



Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

Background Paper

Roundtable (6)

Confronting the Economic Consequences of the Israeli Decision to Annex the Occupied West Bank ¹

2020

¹ This paper relies on several local and international references, the most important of which are various publications issued by the Department of Negotiations Affairs at the Palestine Liberation Organization; World Bank reports; UNCTAD reports; legal references on international law; various Palestinian national plans and strategies; press references on the statements of officials; and several previous MAS reports.

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1. Background

The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) accords special attention to issues that have a significant impact on Palestinian national economic security. As such, this meeting will present and discuss the dangers associated with the occupation's annexation plans (as specified in the American-Israeli "vision" for the elimination of the Question of Palestine), amounting to about 30% of the area of the West Bank.² Under discussion is the issue of annexation (or what the Israeli call "the extension of sovereignty over Judea and Samaria"). The purpose of the Institute's series of roundtable meetings is to discuss such important, sensitive economic issues that have a macro-impact on institutions and individuals across Palestinian society. The issue of Israeli annexation - regardless of when it is implemented and as long as it remains a likely policy option - is the top priority and most important challenge facing the Palestinian government and society, over and above the health and socio-economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic as discussed at previous MAS meetings.

This background paper examines Israel's new annexation plans for the occupied Palestinian territories, in the context of the American-Israeli "vision" and Israel's strategic settlement and security plans. It links the legal dimensions of potential annexation to its economic consequences and their repercussions and implications. It strives to highlight important aspects of this strategic issue by discussing methods for confronting it legally and economically, while detailing recommendations in this regard. There has been an escalation in regional tensions, caused by the Israel-UAE agreement, as a result of which there has been a "temporary suspension" of the implementation of any annexation measures in exchange for the normalization of bilateral relations. This postponement provides the Palestinian people with time to prepare internal and external measures for confronting annexation when it occurs, as a worst-case scenario, or for making the temporary freeze a permanent condition, whereby annexation may be "taken off the table".

2. Annexation is Simply Israeli Legalization of Settler Colonialism

The recently-announced Israeli annexation, as an "act of an occupying power", is not altogether surprising, given the historical background of occupation. This occupation denies Palestinians their economic, human and social rights, working to annex the Palestinian territories in a systematic and comprehensive manner across more than five decades. Annexation plans began to be formed with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. East Jerusalem was illegally annexed, following a change in the Basic Law of Jerusalem in 1980, which declared it as the capital of Israel. This was followed by the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights in 1981. Israel continued to confiscate lands, destroy property and seize absentee property, sporadically declaring land as closed military areas, while building illegal settlements and plundering economic and natural resources. Effective annexation has been performed through the construction of illegal settlements on occupied lands; and via the construction of the Separation Wall. The Wall has annexed more than 9.4% of Palestinian lands, dividing Palestinian villages and cities while isolating Jerusalem from the West Bank. This has increased the fragmentation of the West Bank, vastly increasing the number of Palestinian "cantons". In summary, there is little difference between annexation by force on the one hand; and annexation by law on the other. They are two sides of the same colonial story that has continued for more than a century.

In order to complement systematic Israeli plans to control more land, the occupying power has enacted numerous discriminatory laws. For example, since 2015, it has discussed more than 60 draft laws related to "the application of Israeli law" to the occupied West Bank and settlements. The most important bills presented to the Israeli Knesset for consideration include the bill to annex all settlements in the West Bank to the State of Israel (2018), and the bill concerning the annexation of "Greater Jerusalem." The Knesset has approved five laws that directly and indirectly serve Israeli annexation, including laws related to encouraging investment in settlements, as well as the Settlements Regulation Law of 2017

² RT1 2020.

that allows for the permanent confiscation of Palestinian lands. Moreover, legal appeals concerning land cases have been transferred from the Supreme Court to Israeli administrative courts, further facilitating the annexation process. This is in addition to the passage of numerous other laws. This has created a conducive “Israeli legal environment” to support former and current annexation plans. Recently, such plans have obtained American approval of Israel’s “right” to annex certain areas of the West Bank, given that the State of Israel will retain security responsibility over the State of Palestine. Moreover, the latter State can only be established within the parameters of the Israeli-American “vision”, including US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

In conclusion, previous and current colonial policies continue to stifle any chance of a peace agreement, in complete defiance of international law. Israel has sought to establish a new, legal-political *fait accompli* with America’s blessing. Israeli law applies to Israeli settlers and the lands that they have annexed - or will annex - while military (occupation) law continues to govern Palestinians living on these lands. This is one of the defining features of the apartheid regime, denying the Palestinian people their “inalienable” rights, as recognized by international law seventy years ago.

3. The Legal Context of Annexation and the Official International Palestinian Position

Annexation occurs when a state integrates lands from another, occupied country by force. That is, it is an explicit and direct occupation. What distinguishes annexation from occupation is the temporary nature of the latter - whereas annexation aims at permanent seizure, occupation is temporary, according to the international laws of occupation. Both occupation and annexation are prohibited by international law. Annexation is specifically prohibited under international law, as it counters the right to self-determination, which is a key component of international legitimacy.

The creeping annexation that Israel is actually implementing on the ground is not limited recent announcements. It is a continuous policy violating international law and threatening its principles. It demonstrates the clear denial of Palestinian rights, through racist laws where Israel aims to control the land, while disclaiming responsibility for the people on the land, who are subject to colonial laws and Israeli military orders. Israel considers the presence of the Palestinian population on this land to be a temporary phenomenon, in defiance of recognized international and humanitarian laws.

Israel announced its annexation plans for parts of the West Bank at the beginning of 2020. This constituted a new breach of power by the occupation, leading to widespread political and diplomatic protests. It resulted in the emergence of official positions - by the Palestinian leadership, the international community and some Arab countries such as Jordan - that strongly rejected this planned annexation. The official position of the Palestinian leadership was to announce a boycott of the current U.S. administration, cease security coordination with Israel, in addition to refusing to adhere to other stipulations of the Oslo Accords, as a principled expression of its rejection of annexation.

This is the international, legal starting point for the Palestinian leadership, as it urges states to support international resolutions and bind Israel to their implementation. It is worth noting, however, that the international community (in general) preaches rejection, denunciation and condemnation of occupation, while simultaneously strengthening diplomatic, commercial, economic and cultural relations with the occupying power. Israeli goods hold preferential status in international markets, directly and indirectly supporting the occupation and the apartheid regime. It can be concluded that there will be no confidence in the international community unless it begins to undertake sanctions in accordance with international resolutions, and the rules of international law.

4. Economic Challenges Resulting from the New Annexation Plan, in the context of the American-Israeli Vision

It is difficult to separate official Israeli statements about new annexation plans from the American vision proposed in the Deal of the Century. Therefore, the issue of annexation is directly linked to the American vision and its contents. Since 2017, the U.S. administration has taken several steps to lay the

political groundwork for its vision. This process started with the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and the transfer of the U.S. Embassy to it (December 6, 2017). This was followed by the cessation of U.S. support to UNRWA (August 31, 2018); and statements made by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the U.S. does not consider settlements to be a violation of international law (November 18, 2019), based on the understanding that the West Bank is land under Israeli control, and not under occupation. These measures are unprecedented, when taking into consideration the official American position since the start of the peace process, and indeed since 1967. They have led to a state of political estrangement between the American administration and the Palestinian leadership, in addition to a driving a further dichotomy in the official positions of Arab states (between verbal support for Palestinian rights and efforts to normalize Arab-Israeli relations). This vision ignores all historic UN decisions regarding the Palestinian issue; and Israel's obligations as stipulated in international law and international humanitarian law, not to mention its obligations under the Oslo Accords. In short, it is rejected because it flies in the face of history and the national and human rights of the Palestinian people.

In implementation of the American-Israeli vision, press leaks and official statements made by the Israeli Prime Minister in 2020 indicated that Israel seeks to impose its sovereignty over 16 of its colonies in the West Bank, and annex 43 Palestinian areas to Israeli control (inhabited by some 106,000 Palestinians).³ The Israeli Prime Minister announced, earlier in 2020, that this annexation would cover about 50% of Area C, which itself constitutes about 60% of the total area of the West Bank and is under Israeli security and administrative control, as stipulated by the 1995 Oslo II Agreement.

This vision and continuous colonial onslaught represent nothing but an American-Israeli legitimization of the realities that Israel has imposed on the ground, especially since the conclusion of agreements with the PLO in 1994. This vision is based on imposing, to every extent possible, a colonial framework⁴ that allows for resource-theft, settlement-expansion and preservation of outposts in various areas of the occupied territories, in addition to the establishment of an apartheid regime.

As a logical consequence, a unified Palestinian position was formed, rejecting the proposed American vision. This vision undermined any remaining opportunities to resume negotiations for a two-state solution, as it settled final status issues arbitrarily, ignoring the borders of June 4, 1967 and granting Israel absolute sovereignty over Jerusalem. Therefore, the official Palestinian position - and that of most countries - categorically rejected this vision and annexation.

This paper does not aim to explore Israeli occupation policies and the legal dimensions of the annexation issue in detail. The analysis above has been provided to set the framework for better understanding the economic dimensions of this new situation, which feature two types of economic challenges:

- Those relating to the official and popular Palestinian position that rejects American-Israeli approval of annexation and its further roll-out (that is, the repercussions of the recent decision to cease economic and civil coordination with occupation authorities). This has already had adverse effects on public finances, on foreign trade, on employment in Israel, and on other aspects of Palestinian civil life.
- Those relating to planning, policy, spending and investment priorities that enable Palestinians (especially those residing in targeted areas, estimated at more than 100,000 citizens) to survive in these areas, by protecting them from colonial confiscation and attacks on property and people,

³ On September 10, Netanyahu pledged that should he win the election of September 17 and succeed in forming a government, he would annex the Jordan Valley (almost a quarter of the West Bank), as well as West Bank settlements to "Israeli sovereignty". Later, Hebrew, international and Arab media outlets all reported on his statement to annex 30% of the West Bank. These statements were widely condemned by all parties. See: <https://www.dw.com/ar/%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A9-https://www.aljazeera.net/news/politics/2020/6/8>

⁴ More than 60 annexation projects have been issued by the Knesset. This includes an annexation project for Greater Jerusalem, a project to annex the Jordan Valley, a project to annex all settlements in Area C, in addition to projects for the annexation of specific settlements. In total, annexation projects account for 60% of the West Bank.

fundamentally thwarting annexation at its base (in parallel with efforts to thwart it at the leadership level).

The remaining sections of this paper focus on the second set of economic challenges, as these are directly related to looming Israeli annexation plans and practices.

5. The Potential Economic Impact of Annexing the Jordan Valley, northern Dead Sea and other Areas

It should be noted that it is difficult to quantify potential economic effects in this brief paper, due to their diversity, breadth of scope, uncertainty of their timing, etc. These would need separate, in-depth studies. However, it is possible to discuss - in general terms - the basic features of such negative impacts briefly, for the purposes of facilitating discussion in this meeting. The economic effects of annexation cannot be explained without identifying the specific geographic areas that may be annexed, its unique location, components and resources, and the reality of life therein as dictated by the occupation's policies.

5.1 Concerning the Jordan Valley Specifically

The Jordan River Valley (including the northern Dead Sea area) extends over 1,611,723 dunums, constituting 28.8% of the area of the West Bank. 87.5% of this area is classified as Area C, with the remainder classified as A or B, including the city of Jericho. The Jordan Valley is perhaps Palestine's most fertile agricultural area - with numerous climatic advantages - and the largest such area. It holds deposits of salts and minerals, and numerous tourist attractions.⁵

Residents of the Jordan Valley, especially in the Area C parts, face many challenges. Israel depopulated and demolished nearly a third of their residential communities, leading to serious social and economic repercussions, as well as a rise in poverty and unemployment rates, at a higher rate than the rest of the West Bank. Such policies also contributed to poor food security for the population. Israeli control over land and water resources has prevented Palestinians from exploiting the Jordan Valley and benefiting from its natural resources, thus hindering the potential for investment in what could be an important opportunity for supporting the Palestinian economy and setting the wheels of development in motion.

The paradox in this area is blatant: 11,000 Israeli settlers exploit more than 90% of the area of the Valley, while about 65,000 Palestinians are confined to less than 10% of this area. Additionally, they face restrictions that prohibit them from accessing adequate supplies of agricultural water. Conversely, settlements enjoy numerous rights and privileges through which they have developed extensive agricultural, industrial and tourism facilities. Agricultural produce from these settlements is exported to Europe, America, India and Singapore. In addition, the occupation government provides special support to settlement tourism companies and settlement products.

More specifically, Israel prevents Palestinians from using most of the land in the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea area,⁶ as detailed below:

- a) 48.7% of the area is labelled as "state lands" located within the boundaries of 30 settlements.
- b) 46% of the area is closed military zones, where some zones are controlled by settlements. There are an additional 11 military training zones, while 1% of the area is mined, across the border with Jordan.
- c) Israel has announced the establishment of 26 nature reserves over 20% of these areas.
- d) The remainder of these areas have been allocated to regional settlements councils.
- e) In summary, Palestinians are prohibited from accessing 85% of the total area of the Jordan Valley. This prohibition covers housing/other buildings, grazing/agriculture, and transportation.⁷

⁵ Ma'an Development Center (2012). "Parallel Realities: Israeli Settlements and Palestinian Communities in the Jordan Valley".

⁶ B'Tselem, 2011. Background on the Jordan Valley.

⁷ The 2014 Plan assigns 23% of Area C as accessible to Palestinians.

The importance of the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea - in terms of economic development - can be summarized as follows:

- It forms an area that can accommodate the increasing population of the West Bank.
- Of particular importance is the fertility of the land, which can be used to provide food to the population, as well as agricultural exports. According to the estimates of some experts, the cultivation and reclamation of 100,000 dunums in the Jordan Valley could provide job opportunities for up to 150,000 workers. In addition, the use of modern agricultural technologies could multiply agricultural yields by a factor of 5 to 10.⁸ Export crops, cultivated on an area equivalent to about 50,000 dunums, can pump one billion dollars annually into the economy.
- Additional opportunities are available in energy, infrastructure, mineral-extraction and water.
- Commercial importance, especially through trade with Jordan and the Arab world, to counter the isolation of the Palestinian economy and its dependence on the economy of the occupation.
- Significant tourism potential in a unique eco-sphere, in addition to the industrial potential of medicinal and cosmetic products manufactured from raw materials extracted from the Dead Sea.

5.2 Concerning Area C Overall

In general, land registration has been historically limited in the West Bank. Registered land ownership accounts for 33% of the West Bank and 31% of Area C, i.e. around half of the total area of the West Bank. In accordance with Military Order No. 59 issued after the occupation of the West Bank, Israel halted the registration process that began in the 1920s and continued during the British Mandate and under Jordanian rule. Even during times when registration was feasible, owner turnout was limited for a number of reasons, including collective land ownership and use. Official land registration was rarely related to the actual use of the land.⁹

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the total area cultivated by Palestinians reached 1,195,000 dunums in 2010; down from 1,700,000 dunums in 1982. This indicates a 34% decline in the area of cultivated land, due to occupation policies.¹⁰

Less than 1% of Area C is earmarked by Israeli authorities for Palestinian residential use. Access to the remaining land area is severely restricted for Palestinians. It is not possible for Palestinians to obtain structural plans or building permits for housing purposes or economic activities, even within the narrow boundaries Palestinian villages located in Area C. The same is true for the extraction of natural resources and the construction of infrastructure.¹¹

Area C is of great strategic importance, due to many factors that are vital to the economic, social and political development of the Palestinian state. The most prominent factors are:

- The Jordan Valley, which is strategically important as it forms the eastern border of historic Palestine and serves as a vital gateway to the State of Palestine.
- It is the richest area in terms of natural resources.
- It includes most of the agricultural lands of the West Bank.
- It provides geographic, social and spatial connectivity across the West Bank.
- It has significant potential in terms of tourism-sector investments and internal eco-tourism.
- It serves as the last resort for Palestinian urban expansion.

6. What does Annexation mean in Economic Terms: Destroying the Viability of the Palestinian Economy

In the event that annexation goes ahead, its consequences for the Palestinian economy will be dire:

⁸ B'Tselem, 2011. Background on the Jordan Valley.

⁹ The World Bank. West Bank and Gaza, the economic effects of the restricted access to land in the West Bank.

¹⁰ Kerem Novat. Israeli Settler agriculture as a means of land takeover in the West Bank.

¹¹ World Bank. West Bank and Gaza - Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy. October 2013.

- Consolidating Israeli control over border crossings with Jordan, forcing the Palestinians to use Israeli ports and denying them the right of establishing their own port and airport, in addition to facing a long list of conditions. This is in addition to annexing the entire Jordan Valley and all Israeli settlements and outposts therein, while establishing a network of roads, tunnels and bridges to connect these areas to Israel. This portends a new and unprecedented wave of Palestinian land confiscation.
- Annexation will shackle and restrain any national economic development planning. This is due to the fact that Palestinians will lose significant economic revenues that are essential to the development process, as 50% of Area C revenues will be lost. Numerous international reports have stipulated that current losses of Area C revenues amount to 23% of Palestinian GDP. Financial leakages from Area C amount to more than \$600 million annually, discounting lost natural, human and other intrinsic resources.
- Total arable land in Area C amounts to 326,000 dunums, discounting more than 100,000 dunums used for agriculture by settlers. The cultivation of these areas requires 189 million cubic meters of water annually. According to the Oslo Agreement, the share of Palestine is 138.5 million cubic meters annually. The settlements - and the areas under their control - occupy more than 538,000 dunums, while settlers exploit more than 100,000 dunums of agricultural lands in the Jordan Valley.
- The Dead Sea is also a rich source of minerals such as potash and bromine. Jordan and Israel combined generate approximately \$4.2 billion annually from these minerals. The Jordan Valley also includes about 20,000 dunums that can be used as stone and marble quarries. As for tourism in the Dead Sea, it could generate \$126 million annually for an independent Palestinian economy (World Bank, 2014).
- The World Bank also concludes that lifting Israeli obstacles will generate an additional \$2.2 billion annually in value-added. This covers numerous sectors: agriculture, tourism in the Dead Sea, construction, stone and marble, telecommunications, Dead Sea salts and minerals, and production of medical/cosmetic products.

Instead of lifting these restrictions, the US vision is to grant these - and additional - lands to Israel, on a silver platter. This new annexation (East Jerusalem having been annexed many decades ago) will further increase Palestinian economic losses, as well as denying Palestinians the benefits of economic opportunities available to them within their own state. Direct, adverse economic effects can be summarized as follows:

- All operational and investment potential will be lost as a result of annexation. This will undermine the development process, given the inability to establish an infrastructure for urban and investment expansion.
- Geographic continuity will be compromised, and replaced by “transport continuity”. This will negatively affect the movement of trade, people and capital, leading to the creation of a suffocating investment environment.
- Significant loss in revenues that could otherwise feed into the Palestinian Treasury.
- Lack of control over natural resources that can serve future development, primarily land, water, minerals, phosphates, other raw materials and alternative energy, especially in the Jordan Valley area.
- East Jerusalem has always served as the political, cultural and commercial center of Palestine, and its tourism sector is one of the most important, national economic assets, while it also holds national and spiritual value for all Palestinians, rendering secondary discussion about economic losses.
- It is important to note that Israel has isolated Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings, demographically and economically, while imposing a change in demographic realities such that Israelis now constitute 66% of the city's population. Restrictions, barriers and the construction of the Wall have eroded productive sectors, increasing dependence on the Israeli labor market. The further annexation of Palestinian areas around Jerusalem areas will lead to additional degradation.

In fact, the logical result of implementing annexation will be the devastation of the Palestinian economy and the very concept of “economic viability of a Palestinian state”, by stifling the space available for

enacting development policies, work and investment, and restricting population movement, urbanization and agricultural expansion.¹² Moreover, this situation prevents Palestinians from exploiting their natural resources – the key to economic development. These remain in the hands of Israel, dividing Palestinians geographically and giving Israel absolute control over the movement of goods and people, borders, air- and sea-space etc. This eliminates any meaningful prospects for future Palestinian sovereignty, statehood or development.

7. Are There Credible Proposals for Intervention?

Occupation policies have had disastrous consequences on Palestinians, a price which has been paid by all Palestinians, especially those living under the full control of the occupation in Areas C, the Jordan Valley, and East Jerusalem. Residents in these areas remain in the “front-trenches” of the confrontation with occupation policies and Israeli colonial expansion. The ever-deteriorating living conditions of this population group necessitates intensive humanitarian relief efforts carried out by specialized international organizations, as well as official and civil-society Palestinian organizations.

Recognizing the importance of humanitarian relief; and despite the recent increase in projects and interventions of international institutions operating within the limited development space in these occupied areas; such measures cannot have a lasting positive impact. They are not scaled up enough to address the state of poverty, the weakness of the economy and the suffering of the people in these areas, or their continuous plight in preserving their property rights and preventing colonial expansion and annexation which proceeds apace. Israel - as an occupying power - is not held accountable for its violations. International and Palestinian institutions provide condemnations and opposition, without making any moves on the ground that would make Israel “pay the price” for repeated occupation crimes.

Annexation, if not imminent, remains an Israeli policy decision and it is necessary to act today with the understanding that it will be applied, sooner or later, on more or less of the occupied territory. There needs to be a distinct Palestinian position, which differs from previous policies that did not yield positive change in the material conditions of people living in areas targeted for annexation, nor in enabling them to directly confront creeping colonialism.

Within this context, interventions that are currently required must be based on two tracks. The first is legal, political and diplomatic track (not discussed in detail in this paper). The second track is economic, strategic and developmental, based on interventions that strengthen steadfastness on the ground. Prominent economic interventions can be provided for the benefit of areas threatened with annexation. In order for these interventions to be systematic and effective, we highlight the following:

7.1 Establishing the Intervention Framework according to Three Levels, namely:

- a) **Foundational level**, which can be considered the driver of potential development and its main beneficiary:
 - Local communities, with their unique characteristics and locations.
 - Local councils and local committees.
 - Non-governmental organizations (agricultural, women, cooperatives) that have a mediation role with the local authorities, donors and the local population, in addition to the documentation of popular local support and friendly international mobilization.
- b) **At the level of political leadership and support**, and its role in facilitating and encouraging preferential treatment in favor of threatened areas:
 - The National Authority: It has a leadership, coordination, mobilization, and political/diplomatic role in supporting the foundational level through “pro-poor” laws and procedures that also rationalize development, according to local/national priorities simultaneously.

¹² Raja Khalidi, “The Covid-19 shock in Palestine: Global public health crisis, local impacts and responses, national socio-economic recovery”, al Hadath.

- The private sector and “national capital”: These are required to play a role not only in economic issues and major investment, but also in meeting the needs of local communities through small-scale investment opportunities in Area C localities, within the national development vision and according to the highest standards of corporate social responsibility.
- c) **At the level of partners in solidarity and supporters.** These have a role in financing; in documenting conditions and violations; and in advocacy concerning international legal responsibility of donors, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations, and international human rights/solidarity institutions. Intensive Palestinian action must target these supporters; as they have long awaited resolute Palestinian positions, meaningful efforts and diplomatic leadership; to guide them in their efforts and interventions.

7.2 An update of the 2014-16 National Development Plan for Area C, as prepared but never implemented by the (former) Palestinian Ministry of Planning. There is also a need to review the objectives of national policy agendas, and commencing work according to what was stated in them with relevance to the areas targeted for annexation, focusing on expanding the scope of government projects/services to include all those areas. This should be facilitated through investment support to marginalized groups, combating poverty and unemployment, promoting social justice, and securing health and education needs. All of these are required to enhance the resilience of citizens and their ability to confront future annexation. The “temporary suspension” of annexation provides breathing space to better prepare and organize for an uncertain political future.

7.3 Adopt a strategic direction and an economic program that includes complementary interventions that can be initiated immediately:

- Activate urban planning and expansion, in order to further consolidate Palestinian national identity.
- Expand work in these areas as a national priority, stemming from the developmental needs of these Palestinian communities, by encouraging private and public investments, particularly in the establishment of wealth funds.
- Develop regional reconstruction plans, as an alternative to the plans of the British Mandate.
- Support local authorities by raising their capabilities in implementing structural plans and development projects.
- Limit the amount of land that can be confiscated under ‘security’ pretenses and then granted to settlements for exploitation. This includes legal follow-up.
- Provide legal aid and assistance to victims of Israeli violations.
- Support and strengthen popular resistance methods through a comprehensive national strategy.
- There are additional interventions and programs that can be undertaken, especially with regard to allocating investment spending and supporting small-scale projects in these areas.
- Consider MAS proposals for reorganizing Palestine within five regional development planning councils, empowered by central government to provide planning, coordinate service delivery and focus investment efforts on strengthening local/regional economies, to build an independent Palestinian spatial development vision to contradict the narrative of Israeli-defined boundaries (A, B, C, Seam-zone, Annexed, etc.)

8. Questions and Topics for Discussion

- What are the impediments to establishing the above-mentioned policy framework, as it was detailed in the 2014 strategy?
- How can the institutions of the National Authority intensify their presence and activities in Area C, and at what price?
- Is the PLO performing everything possible, legally and diplomatically, to oppose and thwart annexation?
- Why was there too little investment made in Area C and the Jordan Valley?
- What are the methods for implementing the interventions suggested above, or other plausible interventions? What causes the lack of implementation?