

## EDITORIAL

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,

The last months of 2012 have witnessed a number of political developments which will further contribute in shaping the Palestinian, regional, and international contexts. In the Palestinian arena, the Palestinian Authority's bid to implicitly recognize Palestine at the United Nations was successful as the General Assembly upgraded Palestine to non-member state status. Analysis of this historical achievement and what it means from a political, legal, and diplomatic perspective and in light of national and external commitments is offered through Seyasat Magazine; a quarterly product of the partnership between FES Palestine and the Institute of Public Policies (IPCC).

Seyasat's 22nd Edition also tackles regional and international issues through presenting the analysis and viewpoints from across the spectrum of economic, social and political fields.

Two years after the Arab Spring, the democratic transition process which is still in place, is exerting an impact on the MENA Region and on the political discourse towards political development in particular. On an international level, the elections in the United States have granted Obama a new term of four years and have sparked hope for change among Palestinians. Is it naïve of Palestinians to cling to such hope for change?

To find out more, read below the summary of Seyasat's 22nd Edition, offering insight and analysis to the latest political developments, particularly in the Palestinian and Arab contexts.

[For the full access of Seyasat Magazine in Arabic and its summaries in English is available on \[www.ipp-pal.org\]\(http://www.ipp-pal.org\).](http://www.ipp-pal.org)

Wishing you an enjoyable read!

## Seyasat Magazine Edition (22): English Summary

***Title of Article: The Double-faced Transition to Democracy and its Impact on MENA***

***Author: Prof. Philippe Schmitter***

*Seyasat* magazine opens this edition with a study by Philippe Schmitter entitled "The Double-faced Transition to Democracy and its Impact on MENA". Schmitter is a leading political scientist of our times and is a Professor of Political Science at European University Institute. After conducting an analysis of the democratic transition process in the Arab context within the more general trend of democratic transitions that took place internationally in different waves, Schmitter defines a series of points that he considers crucial to understanding the Arab democratic transitions, these include:

- 1- Islam as a religion does not make a real distinction between itself and the state; recently, it has generated a form of political opposition that is contrary to true democratic practices.
- 2- Family relations and the patriarchal system are intrinsic to Arab culture and generate fatalism and the renouncement of power, which undermines self-confidence and initiative.
- 3- Arab societies intrinsically derive from tribal affiliations so there is flexibility in forming political parties, interest groups and social movements which intersect with these affiliations.
- 4- The middle class in these societies normally depend on the state for work so it is unlikely that this class will engage in an open conflict with the existing public authorities.

5- Nearly all countries in the region have suffered from internal "civil" wars or external "international" wars and therefore, rely heavily on their armies.

6- The majority of the MENA countries depend significantly on oil and natural gas exports and the rulers of these "rentier" states depend on revenues from these resources. They therefore "have strong financial power over those citizens who oppose them."

Schmitter also makes a broader set of detailed analytical comparisons that provide a detailed background to Arab democracy, including:

- i. Democracy is less attractive to public opinion since it is not perceived as linked to long term economic prosperity and job security, does not bring about adequate social justice and does not constitute protection from risk to a large extent.
- ii. Political parties no longer represent an attraction to citizens, even in well-established and stable democracies.

Political technology changes fast, the democracy emerging in MENA comes within a different media context of new information technology and communications. This context has undermined private property and state systems and replaced them with forms of political communication that are dispersed and difficult to control, especially as these means are available to the youth sector. The clear impact of this is evident in strengthening the opportunity for rebellion through the capacity to gather a large number of participants in a short time: this makes police oppression more difficult.

On paper, MENA represents a region even more than Europe and Latin America. We know that democracy makes use of the "influence of others". The spread of ideas and models is very intense, especially between countries close to each other which share common linguistic and racial, or even religious features. The Middle East does not possess regional organizations that can survive and that can guarantee community security, nor exercise the politics that can lead to this.

The MENA countries are sensitive, with good reason, towards the suspicious motives of the western countries, especially the United States.

The transformation in MENA appears to have returned to the conditions prior to the transition phase that precedes democratic transformation. Mass mobilization is conducted by rivals who are excluded from the old regime and who seek to topple the ex-leader and introduce core reforms to maintain their positions in authority (see Tunisia, Egypt and maybe Yemen too), or mobilization from the grassroots that is confronted with violence by the old regime (see Libya or maybe Syria).

***Title of Article: The Arab Revolutions: Political Discourse towards Political Development***

***Author: Mr. Ayyad al-Batniji***

In his study entitled "The Arab Revolutions: Political Discourse towards Political Development", Ayyad al-Batniji discusses the transformations that affected Arab political discourse after the Arab revolutions. Theoretically, changes to authoritarian regimes touch the identity of a society and state. It is

natural for political discourse to be affected by the changes in a manner that opens up windows through which the available resources and potential may be invested in order to re-structure the political domain and public mind according to the vision of each discourse.

This entails the engagement of influential stakeholders in a dynamic process of interaction in order to re-build national political consensus and achieve the aspired political system. The study by al-Batniji seeks to explore the position of political discourse vis-à-vis political development through defining visions on the nature and identity of the state and the organization of public authority.

Perhaps the analysis illustrates that the major variable is the prevalence of the Islamic discourse in its Islamic, religious and Salafi aspects. Islamists entered into the official political arena in more than one Arab country and assumed power. There are three types of discourse that dominate discussion in Arab political circles following the revolutions:

1. The discourse of the civil state with religious terms of reference
2. The discourse of the religious state
3. The discourse of the civil state.

There are also three types of interaction between these discourses:

*First*, collaboration: between the discourse of the civil state with religious terms of reference and the religious state discourse there are friendly relations close to collaboration. Despite the disagreements that rise to the surface, the theoretical background is the same. The ultimate course of political development of the two discourses is close; relations between them do not constitute zero conflict.

*Second*, strongly competitive: between the discourse of the civil state and the discourse of the civil state with religious terms of reference. These two discourses are close in some political concepts but differ on the final course of political development.

*Third*, severely conflicting: between the discourse of the civil state and the discourse of the religious state. In this case, relations are non-existent.

*Title of Article: The General Assembly Resolution no. 19/67*

*Author: Ambassador Nabil al-Ramlawi*

Ambassador Nabil al-Ramlawi, former Palestine Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, examines the commitments under the General Assembly Resolution no. 19/67, classifying them into national and external commitments. Nationally, the most urgent matter now is to achieve national unity and end the internal split. Then, a Palestinian government must be formed for the state and not for a self-autonomy authority. This also entails the development of a Palestinian constitution for the state. Amid all this and in line with Palestine gaining its status as a non-member state at the UN, there is a growing role for the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people internally and abroad.

Serious consideration must be given to setting up a new charter for the PLO that matches the nature of this phase. The PLO is the charter and without a charter, there is no PLO.

Externally, there are a series of commitments, mainly to become a signatory to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their protocols. There are also the specialized organizations of the UN. Al-Ramlawi discusses in detail the need for Palestine to join the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Intellectual

Property Organization (WIPO) in order to draft a Palestinian roadmap that can deal with each organization separately. He then tackles the more controversial point of Palestine joining the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and expresses his opinion that Palestine must join according to Article 125. This study by al-Ramlawi includes a set of proposals to meet the commitments of the state and could prove helpful in designing a detailed Palestinian plan.

*Title of Article: Status of Palestine at the UN*

*Author: Mr. Mohammed Abu Daqqa*

In further discussion of this topic, diplomat and researcher Mohammed Abu Daqqa presents a discussion of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the "Status of Palestine at the UN", calling for analysis of this historical achievement from a political perspective, the discussion highlights the need to clarify the resolution and its content and the principal motives of the Palestinian leadership in approaching the UN.

The political and diplomatic aspects of the resolution are examined through the votes of different countries at the General Assembly and the positions adopted by international and regional countries of influence. In addition, there is analysis of the impact of the resolution on the legal status of Palestinian land, on the status of the PLO and its relations with Israel, potential prospects and international legal tools permitted under the resolution and linking these with existing concerns: relations within the PLO, the PNA and the state, the problems of Palestinian representation, and final status issues, especially concerning refugees.

Abu Daqqa covers the following topics in detail:

- i. The nature of Resolution 67/19 issued by the UN General Assembly.
- ii. The motives behind the resolution.
- iii. The political and diplomatic implications of international recognition of Palestine at the UN.
- iv. The nature of voting and the conduct of the various countries; he divides them into groups and explains the motives behind each group.
- v. The impact of the resolution on the legal status of the Occupied Palestinian Territories in 1967.
- vi. The changes in the international legal and institutional framework and the requirements at national level in order to join international treaties and organizations.

Palestinian representation between the PLO, the PNA and the state and the final status issues, Abu Daqqa believes that fears and concerns regarding changes to the status of the PLO and national rights are unwarranted.

In its articles section, *Seyasat* addresses the aggression on Gaza and its ramifications, along with the accomplishment at the UN, Antoine Shalhat from Acre writes on the results of the war on Gaza and the resolution to recognize Palestine: Israel facing regional and international isolation. Mohammed Hawwash writes "Palestine... the state: Opportunities for Reconciliation and Partnership... Ending the Occupation". Akram Atallah writes "Have Recent Developments Ended the Differences inside Hamas?"

***Title of Seminar: Palestinian Context Amidst Recent Developments***



The *Seyasat* seminar is devoted to discussing the Palestinian context amidst recent developments and hosts on its roundtable Dr. Naser Abul Ata from al-Aqsa University, Dr. Walid Mdallaleh from the Islamic University, Mohsin Abu Ramadan from the NGOs, and Ma'moun Sweidan from the Public Policies Institute. The seminar was coordinated by the chief editor of *Seyasat*, Dr. Atef Abu Seif.

*Title of Article: (Electronic-popular) Monitoring of Elections*

*Author: Dr. Mohammed Ali Hammoudeh*

In the Public Policies section, *Seyasat* presents a study by Dr. Mohammed Ali Hammoudeh from the Political Science College at the Iraqi al-Nahrein University on (electronic-popular) monitoring of elections, with special analysis of the Egyptian experience. Dr. Hammoudeh comments that electronic methods have become one of the best modern tools to exert a political impact and have been used as a tool for monitoring elections, especially since traditional tools were not very effective in some cases. Besides, political systems found it easy to minimize the impact and effectiveness of traditional monitoring tools. After defining popular electronic monitoring, the researcher moves to study Arab experiences, especially the project "Let Us See" in Tunisia and the project "Monitor" in the Yemen. The researcher then discusses the Egyptian experience in detail, especially the model "You Are a Witness". The seeds of the idea began in the recent Kenyan elections, where a group of citizens would monitor the elections and send reports of any violations occurring during polling. The reports were gathered at the electronic website "You Are the Witness" in the

form of a map that included all main polling stations. The idea was successful and was used in a similar way to monitor the elections in India, to follow up the aftermath of the war in Gaza in 2009 and in assisting the victims of natural disasters in Haiti and Chile. Finally, the idea was implemented in Egypt to monitor the parliamentary elections in November 2010.

In conclusion, the researcher presents a series of conclusions and recommendations to introduce popular electronic monitoring and improve on past experience:

- Electoral monitoring bodies need to organize training workshops for an adequate number of people.
- The timing of the workshops should be planned in order to ensure proper preparation of specialist staff.
- Well trained staff can work better and achieve more accurate results.
- To allow the participation of relevant UN organizations, national bodies and civil society organizations in order to develop the program on the basis of scientific standards.
- To organize an awareness campaign that targets the public ahead of time in order to prepare the target groups psychologically and encourage them to participate positively.
- To form alliances between civil society organizations and the various interested groups in order for these parties to act as bodies that receive complaints in a manner that does not disrupt the monitoring process.
- To enable the monitoring bodies to use their tools to gather information.

*Title of Article:* **"The Alliance of the Minorities... and Loopholes"** by Dr. Samir Awad

In its international politics corner, *Seyasat* presents two pieces on the US elections and their aftermath. Dr. Samir Awad of the Political Science Department at Birzeit University presents a piece entitled "The Alliance of the Minorities... and Loopholes".

The researcher focuses on two points: the victory of Obama thanks to the votes of minority groups and a comparison between Israeli and Palestinian influence on American politics. In the former, Obama won due to the major demographic changes in the US, which has resulted in the white majority losing their control over election results. It has become clear that other important players, including blacks, Latinos, Asians, women and youth form a new majority that supported Obama. Awad argues that the new majority is based on an alliance of minorities.

In the second point, Palestinian relations with the US are basically formal and involve passing through dozens of people. They are based on traditional diplomacy with some exceptions; the community, NGOs, parties and interest groups do not participate in an effective way to support these relations. On the other hand, Israeli relations with the US have several political, cultural and historical dimensions: these are organic relations where thousands, even millions, of American and Israeli citizens interact in the process. This study highlights how Arab and Islamic minorities might form alliances with black and Latino minorities in order to exert an impact on US politics.

*Title of Article: "The Palestinians and the US: Waiting for Godot", by Dr. Lourd Habash*

Dr. Lourd Habash from the Political Science Department at Birzeit University writes an article entitled "The Palestinians and the US: Waiting for Godot". The study by Habash focuses on a basic assumption that it is naïve for Palestinians to cling to hopes for change that might happen in the short or medium term, or to expecting changes in US foreign policy towards the Palestinians, especially due to the well-known “second term” concept. Habash bases analysis on six facts that refutes the second term theory in the case of Obama:

1. The priority of the economic crisis in the United States.
2. The decision-making process in the United States.
3. The influence of the Zionist lobby.
4. The process of marginalization of the Palestinians in US politics.
5. The restrictions imposed on the President in his second term.
6. The conduct of former US presidents in their second terms.

Habash argues that the facts on the ground prove that the second term concept is unrealistic, adding that it is up to the Palestinians to either sit and wait for the second term of Godot, or choose to move forward and achieve national unity.

### ***Book Reviews: “Life Pages” & “The Secret of the Temple”***

***Seyasat*** presents reviews of two books. The first book is by Ghazi al-Khalili and entitled "Life Pages". The second book is by a former leading figure in the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, Tharwat al-Khairi, and is titled "The Secret of



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the Temple". This book inspired heated debate in Egypt as a result of the facts and testimonies exposed about the world of the Muslim Brotherhood as the new ruling party in Egypt.

To conclude, we offer the following quote from the introduction to *Seyasat*: "A positive atmosphere prevailed after the Gaza aggression and after the UN step. Everyone believed that reconciliation was a very popular demand and this was clear in the marches organized to celebrate the Fatah anniversary in Gaza, the victory at the UN and the celebration of the Hamas anniversary in the West Bank, in addition to visits by a Fatah leadership delegation and Mash'al to Gaza. All these are signs that reconciliation is possible".

### **Information about the Authors:**

- 1. Dr. Philippe Schmitter** is a Professor of Political Science at European University Institute.
- 2. Mr.Ayyad al-Batnji** is a Palestinian Researcher in Political Science.
- 3. Ambassador Nabil al-Ramlawi** is former Palestine Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, and a researcher in international Science.
- 4. Mr.Mohammed Abu Daqqa** is a researcher and author in political affairs
- 5. Dr. Mohammed Ali Hammoudeh is a** Professor of Political Science at al-Nahrein University in Iraq.
- 6. Dr. Samir Awad** is a Palestinian Writer, Head of Political Science Department at Birzeit University.
- 7. Dr. Lourd Habash** is a Professor of Political Science Department at Birzeit University.