

Salam Fayyad, the Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), announced on 7th March that he had submitted his Government's resignation to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). The resignation will take effect immediately upon formation of the National Consensus Government and, in any event, no later than the end of this month.

According to the letter of resignation, the Government has made every effort to rescue Palestine from economic deterioration and lawlessness, which peaked in June 2007. The Government has also done all that it can to rebuild the institutions of the PNA to enable them to respond to its citizens' needs, to promote its citizens' ability to persevere, and to defend their land and very existence.

Jamal Zakout, Advisor to the Prime Minister, said that Fayyad had affirmed that this step is intended to support efforts to form a national consensus government and is consistent with his calls, which he has stressed over the past period, regarding the need to form a national consensus government that restores unity to the homeland. In respect of the tasks assigned to the Dialogue Committees, which must complete their activities by the end of March, in line with the statement issued after the first round of dialogue held in Cairo on 25 February 2009, Fayyad stated that the priority is to expedite agreement on the formation of a national consensus government. The new government will be capable of immediately restoring unity to the homeland, thereby enabling reunification of PNA institutions and protecting the Palestinian democratic system by preparing for presidential and legislative elections, to be conducted simultaneously no later than January 2010.

"We believe that the positive atmosphere embodied by the first round of the Dialogue is a precious opportunity that should be utilized to terminate the current state of fragmentation. The Dialogue should serve as a solid foundation to achieve unity and reconciliation, which we have long asserted," Fayyad continued.

The Prime Minister also expressed his hope that the new government will meet the expectations and aspirations of the Palestinian people, honor their sacrifices, and work towards realizing the Palestinian National Project of ending the occupation, with the establishment of an independent, sovereign, viable and prosperous Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. He also hoped that the new government would build on the achievements made by the current government.

Fayyad reiterated his appreciation of the sincere efforts made by our Egyptian brothers under the leadership of President Mubarak, to sponsor the national dialogue and to ensure that it accomplishes its goals of reuniting the homeland, thereby enabling our people to overcome the real danger posed by the current division to our national project.

Fayyad also extended his ministers' and his deep appreciation to President Abbas for his strong

support and trust in the Government throughout the period it was in office.