



## ALTERNATIVES TO PARTITION

The 'Alternatives to Partition' Initiative, March 2014

### Principles of Jewish Israeli - Palestinian Partnership

#### Preamble

Twenty years after the Oslo Accords, forty-seven years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and sixty-six years since the inception of the State of Israel and the Palestinian *Nakba*, we reached a political impasse that provides neither freedom and dignity for the Palestinian people, nor satisfies the security concerns of both the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians. We are not closer to a viable and just two-state solution, and are living in a *de facto* single regime of Israeli domination and discrimination. In an attempt to pave a new path for historical reconciliation and constructive normative and political engagement, we believe that there is an urgent need to depart from the current paradigm of solutions based primarily/exclusively on the logic of partition and wrenching separation as manifested in skewed power relations and interests rather than symmetrical rights and evident needs.

We, a group of Israeli Jews and Palestinians, represent various constituencies (inside Israel, Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Diaspora) from different socio-political and professional backgrounds, convened in Vienna during the course of 2011 and 2012, under the auspices of the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue to explore together "Alternatives to Partition". Our deliberations resulted in proposing several principles that would secure the individual and collective rights (including national self-determination), interests, and identities of Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians alike.

This novel type of intellectual and political engagement is not merely a utopian exercise, but one that considers the unavoidable empirical reality manifested in the growing intertwining of lives, rights and identities of Palestinians and Jews in Israel/Palestine, as well as the factual developments on the ground (*inter alia* Israel's ongoing colonial-expansionist project in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as well as in the southern Negev/Naqab). We grounded our intervention on the premises and imperatives of justice (e.g., the Palestinian refugees problem, refraining from inflicting injustices to the agents of a previous injustice) and on an inclusive and egalitarian notion of democracy.

The "Alternatives to Partition" project does not name, or imply, a specific governmental/institutional formula or modality for ending the conflict. Rather it focuses on fundamental principles that need to underlie/govern the design and implementation of any viable solution, and which can be accommodated and realised in various constitutional and/or institutional arrangements (be it two states, federation, confederation, bi-national state, parallel state structure, consociational democracy, etc.). In other words, we have devised a set of guiding principles that transcend the binary predicament of "one state/two states" or any hitherto theoretical institutional arrangement as the preordaining principle or parameter of a political solution; as it has been, times and again, factually and empirically rendered obsolete.

We believe that living together respectfully alongside each other is both desirable and possible. Briefly, rather than suggesting a detailed, concrete solution, this document lays the foundation of a new political grammar and vocabulary that will frame a different understanding of the possibilities and actualities for a just and durable solution in Israel/Palestine. Our departure point lies in the belief that fate of the two people is inextricably linked; that Israeli Jews and Palestinians are part of the Middle East, and that neither will be granted exclusive privileges or sovereignty over the entire land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

### **Basic Principles**

1. Each person residing (or holding residency status) between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea will be granted equal individual, political, economic, and social rights, including the right to be protected and secured; to be treated equally regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and religion; to move freely; to acquire and possess property; to sue in court; and to elect and to be elected.
2. The collective rights of Israeli Jews and Palestinians - linguistic, cultural, religious and political – will be guaranteed in any political framework. It is understood that neither will solely have any exclusive sovereignty over the entire land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean (including land possession, access to natural resources, etc.).
3. The abolishment of all exclusive Jewish privileges, including in land possession and access to natural resources. All resources - material and political - will be distributed based on restorative and distributive justice principles.
4. The recognition of the Palestinian right of return as embodied in UN resolution 194. The implementation of this resolution will take into account the present reality on the ground, and that the moral and political injustice of Palestinian dispossession of the past should not be effected by means of new injustice.
5. Jews and Palestinians living in the diaspora will be able to receive immunity if in danger (according to UN resolutions), and will have a privileged status in this process compared to any other ethnic and national group. Otherwise, the new political institution(s) will legislate democratic immigration laws to regulate citizenship.

We believe that a mutual recognition based on these principles can advance an alternative political project, in which the memories of exile and refuge will turn into an inclusive implementation of rights, citizenship and belonging.

Signed unanimously by the 'Alternatives to Partition' group  
Bruno Kreisky Forum for international Dialogue, Vienna, October 2012