

## **Abstract**

### **- Gaza's Crisis in Light of Internal and External Challenges**

The past and present of the Gaza Strip has always been associated with crises, confrontation, siege and resistance. There are actually a number of factors putting the area in a very serious situation, such as the Israeli occupation along with its systematic aggressions; tightened siege since 2007; Egyptian developments since July 2013; and negative Palestinian-Palestinian the shifts attributed to regional impacts. That pushes the ACT to assign its 5<sup>th</sup> report to address the internal and external challenges facing the Strip, the available points of influence and the scenarios for any developments.

Based on the challenges and potentials, the study briefs the options open for Gaza in several points, mainly: steadfastness; maintaining the current calm; ending the calm and going back to armed confrontation; Palestinian reconciliation; and breaking the freeze with the resistance axis.

It is argued that a number of factors are likely to affect the area, such as the shifts in the region – especially the political and security developments of Egypt – the dead-end in the negotiations with Israel; the expected failure of Kerry's proposals; and the possibilities of Syria's conflict's progress and expansion across the borders. These would bear a number of scenarios. The first is the persistence of the status quo of siege and increasing constraints by the Hebrew State and the world. The second is escalation, violence and ending the quiet. The third is the expansion of the Syrian conflict to reach Gaza. The fourth is the adoption of policies of openness to alleviate the blockade, which gives a better chance for reconciliation and understandings.

Finally, a number of recommendations are made for those concerned in the Strip and the region. One of them is to make no association between the attitude to Gaza and some problems with political Islam movements, especially in Egypt. In other words, the Palestinian issue must be detached from local, national or regional political conflicts. Another recommendation is to adopt open-minded thinking of options to find a way out, rather than taking hard variables or weak ideological stances for granted. Finally, pan-Arab patronage – shared by Egypt in a way or another regardless of its regime – needs to be maintained to achieve the Palestinian reconciliation, settle the dispute with Cairo, end the siege and start the reconstruction programme.

**- 2014 Israeli war on Gaza: Palestinian options upon war's management and results**

The Arab Crises Team (ACT)'s report in this volume addresses the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip in 2014. It discusses the possible scenarios of the Palestinian options. It also sheds light on the local, regional and international circumstances during the events. After that, the Israeli and Palestinian military performance is revised. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are made to the relevant Palestinian and Arab parties.

Five options are listed for the Palestinians on the national level. The first is the completion of the conditions of national unity and reconciliation between all the parties with a political plan at the minimum in accordance with, or even without, the National Consensus document. The second is the continuity of the division, while agreeing on managing disputes within minimum political, publicity and security confrontation. The third is the sustainability of polarization and the isolation between the West Bank and Gaza, dealing with the issue from each party's perspective. The fourth is to hold elections of guaranteed fairness to choose a new leadership for the

Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, opening the way for the elected to carry out the programme they consider the best. The fifth is to reach a general Palestinian strategy, while establishing an accord unified Palestinian leadership to monitor its implementation – which represents a reference in any internal dispute.

As for the options available for the Palestinians to deal with Israel, they may be as follows:

The talks about the quiet may be continued until meeting all the Palestinian people's conditions in the recent war.

If the negotiations fail, a limited or comprehensive military confrontation may be conducted to bring Israel back to square one. Another option is to lengthen the divergence within the talks with Israel about a cease-fire in order to wait for an international resolution in this regard. Furthermore, the resistance may draw the Hebrew State to a partial war of attrition in a way that neither leads the latter to disastrous escalation nor provide security to southern settlements.

Finally, the following are a number of conclusions and recommendations. Firstly, a truce with Israel is proven unguaranteed, as it may violate it for its own security calculations without thinking of the political consequences. Secondly, the war showed that the Israeli humanitarian, legal, and journalistic sides are shakable according to the efforts of the Palestinians, Arabs and supporters of the Palestinian issue in Europe, Latin America and other parts of the world. Thirdly, the unity of the field resistance, in spite of the variety of the involved factions, as well as of its later political attitude during the talks stresses national partnership in making the Palestinian decisions in terms of war and peace. It actually represents the top of the Palestinian power investment in countering Israel. Last but not least, the Arab, Islamic stance in differentiating between what is called “terror” and the legitimate Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation needs to be maintained. This resistance has to be defended in international circles accordingly.