

One Democratic State Campaign

Manifesto

Preamble

In recent years, the idea of a one democratic state in all of historic Palestine as the best solution to the conflict has re-emerged. It started gaining increased support in the public domain. It is not a new idea. The Palestinian liberation movement, before the catastrophe of 1948 (the Nakba) and after it, had adopted this vision, including the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The PLO abandoned this idea in the framework of the diplomatic negotiations at the late eighties that led to the Oslo agreement of 1993. The Palestinian leadership hoped that this agreement would enable the building of an independent Palestinian state on the territories that Israel occupied in 1967. But on the ground Israel has strengthened its colonial control, fragmenting the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza into isolated cantons, separated from one another by settlements, checkpoints, military bases and fences.

The two-state solution, which is basically an unfair solution, is clearly dead. Israel buried it deep under its colonial settlement policies in the territories that were supposed to become the independent Palestinian state. Israel has imposed a single repressive regime that extends over all the Palestinians who live in historic Palestine, including those with Israeli citizenship.

In view of these dangerous developments, and, more important, based on the values of justice, freedom and democracy, we contend that the only way to achieve justice and permanent peace is dismantling the colonial apartheid regime in historic Palestine and the establishment of a new political system based on full civil equality, and on full implementation of the Palestinian refugees' Right of Return, and the building of the required mechanisms to correct the historical grievances of the Palestinian people as a result of the Zionist colonialist project.

On this background, many activists and groups, Palestinians and Israelis, have recently initiated the revival of the one-state idea, proposing differing models of such a state, such as a bi-national state, a liberal democratic state and a socialist state. They are all united, however, in their commitment to the establishment of a single democratic state in all of historic Palestine, as an alternative to the colonial apartheid regime that Israel has imposed over the country from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. A similar regime was toppled by the joint struggle of black and white South Africans under the leadership of the ANC in 1994.

The goal of this political program, as formulated by the One Democratic State Campaign (ODSC), is to widen the support for this solution among the local populations, Palestinian and Israeli alike, as well as among the international public. We call on all those in the world who struggle for freedom and justice to join and support our struggle against this apartheid regime and for the establishment of a democratic state free of occupation and colonialism, based on justice and equality, which guarantees a better future for the next generations and real peace in all of historic Palestine.

The Political Program

1. ***A Single Constitutional Democracy.*** One Democratic State shall be established between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River as a state belonging to all its citizens, including the Palestinian refugees. All citizens will enjoy equal rights, freedom and security. The State shall be a constitutional democracy, the authority to govern and make laws emanating from the will of the people. All its citizens shall enjoy equal rights to vote, nominate candidates for any post and take part in the country's governance.
2. ***Right of Return, of Restoration and of Reintegration into Society.*** The single democratic state will fully implement the Right of Return of all Palestinian refugees and their descendants, those who were expelled in 1948 and thereafter, whether living in exile abroad or currently living in historic Palestine, including those with Israeli citizenship. The State will aid them in returning to their country and to the places from which they were expelled. It will help them rebuild their personal lives and to be fully reintegrated into the country's society, economy and polity. The State will do everything in its power to restore to the refugees their private and communal property and/or compensate them.
3. ***Individual Rights.*** No State law, institution or practices shall discriminate among its citizens on the basis of ethnic identity, national or cultural belonging, or on the basis of color, gender, language, religion, political opinion, property or sexual orientation. The state will grant all its citizens the right to freedom of movement and the right to reside anywhere in the country. The state will guarantee to all the citizens equal rights in all levels and institutions and will guarantee free thought and freedom of opinion. Alongside religious marriage the State will provide civil marriage.
4. ***Collective Rights.*** Within the framework of a single democratic state, the Constitution will also protect collective rights and the freedom of association, whether national, ethnic, religious, class or gender. Constitutional guarantees will ensure that all languages, arts and cultures can flourish and develop freely. No group or collectivity will have any privileges, nor will any group or collectivity have any control or domination over others. The Constitution will deny the Parliament the authority to enact any laws that discriminate against any community, be it ethnic, national, religious, cultural or class.
5. ***Immigration:*** Normal procedures of obtaining citizenship will be extended to those willing to immigrate to the country.
6. ***Constructing a Shared Civil Society.*** The Stateshall nurture a vital civil society comprised of common civil institutions, in particular educational, cultural and economic.
7. ***Economy and Economic Justice.*** Our vision seeks to achieve social and economic justice. Economic policy must address the decades of exploitation and discrimination which have sown deep socioeconomic gaps among the people living in the country. The income distribution in Israel/Palestine is more unequal than in any country in the world. A State seeking justice must develop a creative and long-term redistributive economic policy to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunity to attain education, productive employment, economic security and a dignified standard of living.
8. ***Commitment to Human Rights, Justice and Peace.*** The Stateshall uphold international law and seek the peaceful resolution of conflicts through negotiation and collective security in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The State will sign and ratify all international treaties on human rights and its people shall reject racism and promote social, cultural and political rights as set out in relevant United Nations covenants.

9. ***Our Role in the Region.*** The ODS Campaign will join with all progressive forces in the Arab world struggling for democracy, social justice and egalitarian societies free from tyranny and foreign domination. The State shall seek democracy and freedom in the Middle East, so that the rights of the region's peoples and citizens will be guaranteed and its many communities, religions, traditions and ideologies shall be respected. That should include respect for the peoples' right to struggle for equality and freedom of thought. Achieving justice in Palestine will contribute measurably toward these goals and the aspirations of the region's peoples.
10. ***International responsibility.*** On a global level, the ODS Campaign views itself as a part of the democratic and progressive forces striving for an alternative global order that shall be pluralistic and sustainable, more just, egalitarian and humanistic and free of exploitation, racism, intolerance, oppression, wars, colonialism and imperialism. This new world order will be based on human dignity and respect for the people's rights to freedom and just distribution of resources and will provide a healthy and sustainable environment.