



Resilience through Dialogue

A summary of three scenarios on the future of Palestinian resilience

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To the reader

In this work, we have worked together with many different groups to imagine different possible futures – scenarios – of **Palestinian society**. The purpose of the work is to explore the future of Palestinian resilience. Specifically, we have been interested to find out and experiment on how a futures dialogue could support resilience of the Palestinian society in the coming years.

There are three scenarios that were built as a result of several background studies and a broad participatory dialogue process. These three scenarios are:

1. Division – a scenario about continuing division and a fragile society
2. Collapse – a scenario about collapse and chaos
3. Unity – a scenario about continued and growing resilience

The main message that emerges from these scenarios is as follows: **whether Palestinian society and politics will continue on the path of division or reconciliation is a question of supreme importance.** Division under Israeli occupation leads to collapse and chaos, while reconciliation leads to growing resilience. The full implications of this notion will be explored in a separate, upcoming paper on policy alternatives and the ways forward.

What do we mean by resilience?

We recognize the term resilience does have a variety of meanings and connotations in different contexts and discourses.

Our definition of **resilience** is *decent life in context of struggle for freedom and independence*.

With this we refer to the Palestinians' ability to develop long-term strategies that would ensure better ability to withstand internal and external shocks and to improve their future. Moreover, in the context of this study, the concept of resilience may be explored with reference to different sectors:

- **Political resilience:** functioning political institutions; representativeness of political process

- **Economic resilience:** livelihood of individuals, families, businesses; capacity for public spending
- **Social resilience:** the support and meaning individuals derive from communities; the advancement of political and social issues by social movements and NGOs; public health and wellbeing
- **Technological resilience:** functioning infrastructure, such as transportation, communications, housing, waste and energy infrastructure; the capacity to develop and apply new technologies
- **Environmental resilience:** clean water, air and land; the ability to mitigate effects of climate change, extreme weather and environmental incidents

Why this approach?

The goal of this project is to enhance Palestinian resilience through the exploration of different future scenarios, and the development of concrete policies and actions that can pave the way for better prospects for lasting peace.

Why future studies and scenarios?

The scenario methodology help us systematically imagine different possible futures. In turn, these scenarios can help us see ourselves as actors who can influence future developments. Scenarios can inspire and inform the actions we take today in order to move us toward desired futures and away from undesired ones. In the context of Palestinian Resilience, the scenario approach enables the development of a collective imagination about the Palestinian future. Second, in the volatile, highly complex and unstable context that surrounds the Israeli-Palestinian conflict concerted strategic action and cooperation would be needed, but has had little precedence to date.

The use of future studies in general and the scenario method in particular contributes to building a shared understanding which may form a basis for collective action towards Palestinian resilience.

Why participatory and dialogue-based approach?

A dialogue and participatory approach formed the basis for the creation of the scenarios described in this report. First, the inclusion and exploration of different viewpoints regarding Palestinian resilience has been absolutely critical for the creation of scenarios that are relevant, believable and legitimate. Second, the process of dialogue, which enabled participants to share their perspectives and experiences with one another about difficult issues has helped create a shared view of various stakeholders despite the deep divisions, where participants can see commonalities and better understand their differences. A participatory and dialogue-based scenario approach undertaken in this project thus helps move Palestine towards a road of resilience.

Methodology

The study uses participatory and pluralistic methodology in order to achieve a holistic and co-created perspective to Palestinian resilience. The main goal has been to get a comprehensive look at the internal and external environment in order to determine the most important indicators affecting Palestinian resilience. The study incorporated the use of the following methods:

- **Literary review, data collection, and the preparation of background reports**
- **Authoring of six sectoral policy papers on COVID-19 implications**
- **Online poll**
- **Nine Dialogue workshops in West Bank, Gaza Strip, Palestine 1948 and diaspora**

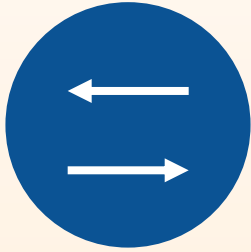
- **Deliberations with Advisory Group, comprised of a cross-cutting representation of civil society**
- **Futures and scenario methods, including:**
 - *Cross Impact Matrix*
 - *The futures wheel*
 - *PESTEL framework (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal)*
 - *5Ts technique (Trends, Tensions, Transition, Today, Tomorrow)*

Process timeline



SCENARIO 1

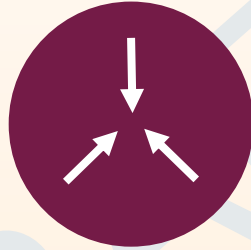
Division



*Continuing division
& a fragile society*

SCENARIO 2

Collapse



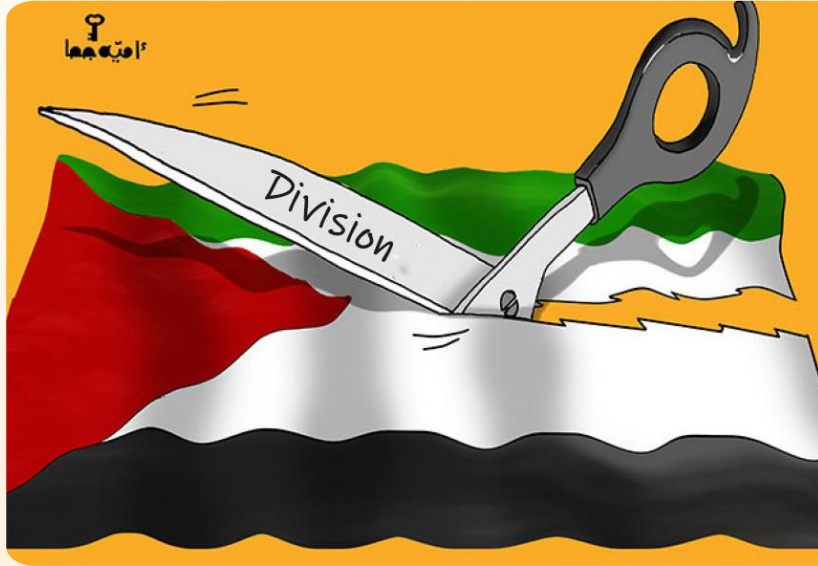
*Collapse &
chaos*

SCENARIO 3

Unity



*Continued &
Growing resilience*



SCENARIO 1

Division

Continuing division and a fragile society

SCENARIO 1 - Division

Division is the main reason behind Palestinian weak resilience.

Youth activist, Male,
Gaza Strip, 18-25

Most domestic efforts to end the division have failed so far, because external forces and factional interests are stronger than the popular will.

Political, Female,
West Bank, 36-55

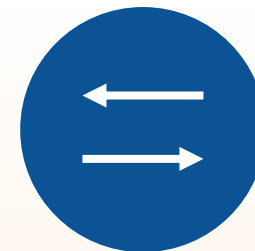
Without a national unity, one national strategy and a united national leadership, no nation can achieve its goals and aspirations of liberation and prosperity....

Civil society, Male,
West Bank, 56 and over

In the current regional and global situation where the whole world is preoccupied with the Corona pandemic, I do not know to what extent the Palestinian issue has an impact? In order not to look too pessimistic, we hear sometimes statements by some friendly countries that still give us some little hope.

Youth activist, Female,
West Bank, 26-35

SCENARIO 1: Division



Situation in 2025

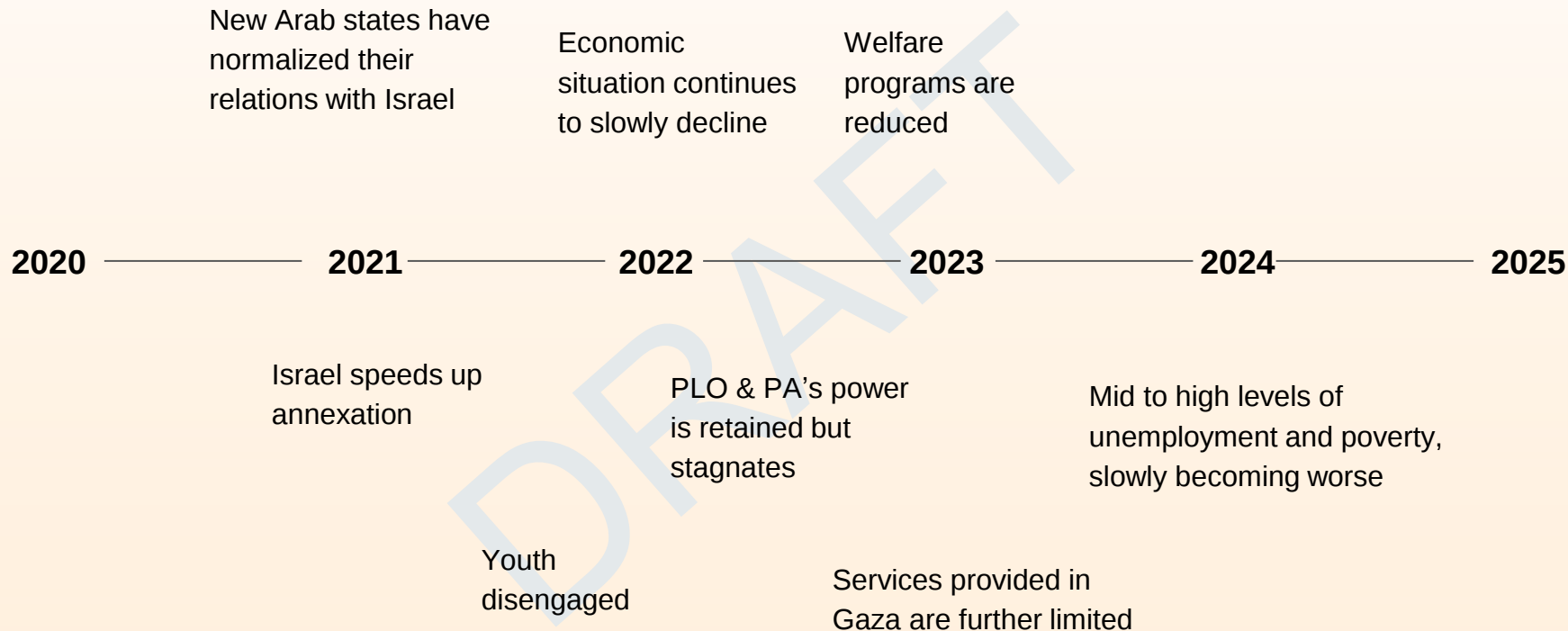
The division in society continues, but does not deepen in a way that would lead to open internal conflict. There has been no solution to the division between West Bank and Gaza, which continues to have profound cultural, social and economic consequences beyond the party-political split.

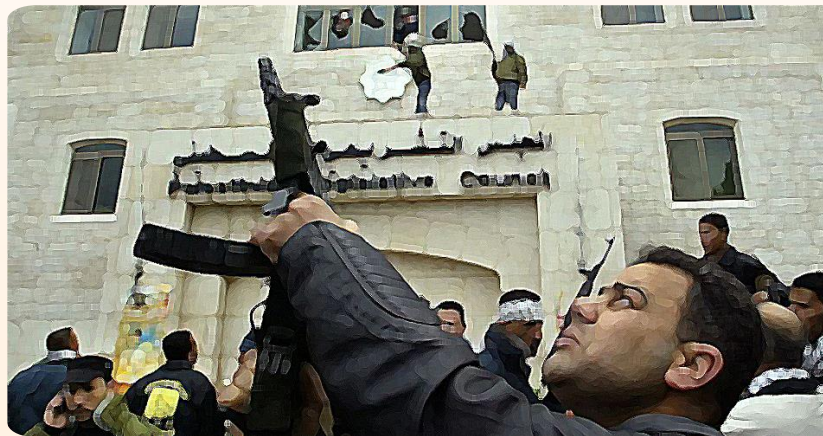
How did we get here?

- The lack of international deterrent policies encouraged Israel to continue separating the West Bank and Gaza Strip and accelerate annexation plans
- Arab normalization with Israel weakens the Palestinian position at the international level
- Welfare programs have been reduced, leaving more and more Palestinian families on a worse basis
- Limited opportunities for youth to participate the political process and in societal affairs
- The blockade of Gaza and physical separation in West Bank and especially Jerusalem further erodes Palestinian unity
- Mistrust between society and political parties

RESILIENCE	Fragile, both politically and socially. Economically situation has stagnated. Particularly in Gaza the blockade has deepened socio-economic fragility.
POWER	The traditional political factions remain strong, but paradoxically, their inability to broaden their base beyond the traditional sources of power hurts them in the long term, and acts to solidify the division.
LAND	Israel has gradually extended annexation and land grabs. Local municipalities are struggling with lack of resources and strategic direction from central governance.
COVID	COVID-19 has been brought under relative control both regionally and in Palestine. However, the virus has not been eliminated and there are outbreaks from time-to-time.

Timeline for scenario 1





SCENARIO 2

Collapse

Collapse and chaos

The occupation is working at all levels and using all sorts of methods to colonize the land, mind and legacy of Palestinians. This is seriously threatening Palestinian resilience especially in light of the total collapse of the Palestinian internal systems.

Youth activist, Male,
Gaza Strip, 25-35

There is an attempt not only for geographical isolation but a moral one, by cutting off any ability to influence decision-making, especially in the diaspora.

Civil society, Male,
Diaspora, 36-55

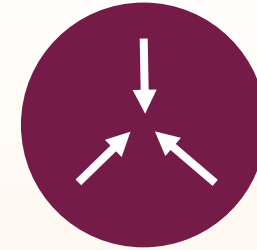
Mistreatment and the deterioration of the economic situation are undermining our ability to do anything.

Private sector, Female,
Diaspora, 36-55

Due to the marginalization of the Palestinian people, the absence of elections, and the lack of serious programs addressing the needs of the people, the PLO's relation with the public has become weaker and weaker.

Political, Female, West Bank,
56 and over

SCENARIO 2: Collapse



Situation in 2025

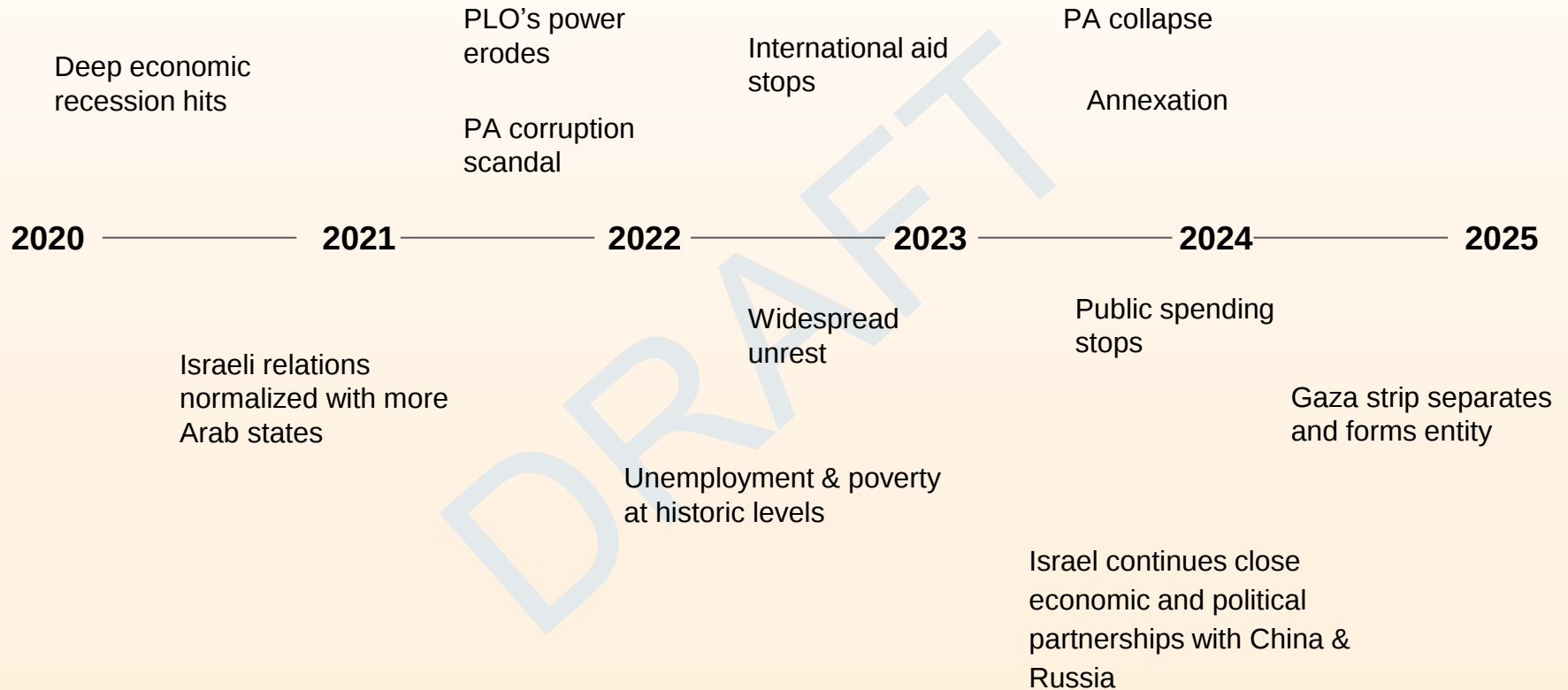
Palestine has largely descended into chaos and most aspects of Palestinian society have collapsed under deepening occupation, annexation plans and economic crises. Key internal and external stabilizing forces, such as the PA and international aid and support have disintegrated, leading to a chain reaction which resulted in widespread suffering of the Palestinian people living in Gaza, West Bank and Land 48. Violence and unrest, domestic violence and poverty are rampant.

How did we get here?

- The economic and COVID crisis has intensified existing problems in Palestine and distract the remaining international allies from the Palestinian cause. Aid is at historic lows
- PA & PLO are not able to adequately respond to ensuing social ills (e.g. widespread poverty), the trust declines further, and so does PA's corruption.
- As a consequence PA loses any remaining legitimacy due to internal conflicts and corruption; PLO's power further erodes and aid is discontinued
- Fewer and fewer people identify as Palestinian, despite having strong Palestinian identity beforehand. On the other hand, sub-identities (e.g. tribal, geographical) strengthen.
- Socio economic conditions have collapsed, leading to violence

RESILIENCE	Very little resilience left, as many struggle to fulfill basic needs.
POWER	PA disintegrates and PLO's power significantly diminished. In the lack of central authority, power is negotiated on a local level, often involving violence.
LAND	Gaza strip separates and struggles to survive without income from the PA. Israel annexed the West Bank without much repercussions (e.g. EU quietly protests, while Arab countries stand by
COVID	Although COVID is under control in much of the west, vaccination rates remain low and new infection waves still occur in the region. Palestinians are not able to leave for containment reasons.

Timeline for scenario 2





SCENARIO 3

Unity

Continued and Growing resilience

A clearly defined national strategy can help create public resilience to encounter challenges and undermine any attempts to go around the rights of the Palestinian people.

Political, Female,
West Bank, 36-55

Youth constitutes the overwhelming majority of the Palestinian people. They are their most important force for change.

Political, Female, West Bank,
56 and over

Reviving the PLO institutions and renewing its political life require reviving the political parties, the trade unions and the grass root organizations and their frameworks. This can be achieved through broad accession that can impose change.

Political, Female,
West Bank, 36-55

I do not think that the Palestinian leaders, whose strategy and tactics failed, are able to make miracles, unless all Palestinian forces come together and be involved in a true open dialogue in order to arrive at a consensus.

Civil society, Male, Diaspora,
56 and over

SCENARIO 3: Unity



Situation in 2025

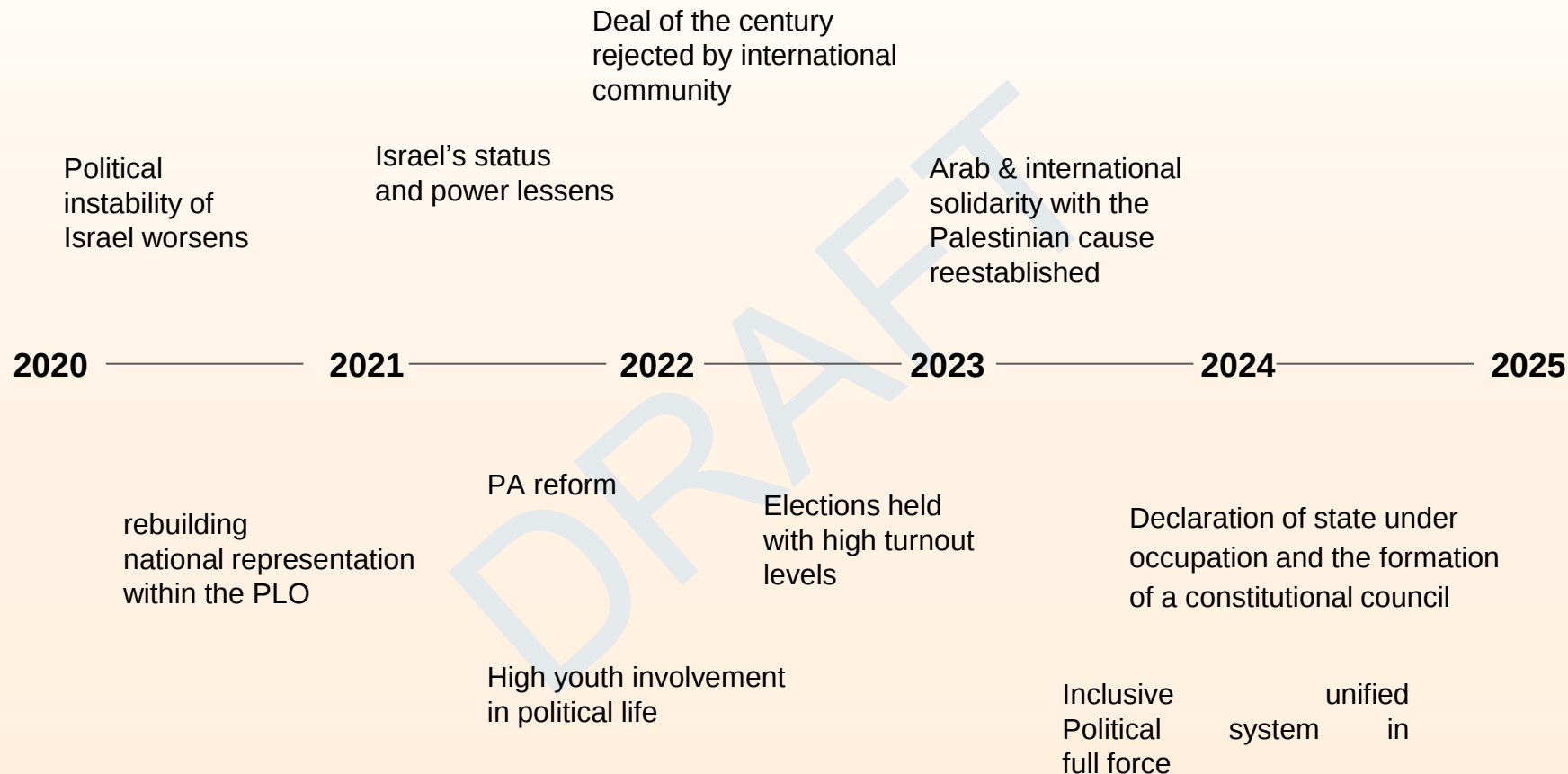
The trend of division in Palestinian society has been stopped, and to some extent, reversed. There are still separate governing bodies in Gaza and West Bank, but there is both will and ability to cooperate. The will to cooperate and broaden representation has strengthened the Palestinian cause both domestically and internationally.

How did we get here?

- The youth have found and they have been offered meaningful ways to participate in political process.
- The diaspora has played a key role in creating support for the Palestinian cause and created incentives for a more inclusive political process.
- In Israel, there has been domestic exhaustion of conflict, and political will towards minimizing the human and economic cost of settlements and war.
- International powers have found reasons and will to consider the Palestinian cause and to exert greater efforts to resolve the conflict. There has been an increasing pressure from internal powers to reconcile in order to respond to the annexation and Israeli plans.

RESILIENCE	The broadening of the base in Palestinian politics has made the process more resilient, inclusive and well-functioning.
POWER	Power-sharing and transitions of power are now a realistic and positive prospect.
LAND	Israel has slowed the settlements and the international community has forced some new negotiations.
COVID	The pandemic is still not fully contained, but strength in Palestinian leadership has helped bring the situation mostly under control.

Timeline for scenario 3



Cross-cutting comparison of the scenarios

Local dimensions

	SCENARIO 1: Division	SCENARIO 2: Collapse	SCENARIO 3: Unity
RESILIENCE	Fragile, both politically and socially. Economically situation has stagnated. Particularly in Gaza the blockade has deepened socio-economic fragility.	Very little resilience left, as many struggle to fulfill basic needs.	The broadening of the base in Palestinian politics has made the process more resilient, inclusive and well-functioning.
POWER	The traditional political factions remain strong, but paradoxically, their inability to broaden their base beyond the traditional sources of power hurts them in the long term, and acts to solidify the division.	PA disintegrates and PLO's power significantly diminished. In the lack of central authority, power is negotiated on a local level, often involving violence.	Power-sharing and transitions of power are now a realistic and positive prospect.
LAND	Israel has gradually extended annexation and land grabs. Local municipalities are struggling with lack of resources and strategic direction from central governance.	Gaza strip separates and struggles to survive without income from the PA. Israel annexed the West Bank without much repercussions (e.g. EU quietly protests, while Arab countries stand by)	Israel has slowed the settlements and the international community has forced some new negotiations.
COVID	COVID-19 has been brought under relative control both regionally and in Palestine. However, the virus has not been eliminated and there are outbreaks from time-to-time.	Although COVID is under control in much of the west, vaccination rates remain low and new infection waves still occur in the region. Palestinians are not able to leave for containment reasons.	The pandemic is still not fully contained, but strength in Palestinian leadership has helped bring the situation mostly under control.

Regional and international dimensions

	SCENARIO 1: Division	SCENARIO 2: Collapse	SCENARIO 3: Unity
<i>REGIONAL</i>	New Arab states have normalized their relations with Israel, and there is a decline of Arab financial and political support. The situation is deteriorating in Syria and Lebanon.	Accelerated normalization of Israel with more Arab states. Israel goes ahead with annexations with little to no repercussions, while Turkey and Iran emerge as active regional powers and expand their influence.	Arab solidarity with the Palestinian cause is reestablished. Israel's position and power regionally is weakened and there is political will in Israel towards minimizing the human and economic cost of settlements and war.
<i>INTERNATIONAL</i>	Weak international solidarity with the Palestinian cause and weakening Palestinian position internationally, contributed by the Arab normalization with Israel.	The economic and COVID crisis distract the remaining international allies from the Palestinian cause. International aid and support have disintegrated due to PA corruption, and there is inaction by international actors. Israel continues close economic and political partnerships with China & Russia.	International solidarity with the Palestinian cause is reestablished. International powers have found and exert greater efforts to resolve the conflict. The diaspora plays a key role in creating support for the Palestinian cause. There is a decline of the image of Israel internationally, and the deal of the Century rejected by most countries.

DRAFT



DEMOS HELSINKI

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