Concept note for the annual conference 2014

The Geo-Strategic and Political Position of the Gaza Strip

18 & 19 November 2014

The Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) in collaboration with the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies (IALIIS) at Birzeit University (BZU), call for research papers for their annual conference, which will be conducted in November, 2014, on the “Geo-Strategic and Political Position of Gaza Strip”. Researchers are kindly asked to submit research papers that fit in the conference themes mentioned below, noting that the topics listed under each theme are not exclusive, some of which are mentioned as examples. Proposed research papers are to be sent to IPS, according to the following deadlines and terms, by email: conference-ijs@palestine-studies.org.

The timetable for receiving papers is:

- March 15th, 2014: Submitting the research proposal, 1000 words max, along with a short biography of the author.
- March 31st, 2014: Refereeing committee replies on the proposal.
- June 30th, 2014: Submitting the full research paper to the refereeing committee.

Important Notes:

- Conference sessions will be conducted in Gaza and the West Bank at the same time via video conference.
- Papers are accepted in both languages, Arabic and English; simultaneous translation will be available.
- Partial or full scholarships will be available for those who can’t cover the travel and hotel expenses.

Problematic of the Conference Topic:

The Gaza Strip had experienced successive catastrophic conditions during the past 6 decades, among which receiving refugees, whose numbers exceeded the numbers of Gaza indigenous populations, after being expelled from their homes and lands. It also suffered
from Israeli aggression in 1956-1957, the aggression of 1967 and the following Israeli occupation, the repressive measures, continuous assaults, military operations, blockade, systematic destruction, starvation, and converting Gaza into a large jail. One of the paradoxes is that this piece of land, which doesn’t exceed 365 square kilometers, less than 1.35% of the surface of Palestine, has been a problematic issue for Palestinians, Israelis, Arabs, regional and international communities.

Proceeding from that background, the conference will analyze geo-strategic and political significance of the Strip, and its centrality, in the past, present and future. In the past; it is not a coincidence that the “all-Palestine government” (حكومة عموم فلسطين) was announced in Gaza in 1948, or that the majority of general commanders of Fatah and Hamas emerged in the Strip; and the refusal of Palestinian officials since 1993 to announce the state of Palestine in the Gaza Strip. In the present, the economic and humanitarian blockade imposed on Gaza has many political implications and ramifications, since the Strip embraces the different regional alliances, influenced by and influencing the current military disputes. In the future, a great deal of the Palestinian national project may end, due to the developments that Gaza faces. This calls for urgent configuration of strategic attitudes and rational policies far from the maze of the ups and downs, progress and regress in the techniques and endeavors of reconciliation.

Main Themes of the Conference:

1- Historical Aspects:
   - From the dismantling of settlements to the present.
2- Socio-Economic Aspects:
   - Economic situation in the Gaza Strip.
   - Economic role of tunnels.
   - The developmental role of natural gas and its political implications.
   - Israeli economic policy.
   - The relief role of UNRWA.
   - Demographic challenges.
   - Transformations in the sociological structure.
   - Higher education in Gaza
   - Social relations between dwellers of Gaza, West Bank, and 1948 Arabs.
   - The besieged Gaza as a symbol of popular solidarity in the West.
3- Political Aspects:
   - The government in Gaza, and its relations with the government in Ramallah.
   - External relations of Hamas with Egypt, Gulf states, Hezbollah, and Iran.
   - Hamas as a mobilizing political party.
   - Fatah and other parties.
   - Youth movements.
4- Strategic Aspects:
   - The significance of Gaza from an Egyptian perspective.
- Sinai and Gaza.
- Israeli controlling techniques after 2006.
- Israeli strategic vision for Gaza’s future.
- Gaza and the Egyptian- Israeli relations.
- Gaza’s significance in the Palestinian national agenda.

For further inquiries and details, please contact IPS at:

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