The Palestinian Left in 2025

THE DFLP POSITION

CEAUP-Interviews
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Ficha Técnica

Titulo: A esquerda palestiniana em 2025: a posição da FDLP

Data: 22/03/2025

Entrevistado: Qais Abdul-Karim / Khader (FDLP)

Local da entrevista: DFLP Office – via vídeo-conference

Entrevistador: Maciel Santos (CEAUP)

CEAUP-Interviews: FO/CEAUP/#2025/1

Contexto:

A **Frente Democrática de Libertação da Palestina** é um movimento histórico da esquerda palestiniana. Para uma curta descrição da sua atividade entre 1969-2014, ver na janela multimédia/CEAUP, caixa da entrevista 3 - A Esquerda Palestiniana

https://www.africanos.eu/index.php/pt/editions/multimedia/ceaup/936-a-esquerda-palestiniana-2

A entrevista abaixo transcrita foi feita uma semana depois de, na atual guerra de Gaza, Israel ter unilateralmente quebrado o cessar-fogo. A trégua vigorou entre 18 de Janeiro e 19 de Março e, segundo o acordo assinado entre as forças palestinas representadas pelo Hamas e o governo de Israel, seria a 1ª fase de um plano de paz. Esta etapa permitiu a libertação de 33 prisioneiros capturados pela resistência palestina durante o ataque de 7 de Outubro; em troca Israel comprometeu-se a libertar das suas prisões entre 30 a 50 reféns palestinos por cada prisioneiro entregue pelo Hamas, bem como a permitir a entrada da ajuda alimentar em Gaza. Em ambos os lados a troca incidiu na libertação de mulheres e crianças, ficando a libertação dos operacionais militares para as fases seguintes.

Paralelamente, na segunda frente de Resistencia, na Cisjordânia, Israel aproveitou a trégua para:

- intensificar a repressão – em janeiro, mais de 30 Palestinians foram mortos na tentativa de eliminar novos grupos de resistência como a Brigada Tulkarem; em março, ataques de colonos a 15 aldeias palestinas (Huwara, Burqa,etc.) fizeram mais de uma dezena de mortos e um milhar de refugiados;

- aumentar a area de colonatos ilegais: em janeiro, mais de 3 mil novas unidades no corridor E1 (Jerusalem leste); no mês seguinte, os tribunais israelitas sancionaram a expulsão de mais de 1,2 mil palestinianos da área de Masafer Yatta (a sul de Hebron) sob o pretexto de ser uma zona militar de tiro (as décadas de resistência a este processo foram celebrizadas no documentário palestino "Sem Outra Terra", de 2024).

Com um desemprego superior a 30% e com ajuda da UNRWA em declino, a que se junta a retenção ilegal das receitas da Autoriadade Palestina, deu-se também a intensificação da resistência civil e armada.

A presente entrevista pretende divulgar nesta conjuntura as posições de um dos movimentos palestino mais experientes e ativos, apesar do filtro mediático que cobre a região praticamente nunca dar visibilidade à esquerda palestina.

A entrevista original foi feita em inglês e não foi traduzida para maior divulgação.

Palavras-chave: Palestina; Palestina – partidos políticos; FDLP; OLP

Publicado por: Jorge Teixeira

Technical File

Title: The Palestinian Left in 2025: the DFLP Position

Date: 22 Mars 2025

Interviewed: Qais Abdul-Karim / Khader (DFLP)

Location of the interview: DFLP Office – via vídeo-conference

Interviewer: Maciel Santos

CEAUP-Interviews: FO/CEAUP/#2025/1

Context:

The **Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine** is a historic movement of the Palestinian left. For a brief description of its activities between 1969 and 2014, see the multimedia window/CEAUP, interview box 3 - The Palestinian Left.

https://www.africanos.eu/index.php/pt/editions/multimedia/ceaup/936-a-esquerda-palestiniana-2

The interview transcribed below was conducted a week after Israel unilaterally broke the ceasefire in the current war in Gaza. The truce was in effect between 18 January and 19 March and, according to the agreement signed between the Palestinian forces represented by Hamas and the Israeli government, was to be the first phase of a peace plan. This stage allowed for the release of 33 prisoners captured by the Palestinian resistance during the attack on 7 October; in exchange, Israel committed to releasing from its prisons between 30 and 50 Palestinian hostages for each prisoner released by the Palestinian resistance, as well as allowing food aid into Gaza. On both sides, the exchange focused on the release of women and children. The exchange of military personnel would be left for later stages.

At the same time, on the second front of resistance in the West Bank, Israel took advantage of the truce to:

- intensify repression – in January, more than 30 Palestinians were killed in an attempt to eliminate new resistance groups such as the *Tulkarem Brigade*; in March, attacks by settlers on 15 Palestinian villages (Huwara, Burqa, etc.) left more than a dozen dead and a thousand refugees;

- increase the area of illegal settlements: in January, more than 3,000 new residential units were built in the E1 corridor (East Jerusalem); the following month, Israeli courts sanctioned the expulsion of more than 1,200 Palestinians from the Masafer Yatta area (south of Hebron) on the pretext that it was a military firing zone (the decades of resistance to this process were celebrated in the 2024 Palestinian documentary 'No Other Land').

Unemployment at around 30%, declining aid from UNRWA and the illegal withholding of Palestinian Authority revenues has led to an intensification of civil and armed resistance.

This interview aims to disseminate the positions of one of the most experienced and active Palestinian movements, whose visibility is scarce because of the permanent media filter which covers the Palestinian left.

Key-words: Palestine; Palestine – political parties; DFLP; PLO

Edited by: Jorge Teixeira

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SOCIETY

1. **CEAUP**: Before October 2023, about 200,000 Palestinians from the West Bank were working in Israel and Israeli settlements. Their wages of roughly $3 billion annually represented about 14% of the Palestinian Authority's GDP. Afterwards, Israel revoked all work permits although it seems that in early 2024 (because of shortage of labour construction and agriculture) a limited number of permits (for around 10,000 workers) were issued. Unemployment is now over 30% (13% pre-October). It looks like more than 0.5 million people in the West Bank are facing acute food problems. **In your opinion, how has this income collapse impacted the Palestinian political forces?**

1. **DFLP:** As usual, an economic collapse tends to negatively affect the capacity for mass-mobilization by the political forces. In addition, there is the restraining effect of hundreds of roadblocks and military check-points that substantially reduce the freedom of movement of the population. This is why, while there is a noticeable rise in resistance guerilla actions, no wide-scale mass protests are witnessed as in the first and the second Intifada.

2. **CEAUP**: The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) is affiliated with the Palestinian Authority (PA), which seems to limit its credibility. In recent years New Unions (Teachers, Health Care Workers) had led independent strikes. Besides, about 10,000 Palestinian workers work illegally in settlements or through unofficial channels and it seems that only informal collectives advocate for these day labourers in Israeli settlements. **Is there a risk that this situation cause more division among Palestinians and, in face of this, what is the view of DFLP about a possible Union reorganization in Palestine?**

2. **DFLP:** The PGFTU was established in the early years of the occupation, long before the PA came into being. The Union unites workers of almost all political orientations: Fatah, DFLP, PLFP, PPP, PPSF and Fida. The fact that Fatah is in the majority gives the PA government some influence on the polices of the Union. Teachers' Unions have always been independent. The same with Health Care Workers who are legally recognized as a "Profession". They are both governed by different laws than the Labour Bill. The DFLP is active in all these unions. Our main focus is on deepening the democratic practices within the labour movement, especially freedom of association and periodical elections of leading bodies with emphasis on the adoption of the principle of proportional representation.

P.L.O.

3. **CEAUP:** As far as we know, the last session of the Palestinian National Council (PNC**)** was held in May 2018 and it had been the first meeting in 22 years (since 1996). Being true that many PNC members live in exile (or in Gaza), which makes it difficult to convene meetings, the fact remains that nowadays with video conferences this should no longer be an obstacle for a PNC meeting. **Does DFLP think that the PNC should have a more active role?**

3. **DFLP:** We have always called for a radical reform of the PNC institution. Regular periodic convention was one of our demands. But more important was that the PNC should be more inclusive, more representative of the Palestinian political spectrum, and mainly that it should be directly elected by the people. The reconciliation accords of May 2011 provided for an inclusive elected PNC, and a new relatively advanced electoral law was later formulated and agreed upon by all factions, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and endorsed by the PLO Executive Committee. In the last PNC session in 2018 we managed to adopt a resolution that the PNC membership should be reduced to 350 members (now it is around 900), and that they should be elected on the basis of the new electoral law. Since the elections of May 2021 were called off, this resolution still awaits to be fulfilled.

4. **CEAUP:** Given that the Central Council also does not meet, **are there any other institutional channels for the opposition parties to challenge the Palestinian Authority?**

4. **DFLP:** The PA leadership has managed to eliminate almost all institutional channels of democratic oversight. Nevertheless, the DFLP maintains its presence in the institutions of the PLO (including the PLO Executive Committee) in order to indicate the necessity of national unity within the PLO, but also as platforms to voice opposition and propagate a national democratic alternative to the defeatist polices and despotic practices of the PA leadership. But we mainly rely on mass mobilization and democratic elections as means for change.

5. **CEAUP:** Since the 2007 split (Hamas took Gaza; Fatah retained the West Bank) there were many speculations about possible agreements - in 2011 and 2017 (Cairo), in the wake of the Algiers Declaration (2022), etc. Even after the new dynamics carried by the current Gaza war, nothing real came out from the meeting in Moscow of April 2024. It seems that Hamas is willing to join the PLO but official Fatah rejects it, in order to remain credible for any possible US plan. People close to Fatah, like Barghouti, think differently. **What is the stance of DFPL on a possible integration of Hamas into the PLO?**

5. **DFLP:** With the intensification of the genocidal war waged by the neo-fascist Netanyahu government, both in Gaza and the West Bank, national unity has become an existential necessity. According to reconciliation agreements, since 2011, the inclusion of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the PLO is the first step towards unity. The DFLP considers this move an urgent patriotic task. In the last meeting of the Central Council, the DFLP proposed a road map for unity, providing for the immediate recognition by the Central Council of Hamas and Islamic Jihad as officially recognized members of the PLO on the basis of the political program that was agreed upon by all factions in Beijing in June 2024, which calls for an independent sovereign state of Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people as stipulated in relevant UN resolution. We also called for the formation of a united negotiation team, under the banner of the PLO, with the participation of Hamas and Jihad, to run the negotiations with Israel on the basis of UNSC resolution 2537, which connects the terms of ending the present war with the rise of an independent democratic state of Palestine within the framework of a comprehensive peace in the region. Hamas showed signs of being ready to accept these proposals. But the PA leadership, also in control of the leadership of Fatah, refuses to take any practical steps towards unity. Their main concern is to avoid any Israeli measures that may threaten the Authority if they took this path. Our strategy is to work with all democratic forces, including the rank-and-file of Fatah, to mobilize mass pressure in order to overcome this obstacle.

ARMED RESISTANCE

6. **CEAUP:** Just in 2023, the UN documented more than 1,200 settler attacks (the largest in Huwara). Over 500 Palestinians were killed in 2023, the highest annual toll since 2005, according to the UN reports. The situation got obviously worse after that. From October 2023 to December 31, 2024, at least 1,860 incidents were recorded – an average of four per day, all due to the settlers (data from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA). We have heard of Jenin Brigade and Lion's D**e**n, both allegedly connected to dissent Fatah members. **What is the current role of the DFLP military wing, known as the National Resistance Brigades, with regards to the settler attacks?**

6. **DFLP:** Militants of the DFLP military wing in the West Bank act within the local brigades in the different regions, which unite combatants from all resistance groups.

7. **CEAUP: Does DFLP have military presence in Gaza?**

7. **DFLP:** The DFLP military wing in Gaza (National Resistance Brigade /Omar Al-Qasim Forces) is the third most active resistance group in the Strip.

TWO STATES?

8. **CEAUP:** There are approximately 144 Israeli settlements in the West Bank, just to mention the ones officially recognized by the Israeli government. In March 2024, Israel announced plans to build 3,500 new homes in settlements, including in the controversial E1 zone which is intended to divide the W. Bank. The very idea of a Palestinian State seems less and less feasible, which is of course the main goal of the Israeli government**. Does DFLP still support the two-state solution?**

8. **DFLP:** Settlement expansion does not make the two-state solution less feasible. This is what the Israelis want us to believe: that settlements are there to stay. This is not true. Not only in Egyptian Sinai, but even in Gaza and the northern region of the West Bank, settlements have in fact been dismantled in different junctures of this conflict. Settlement building is a grave infringement of international law and relevant UN resolutions. The demand to dismantle settlements is a legitimate requirement for a just peace and should not be marginalized or compromised by the Palestinian national liberation movement and all international supporters of peace and justice in the region.

   Since August 1973, the DFLP adopted a transitional program which called for an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state within pre-1967 lines, with the implementation of the refugees right to return to their homes pursuant to UN resolution 194, as a basis for a political settlement of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict in its present stage. This program was later adopted by the PLO, and it outlined the content the Arab Peace Initiative which was endorsed by the Arab summit in Bruit in 2002.

9. **CEAUP:** If, by any remote possibility, Israel could be in a near future brought back to the Oslo Agreements**, what would be easier to achieve: eradication of the settlements and recognition of the 1967 border or a reorganization of a single Israeli-Palestinian state?**

9. **DFLP:** First of all, Israel has never abandoned the premises of the Oslo agreements. It turned its back to its own commitments pursuant to the agreements, but it strictly forced the compliance by the Palestinian Authority to the commitments dictated on it by the Accords. The Oslo agreements were never a path towards Palestinian statehood. They are rather an arrangement for non-sovereign self-government, which are called interim but are in fact permanent.

   Second, an Israeli-Palestinian state, in order to be really democratic and to offer guarantees for genuine national equality for both peoples, can only rise on the ruins of the Zionist enterprise. Otherwise, it will be an Apartheid state.

   It would be reasonable to assume that, under an unfavorable balance of forces, a rational Zionist leadership would prefer a compromise, including the eradication of settlements and recognition of Palestinian statehood, rather than a final defeat, which would entail the collapse of the Zionist regime.

   We, in the DFLP, believe that a final, radical, solution of the contradiction between Zionism and the Palestinian national liberation movement can only be achieved within the framework of a united democratic state in historic Palestine in which both peoples can co-exist in national equality and reciprocal recognition of their national identity and equal rights, but we also firmly believe that Palestinian statehood plus the return of refugees, is an obligatory passage towards this democratic solution.