

## Palestinian youth's disengagement from reconciliation efforts



Prepared by

Nourhan Altabatabi

within project

PalThink Academy for Democracy and Human Rights



Published by

PalThink for Strategic Studies - Palestine

October 2022



## **Youth Research Papers:**

Palestinian youth's disengagement from reconciliation efforts

This is a summery of the original paper, which was written in Arabic.

**October 2022**

## Palestinian youth's disengagement in reconciliation efforts

Although youth constitute one-fifth of Palestinian society, they have been involuntarily disengaged in political participation due to several reasons, on top of which is the disruption of the democratic process and the Palestinian political division since 2007, which led to the calcification of the political system and the dominance of the same ruling figures on the decision-making.

The years 2005 and 2006 witnessed the last democratic scene before the Palestinian arena plunged into political division and its dire consequences. Since then, many efforts have been made to restore the democratic process in many reconciliation meetings. However, youth were never allowed to set at talk tables.

This paper examines the main reasons that made youth absent from political participation:

- 1. Lack of political awareness:** Awareness means understanding a certain context or environment in a way that enables you to adapt to it. You cannot claim your right if you are not aware that it is yours. Young people's lack of awareness of their political rights limits their ability to participate.
- 2. Youth are overwhelmed by social and economic crises:** The Israeli occupation, the existing governments' policies in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, and the poor economic conditions made Palestinians prioritize securing their livelihood over political participation.
- 3. Repression and mouth silencing policies:** The stagnation of democracy in Palestine due to the disruption of elections and division endangered the rights and freedoms ecosystem in Palestine. The first victim of this situation is the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as critics in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been suppressed.
- 4. Lack of an efficient legal system that guarantees political participation for youth:** The legal environment in Palestine is still not conducive to activating the political participation of youth, even though the Palestinian Basic Law has guaranteed political participation as a right for all, and Palestine has signed

several international conventions that guarantee the political participation of youth and women.

However, there are no procedural measures to ensure the effective participation of young people, not to mention that some laws are vaguely-worded in a way that allows the violation or restriction of some rights.

**5. Youth and decision-makers' mutual trust crisis:** Political stagnation undermined confidence in the ruling political system. Youth no longer believe in the efficacy of decision-makers or even demand to be part of the existing system. Meanwhile, political parties use youth in their mobilization programs, but they never allow them to be a part of the decision-making process or the party's leadership.

To overcome these challenges, it is necessary for all parties, including government, political parties, and civil society institutions, to adopt certain policies that can integrate youth and their energies into political life. And young people should raise their political awareness and build a clear vision and a common methodology to pressure decision-makers.