

Call for Paper Proposals

Institute for Palestine Studies Annual Conference

In Partnership with Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights – Birzeit University

Current Political Challenges and Future Prospects for Palestine

The Institute for Palestine Studies is pleased to announce its annual conference for the year 2020, in partnership with Muwatin Institute for Democracy and Human Rights at Birzeit University, to be held in the second half of October 2020, on “**Current Political Challenges and Future Prospects for Palestine**”. We invite researchers to submit paper proposals in accordance with the main themes identified in the conference outline below.

Proposals (250-500 words) should be sent **no later than 24 July 2020**, accompanied by a concise resume, to the following emails:

conference-ijspalestine-studies.org

muwatin@birzeit.edu

The conference committee will review the proposals and will only contact applicants with accepted proposals. Complete accepted papers should be submitted **no later than 24 September 2020**.

Conference Outline

The Palestinian situation is witnessing a state of disarray and uncertainty in light of current international and regional transformations, approaching a state of collapse. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its ramifications. Although Palestine has witnessed many internal and external challenges and crises throughout the past decades, what distinguishes the current crisis is its depth, pervasiveness, and aimlessness.

With the collapse of prospects for a negotiated settlement adopted by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, recent years have witnessed the receding of the "two-state solution" project, which was the core of the Palestinian national project during the past several decades. Some would consider, for tactical or strategic reasons, that the two-state solution remains the best option for ending the conflict and the basis for any negotiations. Yet the facts on the ground indicate the difficulty of achieving a two-state solution at present. The impetus behind this project has diminished as a result of Israeli practices and

policies, especially in the wake of the decision to annex the Jordan Valley and large parts of the West Bank.

The transformations currently taking place raise many questions about the nature of the Palestinian national project and its future prospects. Is it still possible to speak about a single national project, and if so, what is the Palestinian national project today? Is there an overarching interest or set of interests upon which the national project might be based?

This conference aims to shed light on the challenges facing the Palestinian people today; in light of the current political reality and its political, economic and social repercussions. We aspire to achieve a critical analysis of the present impasse by providing a space for discussion and exchange of views on alternatives, hoping to focus on a Palestinian political vision that defines a future course of action and identification of paths to be undertaken.

The main themes of the conference are exemplified by the following questions:

- 1- What is the nature of the current crisis in Palestine and the Palestinian national project?
What are the requirements for reformulating the national project so as to re-focus on an emancipatory program?
- 2- What are the repercussions of the crisis in the national project on the Palestinians in 1948 occupied Palestine and on the Palestinian diaspora? What role can they play in the national project? How can their role be strengthened in order to face the current challenges?
- 3- What are the current international and regional variables affecting the Palestinian cause and the national project? What are the repercussions of the so-called “Deal of the Century” and the decision to annex parts of the West Bank and of the shifts in international and Arab positions on the Palestinian cause? How can Palestinians exercise an influence on these developments?
- 4- What is the composition and future of the ruling political elite in Palestine? Is the current crisis an expression of a crisis in leadership and the interests of the political and economic elites?
- 5- What means are available to overcome the general state of political frustration and stagnation, and restore the initiative to the Palestinian struggle? What is the social structure fostering the project of resistance and how might it overcome future challenges?
- 6- What opportunities exist for the younger generations under occupation or in the Diaspora to create initiatives and modalities for change and resistance? What are the means for supporting and developing such initiatives among the youth?
- 7- What are the available political alternatives to a two-state solution?