



Press Release

Wide spread absence of human security in the occupied Palestinian territory has greatly impeded Palestinian progress

Ramallah, May 9th, 2010 – Until Palestinians are afforded economic and environmental control, specifically control over macro-economic policy, trade, livelihoods, water resources and borders, sustained development will remain elusive, according to the latest Palestinian Human Development Report, released today by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Representative of the Administrator, Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen.

The Palestinian Human Development Report 2009/10 "Investing in Human Security for a Future State" explores different facets of human security - economy, food, health, environment, political, personal, community - from the perspective of establishing freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity. Reframing the concept of 'security', to one that places the security of individual on par with the state institutions is essential when reflecting on the everyday lives of Palestinians. It is particularly significant given the application of a security based discourse by the State of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Salam Fayyad said: "We want to see signs of the occupation regime being rolled back. We want to see an end to Israeli incursions into Area A and we want Palestinians to have a permanent and formal security presence in all Palestinian areas. We do not see these as confidence building measures but as indications of a state in the making. We need this if credibility is to be attached to peace talks. To get Palestinian buy in, we need to see consistent signs of the occupation ending." He also added that the attainment of sustainable development will continue to be an elusive goal in the oPt as long as the territory remains occupied.

The report was authored by an independent team of international and Palestinian academics and development practitioners.

The poverty of disempowerment

Many Palestinians are given enough food aid to sustain themselves but because they are unable to make enough money to feed themselves they remain in a state of dependency. This, the Report argues, is not a poverty of insufficiency but a poverty of disempowerment.

Small gains have been made and must continue to be made. The Report contends that is a correlation between the degree to which the Palestinian Authority has responsibility of the sector and the degree to which advancement has been made. The education and health care system are good examples of areas in which Palestinians, given a window of opportunity, have made progress. By contrast, the national economy has consistently weakened over the reporting period due to stringent control. Palestinian have no authority over their air space, territorial waters, natural resources, movement and the macro-economic instruments that enable economic autonomy

Dr. Fayyad said the report detailed the fragmentation and misery caused by the occupation to Palestinians, which continued to overwhelm efforts led by the Palestinian Authority and supported by the international community to bring about improvements in the occupied Palestinian territory. He said the failure to improve the human condition of Palestinians "was not a result of a lack of will on the part of the Palestinian Authority or lack of desire by the Palestinian community but as result of the occupation regime and its practices".



Territorial fragmentation and political polarization

Since 1967, the territorial breakup of the oPt has become gradually more pronounced. The Report argues that Israel's systematic segregation of Palestinians communities into a series of fragmented archipelagos has had far reaching implications for Palestinian economic, social and cultural cohesion.

The authors of the report contend that the territorial fragmentation of the oPt has severely weakened the central authority and central institutions of governance of the Palestinian Authority and intensified internal Palestinian political polarization. The consequence has been an increase in political violence and the suppression of civil rights by the various authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Report argues that some sort of national reconciliation process may be necessary to overcome the damaging effects of political violence, and also redress the marginalization of ordinary Palestinians from the political process.

At the Launch, Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen pointed out "Human security is the platform for development, the aim of which is to create an environment where people can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This report is a reminder that Palestinians continue to face many challenges including the occupation and internal fragmentation".

Investing in Human Security

Whilst acknowledging that a continuation of the status quo is untenable, the Report supports a pragmatic approach to promoting human security whilst still under, or emerging from, occupation.

Moving forward, the authors argue for a participatory State-building strategy to promote territorial contiguity, economic integration, social cohesion, sovereignty and political reconciliation. It recommends establishing a Commission for Representative Governance to monitor the implementation of the strategy ensure transparency of the Palestinian Authority and build accountability and credibility.

It also suggests that aid be de-linked from the political process so that institutional arrangements can be established to ensure that the rights of Palestinians are protected and their needs are addressed.

The Human Development Report 2009/10 for the occupied Palestinian territory is the fifth Report of its kind. This independent report was commissioned by the UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People with the aim to be a catalyst for a renewed public conversation about human development and human security. The authors anticipate that the report will influence policy debates by presenting accessible and accurate data and analysis on development issues in the oPt.

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