

PM Haniyeh Speech before the PLC, March 17 2007

The following is the unofficial translation of the full speech delivered by PM elect Haniyeh before the PLC on Saturday, March 17, 2007 to get the confidence vote on his government, the national unity government:

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate, (Unite in the name of God and never disperse and remember the blessings of God if you become enemies as God will reconcile your hearts to become brothers again in the name and grace of God – verse from the Holy Quran)

We thank God for all the blessings, Brother Dr. Ahmad Bahar, the Acting PLC Speaker Brothers and sisters members of the PLC Honorable ambassadors and consuls and representatives of the countries and international organizations Respectful representatives of the national and Islamic forces, Dear scholars and dignitaries, Dear audience, Peace be upon all of you,

I welcome all of you on this great day and I welcome Mr. Alvaro de Sotro, the Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Middle East region and the accompanying delegation. I was hoping that the PLC would convene with all members present and that it would be headed by our brother Dr. Aziz al-Dweik, the PLC Speaker, and that it would be held in Jerusalem, but the occupation prevented this from happening and insists on keeping the PLC members and ministers under detention and the occupation continues in its policies to isolate and disconnect the parts of the homeland and to Judaize Jerusalem and isolate it from its surroundings, along with the continuation of the incursions and the incursion in Nablus by the occupation on the eve of announcing the government came to escalate the oppression against our people. The arrest of the Speaker of the PLC and his brothers, the members of the PLC and the ministers and the heads of local councils, is clear proof on the cruelty and oppression of the occupation and evidence on the collective punishment and oppressive siege against our people and their government and their PLC in the past year because of the democratic option that we adopted in our political life and because of our commitment to the Palestinian rights and constants and because we rejected making any concessions under the austerity of the siege and aggression.

We have worked and exerted all efforts for the release of our brothers - the ministers and PLC members - and I affirm to our great brother Dr. Aziz al-Dweik and his brothers the PLC members and the ministers and the leaders in the prisons and the thousands of heroic prisoners who are imprisoned in the occupation prisons and in solitary confinement that you are our top priority and we will not rest until you are released and I call upon God to see your release soon, and I am pleased to congratulate the brothers who signed the prisoners document which constituted the basis for the national conciliation document: Marwan al-Barghouthi and Abdul Khaleq al-Natsheh and Abdul Rahim Mallouh and Bassam al-Sa'di and Mustafa Badran.

We stand today with pride and appreciation in front of the thousands of martyrs who blessed our holy lands with their blood and who paved the way in front of us towards freedom and independent and dignity, in particular the major martyrs the late President Yasser Arafat and Imam Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and Dr. Fathi al-Shiqaqi and Abu Ali Mustafa, and Omar al-Qasem and Abu Jihad and Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi and Abul Abbas and Jihad Jibril and the long list of martyrs whose work and sacrifices made us reach where we are now.

We also remember the our heroic injured who drew with their blood the map of Palestine; we also remember our refugees who are standing at the gate of the homeland in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon waiting for the hour of return to their homes from which they were evicted by the oppression and aggression; these refugees who lived and suffered the pains of Diaspora and exile and who always kept Palestine in their hearts and the new generations of the refugees didn't forget their right of return.

I stress here in particular our people residing in Iraq and I appeal to the Iraqi leadership and religious references and all parties concerned to interfere and protect our people and to stop targeting and terrorizing them.

I also stand in pride and honor in front of our people in the 1948 territories and I express to them our deepest appreciation to their role in protecting Jerusalem and defending the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Palestinian people have lived for close to 60 years under the yoke of dispersion, deprivation and eviction and suffered due to occupation all kinds of suffering and oppression and aggression while our people marked a long process of struggle, resistance, perseverance, and resilience through which they sacrificed hundreds of thousands of martyrs and injured and prisoners and gave the best examples of sacrifice and self denial and giving and clinging to their rights and constants and have always sought national unity and this national unity government is an important expression of this national unity.

This government was born after many efforts exerted by the loyal members of our people who worked day and night to reach a reconciliatory vision and common denominators that gather all Palestinians under one umbrella.

This government came as a fruit of the positive spirit and mutual confidence that resulted in solving all issues in the various fields and in ending the internal fighting between the brothers and was the major result of the blessed Mecca Agreement under the sponsorship of the Saudi King Abdul Aziz and through the high sense of national responsibility by Mr. President Abu Mazen and the brothers in Fatah Leadership and by brother Khaled Mash'al and his brothers in Hamas leadership who all showed high leadership sense of responsibility at this critical phase and they agreed in Mecca to inaugurate a new phase in the life of our Palestinian people and to close a painful chapter in their life.

Brother President Abu Mazen showed strong determination to protect the Mecca Agreement and worked to convince all parties on the need to respect and deal with the Palestinian people on the basis of this agreement and we consolidated constructive work during the consultations phase to form this government.

I pray for God to keep this brotherly climate and this constructive cooperation as realized in the national unity government which came as a result of a long series of Palestinian dialogues where the brotherly country Egypt had the major role in sponsoring and following up the dialogues and where the Palestinian factions signed in Cairo the first comprehensive Palestinian agreement in March 2005 and of course the government is also the fruit of appreciated efforts by several Arab countries and Arab and Islamic organizations.

Based on the rights of our people and in compliance to the national conciliation document and in light of the letter of commissioning, and based on the fact that we are still going through a phase of liberation and building, the program of the national unity government will be based on the following:

First: at the political level

- 1- The government affirms that the key to security and stability in the region depends on ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and recognizing the right to self determination of the Palestinian people; the government will work with the Arab brothers and with the international community for the sake of ending the occupation and regaining the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, mainly the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty on the territories that were occupied in 1967 with al-Quds as its capital, so that we can build a solid basis for peace, security and prosperity in the region and for the sake of the coming generations.
- 2- The government shall abide to protect the higher national interests of the Palestinian people and protect their rights and preserve and develop their accomplishments and work on achieving their national goals as ratified by the resolutions of the PNC meetings and the Articles of the Basic Law and the national conciliation document and the resolutions of the Arab summits and based on this, the government shall respect the international legitimacy resolutions and the agreements that were signed by the PLO.

- 3- The government shall exert special efforts to encourage all Palestinian parties to accelerate work and implement what came in Cairo Agreement pertaining to the PLO.
- 4- The government shall abide by rejecting the so called state with temporary borders which is posed according to the American and Israeli scheme.
- 5- To stress on the right of return and cling to it and call on the international community to implement what came in Resolution 194, especially the right of return of the Palestinian refugees to their lands and properties from which they were evicted and to compensate them.
- 6- To work diligently for the sake of liberating the heroic female and male prisoners from the Israeli occupation prisons and to work for the release of the abducted PLC members and the ministers and the heads of local councils.
- 7- The government vows that it will confront the measures of the occupation on the ground in terms of the assassinations, arrests, and incursion, and military checkpoints and address and work on solving the issue of the crossings and the siege and the closure.
- 8- To consolidate the relations with the Arab and Islamic countries and the friendly countries and the forces that support freedom justice and to and open up and cooperate with the regional and international surrounding on the basis of mutual respect.

Second: Jerusalem

- 1- To form a higher committee for Jerusalem affairs in coordination with the PLO Executive Committee to follow up the affairs and steadfastness in the city of Jerusalem and to allocate a clear budget from the government to Jerusalem from the general budget.
- 2- to confront the Israeli policies pertaining to Jerusalem in terms of its land and people and holy sites and work on providing the adequate resources in the budget to support the steadfastness of our people in Jerusalem and to expose the measures of the occupation against the city and against al-Aqsa Mosque and to activate the cause of Jerusalem in all regional and international arenas and call on our Arab and Islamic nation to assume their responsibilities in protecting Jerusalem and support the people of Jerusalem politically and at the media level.

Third: at the level of confronting the occupation

- 1- The government affirms that resistance in all its forms, including popular resistance against the occupation, is a legitimate right of the Palestinian people as granted by the international norms and charters; our Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves in face of any Israeli continuous aggression.
- 2- The government, through national conciliation, will work on consolidating the calm and expanding it to become a comprehensive reciprocal and concurrent calm and in return the Israeli occupation has to halt its measures on the ground in terms of assassinations, arrests, incursions and home demolition and leveling of lands and the digging works in Jerusalem and it should work on removing the checkpoints and reopening the crossings and lifting all the restrictions on movement and setting a timetable for the release of prisoners.
- 3- The government affirms what came in the national conciliation document on the issue of the administration of the negotiations which is the jurisdiction of the PLO and the President of the PNA on the basis of clinging to the Palestinian national goals and towards achieving these goals, so that any offer on any final agreement should be presented to the new Palestinian National Council for ratification or to hold a general referendum to have the Palestinian people inside and abroad and to have a law that organizes this referendum.
- 4- The government shall support the exerted efforts and shall encourage the relevant parties to accelerate and end the case of the Israeli soldier in the context of an honorable prisoners exchange deal and return of the deportees.
- 5- The government affirms that peace and stability in the region depends on ending the occupation and on seeing our people regaining their national rights and removing the

apartheid wall and settlements and halt of the Judaization of Jerusalem and policies of annexation and all forms of racial discrimination and restore the rights to their owners.

Fourth: at the security level

The national unity government realizes the internal difficult conditions and believes that its top priority at the coming phase is to control the current security conditions and this requires full cooperation between the presidency and the government in order to achieve this, the government shall adopt the following:

1- To call and work to reformulate the national security council that represents the terms of reference to all security services and the framework that organizes their work and define their policies.

2- to structure the security services and build them on professional basis and work to provide their needs and reduce the partisan considerations and move them away from political polarizations and conflicts and consolidate in them the loyalty to the homeland and to have them abide by executing the decisions of their political leadership and to make sure that the personnel working in these services commit themselves to the tasks commissioned to them.

3- To abide by implementing the laws on work and performance in the security services that have been ratified by the PLC.

4- to set up a comprehensive security plan to end all forms of chaos and security chaos and aggressions and protect and prevent any bloodshed and honor of families and funds and public and private properties and control the weapons and provide security to the citizen and work on ending the oppression inflicted on the people through the rule of the law and support the police to perform its duties in the best manner when implementing the decisions of the judicial authority.

Fifth: at the legal level

1- the government shall work in full cooperation with the judicial authority to secure the reform and activation and protection of the judicial apparatus with all its institutions in a manner that can enable it to perform its duties in the context of achieving justice and fighting corruption and abiding by the rule of the law and implement the law with transparency and integrity on everybody and follow up the corruption files and the abuse of public funds.

2- The government affirms that it work according to the Basic Law which organizes the relations between the three authorities on the basis of separating between the authorities and respect the authorities granted to each of these authorities according to the Basic Law.

3- The government shall assist Mr. President in performing his various duties and will make sure to cooperate fully with the Presidency institution and the constitutional institutions and work with the PLC and the juridical authorities towards developing the Palestinian political system on the basis of having a unified strong national authority.

Sixth: the economic situation

1- The government shall work on ending the siege imposed on our Palestinian people in all its forms.

2- The government calls for reconsidering Paris Economic Protocol in a manner that liberates the Palestinian economy from subordination.

3- The government shall give priority to upgrade and advance the national economy and protect the economic, productive and services sectors and encourage the national exports and to support the national products with all possible means and develop the economic and trade relations with h the Arab and Islamic world and with the European Union and the rest of the world.

4- to protect the consumer and encourage the private sector and provide the proper climate for its activities and lay down the sound rules for government work and its official institutions and the institutions of the private sector and end monopoly and decide on the means to use the available resources and achieve justice in distribution.

The government shall work on providing the proper climate and protection and stability of investment projects.

5- The government encourages economic development in a manner that matches with our values and norms and to achieve social justice in a manner that serves development and protection to the private sector and encourage investment and fight unemployment and poverty and reinforce the productive economic sectors and reconstruct the infrastructure and develop the industrial zone and the housing and technology sectors.

6- to reconsider the investment laws and put an end to the monopoly activities between the executive authority and the private sector.

7- to support the agricultural sector and increase the developmental budget allocated to it.

8- to work for having regular payment of salaries to the employees in the public sector and abide by the timetable to pay the delayed salaries and the delayed dues to the private sector.

9- to pay attention to the sectors of laborers and farmers and fishermen and work on alleviating their suffering through support and special projects.

Seventh: in the field of reform

1- The government adopts the administrative and financial reform project and will cooperate with the PLC to issue laws that reinforce reform and fight corruption.

2- to develop the structures and work methods in the public institutions in a manner that achieves effective performance and abidance by the law.

3- to set up a plan to rationalize the government spending and in all fields.

4- to fight corruption and reinforce the values of integrity and transparency and prohibit abuse of public funds and formulate a Palestinian societal strategy for administrative development.

Eighth: at the level of the Palestinian values system

1- The eleventh government shall abide by consolidating national unity and protect social peace and consolidate the values of mutual respect and adoption of the language of dialogue and end all forms of tension and consolidate the culture of tolerance and protection of the Palestinian blood and ban internal fighting.

2- The government affirms the unity of the Palestinian people inside and abroad.

3- The government shall seek to consolidate national conciliation and internal stability and handle the ramifications of the past regretful incidents using the proper mechanisms and the government shall abide by the rule of the law and provide protection to the citizen and public and private properties with all resulting commitments. I call upon our brothers and families of the martyrs of the regretful incidents for more patience and I affirm to them that we support them and stand by their side in their grief.

4- The government shall abide by reinforcing the principle of citizenship through equality in rights and duties and equal opportunities and consolidate social justice in appointments and recruitments in the various ministries and institutions and end all forms of political favoritism in civil and security recruitments.

5- The government affirms its respect to the principle of political pluralism and protection of public freedoms and reinforce the values of Shura and democracy and protect the human rights and consolidate the principle of justice and equality and protect the free press and freedom of expression and the right to disagree and the Palestinian women rights and abide by peaceful transfer of power and authorities and conclude the elections at the local councils as soon as possible.

6- the government shall abide to consolidate political partnership and encourage all forces on the arena to start a serious dialogue to achieve this partnership.

7- to support the families of martyrs and prisoners and offer them assistance and preserve their dignified life and provide them with their needs.

8- The government shall abide by providing a dignified life to the Palestinian citizen and provide the requirements of life and social welfare and meet the health needs and quality health and work on tackling the phenomena of poverty and unemployment through providing job opportunities and development projects and social securities and the social welfare program.

9- the government shall work to develop the education apparatus and improve the conditions of teachers and encourage scientific research and maintain the neutrality of the education apparatus; the government also supports achieving and implementing the national fund for university education.

10- to pay utmost attention to the youth and the Palestinian sports movement and provide its needs and seek to expand the sports infrastructure, including accelerating work to conclude the sports city project and keep participation in external activities and competitions in a manner that reinforces the status of Palestine in the sports arenas at the Arab, regional and international levels.

11- the government shall sponsor implementing the special law for people with special needs

12- to protect the rights of women and offer space and room for women for political participation and in decision making and to contribute in the process of building in all institutions and at all levels.

13- the government shall encourage and support NGO and societal action and the civil society institutions.

Ninth: International relations

At the time when our government stresses on its Arab and Islamic depth and as its expresses high esteem and appreciation to the Arab Islamic political and economic and media support, it shall work on activating its role in the Arab League and in the Islamic Conference Organization and we are looking forward to the Arab Summit meeting to be held in Riyadh at the end of this month to take decisions to end the siege and to support and protect Mecca Agreement. The government also expresses pride in the various international ties which have been deepened through international support to our people and to their legitimate rights. The government shall work on establishing sound and solid relations with the various world countries and with the international institutions, including the UN and the Security Council and the international regional organizations in a manner that assists reinforcing world peace and stability.

The government affirms its commitment to the civilization heritage based on tolerance and coexistence and dialogue between the civilizations and its respect to the international law and the international humanitarian law in a manner that matches with our norms and original traditions. The European Union has offered lots of assistance to our Palestinian people and supported our people's right in freedom and independence and the EU has had serious standpoints in launching criticism to the Israeli occupation policies and this was also adopted by China and Japan in their foreign policies towards the Palestinian cause. Therefore, the government is interested in solid ties with the EU and with Russian Federation and China and Japan and India and Latin American countries and we expect them to take practical steps towards ending the siege imposed on our people and towards exercising pressure on the occupation authorities to end the siege and respect human rights as stipulated in the international charters and to have the occupation withdraw from our occupied territories and to end the repeated aggression measures against our people. The government shall also work on developing relations with the countries with permanent membership in the Security Council.

The government calls on the United States Administration to reconsider its position towards the Palestinian cause and calls on the need to respect the option of the Palestinian people as realized and translated in the national unity government and to stop adopting double standard policies as the Palestinian government looks forwards to having good relations between the Palestinian and American peoples.

Brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to express deep gratitude to the Saudi King Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz for his blessed efforts in uniting the Palestinians and in reaching the Mecca Agreement which we are depending at this phase and we express also gratitude to the Saudi leadership and people for their warm hospitality and sponsorship.

We also express gratitude to the brotherly Egypt which supported our people at times of crises and exerted tremendous efforts through the Egyptian security delegation residing in Gaza Strip in their efforts to stop the Palestinian bloodshed and in reinforcing unity and bridging the gap between the various positions.

We also extend our appreciation and gratitude to brotherly Syria which hosted several Palestinian dialogues, including the last Damascus dialogue which prepared the climate for Mecca Agreement. We also thank the brotherly Qatar which expressed original Arab positions and supported our people during their crisis and the siege and showed concern for the Palestinian unity and we also thank the brotherly Jordan which followed up the Palestinian moves politically and internally and expressed readiness to host the Palestinian meetings, and also Sudan which exerted blessed efforts supporting the Palestinian people and moved also within its capacity as head of the President of the Arab Summit and we express gratitude to brotherly Yemen and the brotherly Arab Moroccan countries and the brotherly Gulf Cooperation Council countries and we also extend gratitude to Islamic Republic of Iran which alleviated the suffering of our people through its support. We also extend gratitude to the Arab League and to the Islamic Conference Organization and we also thank all friendly countries which announced their positions and welcomed the formation of the national unity government and expressed willingness to work towards the end of the siege imposed on our people.

We also express deep gratitude to the Follow Up Committee and the factions and the figures inside and abroad who followed up the internal dialogues and moved at all phases for the sake of reaching this great national moment.

Dear audience,

The challenges ahead are big and there are many difficulties and those who seek to frustrate our efforts and experience are many and our path is still long and our battle is severe and our path is not paved with roses but there are high hopes and our people are waiting anxiously and the eyes of the whole nation are looking at us and everyone is waiting to see what this national unity government will offer and if it will rise to the level of the challenges. We are determined to accomplish things to our people and we are optimistic and we are full of confidence in God first and in our people and nation second and we will proceed in the path of dignity until we achieve victory, freedom, return and independence and the occupation and the siege will end God willing.

I present to your honorable council the members of my government to get your vote of confidence and I welcome all the ministers who make up this government and I extend appreciation and gratitude to the members of the tenth government with whom I had the honor to work as they worked under difficult conditions and they assumed all difficult tasks and showed high sense of responsibility and remained steadfast in face of the hurricanes and remained loyal to the martyrs and injured and prisoners and their families and never changed or yielded and we thank them on behalf of our people.