division and invest concrete efforts to realize that.



Ms. Afaf Ghatasha, a representative of the People's Party at the roundtable in Ramallah, stated: "The invitation for the meeting was initiated by President Mahmoud Abbas where he was "the star of the show". He decided to arrange the meeting following the military aggression on Jenin and the invitation is just a reaction from the Palestinian leadership to deal with the emerging security circumstances. However, from the point of view of the People's Party, the positive aspect is that the issues discussed during the meeting were political issues. The meeting discussed the strategies for facing the policies of the occupation within the presence of the most radical and racist government in the history of the occupation's state. For that, the major issue tackled during the meeting was positive though there were no clear results or agreement between the participants. The absence of results and agreement is due to the fact that there was no clear preparation for the meeting and it was decided on the spot, by the president, to conduct the meeting. Boycotting the meeting by Islamic Jihad is a legal step as all Palestinians reject the political detention policy applied by the Palestinian Authority and those interested in achieving national unity, should eliminate the obstacles that hinder realizing such an objective and should express good willingness and release all the political detainees".

On a related level, the former member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Ms. Khalida Jarrar, emphasized the need to develop a comprehensive national strategy to face the occupation. Ms. Jarrar stressed that the overall situation is approaching the worst and added that the absence of preparation and identified agenda for El- the Alamein meeting, resulted in achieving no results on the way of realizing the national unity. The speaker affirmed that national unity is the most important thing needed and without reconciliation, there is no possibility to win the conflict with the occupation. According to Ms. Jarrar, the Israeli government is passing currently through real crises and Palestinian political parties should make use of such a situation to organize the internal Palestinian situation and end the division".

The spokesperson of Fateh and member of the Mobilization and Organization Commission, Mr. Abdul- Fattah Doula, said that: "The current challenges are permanent ones. Fateh does not ignore the presence of women within the political work field and recognizes the sacrifices of

women for the national question. Women are still representing the incubator mother for all Palestinians (as he said). Women participate in political meetings and political dialogue as well as being involved within the various political parties. We witnessed the significant role of women and their sacrifices during the latest military aggression on Jenin Refugee Camp as well as her role in the national resistance in the various Palestinian localities. The meeting in El- Alamein is a significant step to proceed in realizing national reconciliation and strengthening the national unity of Palestinians to direct the efforts towards resisting the occupation”.

The specialized political analyst (specialized in Israeli affairs), Mr. Jumaa Al- Tayeh, mentioned that the reason behind the abstain of the Islamic Jihad from participating in the given meeting is due to the refusal of the Palestinian Authority to release the political detainees from its prisons. He added that it was clear from the beginning that the meeting is a failure and there would be no results from it as the Palestinian Authority declared refusal to release the political prisoners. According to the speaker, the fact that there was no statement issued at the end of the meeting, indicates that it was a failure.



As for the roundtable in Gaza Strip (Gaza City) arranged in parallel with the one in Ramallah, it included several opinions proposed by participants regarding excluding women from the reconciliation negotiations and the efforts to achieve national unity.

Ms. Nihad Al- Jeidi ( Hamas), emphasized the necessity to end the political division and strengthen the presence of women within the delegations that participate in the reconciliation negotiations.

Ms. Itidal Abu- Qamar ( Fateh) emphasized the same idea and stressed that women should participate in the reconciliation negotiations. The speaker added that there should be efforts to eliminate the obstacles that hinder women's participation in the reconciliation negotiations. Additionally, according to Ms. Abu Qamar, women should be encouraged to perform political roles and have a say in ending the political division, especially within the current circumstances that the Palestinian question is passing through.

Ms. Basima Al- Bsous, the representative of Islamic Jihad said that the decision of boycotting the meeting is to express clear rejection of the political detention policy applied by the Palestinian Authority against the members of the Islamic Jihad in the West Bank.

The political activist and head of the Union of the Cultural Centers, Mr. Yusri Darweesh, criticized excluding women from the negotiations to end the political division, especially the latest meeting in El- Alamein- Egypt. In this regard, Mr. Darweesh said: "Women are partners in the national struggle and so partners in the suffering and they should be partners in the decision making process". On a related level, Dr. Mariam Abu Daqqa, a leader from the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine, emphasized the necessity to activate women's role within the political parties and increase women's representation in the various leadership structures. Moreover, Dr. Abu Daqqa stressed the necessity to invest concrete efforts to end the political division.

The participants in the two roundtables in Gaza City and Ramallah stressed the importance of achieving national Palestinian reconciliation and enhancing women's role in political leadership. The participants emphasized the need to develop initiatives to strengthen women's role and participation in the negotiations to end the political division. Among the proposed initiative was the idea to elevate the situation of the General Union of Palestinian Women and develop an

ongoing campaign to end the division based on the social activeness initiative against the division that started in the year 2012. Another idea was to initiate enhancing the culture of equality between women and men by arranging to raise awareness activities within the various governorates with the participation of the Palestinian political parties and political frames.

The project: “Advancing women's rights through the implementation of peace agreements in Palestine, South Sudan, and Libya”, is implemented in Palestine by the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development- PWWSD in partnership with Karama Regional Network, through the fund of NORAD. The main objective of the project is to contribute to solving and eliminating conflicts by involving women in advocating for the Women's Peace and Security Agenda, advocating human rights, and working on the priorities of both sexes from a gender perspective in areas affected by armed conflicts. The project in Palestine is dedicated to activating the role of women CSOs/ CBOs in ending the Political division and realizing national reconciliation.