



### Introduction:

Food sovereignty is a political developmental concept- introduced in 1996 by La Via Campesina - that asserts the right of peoples to control their food resources including land, water, seeds, pastures, animal and fish wealth. The food sovereignty concept is concerned with protecting small producers, ensuring people's right to healthy food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems.

As opposed to the concept of food security, which is a social concept rooted in a capitalist context, food sovereignty, with its progressive and liberal agenda, defies colonial policies, capitalist globalization and its transnational monopolies, such as seed and agro-chemical companies. Most importantly, food sovereignty is regarded as a fundamental human right, one that is of a growing concern at a time when world hunger is escalating. For instance, the number of hungry people in the world in

2017 is about 821 million people, or 1 in 9 people<sup>1</sup>.

"Since the turn of the century and for the first time in history, mankind has enjoyed an abundance of goods that has exceeded our demands," remarked Swiss sociologist Jean Ziegler in his book entitled 'Capitalism explained to my granddaughter'. Ziegler contends that we live on a planet where every 5 seconds, a child under the age of 10, dies of hunger or a related disease, whereas the Earth has the capacity of feeding twice the number of its inhabitants provided that the distribution of food is equitable<sup>2</sup>.

In his book, Ziegler includes other shocking figures. For instance, the world's richest 85 billionaires in 2017 have wealth more than that of the world's poorest 3.5 billion people. Additionally, the 500 most powerful private transnational corporations in all fields of industry, services, and finance

<sup>1</sup> WHO Report on September 2018

<sup>2</sup> [https://al-akhbar.com/Literature\\_Arts/263567](https://al-akhbar.com/Literature_Arts/263567)

control 52.8% of the world's crude oil production. Furthermore, Ziegler refutes the theory of British economist Thomas Malthus, who in the late 18th century observed that populations grow in a geometric progression, whereas food production increases in an arithmetic progression. He claims that this will inevitably lead to a shortage of food and housing as populations will grow faster than the supply of food, to which Karl Marx refuted the Malthusian Theory of Population in his work 'Capital', regarding Malthus' arithmetic progression null.

In the Palestinian context, the issue of food sovereignty is of great importance considering the Israeli military occupation that has full control over Palestinian natural resources, including land, water, and fisheries.

The dependence of the Palestinian economy on the Israeli market, instigated by the Paris Economic Protocol, gives rise to the imperativeness of food sovereignty, as the Paris Protocol granted the Israeli occupation control over the Palestinian economy and the benefit of protecting its own market.

A report published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in early 2018 highlights the Palestinians' material loss since 1967, outlining that if growth trends in the

production.

Palestinian territories were to proceed as prior to the Oslo agreement, the real GDP would have been twice that of today. In addition, the report highlights that Israeli control over areas "C" costs the Palestinian economy 35% of its total size (about \$ 4,700 billion).

In December 2018, WFP reported that food insecurity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is increasing, affecting one-third of Palestinian population. The situation is detrimental in Gaza where nearly 70% of the population suffers from food insecurity.

The main reason for Palestine's loss of autonomy over its food and natural resources, especially the subjugation of its land for production, is the Israeli military occupation. To make matters worse, neo-liberal policies of the Palestinian Authority exacerbate the daily struggles of the working-class community, as policies are geared towards improving unproductive industries rather than adopting an emancipatory development strategy. Importing policies and plans to rectify the effects of the Paris Economic Protocol are not being implemented or promoted, especially policies that promote the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli occupation policies.

## **Background to the Conference:**

Given these facts, it has become vital to initiate a conversation about establishing the concept of food sovereignty in Palestine and the world as a concept that defies the backdrop of colonial and capitalist policies, serving as a substitute for the concept of food security, one that does not adequately resolve food insecurity in the region, but merely offers short-term interventions that address the economic and

social situation. As such, this conference is a continuation of the previous conference held by the Social and Economic Policies Monitor (Al-Marsad) and UAWC last year entitled "Social Movements from the Streets to Podium".

### **Overall Objectives of the Conference:**

- Discussions at the conference seek to promote awareness of the concept of food sovereignty as an alternative to the concept of food security, thereby contesting colonial and neoliberal systems and developing practical mechanisms for its attainment, which are based on global experiences. The concept of food sovereignty has already been adopted by various actors as a prelude to its inclusion in the sectoral plans, national policies and agendas. At the forefront of this inclusion is adopting the concept of sovereignty as a daily constituent of everyday life at different individual, collective, official and civil society levels.
- The second objective of this conference is to examine changes in social movements, especially peasant movements within the framework of the upheavals of colonial policies, including trans-border policies. Such policies infringe upon any possible development, obstructing the global social struggle against all forms of exploitation, domination and oppression.

### **Conference Participants:**

The conference will host a number of decision-makers, leaders of civil society organizations and universities, experts, researchers, as well as Arab and international researchers in the field of sovereignty and resources.

### **Conference Themes:**

<b>First</b>	Theoretical approaches to the concepts of food sovereignty and food security
<b>Second</b>	Food sovereignty in a colonial context ... Palestine as a model
<b>Third</b>	Capitalist globalization and determinants of food sovereignty: struggles of exploitation and domination
<b>Fourth</b>	The importance of local/ Indigenous seeds from an economic, social, political, and environmental perspective
<b>Fifth</b>	Social movements and the quest for food sovereignty
<b>Sixth</b>	Challenges of water and food sovereignty: the struggle for the last drop
<b>Seventh</b>	Landless peasants - new forms of privatization or a return to the feudal system?
<b>Eighth</b>	Strategies for food sovereignty as a concept and practice

## **Participation in the Conference:**

### **1. Individual Participation:**

For interested parties, to attend the sessions and proceedings of the conference; please fill out [participant's form](#).

### **2. Participating as a speaker in the conference:**

Participants can submit a scientific research paper for the conference, present global or local models, or share their experiences related to the theme of the conference. For those wishing to contribute with a research paper, please send a preliminary summary of the research, to one of the addresses listed above, of no more than 500 words, including the research problem, the research methodology and main ideas, as well as five keywords, and a brief bibliography. Participants can also send a summary of their presentation on models or experiences on social movements which fit the theme of the conference. If the proposal is accepted, the participants should submit a research paper of no more than 20 pages, a 12-size font, Simplified Arabic for Arabic, and Times New Roman for English. Please fill out [speaker/ panelist form](#).

- Research, scientific, and language integrity, and accuracy of research must be considered.
- The paper has not been previously published, and the committee supervising the conference has the right to select the research papers to be presented.
- **The deadline for submission of proposals for papers is 17/4/2019. The deadline for the submission of full papers is 31/8/2019.**
- Papers submitted will be published after the conference and arbitration.
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## **Organizers:**

Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), Social and Economic Policies Monitor (Al-Marsad), and La Via Campesina (LVC).

## **Time and Place of the Conference:**

The conference will take place in Palestine, Ramallah Municipality Hall, from 14 to 16 October 2019 and in Padr Association hall in Gaza. The third day of the conference will be dedicated to field visits by international participants, representatives of local institutions and the local media to the Seed Bank run by UAWC in Hebron. A voluntary olive harvesting activity is also organized by UAWC.

### Additional Notes:

- Instant translation from Arabic to English and vice versa will be available.
- For inquiries, please contact the following numbers:
  - Union of Agricultural Work Committees:  
Email: [conferences@uawc-pal.org](mailto:conferences@uawc-pal.org) | Tel: +970 (2) 2421712/3  
For participants from Gaza: Union of Agricultural Work Committees  
Email: [info@uawc.net](mailto:info@uawc.net) | Tel : + 970 (8) 287 99 59
  - Social and Economic Policies Monitor (Al-Marsad):  
Email: [almarsad@almarsad.ps](mailto:almarsad@almarsad.ps) | Tel: +970 (2) 2955065
  - La Via Campesina: Email: [mariammousa12@gmail.com](mailto:mariammousa12@gmail.com)