

## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to clarify the relationship between human dignity and resistance. The relationship between the two concepts seems to be vague, but if resistance is considered as a means to achieve human dignity, the following question can be formulated: What are the conditions, rules, and principles that enable a resistance movement to be consistent with human dignity?

The thesis answers this question through three chapters, divided as the follows:

### **Chapter one:**

The first chapter tackles the concept of human dignity and the sense of human existence. It builds on the philosophies of both Kant and Sartre. It argues that achieving human existence is conditioned on the ability of people to formulate laws and to submit to them freely, taking into consideration that these laws treat humans as a goals and not as means, and that the main objective of such laws is achieving people's freedom. Hence, human dignity can be defined as a supreme value that is achieved through human freedom and self-determination to formulate laws and regulations that maintain human freedom as a supreme objective, treat human beings as a goal rather than a means and does not detract from, or add to human dignity the consequences of achieving it.

Any colonial / despotic system violates human dignity, since people under such regimes don't possess the right to determine their own destiny through legislation and the free submission to it. Therefore, the dignity of people under occupation is violated and they resort to resistance seeking its restoration.

### **Chapter two:**

The second chapter discusses the standards and criteria, which indicate that a resistance movement is aware of the concept of human dignity as a goal that it seeks to achieve.

To define the abovementioned standards and criteria the chapter examines four resistance movements around the world. These are:

- The resistance in India led by Gandhi.
- The resistance in South Africa led by Nelson Mandela.
- The resistance in Cuba led by Fidel Castro.
- The resistance in Algeria, led by the Algerian National Liberation Army.

The comparative analysis of the four movements addresses the following aspects:

- The ability of the resistance movement to create a separated / independent structure from the colonial system in all aspects;
- The consistency and harmony of the methods / techniques that each resistance movement adopted to achieve its goals with the principles human dignity;
- The extent of the ability of the resistance movement to maintain human beings as the goal / target rather than the means of liberation, considering that the objective of any resistance is human emancipation.

### **Chapter three:**

The third chapter of the thesis investigates the extent to which the Palestinian resistance (in Palestine and abroad) was able to achieve human dignity by examining the stages that the Palestinian resistance went through since the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) until the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

The following conclusions are deduced from trailing the main stages that the Palestinian resistance went through:

- In its early stages, the Palestinian resistance abroad adopted armed struggle as a strategy for liberation. This affected the achievement of human dignity by glorifying arms power, and sanctifying force as a means of liberation, which made human beings turn into means of liberation.
- In the next phase (١٩٧٤-١٩٨٠), after the PLO was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, claiming the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people became central, and the Palestinian position shifted towards establishing an independent identity that is not based on the negation of the other.
- The struggle inside the Palestinian territories played a major role in supporting the resistance abroad. It carried public characteristics that depend on the Palestinian popular resistance. Despite the absence of a strong international political impact demanding the Palestinian people rights, the popular resistance accumulation sparked the ١٩٨٧ Intifada, which had a tremendous effect on the resistance leadership abroad, and, as a result, the independence of the Palestinian estate was declared on the ١٥<sup>th</sup> of November, ١٩٨٨. This symbolic practice of self-determination put the PLO in a position of power to be a party to the peace process that has emerged after the Gulf War.
- The signing of the Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israel, and emergence of the Palestinian National Authority, and the establishment of

the temporary self –governance, in accordance with the Accords, were the beginning of a real direct Palestinian practice of self-determination. This, per se, is considered as an achievement of human dignity despite the fate of the Accords and subsequent agreements. However, the Palestinian resistance which took new forms didn't end, and, as it seems, will never stop until sovereignty is achieved and the right to self-determination is practiced in full, as the speech in front of the United Nations General Assembly on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2011 by President Mahmoud Abbas made clear.

Human dignity can be achieved only by resistance; by resisting any attempts to detract this right. This resistance, which is founded to restore human dignity by achieving freedom, must preserve its supreme goals by formulating a set of laws, standards, and guiding principles which are consistent and harmonious with the concept of human dignity, to serve as a compass for liberation.