

Palestinian Realism



By Nasser Al-Kidwa

unparalleled campaign of oppression and intimidation that led to the uprooting of half the population from their homes and lands, turning them into refugees in what remained of Palestine and in the surrounding Arab countries.

This tragedy continued in 1967 with Israel's occupation of the remainder of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and then by settler colonialism unparalleled in our modern world.

Despite the clarity regarding these facts in the Palestinian consciousness and narrative, the people and its leadership have demonstrated exceptional sensibility and a real desire to live in peace and security. They have accepted a pragmatic solution that had not been envisaged for many years: independence of the State of Palestine on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. They have shown the willingness to accept Israel and coexist with it as part of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Israel's general trend of political leadership and constituents have chosen to side with the extreme right and even fascism and have consistently expressed their rejection of the Palestinian national presence and refused to grant the national rights of our people through their rejection of the existence of the State of Palestine. Their continual appropriation of parts of our territory now portends the annexation of the entire West Bank, following Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem.

This situation creates a major predicament for the international community, which has stood on the sidelines of the *Nakba*, the occupation, settler



colonialism, and countless violations of international law and international humanitarian law, which have often constituted war crimes.

This has also caused a great impasse in a region that has been deprived of the fruits of peace and normal relations, despite some unnatural surges toward normalization that we do not believe will be sustainable. Above all, it has perpetuated the state of conflict between the Palestinian and Israeli sides that has slipped repeatedly and could always slip again toward direct and open confrontation, and perhaps war.

Despite this denial of their rights, the Palestinian people remain committed to an internationally supported political solution and to its central objective of achieving national independence in the State of Palestine along the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian people remain ready for a negotiated peace settlement, provided that the unending so-called peace process, which has proved to be sterile, is replaced with a serious negotiated settlement in which the states of Palestine and Israel negotiate under the supervision of a fair international mechanism that is not monopolized by any side.

The Palestinian side will undoubtedly insist on the recognition of the rights

of Palestine refugees to return and on the compensation for their losses and rights to their property.

A settlement of this conflict that acknowledges the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people will allow the two states, Israel and Palestine, to live in security and peace. Indeed, such a solution will enable the entire Middle East to finally enjoy genuine peace and prosperity.

Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, former Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs and international diplomat, boasts a long career in international diplomacy, including as permanent observer of Palestine to the United Nations and head of the delegation of Palestine to the International Court of Justice. He served in several senior international diplomatic positions, including as Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the Arab League of Libya, and Deputy Special Envoy of the United Nations and League of Arab States for Syria. A member of the PLO's National Council since 1975, Dr. Al-Kidwa was elected twice to the Fatah Central Committee. He has also served as the chairman of the board of directors of the Yasser Arafat Foundation since 2007.