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Subject: [imra-l] Official Statement of the Palestinian Central Council -  
[require full Israeli withdrawal and no compromise on right of return]  
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Official Statement of the Palestinian Central Council - [require full  
Israeli withdrawal and no compromise on right of return]

Gaza, 9th-10th September 2000 -  
[http://www.pna.net/events/pcc\\_statment.htm](http://www.pna.net/events/pcc_statment.htm)

The Central Council has been briefed in detail by President Yasser Arafat, members of the Executive Committee, and the Palestinian negotiating team, on the developments that have taken place in the political process on all tracks.

We value the efforts exerted to accelerate the negotiations on the Palestinian track by our fellow Arabs and other friends concerned with the achievement of peace in the Middle East. The reality, however, is that all those efforts have collided with an evident Israeli obstinacy in not implementing the signed agreements as well as the legal resolutions adopted by the international community. Foremost among these is the implementation of UN Resolution 242, which stipulates the Israeli withdrawal to the 4th June 1967 borderlines, and Resolution 194 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which deals with the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and to obtain compensation.

The Palestine Liberation Organization has granted the peace process every possible opportunity for success, and has carried out all of its obligations for the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace. This has included the extension of the interim period until 13th September 2000, in accordance with the Sharm El Sheikh agreement. The Palestine Liberation Organisation has participated responsibly, earnestly and with flexibility, in intensive negotiations on issues of the final status settlement such as Jerusalem, refugees, borders and other matters. In all the rounds of the negotiations, however, there were the Israeli 'red lines', which contravened the very foundation on which the peace process is based. There was also, on the part of Israel, a failure to implement its obligations.

In this respect, the Central Council values the stance taken by President Arafat and the negotiating team during the recent Camp David summit. The Council also salutes all the Palestinian people, activists and political groups, for their honorable and historical stance behind their leadership. This has had a profound effect on the morale of our negotiating team, and has deepened the unwavering conviction that our people are committed to our constant national aims, and are behind the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Now, all indications, as well as Israeli proclaimed positions and occupation measures materializing on the ground, confirm that this new chance requested for the achievement of peace will crash like its

predecessors against the same intractable Israeli positions. These all lead towards dragging the region once again into the vortex of instability and violence. This is confirmed by the Israeli military measures taken all over the country, including the arming of settlers and the fortification of settlements. Threats have also been uttered by heads of the Israeli military establishment against the Palestinian Authority and people, threatening to take measures aimed at destroying what has been achieved so far. The Central Council, while rejecting and condemning these threats, affirms our people's determination and its right to confront these challenges.

Thus, and in order to ensure the success of this opportunity, we call upon the two sponsors of the peace process, in particular the United States, to join directly the negotiations taking place over the coming few weeks, with the participation of Arab countries as well. This would ensure the seriousness of the talks, and allow the achievement of a final agreement, based on the terms of reference of the peace process.

The above-mentioned Israeli policies have met with wide disapproval and discontent, both regionally and globally. The policy followed by the Palestine Liberation Organization, in comparison, has been highly appreciated. This international stance, which we highly esteem, has been confirmed during the world tours made by President Arafat and his envoys, and during the UN Millenium Summit with its special importance.

Based on all of the above, and considering the end of the time limit specified for the interim period and for reaching a final settlement by 13th September 2000, the Central Council, while stressing its previous decisions regarding the provisions of the interim period and the issues pertaining to the final status, declares the following:

1. The Palestinian people and their leadership will continue to adhere to the peace option, as a strategic choice for the achievement of a just and comprehensive solution. This is based in particular on UN Resolutions 242, 338 and 194, and aims at implementing these resolutions in order to realize the goals of the Palestinian people: the right to self-determination, the right of return, the right to establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the founding of peace and stability in the Middle East.
2. The Central Council affirms that arriving at the deadline of the interim period does not exempt the Israeli side from implementing its obligations. The Council calls on the international community, and the two sponsors of the peace process, to compel the Israeli side to implement its obligations, which it still fails to carry out. Foremost among these is the third phase of re-deployment, ensuring the return of the displaced persons, and the release of Palestinian prisoners-of-war and detainees.
3. An absolute insistence on an Israeli withdrawal from all of the Palestinian occupied territories, which include Jerusalem, to the June 1967 borderlines, in accordance with UN resolutions 242 and 338, and with the principle of land for peace. In this regard, the Central

Council reaffirms its previous decisions rejecting Israeli settlement on the occupied territory, and the necessity of relocating settlers off our land.

4. The Council adheres to the concept of full Palestinian sovereignty over the areas of Jerusalem occupied in 1967, including all of its neighborhoods, its holy Christian and Islamic sites, and that it must be the capital of the independent Palestinian state, with free access for all to places of worship. In this regard, the Council values the resolutions of the Jerusalem Committee in Morocco, as well as the resolutions passed by The Arab League during the Jerusalem session of its latest meeting. The Council appreciates the importance of following up their implementation.

5. In accordance with the Palestinian people's absolute right to an independent state, with Jerusalem as capital, and to exercise sovereignty over the land on the basis of the natural and historical right of our people to establish our own state; in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 181 which recognized the existence of two states in British mandate Palestine; in realization of the Declaration of Independence of 15th November 1988;

The Central Council mandates the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the leadership of the Palestine National Council and the Palestinian Legislative Council to take all necessary steps to realize the state of Palestine and to materialize Palestinian sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory, with Jerusalem as its capital, during the coming period of time. This includes finalizing the Constitutional Declaration, completing the Law on general elections for the leadership of the state and for the Palestinian parliament, as well as initiating the application for Palestine's membership of the United Nations. It is also imperative that the Executive Committee present a detailed report on these steps to the Central Council at a special meeting to be held prior to November 15th, 2000, the anniversary of the declaration of Palestinian national independence, which took place at the Council's 19th session in Algeria in 1988.

6. An absolute adherence to UN resolution 194 dealing with the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes and properties, and a rejection of all attempts leading to re-settle them or to deprive them of their right of return. In this regard, the Central Council salutes the perseverance of our people in the Diaspora, especially those in Lebanon. The Council honors their attachment to the right of return, their rejection of re-settlement and displacement schemes, and their rallying behind the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative. The Council affirms the need for ensuring the civil rights of the refugees and allow them to live in dignity.

7. The Central Council salutes the steadfastness of the prisoners-of-war and the detainees, assuring them of its determination that they be unconditionally set free.

8. The Central Council reaffirms that democracy, equality, the protection of human rights and the principle of the separation of powers, are the options of the Palestinians for the building of their

national authority and independent state. Based on this, the Central Council invites the Executive Committee and the National Authority to enhance democracy and political pluralism, to respect the independence of the judiciary and to develop the judicial system, to implement the principles of transparency and accountability, the rule of Law and the protection of citizens' general rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, while praising the regularity of the Executive Committee meetings, and acknowledging the value of the reports which it presents to the Central Council, the latter calls on the Executive Committee to present written reports and to exert more efforts aimed at implementing previous decisions issued by the Council in its successive sessions.

The Central Council salutes and expresses its appreciation to Egypt and to President Hosni Mubarak, for the significant role played by Egypt and its president personally, as well as by the other Arab leaders, in supporting the Palestinian people and their leadership to achieve our national rights and establish an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council similarly salutes King Fahd, Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines, the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, to Jordan and King Abdullah II, to King Mohammed VI of Morocco, the Tunisian President Zein El Abdeen Bin Ali, President Ghadafi, President Abdul Aziz Boutefliqa of Algeria, President Ali Abdallah Saleh of Yemen, His Excellency Sheikh Zayed, and the other Arab leaders.

The Central Council also salutes the two sponsors of the peace process, The United States and the Russian Federation, President Clinton, President Putin, countries of the European Union, China, Japan, The Islamic Conference, The Organization of African Unity, all other friendly countries, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the member states of the Security Council.

The Central Council addressed in its meetings Iraq's continuing distress caused by the unjust sanctions imposed on the state. The Council petitions our fellow Arabs and the rest of the world to lift these sanctions off the Iraqi people and their children.

The Council also observed a minute's silence in honour of our dearly departed freedom fighter H.E. Minister Bashir Al-Barghouti, member of the Central Council and Secretary-General of the Palestinian People's Party. Prayers were said for the rest of his soul.

The Central Council stands in deference to the Palestinian and Arab martyrs who gave their lives for Palestine. The Council affirms that the loss of their lives has not, and will not, be in vain. For the independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, is, without question, soon coming.

To conclude, the Central Council considers its current session to be an open one.

Long live the State of Palestine, free and Arab;

Long live the State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital;

Long live the Arab nation;

Long live international solidarity with our people and our just cause.

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