

General Union of Palestinian Students' (GUPS) Campaign for direct elections to the Palestine National Council (PNC)

We, Palestinian youth of the General Union of Palestinian students, gather here today in honour of the integral part our union has played in the struggle for liberation. Since its official foundation more than five decades ago, GUPS has been at the forefront of mobilising our people and regenerating our commitment to free Palestine, especially in times of national danger and depletion. We are at the office of the PLO delegation to the United Kingdom in order to reassert our inalienable rights, and today we claim our right to democratically participate in the shaping of our destiny. We begin a national initiative to campaign for direct elections to the Palestinian National Council (PNC), on the clear understanding that only a reformed national representative institution that includes the will of all Palestinians - those struggling in the homeland and those struggling in exile - can create a representative Palestinian platform and restore the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In the spirit of national unity that bring us here today, we remind Palestinian youth everywhere of the National Reconciliation Document of the Prisoners of 2006, issued from the Occupier's prisons from the leaders of all political parties. Its second point of national unity urgently calls for the reactivation of the PLO through its democratic mechanisms, enfranchising all Palestinians, the millions of refugees in exile, and those inside. We are all Palestinian citizens, we all have the right to vote. We declare here that we insist upon this right to form our national institutions.

We announce, in the spirit of national unity that brought us here, and with the aim of leaving behind factionalism in order to liberate our homeland and return to our homes:

1. The call for direct elections to the Palestine National Council (PNC), the parliamentary body that gives authority to and creates the political platform, strategies and policies for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, to be held one year from this day, in January, 2011.

2. The inclusion of all our people wherever they now live - in the homeland, the *Shatat*, in the prisons, and the camps of refuge in that election.

3. That this new representative body, reflective of all sectors of our people, reform and reactivate the PLO institutions so that they embody the will of the Palestinian people as a whole, in accordance with the principle of direct elections.

We urge all Palestinians at this critical moment to join our call for representation, and to take up our historic responsibility in the struggle for liberation, only on the basis of popular sovereignty. We begin the campaign through our national institutions and our associations, in the spirit of our united love of our homeland and the principles that bind us, to restore our PLO as the legitimate voice of the Palestinian people.

January 27th, 2011.