

First Arab Palestine Congress. *National Covenant of the Palestine Liberation Organisation*. Jerusalem, 28 May 1964. In *Documents on Palestine Volume II: 1948-1973*, Jerusalem: The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, 2007.¹

Statement of Proclamation of the Organisation

In the name of God, the Magnificent, the Compassionate,

Believing in the right of the Palestine Arab people to its sacred homeland Palestine and affirming the inevitability of the battle to liberate the usurped part from it, and its determination to bring out its effective revolutionary entity and the mobilisation of the capabilities and potentialities and its material, and spiritual forces;

And in realisation of the will and determination of our people to wage the battle of liberating its homeland forcefully and vigorously in harmony with its role as the effective and fighting vanguard of the sacred march;

And in realisation of a genuine and dear national aspiration embodied in the resolutions of the League of Arab States, and the First Arab Summit Conference;

And depending upon God the Almighty and in the name of the First Arab Palestine Congress held in the city of Jerusalem this day on the 16th of Muharram of the year 1384, corresponding to 28 May 1964,

I do hereby proclaim the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as a mobilising leadership of the forces of the Palestine Arab people to wage the battle of liberation, as a shield for the rights and aspirations of the people of Palestine and as a road to victory.

Ahmed Shukairy

Chairman of The First Palestine Congress

¹ The Fourth Palestine National Assembly, held in Cairo from 10 to 17 July 1968, studied the constitution for the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the regulations related to its structure, and introduced certain amendments.

The Palestinian National Covenant: Introduction

In the name of Almighty, the Magnificent, the most Merciful,

We, the Palestinian Arab people, who waged fierce and continuous battles to safeguard its home-land, to defend its dignity and honour, and who offered all through the years continuous caravans of immortal martyrs, and who wrote the noblest pages of sacrifice, offering and giving.

We, the Palestinian Arab people, who faced the forces of evil, injustice and aggression, against whom the forces of international Zionism and colonialism conspired and worked to displace it, dis-possess it from its homeland and property, abused what is holy in it and who in spite of all this refused to weaken or submit.

We, the Palestinian Arab people, who believe in its Arabism and in its right to regain its home-land, to realise its freedom and dignity, and who have determined to amass its forces and mobilise its efforts and capabilities in order to continue its struggle and to move forward on the path of holy war until complete and final victory has been attained.

We, the Palestinian Arab people, depending upon our right of self-defence and the complete restoration of our lost homeland - a right that has been recognised by international covenants and common practices including the Charter of the United Nations - and in implementation of the principles of human rights and comprehending the international political relations, with its various ramifications and limits, and considering the past experiences in all that pertains to the causes of the catastrophe, and the means to face it.

And embarking from the Palestine Arab reality, and for the sake of the honour of the Palestinian individual and his right to free and dignified life,

And realising the national grave responsibility placed upon our shoulders, for the sake of all this,

We, the Palestinian Arab people, dictate and declare this Palestinian National Covenant and how to realise it.

Article 1. Palestine is an Arab homeland bound by strong Arab national ties to the rest of the Arab Countries and which together from the large Arab Homeland.

Article 2. Palestine with its boundaries at the time of the British Mandate is a regional indivisible unit.

Article 3. The Palestinian Arab people has the legitimate right to its homeland and is an inseparable part of the Arab Nation. It shares the sufferings and aspirations of The Arab Nation and its struggle for freedom, sovereignty, progress and unity.

Article 4. The people of Palestine determine its destiny when it completes the liberation of its homeland in accordance with its own wishes and free will and choice.

Article 5. The Palestinian personality is a permanent and genuine characteristic that does not disappear. It is transferred from fathers to sons.

Article 6. The Palestinians are those Arab citizens who were living normally in Palestine up to 1947, whether they remained or were expelled. Every child who was born to a Palestinian parent after this date whether in Palestine or outside is a Palestinian.

Article 7. Jews of Palestinian origin are considered Palestinians if they are willing to live peacefully and loyally in Palestine.

Article 8. Bringing up Palestinian youth in Arab and nationalist manner is a fundamental national duty. All means of guidance, education and enlightenment should be utilised to introduce the youth to its homeland in a deep spiritual way that will constantly and firmly bind them together.

Article 9. Doctrines whether political, social or economic, shall not distract the people of Palestine from the primary duty of liberating their homeland. All Palestinians constitute one national front and work with all their feelings and spiritual and material potentialities to free their homeland.

Article 10. Palestinians have three mottoes: National Unity, National Mobilisation, and Liberation. Once liberation is completed, the people of Palestine shall choose for its public life whatever political, economic or social system they want.

Article 11. The Palestinian people firmly believe in Arab unity, and in order to play its role in realising this goal, it must, at this stage of its struggle, preserve its Palestinian personality and all its constituents. It must strengthen the consciousness of its existence and stance and stand against any attempt or plan that may weaken or disintegrate its personality.

Article 12. Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine are two complementary goals; each prepares for the attainment of the other. Arab unity leads to the liberation of Palestine, and the liberation of Palestine leads to Arab unity. Working for both must go side by side.

Article 13. The destiny of the Arab Nation and even the essence of Arab existence are firmly tied to the destiny of the Palestine question. From this firm bond stems the effort and struggle of the Arab Nation to liberate Palestine. The people of Palestine assume a vanguard role in achieving this sacred national goal.

Article 14. The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty. Its responsibilities all upon the entire Arab Nation, governments and peoples, the Palestinian people being in the foreground. For this purpose, the Arab Nation must mobilise its military, spiritual and material potentialities; specifically, it must give to the Palestinian Arab people all possible support and backing and place at its disposal all opportunities and means to enable them to perform their role in liberating their homeland.

Article 15. The liberation of Palestine, from a spiritual viewpoint, prepares for the Holy Land an atmosphere of tranquillity and peace, in which all the Holy Places will be safeguarded, and the free worship and visit to all will be guaranteed, without any discrimination of race, colour, tongue, or religion. For all this the Palestinian people look forward to the support of all the spiritual forces in the world.

Article 16. The liberation of Palestine, from an international viewpoint, is a defensive act necessitated by the demands of self-defence as stated in the Charter of the United Nations. That is why the people of Palestine, desiring to befriend all national which love freedom, justice, and peace, look forward to their support in restoring the legitimate situation to Palestine, establishing peace and security in its territory, and enabling its people to exercise national sovereignty and freedom.

Article 17. The partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are illegal and false regardless of the loss of time, because they were contrary to the wish of the Palestine people and its natural right to its homeland, and in violation of the basic principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, foremost among which is the right to self-determination.

Article 18. The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate system and all that has been based upon them are considered fraud. The claims of historic and spiritual ties between Jews and Palestine are not in agreement with the facts of history or with the true basis of sound statehood. Judaism because it is a divine religion is not a nationality with independent existence. Furthermore the Jews are not one people with an independent personality because they are citizens of the countries to which they belong.

Article 19. Zionism is a colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goal, racist and segregationist in its configurations and fascist in its means and aims. Israel in its capacity as the spearhead of this destructive movement and the pillar of colonialism is a permanent source of tension and turmoil in the Middle East in particular and to the international community in general. Because of this the people of Palestine is worthy of the support and sustenance of the community of nations.

Article 20. The causes of peace and security and the needs of right and justice demand from all nations, in order to safeguard true relationships among peoples and to maintain the loyalty of citizens to their homeland, that they consider Zionism an illegal movement and outlaw its presence and activities.

Article 21. The Palestine people believe in the principle of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity, and the right of peoples to practise these principles. It also supports all international efforts to bring about peace on the basis of justice and free international cooperation.

Article 22. The people of Palestine believe in peaceful co-existence on the basis of legal existence, for there can be no coexistence with aggression, nor can there be peace with occupation and colonialism.

Article 23. In realising the goals and principles of this Covenant the Palestine Liberation Organisation carries out its complete role to liberate Palestine in accordance with the fundamental law of this Organisation.

Article 24. This Organisation does not exercise any regional sovereignty over the Western Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on the Gaza Strip or the Himmah Area. Its activities will be on the national popular level in the liberational, organisational, political and financial fields.

Article 25. This Organisation is encharged with the movement of the Palestine people in its struggle to liberate its homeland in all liberational,

organisational, political, and financial matters, and in all other needs of the Palestine Question in the Arab and international spheres.

Article 26. The Liberation Organisation cooperates with all Arab governments, each according to its ability, and does not interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab States.

Article 27. This Organisation shall have its flag, oath and a national anthem. All this shall be resolved in accordance with a special system.

Article 28. The Fundamental Law for the Palestine Liberation Organisation is attached to this Covenant. This law defines the manner of establishing the Organisation, its organs, institutions, the specialties of each one of them, and all the needed duties thrust upon it in accordance with this Covenant.

Article 29. This Covenant cannot be amended except by two-thirds majority of the National Council of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in a special session called for this purpose.