

al majdal



quarterly magazine of

BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

Double Issue No. 39/40
(Autumn 2008 / Winter 2009)

Palestine's Ongoing Nakba



Jaffa 1948....Gaza 2008

BADIL takes a rights-based approach to the Palestinian refugee issue through research, advocacy, and support of community participation in the search for durable solutions.

BADIL was established in 1998 to support the development of a popular refugee lobby for Palestinian refugee and internally displaced rights and is registered as a non-profit organization with the Palestinian Authority.

Acknowledgments

Badil thanks the Pluto Press, Marcy Newman, Shourideh Molavi, Maher Bitar, Rania Madi, and Anaheed Al-Hardan for their help in putting together this issue of *al-Majdal*.

Front Cover: Fleeing Yaffa in 1948 (courtesy New Jersey Solidarity); Fleeing Rafah 2008 (Courtesy *rafahkid*).

Production and Printing: al-Ayyam

BADIL welcomes comments, criticism, and suggestions for *al-Majdal*. Please send all correspondence to the editor at mediaenglish@badil.org.

The views expressed by independent writers in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of BADIL Resource Center.

al-Majdal is a quarterly magazine of BADIL Resource Center that aims to raise public awareness and support for a just solution to Palestinian residency and refugee issues.

Electronic copies are available online at:
www.badil.org/al-Majdal/al-Madjal.htm

Annual Subscription: 25€ (4 issues)

Published by

BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian
Residency & Refugee Rights

PO Box 728, Bethlehem, Palestine
Tel/Fax: 972-2-274-7346
Email: info@badil.org
Web: www.badil.org

ISSN 1726-7277

Editor

Hazem Jamjoum

Editorial Team

Reem Mazzawi, Mohammad Jaradat,
Nidal al-Azza, Ingrid Jaradat Gassner

Layout & Design

Wael al-Azzeh, al-Ayyam
Atallah Salem

Advisory Board

Abdelfattah Abu Srou (Palestine)
Diana Buttu (Palestine)
Jalal Al Husseini (Switzerland)
Arjan El Fassed (Netherlands)
Randa Farah (Canada)
Usama Halabi (Palestine)
Jeff Handmaker (Netherlands)
Zaha Hassan (United States)
Salem Hawash (Palestine)
Isabelle Humphries (Palestine)
Scott Leckie (Australia)
Karine Mac Allister (Quebec)
Terry Rempel (Canada)
Shahira Samy (Egypt)
Joseph Schechla (Egypt)

Contents

Editorial

Gaza: The Latest Chapter in a Sixty-Year Nakba 2

Commentary

Resolution 194: A Retrospective
by *Terry Rempel* 5

Main Feature: Ongoing Forced Displacement

Jaffa: Eminence to Ethnic Cleansing
by *Sami Abu Shehadeh* and *Fadi Shbaytah* 8

Akka: A Palestinian Priority
by *Eyad Barghouti* 18

Al-Naqab: The Ongoing Displacement of Palestine's Southern Bedouin
by *Hazem Jamjoum* 27

Displacement of the Jahalin Bedouin
by *Reem Mazzawi* 32

Jerusalem: A Displacement Master Plan
Interview with Khalil Tafakgi 38

Palestinians in Burj al-Luq Luq
by *Emad Jaouny* 44

Jordan Valley: Civil Resistance to Systematic Displacement
by *Fathy Khdirat* 45

Palestinian Villages of the West Bank between Isolation and Expulsion
by *Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign* 52

Assessing the Response to Situations of Internal Displacement in the OPT
by *Karine Mac Allister* 59

Reviews

Book Review: A Doctor in Galilee: The Life and Struggle of a Palestinian in Israel
by *Janet Walker* 68

Writing My Life and Struggle
by *Dr. Hatim Kanaaneh* 71

Documents

Ongoing Forced Displacement of the Palestinian Population on Both Sides of the "Green Line"
Submission to the Human Rights Council Third Universal Periodic Review of Israel 74

"The Rights of Palestinian Refugees and the Final Status Negotiations"
Open Letter to President Mahmoud Abbas from Palestinian Refugee Organizations 78

Civil Society Action for Justice in Palestine
Final Declaration and Action Plan of The Bilbao Initiative 80

"There is No Alternative to the Return of Palestinian Refugees"
Closing Statement of the Fourth Right of Return Popular Conference 82

Final Statement of the 2008 Special Meeting
Global Right of Return Coalition 87

"Stop the Massacre in Gaza – Boycott Israel Now!"
Statement of the BDS Campaign National Committee (BNC) 89

"Gross Human Rights Violations and War Crimes in the Occupied Gaza" -
Statement to the 9th special session of the UN Human Rights Council
Badil and other Palestinian Organizations 90

BDS Campaign Update 92

Gaza: The Latest Chapter in a Sixty-Year Nakba

The Gaza Massacre by Carlos Latuff



In December 2008, Israel decided to mark the 60th anniversary of its existence the same way it had established itself: by destroying lives and livelihoods of the Palestinian people. For 23 days, one of the world's most powerful armies shelled and pounded from the air, land and sea the 1.5 million Palestinian inhabitants of the tiny, over-populated and occupied Gaza Strip that was compared to the Warsaw Ghetto by UN Rapporteur for Human Rights, Prof. Richard Falk.¹ Israel thus caused the forced displacement of tens of thousands of Palestinians, the death of more than 1,300 and the injury of over 5,000, the great majority of them civilians. 13 Israelis, ten of them soldiers, were killed in this latest round of hostilities. As this issue of *al-Majdal* goes to print, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are working to dig out what remains of their families, rebuild what remains of the homes built through a lifetime of work and unearth what remains of belongings bearing memories of generations.

An official UN fact finding mission has yet to be dispatched to Gaza and “investigate all violations of international human rights law and International Humanitarian Law by the occupying Power, Israel, against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, due to the current aggression [...]”² In the meantime, Israeli spokespersons have confirmed that “massive use of force” was required in Gaza in order to prevent casualties among its armed forces. Eyewitnesses, NGOs and international agencies have confirmed that Israel has applied excessive force, including illegal use of weapons in an indiscriminate and wanton manner against the civilian population of Gaza.³ In terms of common and plain language, and given the civilian death toll, this means that Israel has perpetrated massacres.

It would not be for the first time: massacres against Palestinian civilians have been committed by Zionist forces, Israel and Israelis in the past, from Deir Yassin, Ayn Ghazzal, Tantura, Khisas and Dawaymeh in 1948, through Qibya (1953), Kafr Qasem (1956) and Sabra and Shatila (1982), to Ayun Qara, the Ibrahimi Mosque, Qana, Jenin, Rafah and Khan Younis between 1990 and 2007. In all cases, Israel has invoked the right to self-defense and a need to ensure security and protection for its Jewish population, because efforts to create, maintain and expand an exclusive Jewish state were met with rejection and resistance by the country's indigenous population. Massacres, while they may be the most graphic means, have not been the only ones.

Other means employed by Israel with the aim to prevent Palestinian self-determination and undermine resistance to Jewish colonization have included: gross and systematic violation of fundamental rights and freedoms (including arbitrary restriction of movement and the denial of refugee and IDP return), torture and inhuman treatment (including theft of land and other property, segregation, restriction and denial of access to essential services and sources of livelihood, destruction of homes and other private and public infrastructure, arbitrary arrest and detention, and extra-judicial killing), as well as the systematic and arbitrary forced displacement of the Palestinian population in and from their homeland. The result is what Palestinians call the Ongoing Nakba.

In this issue of *al-Majdal*, we shed light on one central aspect of the Ongoing Nakba: the systematic, ongoing and arbitrary forced displacement of Palestinians by Israel. The articles featured in this issue describe the policies and practices used by Israel to forcibly displace Palestinians from their homes inside Israel and in the 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and the various ways in which Palestinians struggle to protect themselves from displacement. Also included is a preliminary assessment of the international response to the ongoing forced displacement of Palestinians in the OPT. While each article stands on its own in describing the Ongoing Nakba as it has affected a particular community, the stories combined offer a clear – albeit by no means comprehensive - picture of the cost for the Palestinian people of Israel’s racist colonial enterprise.

The ongoing forced displacement of Palestinians is the result of an Israeli strategy that combines policies and practices of transfer (expulsion, deportation) of the largest number of indigenous Palestinians possible from their homeland with the concentration and confinement of as many as possible of those who remain in the smallest possible areas of land (described as “reserves and ghettos” in the Apartheid Convention⁴); effective Israeli control of all movement into and out of the reserves and ghettos; and, confiscation of Palestinian land and transfer of Palestinian people from areas located outside of these reserves and ghettos through a combination of military and administrative measures, such as home demolitions, physical harassment, water and electricity deprivation and discriminatory zoning and development planning, that make life outside these areas difficult and unsustainable for Palestinian individuals and communities.

Inside Israel, in the Naqab (Negev), Israel has recognized and developed seven communities for Palestinians which are officially designated “concentration towns.” The remaining 45 Palestinian Bedouin communities are considered illegal, and their residents are pressured to move to one of the concentration towns in exceedingly violent ways. Palestinian towns in the Galilee and the Triangle (central-eastern part of Israel) are completely surrounded by Jewish communities and national parks and forests which prevent their geographical expansion, while Palestinians in the historic cities (such as Jaffa, Lydd, Akka, Ramle) are being evicted and pushed to move into one of the already overcrowded Palestinian communities.

In the OPT, an aerial photo, or a drive around any Palestinian town in the occupied West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem, will immediately reveal that the respective community is surrounded by a combination of illegal Israeli infrastructure, including the Wall, Jewish colonies (settlements), checkpoints and other military and settler infrastructure which are off-limits to Palestinians. A brief discussion with Palestinians in any community outside

**Letters and
Corrections to the
Previous Issue of
al-Majdal (Issue #38,
Summer 2008)**

I have just had the opportunity to read your article on BDS in Canada in the summer issue of *al-Majdal*. I learned a great deal. However, I was deeply disappointed by your failure to mention the church-oriented community, especially Canadian Friends of Sabeel and the United Church of Canada. BDS activity in the United Church preceded a number of organizations and projects that you mention, and in at least one case I am aware of moved beyond mere promotion of BDS to a major investment decision. --David Wurfell, Toronto, Canada.

In our article in edition no.38 on trade union solidarity in Ireland we mistakenly referred to TUIP being established by Yousef Allan in Dundee in 1980. This in fact was the British TUIP. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions established TUIP (ICTU) in October 2006 to mobilize trade union solidarity throughout the island of Ireland. It has been very active since this time. --Trade Union Friends of Palestine, Ireland.

The photo on page 63 is incorrectly captioned. The caption should read: “Sign in *Dublin* calling for EU sanctions against Israel, 2008.”

Send your letters to the editor at mediaenglish@badil.org

It seems to me ironic that Israel, a State that, more than any other, owes its very existence to a General Assembly resolution, should be so disdainful of United Nations resolutions. Prime Minister Olmert's recent statement disavowing the authority of Security Council Resolution 1860 clearly places Israel as a State in contempt of international law and the United Nations.

--UNGA President Fr. Miguel D'Escoto Brockman (32nd Plenary of the 10th Special Session of the General Assembly - 15 January 2009)

(west) of the Wall will quickly reveal that there are strong Israeli pressures on them to move to the closest walled-in area. Also in the OPT, the cost of administering and policing the closed Palestinian areas has been outsourced to the Palestinian Authority, a Palestinian 'partner' whose loyalty is guaranteed by its complete dependency upon the international community and Israel, and – if needed - by Israeli military force.

The story of Israel's treatment of the 1.5 million Palestinians in the tiny 360 km² Gaza Strip is the story – in a nutshell – of Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people and of Palestine's Ongoing Nakba. The Palestinians killed, injured and displaced by Israel's brutal military assault in December 2008 are the same Palestinians – and their descendants - whom Israel had expelled from their homes and pushed into refugee-hood in Gaza in 1948 (two out of every three Palestinians in Gaza are refugees), whose land it has stolen, whom it has oppressed since 1967 by means of a brutal military occupation, whose freedom of movement it has severely restricted since the early 1990s (the Gaza Strip was called an "open-air prison" already back then), and whom it had tried to starve into submission by means of a criminal blockade of food, fuel and electricity in the 18 months preceding the military assault.

Under the pretext of self-defense, the state of Israel invoked – and western governments endorsed – a "right" to indiscriminately and wantonly kill, injure and displace those Palestinian refugees and civilians under occupation, whose fundamental human rights, including the rights to return and self-determination, Israel and the international community have failed to respect, protect and promote for the past 60 years. As in the case of Israel's war against Lebanon in 2006, western governments led by the United States and the European Union condoned and supported Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, and helped delay a Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire. The same states continue to block further action by the United Nations, including effective sanctions and investigation and prosecution of Israeli war crimes and gross and systematic human rights violations.

In many ways, the case of the Palestinian people, represented by the victims of Israel's assault on Gaza, has become a test case. Now, when the government that promoted "preventive war" and "war on terror" and established Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib has come to an end in the United States, new hope for change and a different, more just and peaceful world inspires millions. For most people of the world, however, such hope will remain elusive, until legitimacy is restored to their struggles for justice, freedom and unmitigated equality, until the powerful can be held accountable to universal standards, and impunity for gross and systematic violation of human rights and war crimes can be put to an end. The case of the Palestinian people is a test case in this regard because Israel's racist and oppressive regime which combines elements of apartheid, colonialism and military occupation is sustained and protected by the most powerful Western states.

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Resolution 194 (III), A Retrospective

by Terry Rempel

December 11, 2008 marks 60 years since the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 194 (III). While much of the resolution has been either forgotten or discarded, paragraph 11, which sets out the principles and mechanisms for a solution to the Palestinian refugee question, continues to occupy a central place in the debate over a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Resolution 194 (III) was drafted in just over 3 weeks during the closing months of 1948. The debate pitted Palestinian leaders and the Arab states against the newly-established state of Israel, but it was also coloured by Cold War animosities, US domestic politics, and the debate over human rights and refugees at the UN.

The principles and mechanisms found in paragraph 11 of the resolution can be traced to the June 1948 Text of Suggestions (A/863) drafted by the UN Mediator for Palestine, Count Folke Bernadotte, in which he recommended that the UN recognize “the right of residents of Palestine who, because of conditions created by the conflict there have left their normal places of abode, to return to their homes without restriction and to regain possession of their property.”

The origin of the recommendation is somewhat curious as the Mediator’s drafts do not address the refugee crisis. The US and UK, which were closely following Bernadotte’s work, both supported the recommendation, but neither had much contact with the Mediator in the period leading up to his June report. Some suggest that the recommendation was the result of consultations with Palestinian officials in Rhodes in late June, but he also met with Israeli officials who made known their opposition to the return of the refugees.¹

Bernadotte’s experience as head of the Swedish Red Cross and his role in securing the release and repatriation of prisoners of war during WWII may provide another explanation. Both the Mediator and his team of advisers expressed serious concerns about violations of international humanitarian law (1907 Hague Regulations) during the war in Palestine. This included, for example, the expulsion of Palestinians from ‘Ayn Ghazal, Ijzim, and Jaba and the systematic destruction of the villages. It was these types of incidents which Bernadotte was likely referring to when he wrote in his September report that the Arab refugee crisis had resulted from both the “hazards and *strategy*” of the war.

The extent to which Bernadotte was aware of and influenced by the drafting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Status of Refugees* is less clear. The refugee crisis in Palestine resulted in significant additions to both instruments, including provision for the right of return in the Declaration, but these changes were introduced months after the Mediator issued his two reports.² A more likely influence would have been the 1945 Charter of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg which defined the deportation of civilians as both a war crime and a crime against humanity. The following year the General Assembly (Res. 8, 12 February 1946) reiterated that “the main task concerning displaced persons is to encourage and assist in every way possible their early return to their countries of origin.”

Bernadotte dealt with the refugee question in more detail in his September report (A/648) in which he refers to the right of return no less than 9 times. The report’s conclusions provided the foundation language for paragraph 11 of Resolution 194 (III). Bernadotte recommended that,

[t]he right of Arab refugees to return to their homes in Jewish-controlled territory at the earliest possible date should be affirmed by the United Nations, and their repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation, and payment of adequate compensation for the property of those choosing not to return, should be supervised and assisted by the United Nations conciliation commission

Commentary

Publicly, Israel rejected the report, but the debate in the Knesset is somewhat telling. Foreign Minister Shertok (Sharett) first expressed his government's opposition to the Mediator's recommendations, but went on to acknowledge that "[i]t is not so nice or humanitarian to oppose something which is so basic, so simple: a person's right to return to the home from which he has been driven out by force."³

On 21 September 1948, four days after Bernadotte's assassination in Jerusalem, the UN Secretary-General forwarded the report to the General Assembly. The Assembly's First Committee, which dealt with political and security issues, began its review of the report in mid-October, but the discussion was again delayed for several weeks. This was due, in part, to US concerns that the debate would become mired in domestic politics leading up to the US Presidential elections in November of that year. In the meantime, the US and UK collaborated on a draft resolution.

Substantive discussions finally began in mid-November when the UK submitted a draft resolution. The paragraph on refugees closely mirrored the Mediator's recommendation. The UK draft underwent several revisions in the following weeks. The phrase "Arab refugees" was dropped making the draft resolution applicable to all persons displaced during the war in Palestine. US amendments included the principle of refugee choice, which was a major issue of debate between the US and the Soviet Union at the UN, as well as the provision that returnees would have to "live in peace with their neighbours." The Committee rejected a US amendment that would have limited compensation to those choosing not to return. It also rejected a Guatemalan amendment that would have linked the return of refugees to "the proclamation of peace between the contending parties." The Committee approved a last-minute British suggestion that the refugees should be allowed to return at the earliest "practicable" rather than "possible" date. The Mediator used both terms in his September report.

Australian and Polish drafts, which called upon UN organs and agencies to "assist in working out plans both for the resettlement of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons and for their repatriation where feasible in the areas from which they have come" were eventually withdrawn. Syria submitted two draft resolutions which dealt incidentally with the refugee question: the first called for the establishment of a commission to study and prepare proposals for the creation of a single state in Palestine; the second called for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the UN recommendation to partition Palestine (Resolution 1811).⁴ The Committee rejected both draft resolutions, but narrowly defeated the second by a vote of 21 in favour, 21 against with 4 abstentions.

UN General Assembly Resolution 194

11. Endorses the conclusions state in Part One, section VIII, paragraph 4(i) of the Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator in Palestine⁵;

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement, and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, and to maintain close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and, through him, with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations;

The First Committee met 31 times between 15 October and 4 December 1948. Paragraph 11 of the revised British draft resolution included a total of 7 major changes. Members voted on each amendment before voting on the draft resolution as a whole. 29 states voted in favour of paragraph 11, as amended, by a show of hands.⁶ 6 voted against and 13 abstained. The Committee then voted for the draft resolution as a whole. The draft was barely adopted by a recorded vote of 25 in favour, 21 against and 9 abstentions.

Those who supported the draft resolution noted that it was not perfect, but, in the words of the British representative, the draft "was the best answer which many brains and good intentions could produce."

On December 11, the General Assembly met to discuss the draft resolution. There was palpable concern that the draft would fail to obtain two-thirds support of the Assembly's members. The

New Zealand representative warned that “[i]f the United Nations did not pass the resolution that day, it would be still another example of its helplessness and the world would be aghast at the fact that the problem of the government of an area of 10,000 square miles only could not be solved by all the brains and all the goodwill in the world.”

In order to obtain the widest-possible support, the Assembly decided to cut all references to the UN partition plan (Resolution 181) and the UN Mediator’s report, and to modify provisions for the appointment of the UN Conciliation Commission. The Arab states were among those opposed to Resolution 181 and the Mediator’s Report. This meant deleting the first clause of paragraph 11, which endorsed the Mediator’s conclusion on the right of return. This explains why the actual text of paragraph 11 does not use the phrase “right of return”, which is found in the Mediator’s report. Nevertheless, the sponsors of the amendment were in full agreement that the change would not affect the substance of paragraph 11. Moreover, the intention of the Arab states was to remove any reference that would comprise recognition of the state of Israel, not to delete the right of return. Resolution 194 (III) was adopted by a vote of 35 in favour, 15 against and 8 abstentions. In the end, the Arab states decided to vote against the resolution and encouraged others to do so after it became known that Israel’s request for UN membership had come before the Security Council. None of the votes cast against the resolution, however, related to paragraph 11.

The UNCCP, which was set up to facilitate the implementation of Resolution 194 (III), subsequently drafted a number of papers to facilitate its work. In 1950, however, the Committee prepared a comprehensive paper (W/45) on the meaning of paragraph 11. The Committee arrived at 6 major conclusions:

- (1) the term “refugees” applies to all persons displaced during the war in Palestine;
- (2) the refugees have a right to exercise their free choice about their future;
- (3) the refugees have a right to return to their homes and not just their homeland;
- (4) refugees wishing to return should give advance assurances of their intention to live in peace. Israel may reserve a right to veto individual cases based on evidence of past action;
- (5) Israel has an obligation to protect the rights of returnees and Arab host states have an obligation to ensure that refugees are able to make a free choice; and,
- (6) refugees should be able to return when stable conditions have been established and that such conditions were created by the 1949 armistice agreements.

Additional papers concluded that refugees have an individual right to both restitution and compensation; it applies to both returnees and to those refugees choosing not to return, and compensation should be paid for both loss of and damage to property.

Sixty years later, Israel continues to dispute the relevance of Resolution 194 (III) to resolving the Palestinian refugee question and the meaning of paragraph 11. The drafting history of the resolution, the UNCCP working papers and a review of international law in 1948 clarify the meaning of paragraph 11. All refugees have the right to return, restitution and compensation, while a solution must be based on the free and informed choice of each refugee. The recent (2007) concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination underscore the relevance of paragraph 11 to resolving the Palestinian refugee question today. The Committee reiterated its concern about “the denial of the right of many Palestinians to return and repossess their land in Israel” and called upon Israel to “to assure equality in the right to return to one’s country and in the possession of property” (CERD/C/ISR/CO/13). And, finally, the importance of Resolution 194 (III), paragraph 11, is that it takes us back to first principles, which provide the foundation for a solution based on the universal principle of equality and the fundamental rights and freedoms of all.

* Terry Rempel is a PhD Candidate in Politics at the University of Exeter, UK. He is a founding member of BADIL and former Coordinator of Inforch.

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Jaffa: From Eminence to Ethnic Cleansing

by Sami Abu Shehadeh & Fadi Shbaytah



Photo of Jaffa in the early 1930s (Courtesy of palestineremembered.com)

Jaffa was the largest city in historic Palestine during the years of the British mandate, with a population of over eighty-thousand Palestinians in addition to the forty-thousand people living in the towns and villages in its immediate vicinity. In the period between the UN Partition resolution (UNGA 181) of 29 November 1947, and the declaration of the establishment of the state of Israel, Zionist military forces displaced ninety-five percent of Jaffa's indigenous Arab Palestinian population. Jaffa's refugees accounted for fifteen percent of Palestinian refugees in that fateful year, and today they are dispersed across the globe still banned from returning by the state responsible for their displacement.

Jaffa was the epicenter of the Palestinian economy before the 1948 Nakba. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the people of Jaffa had cultivated citrus groves, particularly oranges, on their land. International demand for Jaffa oranges propelled the city onto the world stage, earning the city an important place in the global economy. By the 1930s, Jaffa was exporting tens of millions of citrus crates to the rest of the world, which provided thousands of jobs for the people of the city and its environs, and linking them to the major commercial centers of the Mediterranean coast and the European continent.

With the success of its citrus exports, the city witnessed the emergence and growth of various related economic sectors, from banks to land and sea transportation enterprises to import and export firms, and many others. As the city grew, Jaffa's entrepreneurs began to develop local industrial production with the opening of metal-work factories, and others producing glass, ice, cigarettes, textiles, sweets, transportation-related equipment, mineral and carbonated water, and various foodstuffs, among others.

In addition to commerce and industry, a third major pillar of Jaffa's economy in the mandate years was tourism. Tens of thousands of tourists and pilgrims visited the historic city every year, both for its sites of historical and religious significance, its beautiful buildings, and the Christian holy sites scattered throughout the city. As Jaffa's tourism industry grew, so too did its communications infrastructure, and the transportation network connecting it to the rest of Palestine and the Arab world.

Ongoing Forced Displacement

More investments and jobs were also created for Jaffa's residents through the increasing number of hotels, transportation companies, and the growing number of tourism-related services.

Jaffa was also the cultural capital of Palestine, being home to tens of the most important newspapers and publication houses in the country, including the dailies *Filastin* and *al-Difa'*. The most important and ornate cinemas were in Jaffa, as were tens of athletics clubs and cultural societies. The headquarters of some of these societies, like the Orthodox Club and the Islamic Club, have themselves become historic sites still testifying to the city's cultural history. During the Second World War, the British Mandate authorities moved the headquarters of the Near East Radio broadcast studios to Jaffa, the studios becoming a cultural hub in the city from 1941 to 1948. With the growing cultural importance of Jaffa came increasing cultural exchange and interconnection with the main cultural centers in the region such as Cairo and Beirut, which further established the city as a cultural minaret in the region – lovingly dubbed the *Bride of the Sea*.

The story of Jaffa's Ongoing Nakba is the story of the transformation of this thriving modern urban center into a marginalized neighborhood suffering from poverty, discrimination, gentrification, crime and demolition since the initial wave of mass expulsion in 1948 to the present day.

The Early Years of Jaffa's Nakba

Zionist forces initiated a cruel siege on the city of Jaffa in March 1948. The youth of the city formed popular resistance committees to confront the assault. On 14 May 1948, the Bride of the Sea fell to the Zionist military forces; that same evening the leaders of the Zionist movement in Palestine declared the establishment of the state of Israel. Approximately four thousand of the one hundred and twenty thousand Palestinians managed to remain in their city after it was militarily occupied. They were all rounded up and ghettoized in al-'Ajami neighborhood which was sealed off from the rest of the city and administered as essentially a military prison for two subsequent years; the military regime under which Israel governed them lasted until 1966. During this period, al-'Ajami was completely surrounded by barbed wire fencing that was patrolled by Israeli soldiers



Packaging oranges for export in Jaffa, early 1920s (Courtesy of palestineremembered.com)

Ongoing Forced Displacement

and guard dogs. It was not long before the new Jewish residents of Jaffa, and based on their experience under Nazism in Europe, began to refer to the Palestinian neighborhood as the “ghetto.”

In addition to being ghettoized, the Palestinians who remained in Jaffa had lost everything overnight: their city, their friends, their families, their property, and their entire physical and social environment. Most had lost their homes as the Israeli military forced them into al-'Ajami. Legislator, judge and executioner in the 'Ajami ghetto was the military commander; without his permission one could not enter or leave the ghetto, and rights to things like education and work were among those rights that Palestinians were denied. Arab states were classified as enemy states, and so making contact with the expelled family and friends, the refugees, was strictly prohibited. This was the nightmare lived by the Palestinians of Jaffa after the 1948 Nakba.

In the early 1950s, Jaffa was administratively engulfed by the Tel Aviv municipality that became known as Tel Aviv-Yafo; the Palestinians of Jaffa went from being a majority in their city and homeland to the two-percent "enemies of the state," a minority of Israel's main metropolis. The municipality immediately began drawing up plans for what they called the “Judaization” of the city, renaming the Arabic streets of the city after Zionist leaders, demolishing much of the old Arab architecture, and completely destroying the buildings in the surrounding neighborhoods and villages that were depopulated during the 1948 Nakba. The new curriculum introduced in Palestinian schools denied that the place had any Arab-Palestinian history at all, a facet of the Israeli education system that continues until today.

The Largest Armed Robbery of the 20th Century

After expelling most of Jaffa's residents, militarily occupying the city and ghettoizing the remaining original inhabitants, Israeli authorities passed the *Absentee Property Law (1950)* through which it seized the property of all Palestinians who were not in possession of their immovable properties after the Nakba. Through the implementation of this unjust law, the state of Israel sent its operatives to all corners of the land, surveying the properties left behind by the expelled refugees, the internally displaced Palestinians banned from returning to their lands, and those relocated to the ghettos of Palestine's cities. Title to these lands, buildings, homes, factories, farms and religious sites were then transferred to the state's “Custodian of Absentee Property.” This is how the Palestinians of Jaffa, the refugees and the ghettoized, had their properties “legally” stolen by the state of Israel.

In the interviews conducted for our research, we heard dozens of stories from Nakba survivors telling us about how their homes, often just meters away from the ghetto, were seized, and how they could do nothing about it. Many told us stories of how their homes were given to, or simply taken by, new Jewish immigrants, and how they would try to convince the new residents of their homes to give them back some of their furniture, or clothes, or documents, or photographs. In some of these cases, the house's new resident would give back some of the items, in most of the cases the response was to consider the original Palestinian owner an intruder, and to call the police or report him to the military commander. Former residents of the al-Manshiyya neighborhood, one of the city's wealthier areas before the Nakba, described the sorrow they felt as they walked past their old houses, and the pain of seeing what remained of the neighborhood demolished to be replaced by a public recreation area.

Some of the most difficult stories are those of the Palestinian farmers and peasants from the villages of the Jaffa district. They describe how they were forced off of their land, how they managed to stay in Palestine, how the Israeli government handed their land over to Jewish settlers, and how these settlers then hired the same Palestinian farmers to work on their own land as day laborers exploited for the personal profit of the Jewish settler off the produce of the land that Palestinians had cultivated for generations. In fact, after their properties and enterprises were seized or shut down, the vast majority of the Jaffa Palestinians who remained became cheap labor for Jewish employers. Their employment was contingent on their "loyalty" to the new state. And so it was that the people who ran the economic hub of Palestine before 1948, became its orphans feigning loyalty to the ones who orphaned them in order to feed their own children.

The Daily Violations of Co-Habitation

After the creation of the state of Israel on the ruins of Arab-Palestinian society, the fledgling state began absorbing thousands of new Jewish immigrants from around the world, masses of immigrants whom the state was not fully able to absorb. The state resolved this lack of capacity by distributing the homes of refugee and internally displaced Palestinians to the new immigrants. After all the Palestinian homes in Jaffa had been occupied, Israeli housing authorities began dividing the homes in the 'Ajami ghetto into apartments so as to provide housing for Jewish families. As such, an Arab family in 'Ajami, who had been displaced from their original home, and whose family and friends had been expelled, and who lived in a house with four rooms, for example, would have their new home divided into four apartments to absorb three Jewish immigrant families, and the four families would share the kitchen and bathroom.

This process was one of the most difficult for the Palestinian families; they were forced into "co-habitation" with the people who had expelled them and, considering that many of the Jewish families included members who were serving in the army, people who were directly carrying out the ongoing violence suffered by the remaining Palestinian community.

The horrors of war, the loss of their country, the deep rupture in the social environment, the trauma of oppression, occupation, segregation and discrimination, the demolition or theft of their original homes before their own eyes, being forced to share their homes in the ghetto with the people who expelled them from their original homes, all combined to create an overall feeling of despair and impotence among the remaining community of Palestinians in Jaffa. This collective depression eventually led many of Jaffa's ghettoized Palestinian residents down the path of dependency on drugs and alcohol as a way of escaping the burden of powerlessness in the face of colonial oppression. It was this form of colonial oppression that transformed the thriving Bride of the Sea to a poverty and crime-ridden neighborhood of Tel Aviv.

1951-1979: Survival and Self-Improvement

The first generation of Nakba survivors faced immense hardship, and as such the main goal of that generation was survival in a milieu replete with fear of the Israeli authorities. The hope for a better life, for a return to how things once were, for freedom, became a motivating factor in their lives. This was especially true in the late 1950s and 1960s, when the Arab world



The northern part of the Ajami neighborhood is being transformed by the Tel Aviv municipality into a very expensive Jewish neighborhood pushing out Palestinian residents and reaping large profits in the process (@Badil).

Ongoing Forced Displacement

went through the awakening epitomized by Nasserism. The ideas of Arab unity, Palestinian liberation, cultural revival and the hope entailed by these ideas found fertile ground in the Palestinian society within the "green line." This was the environment in which the second generation was raised.

The generation of the 1950s and 1960s grew up in an environment very different from that of their parents. This generation sought self-improvement, to work hard to provide for their families and educate their children by working the manual labor jobs that Jewish immigrants avoided. It was members of this youthful generation who filled the ranks of the Communist Party and the Nasserist Land Movement, among other political currents that aimed to challenge the prevailing oppression, poverty and landlessness of the Palestinian community to varying degrees.

In preparation for its occupation of the remainder of Palestine, and as internal opposition grew and information began to leak out that the "only democracy in the middle east" actually had two sets of laws for two sets of citizens, the Israeli government formally abandoned the regime of military rule in 1966. While systematic discrimination against Palestinian citizens continued unabated, the 1970s witnessed the emergence of a relatively powerful political and social movement of Palestinian citizens of Israel. In Jaffa, this movement culminated with the formation of the Association for the Care of Arab Affairs in 1979. The Association was formed by activists and intellectuals who aimed to protect what remained of the city's Arab-Palestinian identity and heritage, to fight the systematic discrimination faced by the Palestinians of Jaffa, and to spearhead campaigns on important issues facing the Palestinian community, foremost among them housing and education.

It was in this same decade that "Judaization" of areas within the green line became publicly known as official Israeli state policy. While the main theater of Judaization during the 1970s was the Galilee in the north of historic Palestine, the Palestinians of

Jaffa continued to feel increasing pressure to leave their homes in the city through various discriminatory policies and practices, such as those banning Palestinians from renovating their homes since these properties were largely registered as absentee property with title held by the state. The municipal authorities had ignored the neighborhood, allowing many houses to collapse, and in some cases ordered the demolition of Palestinian homes. As a result of these deteriorating conditions, most of the Jewish residents of 'Ajami had moved to the city's suburbs, and were beginning to move to the West Bank in the newly built illegal settlements where the cost of living was, and continues to be, heavily subsidized by the state.

The central clock-tower (Burj al-Sa'a) square of Jaffa was renamed "Haganah square" (@Badil).



1979-2000: The Return of the Spirit

The proportion of Palestinians in Jaffa had grown by the onset of the 1980s, both as a result of natural growth, and because a growing number of Palestinians displaced from the Galilee and the triangle ended up in Jaffa. Literacy and education levels among the adult Palestinian population in the city had also risen as the generation of the sixties and seventies grew and became active members of the society. This second generation benefited from the sacrifices of their predecessors, many of them having opened their own small enterprises like restaurants, contracting firms, and car repair shops. A small number had also been able to complete post-secondary education in professional fields such as law, medicine, accounting, engineering, and others. As such,

the economic, social and demographic balance of the city had begun to restore itself.

The increase in the city's Palestinian population, and the improvement of their social and economic condition was coupled with the increase in the number of Palestinians who began to move to other parts of what remained of Jaffa beyond the the 'Ajami ghetto, particularly to the nearby coastal Jabaliyya neighborhood. This phenomenon was largely the result of the overcrowding in 'Ajami, and since the combination of poverty, municipal neglect and the discriminatory policies banning Palestinians from renovating their homes had resulted in further deterioration of their living conditions.

The improvement in the standard of living of Jaffa's Palestinians that began in the 1980s involved the increase in the number of Arab owned and operated enterprises, the renovation of Palestinian mosques, churches and public buildings, as well as annual increases in the number of post-secondary graduates most of whom reinvested their acquired skills and knowledge in the betterment of their community. While the state and municipal authorities continued their Judaization efforts, the Palestinian community had become an active and effective player in the life of their city. Working against this economic development within the community has been the fact that the Israeli government has not invested or supported Palestinian-owned enterprise while simultaneously subsidizing and investing heavily in Jewish owned enterprises in Tel Aviv. This economic discrimination has played an important role in making Palestinian Jaffa economically dependent on Jewish Tel Aviv.

The nineties witnessed a powerful political and cultural revival among Palestinian citizens of Israel as the third generation since the Nakba began to discover and assert their Palestinian identity as the indigenous people of the land. The fear that had been a powerful force facing their grandparents did not affect them in the same way, and as a largely educated generation, the disparity between the ideals of "Israeli democracy" that they had learned in school and the discrimination they faced in their daily lives drew increasing members of this generation into the political arena. The growing national awareness of Jaffa's Palestinians materialized during the outbreak of the Second Intifada when the Palestinian youth of Jaffa protested the brutal Israeli military violence against the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza by organizing dozens of forums, protests, pickets, and fundraising campaigns to stress the unity of the Palestinian people across borders.

Amidar

Founded in 1949, a year after the Palestinian Nakba and establishment of the State of Israel, Amidar is the national Israeli company jointly owned by the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, and the Israeli government. The



organization manages all public housing, and assists thousands of Jewish people in Israel deemed entitled to rent properties from the government.

While it claims to "build a model for public and sheltered housing and social management that is stemming the tide of homelessness and providing people with the basic human need of shelter," Amidar has a record of dispossessing, displacing and demolishing the homes of Palestinians inside Israel and the West Bank. For instance, on March 19, 2007, Amidar published a document titled "A Review of the Stock of Squatted Properties in Jaffa – Interior Committee, Israel Knesset" which reviews properties managed by the company in the Jaffa–Tel Aviv area. The document outlined 497 eviction and demolition orders received over the past eighteen months by Palestinian families living in the Ajami and Jabaliya neighborhoods in Jaffa, the grounds for which range from "squatting" in the property to "building additions" to properties undertaken by the Palestinian tenants of these properties "without approval from Amidar and without obtaining a permit from the planning and building authorities."

In response to the publication of the document prepared by Amidar, The Popular Committee to Defend the Right to Housing and Land in Jaffa was formed, comprised of "residents, social activists, movements, organizations, and political parties in Jaffa representing the common public interest of the Palestinian population." The Committee demands that the authorities (the Israel Lands Administration, Amidar, and the Municipality of Tel Aviv–Jaffa) freeze the issued eviction orders, and recognize the historical rights to land and properties of the Palestinian community in Jaffa.

Through the racist policies of quasi-governmental housing companies like Amidar seeking the Judaization of parts of Israel proper with "significant" Arab populations, Palestinians in their historic cities within the green line face a constant threat of eviction on the pretext of legal violations. Indeed, eviction orders are seen as an extension of the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population in 1948 in Jaffa and in other Arab localities in Israel. While in 1948 the Palestinians were forcefully evicted from their homes the Israeli authorities have since tried to evict Palestinians (1.2 million of whom are citizens of the Jewish state) through economic and legal means. This process is often referred to as the "quiet transfer" of the Palestinian residents to maintain Jewish demographic dominance in Israel.

Sources:

http://www.israelactie.nl/projecten/amigour_uk.html

<http://www.arabhra.org/hra/SecondaryArticles/SecondaryArticlePage.aspx?SecondaryArticle=1670>

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Jaffa's Ongoing Nakba Today

Despite the growth of Palestinian political and social movements, the over twenty-thousand Palestinians living in Jaffa today continue to experience an Ongoing Nakba. We do not use this description lightly, or to enlist tears of sympathy or nostalgia for what once was; it is an important way of understanding the present, entrenching the demand for redress for the crimes committed by Israel over the past sixty years, and to stress the urgency of the struggle to bring about change for the future. While systematic discrimination and Israeli policies and practices aimed at displacing Palestinians and Judaizing their space permeate all aspects of Palestinian life in Israel, we will focus on the fields of housing and cultural identity.

Housing: The Right to Remain

The most pressing issue facing Palestinians in Jaffa today is the issue of housing and eviction. Every Palestinian in Jaffa is either directly facing eviction by the municipal authorities, or has a neighbor or relative who faces such eviction, an estimated total of over five-hundred families are in this situation. The two main excuses for eviction are lack of licensing – especially since licenses are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain – or that the family is considered illegal squatters in their own home which is registered as state property.

Title to the vast majority of properties in Jaffa were transferred to the state through the implementation of the *Absentee Property Law (1950)*, and the state transferred this title to Amidar, a state-run company managing state properties in urban areas. After focusing its Judaization efforts on the Galilee and the Negev, the state has now set its sights on Palestinians living in Palestinian cities, officially referred to as “mixed cities,” ordering their removal from homes in which they have lived for sixty years, and in some cases longer.

Mass eviction of Palestinians from their homes in these cities is a dual process. The first, and primary, aspect is *Judaization* aimed at changing the demographic character of these cities so as not to include significant numbers of indigenous Palestinians, and to erase the *Palestinianness* of the landscape. The second aspect is *gentrification*; in most cases these properties are slated for demolition to be replaced with expensive condominiums and housing units for the rich. As such, both the political merchants pandering to the ideologically-driven Zionist public, and the real estate merchants hoping to build and make millions off of their “development” projects stand to benefit. We should also note that the 'Ajami ghetto, while by far the poorest neighborhood in the Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality, is also a coastal neighborhood with some of the highest property value in the city.

The issue of Palestinian housing in Jaffa is more than the sum of its parts; it goes beyond the hundreds of eviction and demolition orders. One cannot but connect the dots between Amidar and the Israeli Lands Administration putting up tens of Palestinian homes for auction, the rapidly increasing property value, the construction of the Peres “Peace” Center on confiscated Jaffa refugee property, and the establishment of a center for Jewish fundamentalists in the heart of the 'Ajami neighborhood. The picture we see when the dots are connected is worrying, the original inhabitants of Jaffa are uprooted, and their place invaded by those who have money and power: the elites of the Jewish-Israeli establishment. We see the state handing out properties to Jewish settlers almost for free in other Palestinian cities like al-Lydd and Ramleh as well as in the Naqab and now Jaffa, while we, the indigenous people of Palestine are dealt with as illegal squatters and intruders. We, the Palestinians who remained in the part of Palestine taken by the Zionist movement in 1948 and who were forced to accept the citizenship of the state that usurped our country, now form twenty percent of the citizens of the state of Israel, but only control 3.5 percent of the land after most of our land and property was confiscated by this state. Since its establishment, Israel has created hundreds of new communities for Jewish settlement, but not one new community for Palestinians.

Ongoing Forced Displacement



The Himil family home. With a cafe on the ground floor, the staircase leading to the Himil family home was demolished by Israeli authorities several times before the family lawyer recommended they use a metal staircase on wheels that can be moved when the bulldozers come. They now enter their fifteenth year of a court battle to have a 'legal staircase' to get into their house (@Badil).

Reshaping Identity, Language and History

One of the most prominent landmarks in the city of Jaffa is the clock-tower built by the Ottomans at the entrance to the old city long before Israel came into being. Today, Jaffa's visitors and residents who care to take a look at the structure see a Hebrew-language plaque that states "In Memory of the Heroes who Fell in the Battle to Liberate Yafo." From there, if we turn right to walk up to the old city we catch a breathtaking view of the Mediterranean Sea until we reach the informational signs posted by the Tel Aviv municipal authorities. Here we can read the history of the city covering thousands of years until the present day. One may be surprised to see that these signs are written in four languages none of which are Arabic. More astonishing is that in none of these appears any mention of Arabs or Palestinians who only pop up in one line "in the year 1936, Arab barbarians attacked the Jewish neighborhood." More examples of the systematic erasure of the Arab-Palestinian history of the space abound, from the replacing the names of streets, neighborhoods, and other landmarks in the city with Hebrew names, most often names of Zionist political and military figures.

An important aspect of the reinvention of Jaffa as an Israeli city, in addition to burying its Arab-Palestinian identity, is Israel burying the evidence of its crime. If we are to accept that were no Palestinians here, then there were no Palestinians for Israel to kick out. The erasure of Palestinian memory is also strongly reflected in the Israeli education system in Arab schools where the curriculum is geared toward rearing Palestinian youth, ignorant of their identity and history, and loyal to their colonial oppressor.

After the 1948 Nakba, Arab schools came under the control of the Israeli Ministry of Education, through which the Israeli intelligence services play a direct role in the selection of principals, teachers and curricular materials. In social science and humanities classes, Palestinian students in Israel learn about the history of Jewish communities in Europe, the heroic establishment of the modern Jewish state with no mention of the catastrophe that befell the indigenous Palestinian society of which they are a part. Schools are also a site of intimidation against any politicization, especially on important commemoration dates of the Palestinian struggle such as Land Day or Nakba commemoration. For the most part, Arab public schools are largely neglected in the allocation of funding and resources, and the quality of education is very low

Ongoing Forced Displacement

relative to the schools of the Jewish community. This drove many Palestinian parents in Jaffa to send their children to Jewish schools, a phenomenon that amplified the identity crises facing many of the city's Palestinian youth, as well as their difficulty with the Arabic language.

Jaffa: The Struggle Continues

In response to the Israeli establishment's efforts to Judaize Palestinian space and consciousness, the Palestinian movement in all of its currents has worked to entrench Palestinian steadfastness and dignity. Despite the various processes facing Palestinians in the "mixed cities" that we have described, Palestinians in Israel have remained strong and held our heads up high. For decades, the Israeli authorities have played a carrot-and-stick game to transform Palestinians into a servile minority called "Arab-Israelis," a minority with no connection to their Palestinian identity, with a collective amnesia of their relationship with the land around them and of the ongoing crimes committed against them, and most importantly, loyal to their jailers.

Beginning systematically in the 1970s, the Palestinian rights movement consistently challenged Israeli policies and practices with such mobilizations as the 30 March 1976 general strike commemorated as Land Day, and the hundreds of actions taken in support of the First and Second Intifadas. The movement pushed the Palestinian struggle out of its superficial national and religious confines to an internationalist struggle in which Palestinians and Jews struggled side-by-side for justice. In Jaffa, this struggle has managed to bring about some tangible victories, among them stopping the municipality from transforming the beach into a waste-dumping ground, pressuring the Israeli authorities to build housing units for Palestinians in the city, and establishing independent Arab educational institutions such as a nursery and the Arab Democratic School which opened its doors to students in 2003. This struggle has been the main factor enabling Palestinians to remain steadfast in their historic city.

Today, the struggle continues under the banner of the Jaffa Popular Committee for the Defense of Land and Housing Rights (also known as the Popular Committee against House Demolition in Jaffa) which was established in March 2007 as a direct response to the hundreds of eviction orders issued to the Palestinian residents of the 'Ajami and Jabaliyya neighborhoods of Jaffa. The importance of the Committee's work soon became clear to its members when their preliminary research revealed



Jaffa Popular Committee for the Defense of Land and Housing Rights working to rebuild a Palestinian home demolished by Israeli authorities (photo: courtesy of the Popular Committee)

that 497 Palestinian homes in Jaffa were under threat of eviction and/or demolition by the Israeli Lands Administration, which had also put up many of these properties – all of them “absentee” properties – for auction. The Popular Committee is made up of residents, social and political activists, movements and organizations and political parties operating in Jaffa. The Committee represents the collective struggle of Jaffa's Arab-Palestinian residents, and is open to membership to anyone who agrees to its demands and political basis of unity.

A central aspect of the Committee's work is pressuring the various arms of the Israeli authorities (the Israeli Lands Administration, Amidar, Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality) to freeze all legal actions taken for the purpose of eviction, demanding that these authorities enter a dialogue with the Committee instead, in order to reach an agreed-upon solution. The Committee also demands an end to any and all sale and auction of "publicly owned" (i.e. absentee/refugee) land, and entering a dialogue with the committee to implement a system that guarantees the long term Palestinian presence in the city, and that enables youth and young couples to find affordable housing in the city, particularly in the Jabaliyya and 'Ajami neighborhoods. The motivating spirit of the campaign launched by the Popular Committee is the need to wrest recognition of Jaffa's Arab-Palestinians as a group with a historic rights to the land and properties of the city, and that as such, alternative solutions to Jaffa's housing problem must be reached in consultation and with the consent of the indigenous community.

The Popular Committee also works on information gathering and research mainly from the directly affected residents of Jaffa facing eviction and home demolition; direct action to prevent eviction and home demolition which has involved mobilization of activists to be physically present in homes slated for demolition; organizing popular activities such as pickets, protests, information forums and others; as well as a media campaign to raise awareness about the plight of Jaffa's Palestinian community in local and international media. We are constantly looking for ways to fundraise both for our legal costs and for activities to enable youth, women, and young couples to find affordable housing. Increasingly the committee has taken on organizing extracurricular activities for youth, and workshops to support women and youth to run their own businesses with the understanding that the economic viability of the community is directly linked with our ability to remain steadfast.

Reversing the Ongoing Nakba

Today the estimated number of Palestinian refugees from Jaffa hovers around 700,000, which is one-tenth of the Palestinian refugee population. While most of these refugees are in Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan, many are further away with foreign passports that can enable them to visit what remains of their city. Perhaps one of the most important steps in reversing the Nakba, which involved shredding up the Palestinian body and dispersing us to various far corners of the earth, is to intensify efforts to reconnect this body. If it is not physically possible because of Israeli travel restrictions on Palestinians, the Internet and other communication technology can play an effective role in this process.

At least as important is the international solidarity needed to stop the Israeli policies and practices that constitute the Ongoing Nakba. In Jaffa, the Ongoing Nakba has brought about ongoing resistance. This resistance may not be able to turn back the clock, and we may not be able to live as if the past sixty years never happened, but at least we can work to prevent further suffering and destruction of our city and our society, and we can work to rebuild the eminence that was the Bride of the Sea.

**Sami Abu Shehadeh and Fadi Shbaytah are residents of Jaffa, and members of the Jaffa Popular Committee for the Defense of Land and Housing Rights.*

Akka: A Palestinian Priority

by Eyad Barghouti

The port of the ancient Palestinian city of Akka (©Anne Paq).



Arab Palestinians still live in the old city of Akka, with their buildings, cultural, religious and historic sites largely intact as a result of these Palestinian residents' tireless efforts. With the exception of Nazareth, Akka is the only historic Palestinian city within the green line where this is the case. For various reasons, this strong Palestinian presence in Akka is an uncomfortable fact for Zionist and Israeli authorities who have expanded and escalated their Judaization efforts in the city over recent years.

We can consider the continuation of a strong Palestinian presence in Akka, and the commitment of the city's Palestinian residents to stay in their city, as a national and historic achievement. This presence is also evidence of a partial failure of old and new Zionist plans to evict them from the city, transforming it into a tourist attraction empty of its indigenous population. It is true that this achievement can continue into the future and grow stronger, but it is also true that what has failed in the past may yet see success.

What is Judaization? How is it manifested in Palestinian cities in general, and Akka in particular? What are the projects encapsulated in such a plan? Will the Israeli regime really succeed in clearing the ancient city of its indigenous people and its identity?

On Judaization

Judaization is the policy and practice of implanting, or more accurately, forcibly replacing Palestinians with Jewish settlers in areas with an Arab-Palestinian majority. The effect of Judaization transforms the demographic composition and cultural identity of a place from Palestinian to Jewish-Israeli. Looked at on the ground, Judaization usually involves either the displacement of indigenous Palestinians from their homes and subsequently housing Jewish-Israelis in these homes; or establishing brand new residential areas in Palestinian cities exclusively for Jewish-Israelis with the purpose of overall demographic superiority and absorption of Jewish immigrants.

On the political level, Israel's Judaization projects aim to win the "demographic battle" by entrenching and expanding the Jewish majority, which provides a semblance of legitimacy for the Jewish monopoly on decision-making authority over the land and people of Palestine. Zionists see Judaization as a strategy and as an integral part of the larger Jewish-colonization project; it is an Israeli national priority, a foundation of the entire historical Zionist project.

There are currently no Israeli campaigns to Judaize remaining Palestinian towns and villages within the 'green line' *per se*; there are no plans to settle Jews within the towns of Sakhnin or Um al-Fahm, for example. For in the case of these Palestinian towns and villages, the colonial project involves the confiscation of the land around these areas populated by Palestinians, and on this land new settlements are built and old settlements are expanded. The Palestinian population of the town will increase, but the geographic size of the town will shrink, inevitably suffocating under its own ever-increasing population density. Palestinian towns and villages are not Judaized, but various educational, cultural, economic and security policies ensure the constant erosion of the Arab Palestinian residents of these population centers, and the de-development of these places; where the population continues to grow while no planning or investment is contributed to residents' quality of life. Meanwhile, the nearby hilltops are transformed into ever more planned, neat and growing settlements for exclusively Jewish residents, or ever-quieter lookout points in the ever-greener national parks and forests of the Jewish National Fund.

Historic and ancient Palestinian cities within the "green line," often referred to as "mixed cities," have their own unique scenario, their own dynamics involving historical and economic dimensions that cannot be ignored, and which call for increasingly complex levels of struggle. There are four general pillars of the policies and practices of Judaization in Palestinian cities within the green line (Yaffa, Haifa, al-Lydd, Ramleh, Nazareth and Akka):

Tightening the noose around the Arab-Palestinian residents of these cities by policies of economic, cultural and social marginalization, discrimination in the provision of services and law enforcement, all aimed at reducing Palestinian quality of life to the point where Palestinians "voluntarily" leave their old neighborhoods;

Erasing the Arab-Palestinian identity of the city by practices of writing-out the Palestinian in the official histories of the place, systematic neglect and demolition of old Palestinian buildings, and the Hebraization of the names of public spaces and streets;

Seizure of Palestinian homes and real estate through governmental agencies and corporations through legislation and policies that hinder inheritance rights for Palestinians, maintenance of Palestinian control over Muslim and Christian religious endowments, and facilitate the transfer of property titles to Zionist capital and institutions;

Transformation of very old Palestinian neighborhoods into tourist and cultural attractions (notably artists' colonies) emptied of the indigenous residents, and transferring ownership of larger buildings and landmarks to Jewish tourism entrepreneurs.

All too often, Judaization projects don the mask of "development," and it is no coincidence that the government has a ministry called the "Ministry for the Development of the Negev and Galilee" with the clear goal of Judaizing these areas. Nor is it by chance that the past few decades have seen the growth of the development industry in historic Palestinian cities, and that this industry attracts investors and residents to projects that use the language of development to cloak their racist intentions and effects.

The Judaization of Akka: Live Examples

The Judaization of Akka, with its various colonial and cultural components, did not suddenly begin in the last few years. The vast majority of Akka's indigenous Palestinian residents, as well as those who had sought refuge in the walled city after their communities had been depopulated by Zionist forces (mostly from Haifa and the towns and villages of the Western Galilee), were expelled from Akka during the 1948 Nakba. This despite the city being considered part of the Arab-majority state proposed in the 1947 Partition Plan (UNGA Resolution 181).

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Destroyed Palestinian home in the Mahatta neighborhood of the city of al-Lydd. Israeli authorities have rezoned the entire neighborhood – which served as a ghetto for Palestinians in the years following 1948 - as 'agricultural land' and served over 600 Palestinian homes with demolition orders (©Badil).



Jewish colonial settlement in Akka began in the early 1950s, with a large wave of Arab and Eastern Jews being settled in one of Akka's old city neighborhoods in the early 1970s, although the Israeli government pulled many of those new immigrants out when it became apparent that they were integrating into their new Palestinian surroundings rather than imposing the Jewish character of the state. During the British mandate period, middle and upper class Palestinians in Akka established a new neighborhood outside the city walls that they called al-Rashadiyyah, with beautifully built homes. In the 1970s, the Israeli government began settling thousands of Jewish immigrants in this area and expanding it onto the agricultural land to the north and east of the city.

From the perspective of Israeli government authorities, Akka is the city beyond the walls, the buildings and people inside the walls constitute “old Akka.” For the Palestinians of Akka, and Palestinians in general, Akka is the city inside the walls, the area outside the walls is “new Akka” or *al-Imarat* (the tall buildings). Jewish Israelis consider Akka to be theirs, a Jewish city with an annoyingly increasing number of Arabs. As such, the city's municipal authorities work with the support of the Jewish Agency to do all they can maintain a growing Jewish population in the city, and to initiate an increasing number of housing, cultural, athletic and religious projects to attract larger numbers of Jewish Israelis to the city.

In 2001, UNESCO recognized the old city of Akka as a world heritage site. This became a major incentive for Israeli authorities develop, implement and expand its Judaization plans for the city. Besides the potential influx of tourist dollars that could result from the UNESCO recognition; a central impetus for accelerating the Judaization plans has been the fear that the world might discover the actual rich Arab-Palestinian cultural heritage of the city which poses a direct threat to the official Israeli narrative that denies the collective history and existence of Arabs and Palestinians on this land.

The main priorities of Akka's municipal and Jewish religious authorities, predating but accelerated by the UNESCO recognition, have been to stop the migration of Jews from Akka to Nahariya, Krayot, and the cities and towns of the center; increasing the number of Jews moving into the city, and preventing the growth of the Palestinian population in the city beyond thirty percent (according to the 2006 statistics, Palestinians accounted for 15,000 of the 46,000 residents of Akka). These priorities are not

part of a secret plot, but are quite openly stated: the current mayor of Akka boasts that his most important achievement has been reversing the migration trend – that more Jews moved to Akka than left it – during his tenure. In 2007 the chief Rabbi of Akka called on Jews to move to Akka and stated that he wanted to see Akka transformed into an “absolutely Jewish” city. We Palestinian residents of Akka were not shocked by these comments, we recognized them for what they were, an escalation in the struggle between Palestinian presence in their ancient city, and Zionist efforts to Judaize it.

The Israeli establishment has planned for and implemented several parallel and complimentary Judaization projects. In what follows I present some of the most prominent of these projects so that readers can better understand the different aspects of the Judaization of Akka, and the urgency with which we need to work to protect the city's Palestinian community.

Acquisition of Homes and Real Estate

After the 1948 Nakba, the Israeli Lands Administration (ILA) seized the property of Palestinian refugees from Akka (as it did with the property of all of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced that year). Title to the land was transferred to the Custodian of Absentee Property, and the Amidar corporation was established to administer these properties.

In the decades following the Nakba, the ILA used various housing laws and policies to force Palestinians to leave their homes in Akka, as it did in other Palestinian cities under Israeli control. For instance, Palestinians were not allowed to repair or renovate their homes within the city, while incentives were offered to Palestinians to move to the nearby village of al-Makar, built especially to absorb Palestinians displaced from Akka.

As with most discriminatory Israeli laws, the discrimination is not apparent in the text of housing laws used to displace

Palestinian Land Confiscated by the Absentee Property Law (1950)

Before the 1948 Nakba, and despite the five decades and millions of dollars spent by the Jewish National Fund and other Zionist organizations trying to acquire Palestinian land, Jewish land ownership in Palestine was no more than 6.7% of the land of historic Palestine (10% of the land controlled by the state of Israel after the Nakba). Israel's *Absentee Property Law (1950)* transferred title over the properties of displaced Palestinians (“absentee property” belonging to refugees and internally displaced Palestinians) to the Custodian of Absentee Property.

Estimates of the size and value of the land confiscated by the Absentee Property Law vary. The Custodian of Absentee Property's official figure is that 70% of the land controlled by the Israeli state is Absentee property.¹ According to the Jewish National Fund, 2% of Israeli controlled land after the Nakba had been state domain on the eve of the war; 10% was owned by Jewish individuals and organizations on the eve of the war, and the remaining 88% belonged to Arabs.²

The difficulty with determining exactly how much Palestinian property was taken by Israel in 1948 lies in the fact that, as Don Peretz puts it, “... information concerning the use, amounts, and distribution of abandoned Arab property and the government's policy toward it was secret. Records and most reports of the Custodian of Absentee Property were secret. Sessions of the Knesset Finance Committee, when it discussed the problem, were closed. Even the United Nations, in spite of frequent requests, was unable to obtain adequate information about Israel's disposition of Arab property.”³



Ongoing Forced Displacement

Palestinians from the city. Instead, properties within the old city are divided into two parts, those that fall under the Ministry of Housing, which are mostly housing projects set up by the government to house Jewish immigrants, and those that fall under the city's "Development Authority", which is responsible for the historic buildings of the city, i.e. those predominantly inhabited by Palestinians.

The Development Authority issued policies which prohibit Palestinians from transferring title through inheritance more than once; preventing the third generation from inheriting, and remaining in, the property. Thus, if a Palestinian inherits property from his father, it cannot be inherited by his son. Even if the property was not inherited, the inheritor must prove that they have lived in the home for at least six consecutive months before the death of the person with title to the house in order to inherit the property. Even though Palestinians can now renovate their homes, renovation of a building governed by the Development Authority is far more expensive than regular renovation, with most of the renovation expenses shouldered by the resident (not the case in government housing projects). Another clear difference is that the process of evicting residents, a complicated task in the case of government housing projects, is a far simpler administrative order for the Development Authority, with far fewer protected housing rights for the Palestinian resident.

Today's Akka has 240 shut-down empty homes whose Palestinian residents have been evicted, and 160 homes housing families who face eviction orders. Tens of Palestinian homes have been purchased over the past two years by Jewish businessmen for large amounts of money, and Zionist land-brokers are working overtime to convince the remaining Palestinians of Akka to sell; particularly in the *Fakhoura* neighborhood on the west shore of the old city.

Another major issue in Akka is that of religious endowment (*waqf*) property, which accounts for 40% of the property in the old city of Akka. The Israeli government and Akka municipality

The alleyways and arches of old city of Akka (©Makbula Nassar).



appointed a Board of "Trustees" to administer these properties, and in turn, these trustees leased the properties to the Israeli Lands Administration (ILA) for 99 years, who in turn has begun leasing the properties to wealthy Jewish entrepreneurs. The most recent of these deals, technically called "generational leases" because of their long duration, was the *de facto* sale of *Khan Umdan*, the largest and most important of Akka's historic guest-houses and the closest one to the city's port. The deal was closed in the summer of 2008 to a Jewish businessman from the UK for over 12 million shekels.

A New City in the Galilee to De-Palestinianize Akka

In a report prepared for the Lebanese newspaper *al-Akhbar* by my colleague Feras Khatib, he outlines plans by the Israeli Ministry of Interior to establish an Arab community in the Galilee which is to be marketed as a modern community for young Arab couples.⁴ At present, the site of the "New City" has not been finalized, but the proposed site is close to the Palestinian village of Judayida a few kilometers from coastal Akka. Contrary to what has been reported in the Hebrew-language press, plans for the new community are not to build it from scratch, but to expand an area of Judayida village. Urban planning specialist Yusuf Jabbarin

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Khan Umdan, the largest and the closest of Akka's historic guest houses to the port. Sold by the ILA in 2008 (courtesy of palestineremembered.com)



explains that there are “political factors” in the decision-making surrounding this project, “it must be close to Akka, and there are ongoing plans to empty Akka of its indigenous Arab population, and it is quite likely that this city will be used as a kind of refuge for the Palestinians who will be displaced from Akka.”

The Ayalim Association Settlement Project

In 2007, the ILA handed three renovated buildings in the Ma'aliq neighborhood in the western part of the old city to the Ayalim settler association without any legal auction. The association housed twenty university students in the buildings offering them 10,000 shekels worth of scholarships. Recent information suggests that the Jewish Agency has begun renovation of several other buildings in the same neighborhood with the intention of handing them over to the Ayalim to bring in larger groups of students.

According to its website, Ayalim was founded in 2002 by young veterans of the Israeli army with the intention of increasing Jewish settler activity in the Galilee and the Naqab. It aims to do this by creating a new moral climate and by modernizing Zionist ideology to suit the needs of the 21st century. Its work on the ground involves establishing socially interconnected permanent student settlements. To date, Ayalim has established eight such settlements in the Naqab and Galilee, its work having been greatly facilitated by support of the national and municipal governments, with special support provided for the creation of a "student settler village" in old Akka.

Ruah Tsvonit Religious Seminary

Four years ago it seemed that the state of Israel was on the verge of losing the city of Akka since the establishment of the state; over the last fifteen years, over twenty-thousand Jews had left the city, and Arab families from the Galilee had moved into the city... the Wolfson neighborhood went from being a Jewish neighborhood to a neglected Arab neighborhood, and the Ohel Tsedek synagogue remained in its place. In 2003, the religious seminary found its natural home in the synagogue, which the Arabs had tried to turn into a mosque.⁵

This is the translation of the text found on the website of the Ruah Tsvonit Religious Seminary, in which over 150 religious students are enrolled today, all living in the Wolfson neighborhood beside the train station, and which has indeed transformed back into an Arab-Palestinian neighborhood. As is clear from the text, fundamentalist religious movements do not attempt to

Ongoing Forced Displacement

hide their national-religious Judaization goals, rather they make clear that the Israeli establishment and government share and work towards these same goals. The same site informs us that “the municipality of Akka, which sees our work as a means of bringing Jewish individuals and families into the city, has set aside a piece of land for us to build our campus.”

The fact that such organizations have set their sites on important landmarks in Akka is also quite clear. For instance, one story on the Ruah Tsvonit website is that of Rabbi Haim Ben Attar, who “arrived in Akka in 1741 with tens of his students. They settled in the city and established *Knesset Yisrael*, the current location of which seems to be the Thaher Omar mosque.” There is a strong Zionist tradition of “reclaiming” sites which are said to have been visited by renowned Rabbis, which does not bode well for important Arab-Palestinian landmarks such as the Thaher Omar mosque.

The Branding Campaign

The Branding (or Re-Branding) campaign announced by the Akka municipality at the outset of 2008, aims to change the character and marketed image of the city from a “Crusader City” into a “Mediterranean City.” In both cases the Palestinian, Arab and Ottoman character of the city is completely ignored and sidelined, and in both cases the municipality and the Ministry of Tourism have done all in their power to hide the fact that today’s Akka, with its historic and distinctive architecture, is the city that was rebuilt by Thaher Omar al-Zeidani over the ruins of the crusader city, a project that was continued by Ahmed Pasha Al-Jazzar and the rulers that followed him until the fall of the Ottoman empire and the onset of the British occupation. Akka is an Arab city with over four thousand years of human history spanning Phoenician, Pharaohnic, Hellenic, Roman, Islamic and other civilizations, and is one of the best urban areas of the world where so much of this architectural and civilizational inheritance is still significantly intact and well-preserved.

In fact, the UNESCO recognition of Akka as a World Heritage Site came as a result of an Israeli application for this recognition. The core of the Israeli application was that the old city of Akka is a living example of an Ottoman port-city, which has preserved its cultural life since the Ottoman period, in addition to the important Crusader architecture (Akka was the capital of the second Crusader kingdom). The Israeli authorities who made the application made sure not to use the word “Arab,” let alone “Palestinian” in the UNESCO application, in spite of the fact that the actual residents of Akka’s old city have been Arab throughout the city’s history, and despite the Arab identity of Thaher Omar himself, the initiator of the first Arab political independence movement in Palestine in the modern period, and who had chosen Akka as his capital.

Notes on the October 2008 Events in Akka

The violent aggression that stormed through Akka on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur (8 October 2008) and the nights that followed marked a critical escalation in the chain of racist assaults against the Palestinians of Akka, specifically those living in the newer neighborhoods outside of the old city walls. Assaults on Palestinian families and religious sites in the Eastern Neighborhood have been increasing over the past six years, with a marked intensification over the past two years epitomized by such acts as the arson attacks on the Manshiyya Mosque, on Palestinians’ cars and homes, and violent physical assaults on many Palestinian families. The past two years have also witnessed Jewish-Israeli neighborhood committees’ refusal to accept Palestinian families as neighbors, and harassment of Palestinian families who have managed to take residents in the Eastern Neighborhood. Racist graffiti, notably the common settler slogan “death to the Arabs” has been regularly spray-painted onto the walls and buildings of the neighborhood as well as on the mosque.

Details about the October 2008 events are outside the scope of this article,⁶ but it is important to note that great deal of these violent and racist acts took place before the eyes of Israeli police and law enforcement personnel who made their complicity very clear by their refusal to protect the Palestinian victims of the various physical violence and arson attacks. The main purpose of the Jewish-Israeli violence against Akka’s Palestinians had the central aim of forcing out the Palestinian families who had moved into the newer neighborhoods of Akka, and police complicity with such a goal makes evident the state’s backing for this forced displacement campaign.

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Just as important was the Palestinian response to the Jewish-Israeli violence. Palestinian political, commercial and social organizations and networks, as well as several prominent individuals, came together to form the *Akka Residents' Coalition* which worked to disseminate information about what was actually happening in the city to the Arabic, Hebrew and international press. The goal was to present an Arab-Palestinian position, providing the political and historical context of the violence that had erupted, as well as taking practical measures to organize and support the Palestinian residents of the city. Zionist organizations had called for a boycott of Arab enterprises, and for the cancellation of important Arab cultural activities such as the theater festival, so the Coalition called on Palestinians within the green line to come to Akka, and organized delegations to visit the city and see for themselves what had taken place, organizing various cultural activities to attract visitors to the city.

On the community level, the Coalition worked to provide material support to the Palestinian residents of Akka who had been evicted or hurt by the settler violence of October 2008. Money raised by the Coalition was used to repair damage done to some of the homes and shops, as well as in hiring counselors to provide psychological support to victims of the racist violence.

In addition to discrimination, marginalization and Judaization, the Palestinians of Akka lack the institutionalized civic and political infrastructure necessary to face discriminatory Israeli policies, and plan for the future of Akka's Palestinian community. Thus far, the community has not been able to transform its demographic strength into effective political power, and have faced a debilitating internal crisis at the level of civic and political leadership, a factor which serves to augment the dangers faced by the community. As such, the experience of the Akka Residents' Coalition is an important one well worth maintaining and building upon, especially in light of the ongoing nature of the crisis facing the Palestinians of Akka, but risks falling into the trap of being a spontaneous response to particular events and that dies down as the events recede into the past.

Confronting the Judaization of Akka

We cannot simply sit on the walls of Akka and lament the loss of our beloved city, angrily counting the waves, homes, landmarks, religious sites all put up for sale. Nor can we feel content that we have exposed the political schemes that have tightened the noose around our impoverished community, battered by the various forms of forced displacement.



The Ali family home looted and destroyed by settlers during the October 2008 settler riots (courtesy of Akka Residents Coalition).

Ongoing Forced Displacement

The other face of opposition to the government's policies and practices aiming to displace us is the creation of our own Palestinian alternative. Such an alternative must go beyond slogans and denunciations to mobilize the energies of the entire community, transforming them into the engine for a social movement for the steadfastness and development of the community, with a clear vision backed by the consensus of the population and its institutions, and that can be translated into particular campaigns and initiatives that can bring the people closer to their goals.

The foundations for a movement to defend and advance the Palestinian population of Akka must be the organization and unification of this community, with its various political and civic institutions. Such a movement should aim to coordinate political and social action to regain and defend the rights of the Palestinians of the city, both as individuals, and as an indigenous collective with a particular historical relationship to the city whose housing, employment and education needs should be prioritized. A social development project such as this should strive to restore Akka as a vibrant cultural and economic center for the Palestinian community throughout the country. Akka is not simply an issue of concern for the indigenous residents of Akka and its refugees, but is a Palestinian national priority. There can be no solution to the crisis faced by the city and its people without Palestinian recognition that Akka is indeed a priority, and action to address the crisis facing the Palestinians of the city.

While there are several forms that such action can take, an important area on which to focus in the short term is the eviction and auction of Palestinian homes. Individual and collective efforts can have a far-reaching impact as an increasing number of uninhabited properties, and the Akka Development Corporation, which controls many of the buildings and landmarks in the city, has recently put much of this real estate up for auction. Additionally, a significant number of the city's Palestinian residents have informed us that they wish to sell their homes for various reasons (most notably old age) and of their desire to find a Palestinian or Arab buyer. As such, and in the absence of an organized effort through which these properties remain under Palestinian ownership, control of these properties will go to Amidar, an arm of the Israeli government, or to the Jewish Agency or an investor with strong connections to the Jewish Agency.

Besides the political reasoning behind Arab investment in Akka real estate, which may not resonate with some, such investments are economically sound. Akka is a world-class tourist destination visited by over one-million people each year. During weekends and holiday seasons, its markets are packed with tourists and shoppers; and all who visit the city cannot help but be impressed by the city's architectural heritage, its historic walls, markets, guest-houses, its port, beach and restaurants. A good example of such property reclamation initiatives is that of Elijah Mourani, a Palestinian businessman from Ma'aliya. Mourani bought the old courthouse on Salah al-Din Street, and transformed it into a beautifully designed hotel. This project preserved the historic building, added to the city's tourism industry, and did it through a profitable business venture; a win-win situation.

Support for the city should not be limited to the purchase of buildings for businesses and economic ventures in Akka, but should also involve moving to live in Akka. Palestinians should visit the city, and get to know its important history (our history), they should come and shop here, and stay overnight, and walk along its shoreline, We need positive steps in the right direction, not just to confront the government and municipal plans to displace the Palestinians of Akka, but to also build our own plans to transform what could have been another chapter of the Palestinian Nakba into a chapter of the Palestinian story, written in Arabic with the words steadfastness, renaissance and achievement.

**Eyad Barghouti is a Palestinian writer and journalist living in Akka. He is the Networking Officer for the Union of Arab Community Based Associations (Ittijah).*

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

al-Naqab: The Ongoing Displacement of Palestine's Southern Bedouin

by Hazem Jamjoum



*Power generation station in
the middle of the unrecognized
Palestinian village of Wadi al-
Na'am (Anne Paq, ©Badi)*

Following government orders, Israeli forces, demolition workers, and two bulldozers entered the village at 9:30 a.m. on 8 May 2007, while all the men of the village were at work. They destroyed every structure in sight, forcing the women, children, and elderly in the village out of the thirty homes before destroying them all, rendering one hundred more Palestinians homeless under the scorching summer sun.¹ This did not take place in the West Bank or Gaza but in the village of Twail Abu-Jirwal in the Naqab, and all one hundred Palestinians who were forcibly displaced were citizens of the state of Israel.

The residents of Twail Abu-Jirwal have been subjected to home demolitions at least fifteen times since 2006, most of these times the whole village was completely flattened.² This village is not the exception, but the rule in the Naqab; Israel has systematically tried to squeeze these Palestinian Bedouin in the south of the country onto smaller patches of land while confiscating the rest of this forgotten half of Palestine.

On the eve of the Nakba (1947–1949), more than 100,000 Palestinian Bedouin lived in the Naqab, and made up over 99 percent of the area's inhabitants.³ The particular lifestyle of the Bedouin in this large and partially fertile desert area was based on animal husbandry, which required vast grazing areas for goats, sheep and camels, and on agriculture in years of adequate rainfall. While the clan-based structure of the society did not lend itself to chopping up the land into privately owned parcels, each tribe held customary ownership of a certain territory, and the territorial boundaries were respected by other tribes as well as by the Ottoman and, later, the British authorities.⁴

Large scale and systematic forced displacement of the Palestinian Bedouin began in 1948 with Israel's conquest of the town of Beersheba and the complete destruction and depopulation of all Palestinian communities in the district. By the early 1950s, more than 90,000 Palestinian Bedouin were forcibly displaced; most of them becoming refugees in the adjacent Gaza strip, West Bank, Sinai Peninsula and Jordan.⁵ Subsequent large-scale and systematic dispossession is rooted in the decision of the

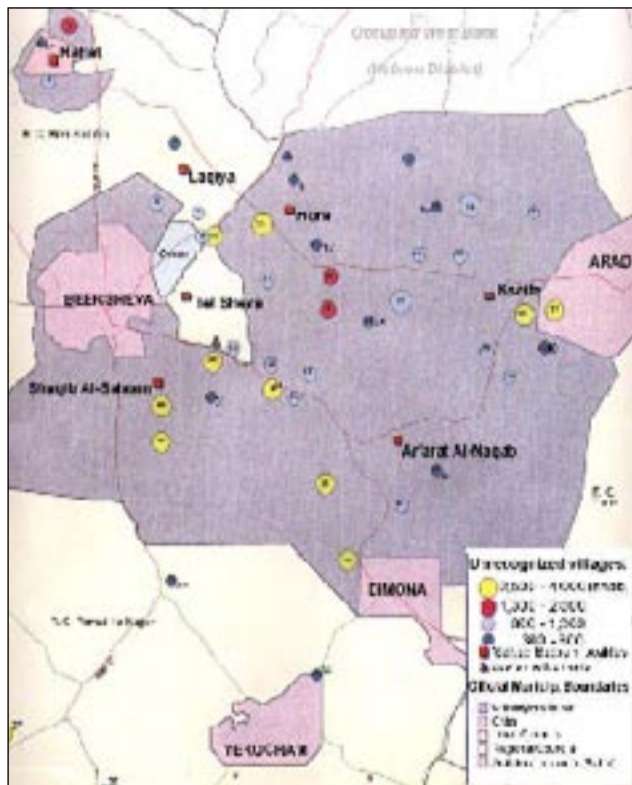
Ongoing Forced Displacement

state of Israel not to recognize the Bedouin's customary tribal land rights. Israel treats all Bedouin land as state land, unless it was registered as private property.

Between 1948 and 1967, population transfer (ethnic cleansing), dispossession and oppression proceeded through a discriminatory military regime that controlled Palestinian Arabs who managed to remain within the borders of the new state; these military laws did not apply to Jewish Israelis. The approximately 10,000 Palestinian Bedouin who managed to remain in the Naqab were systematically rounded up and forcibly transferred and confined to the so-called siyaj (fenced) area located in the north-east corner of the Naqab, just south of the West Bank, in a triangle marked by the towns of Beersheba, Arad and Dimona.⁶

Israel conditioned the granting of citizenship (under the 1952 Citizenship Law) to Palestinian Bedouin in the Naqab upon registration with one of the 18 tribes recognized by the state. Israeli military and civil authorities communicated with the Bedouin population only via the sheikhs or heads of these tribes who served as intermediaries.⁷ Under military rule, no Palestinian was allowed to leave or enter their towns and villages without military permits.

In 1965, Israel passed the Planning and Building Law 5275-1965 which sets out, in minute detail, the authorities of various official bodies responsible for planning and implementation under the law, as well as a country-wide master plan including maps of all existing communities and zones for residential, industrial and agricultural development, road and electricity networks, archaeological and antiquity sites, forecasts of population trends, settlement needs, etc. A key element of the 1965 Planning and Building Law is that it was designed to obstruct the development of the indigenous Palestinian population in Israel and discriminating against it in the provision of public services and resource allocation.⁸



Map of the Siyaj (fenced) area (Courtesy of the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages of the Naqab).

Although most Palestinian communities within the green line in 1965 had existed long before the establishment of Israel, many Palestinian villages in the Galilee, and at least 50 Bedouin communities in the Naqab, were not included in the 1965 Planning and Building Law. Not part of the national master plan, they became “unrecognized” or illegal under the law.

Since 1965 when the law was passed, unrecognized villages do not appear on state maps; they receive no water, electricity, sewage, waste collection, or any municipal services; no roads are built to service the villages, no schools, no community centres, nothing. The denial of electricity is particularly stark given that the vast majority of these villages have high-tension electricity cables running above them. One of the main electric-power-generation plants that service the Bir Saba' area sits right in the middle of Wadi al-Na'am, an unrecognised village with no electricity. In addition, since Israel considers the villages illegal, homes are subject to demolition at any time, as are any and all structures from tents to water tanks to cattle pens, a constant fear and reality for over 75,000 Palestinian Bedouin citizens of the state of Israel who live in these villages in the Naqab, including the village of Twail Abu-Jirwal.⁹

Although the period of military rule witnessed massive displacement of Palestinian Bedouin and the confiscation of their lands, the north-east of the Naqab remained an area with a very

Ongoing Forced Displacement



View of Omer settlement, one of the wealthiest population centers in Israel, from the Tel al-Sabi' (Tel Sheva) concentration township (Anne Paq, ©Badil)

high Palestinian population density. The next step was to squeeze as many Palestinian Bedouin as possible into the smallest portion of land within the “fenced area.”

Beginning in 1968, the Israeli government “recognized” seven Palestinian villages, referred to as concentration townships. Tel Sheva, Rahat, Arara, Kseiffa, Segev Shalom, Houra, and Laqiyya are the poorest recognised communities in Israel, a stark contrast to the nearby Jewish-Israeli settlements, many of which boast some of the highest socio-economic indicators in the country. The clear purpose of the concentration townships, as obvious in their designation, is to concentrate the Palestinian Bedouin in ghettoised urban spaces, severing them from their pastoral and nomadic way of life and transforming them into exploitable workers for the various Jewish-owned industries in the Naqab.

Whereas the tactics used by Israeli authorities have varied, the main purpose of Israeli policy in the Naqab since the mid-1970s has been one of forcibly displacing the Palestinian Bedouin from the unrecognised villages into the concentration townships. For instance, schools were only built in the concentration townships, and Israel passed mandatory education laws which meant that parents in the unrecognised villages faced a difficult choice: make their children go by foot to schools that were many kilometres away, move to the nearby township, or face punishment under the mandatory education laws.¹⁰

During the late 1970s, Ariel Sharon was the Israeli minister of agriculture and established military units called the Green Patrols that were accountable to his ministry.¹¹ The main task of these patrols was to harass the Palestinian Bedouin of the unrecognised villages, often damaging their property. Black goats, perhaps the most important Bedouin livestock, were deemed a danger to the environment by Israeli legislation; and “stray” goats were confiscated by the Israeli authorities. Green Patrols would descend on Palestinian shepherds making as much noise as possible with their jeeps and weapons in order to scare the goats and make them run in every direction. The following hours would be a race in which the shepherd and his family would run to collect as many of the mortified “stray” goats as possible before the Green Patrol units reached them.¹²

Until today, Israeli policies governing livestock herders are starkly discriminatory against Palestinian shepherds at every level of implementation. Shepherds require licenses to raise livestock, and Israeli authorities only allow a limited number of licenses to be issued; no new licenses are issued, nor are any licenses for the raising of camels, a creature on which Bedouin throughout the Arab world depend heavily for their livelihood. In years of drought, Palestinian shepherds must transport their herds north to pasture, this transportation requires licensing which is very difficult to obtain, as is the permission to graze their cattle on land which they often have to rent from the Jewish National Fund.¹³

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Since the 1980s, Israeli authorities have also targeted the Palestinian agricultural crops in the Naqab as a means of triggering forced displacement to the townships. Green Patrols, and other agents of the state, would use bulldozers and other machinery to physically destroy Palestinian crops, ruining the livelihood of the owners. During the years 2002 to 2004, agents of the Israeli Lands Authority began using a new method: fumigating the crops from the air using the poisonous herbicide “Roundup.” During these years, more than 30,000 dunums of Bedouin-cultivated land were destroyed in this way, and the poisonous chemicals used also resulted in the death of hundreds of animals, miscarriages among pregnant Palestinian women, and a sharp increase in the rates of certain diseases among Palestinians who inhaled the chemical or ate from the fumigated crops.¹⁴ This practice was discontinued only after Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli human rights organisations won a fierce legal battle obtaining a court-ordered cessation of the fumigations.

The clearest method through which Israeli authorities have displaced Palestinian Bedouin from the unrecognised villages is house demolition. At 5 a.m. on 15 December 2008 (while I was writing this article) more than 200 police and a number of Green Patrol units descended upon the Bedouin encampment of Abdallah al-Atrash, near the Rahat township. Over the following 6 hours, they proceeded to demolish the entire village and forcibly expel all 20 families living there. Not a single structure was left standing, and all men, women, and children were pushed off their land.¹⁵ The residents of this village had been living in the same location for close to 20 years, after having been expelled from their previous homes farther to the west.

1994 witnessed a major mobilization of Palestinian Bedouin to reclaim some of the land from which they were displaced in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Overnight, over five-hundred tents were set up in Bir Haddaj, a village south west of the fence area. The action took place at a unique political moment in which a Palestinian party held the balance of votes in the Knesset, and through some maneuvering managed to stop the forced removal of the Bir Haddaj reclaimers.¹⁶ This event brought the issue of Palestinians of the Naqab back on the agenda, with Israeli authorities responding, as before, that the Bedouin had no real leadership or representatives with whom Israeli authorities could negotiate.

In 1997, a group of Palestinian activists from the Naqab began to work to build the capacities of their community, in part as a response to the claim that Palestinian Bedouin lacked representatives. They worked to form their own municipal body to provide the basic services provided elsewhere by municipal councils. The process involved the establishment of local elected committees that voted for representatives of all the unrecognized villages in what is now known as the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Villages of the Naqab (RCUV). In its first three years of work, the RCUV found that municipal services required major resources, and that the main obstacle was indeed political, the fact that Israel's policies and practices severely discriminate against Palestinians.

Demolished structure that was home to a family of 8 Palestinians. Segev Shalom concentration township in the background (Anne Paq, ©Badi).



Since 1995, the RCUV has worked to educate and organize the Palestinians of the Naqab around the issues directly affecting them. These efforts have included 'know your rights campaigns', support with access to electricity generators and water tanks, home rebuilding efforts, and local and international advocacy. In several cases, the RCUV has launched legal challenges in attempts to

Wadi al-Na'am

View of the Ramat Huvav industrial area from the unrecognized village of Wadi al-Na'am. (Anne Paq, ©Badil).



Perhaps the only Palestinian village where the inhabitants have requested to be relocated, Wadi al-Na'am is one of the most miserable places in Palestine. The 5,000 or so Palestinian residents of the village were displaced from the western part of the Naqab in the early 1950s where Israel has banned them from returning. In addition to the problems of ongoing home demolition, lack of water, electricity, etc.. that the residents of other unrecognized villages face, a major power generation plant sits in the middle of the village, while to the south east lies the Ramat Hovav industrial zone specializing in chemical production. The winds from the industrial zone carry with them dangerous emissions that have resulted in extremely high rates of cancer, respiratory disease, skin disease, infertility, and miscarriages. Israeli authorities have severely hindered efforts to staff and supply a clinic in the village.

secure access to health facilities, schools and pastures often with the support of Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, and through which they have managed to set up three schools and seven clinics in unrecognized villages. Some of the Council's work has built on the direct-action experience of Bir Haddaj; in 2006 the Israeli authorities banned the grazing of cattle in Um Khashram, an extremely important grazing area north west of the fence area. In a spectacular coordinated action, over 200,000 heads of cattle were transported to Um Khashram as an act of defiance and protest.¹⁷ While the Israeli government managed to clamp down on the herders, it is this spirit of defiance and will to implement their rights that is growing among the Palestinians of the Naqab.

The Israeli government has made several attempts to settle Bedouin land claims, but never on the bases of actual restitution to the rightful owners of the land. The recent Goldberg Commission Report is only the latest of these attempts to settle land claims by creating a few more concentration townships, giving more time, and providing a little more space on which to segregate the Palestinians of the Naqab. Despite the intensity and violence of these displacement-inducing policies and practices, only half of the 150,000 Palestinian Bedouin remaining in the Naqab live in concentration townships, clear evidence that in the face of ongoing Israeli efforts to displace Palestinians and take control of their land will always stand the ongoing steadfastness of the Palestinian Bedouin of the Naqab.

**Hazem Jamjoum is Badil's Communications Officer, and the editor of al-Majdal. He can be reached at mediaenglish@badil.org*

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Arab Jahalin: Story of an Ongoing Nakba

by Reem Mazzawi

Palestinian children of the Arab Jahalin – Ma'ale Adumim in the background (Anne Paq).



Today, Arab Jahalin is the largest group of Palestinian Bedouin in the West Bank, both in terms of the large area of land they inhabit and in terms of population, which numbers around 7,500.¹ The forced displacement of Arab Jahalin began in the Naqab in 1948, and continued throughout the 1970s until the present day, and now threatens the very existence of the community. Every time a new Jewish settlement is established or an existing one is expanded, expulsion of the indigenous Bedouin communities, including Arab Jahalin, follows. Furthermore, due to the fact that the Jahalin are spread around Jerusalem, they are harshly affected by the construction of the Wall and the continued expansion of the settlements. Thus, for Arab Jahalin the Nakba – the mass displacement of Palestinians from historic Palestine in 1948 – has never ended.

Not much has been written about Arab Jahalin and the available literature largely ignores the historical dimension of their current plight. The report *Arab Jahalin: from the Nakba to the Wall* published by the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, however, provides a historical timeline for the displacement of the Arab Jahalin, who originally were expelled from the Naqab to eastern Bethlehem and Hebron. From there they moved to the hills south and east of Jerusalem, as well as areas in the Jordan Valley. After the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli forces in 1967, some of the Jahalin families fled to Jordan while those who remained in Jerusalem were, and still are, pushed by the Israeli military in the direction of Palestinian villages and towns, such as Abu Dis, al-‘Eizariya, al-‘Isawiya and Anata. Therefore, the above-mentioned report constitutes a great effort at casting light on the ongoing forcible displacement of the Jahalin Bedouin, which has been carried out by the Israeli military over the past 61 years.

The Jahalin Bedouin and the 1948 Nakba

Before the founding of the State of Israel, Jahalin Bedouin were spread throughout the Tal ‘Arad area north of Beersheba in the Naqab. The Arab Jahalin, like other Bedouin communities in Palestine, are semi-nomadic. Historically, they have relied on animal husbandry while simultaneously engaging in agricultural activities in years of adequate rainfall. The Jahalin permanently resided in certain areas, and did not leave these areas, except for short periods in order to graze their herds. Thus, they had a right to live and graze their animal on the lands that they traditionally inhabited, irrespective of whether or not they

hold documents proving private land ownership. Legally, the battle fought by indigenous peoples around the globe has won recognition by the UN that land rights are not based on a narrow conception of private property.²

The Naqab was the last district to be invaded by the Zionist forces in 1948. The Jahalin were among the Palestinians displaced during the Israeli population transfer operations of the early 1950s. In order to force the Bedouin off their land and to cleanse the whole area targeted in these Zionist operations, the Israeli military employed various tactics including attacking individual Bedouin shepherds, setting up military bases on Bedouin land, and dispatching patrols at all hours to would fire on shepherds and their flocks and confiscate animals. This strategy pushed a small number of Jahalin out, but was not successful in completely expelling them. Instead, most Jahalin fled to the borders of Tal ‘Arad and took refuge with families living in more secure areas that Zionist troops had not yet reached.

The Israeli military carried out a wholesale annihilation campaign targeting Bedouin communities, concentrating those who managed to remain into fewer places. The campaign, which involved the destruction of tents, killing of individuals, and slaughter of animals,³ forced these Palestinians to flee towards the edges of Tal ‘Arad, ultimately pushing them in the direction of the West Bank. These operations took approximately half a year to complete, and when they were over, the entire region of the southern and western Naqab had been cleared of its indigenous Palestinian Bedouin inhabitants.

After the Nakba (1950 – 1967)

During the course of the military operations, the Arab Jahalin who were living in Tal ‘Arad were among the communities that fled to the West Bank. At the beginning, they took up residence on the outskirts of Bethlehem and Hebron. However, only 80% of Jahalin Bedouin were registered by UNRWA as refugees, and without moving them into the refugee camps that were being established during that period.

The Arab Jahalin lived in the area east of Bethlehem and Hebron for no longer than three years before they began to feel confined and a burden on the local population because of the strain on the pastures and local water sources caused by the sudden influx of people and cattle. They therefore moved north with their animals and tents and settled on hills to the south and east of Jerusalem, as well as in places around Jericho and elsewhere in the Jordan Valley. These lands extended from the ‘Anata crossing to eastern al-‘Eizaryya and Abu Dis, to Khan al-Ahmar and Nabi Musa reaching the hills around Jericho and the Dead Sea.

This new area was spacious and was distinguished by the many pastures and water sources nearby, which allowed the Bedouin to preserve their way of life. This land belonged to Anata, Abu Dis, al-‘Eizariyya and al-‘Isawiya villages. Some of it was considered public land and fell in the state registry, like the area of Khan al-Ahmar and Nabi Musa. In this area, Arab Jahalin were relatively mobile and moved their camps from place to place. During this time, they were capable of re-establishing their life in the West Bank although never giving up on their desire to return to their lands in Tal ‘Arad.

After the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967

The living conditions of the Bedouin have always been difficult, but they are becoming harsher as they are prevented from pursuing their traditional way of life and maintaining their livestock, their main source of livelihood. The Bedouin live a semi-nomadic life based on custom and traditional use of land for inhabiting and cattle-grazing. Without electricity and often

“ My uncle...was old and deaf and was not able to run with the people and so he was left behind. He looked around and found a place in the rocks and so he sat there. When the army came and saw him they killed him, they shot him in his eye.”
--Hajj Salim ‘Owdah

“No one left on account of the massacres that we heard about, but when they came and expelled us...They were shooting, firing on us with guns, oh God, the cars [military jeeps] were patrolling, and if they saw you they would shoot you, and if they saw sheep they would shoot them.”
--Hajj Salim ‘Owdah

Ongoing Forced Displacement

without running water and with little access to essential services, the Jahalin Bedouin live in “Third World-like” conditions. Many lack essential food and potable water, basic and habitable housing, appropriate clothing, essential medical services, sanitation, access to educational services and secure land tenure.

The 1967 war, which resulted in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, represented a second Nakba for the Jahalin Bedouin. During the war, a large number of them fled to Jordan to escape the military confrontations that were taking place in the Khan al-Ahmar area and in other open areas outside Jerusalem. Furthermore, a climate of fear was created as news spread about massacres committed by the occupation forces in nearby villages. Those who remained found themselves under direct occupation and subject to harsh military rule. Occupation forces closed pastures and water sources, and harassed shepherds. These repressive practices would evolve into a new campaign of forced displacement that served to facilitate the expansion of Jewish settlement and to consolidate Israel’s grip on Palestinian lands.

If you want to solve my problem, give me back my land you took from me in Tal ‘Arad.

--Ibrahim Deyfallah Abu Dahuk (Abu Ahmad)

After 1967, the Israeli occupation administration confiscated the land east of Jerusalem, as well as in the Khan al-Ahmar area, and Nabi Musa. The lands in which the Jahalin Bedouin were living were transformed into closed military areas or natural reserves. In a repeat of tactics used against Palestinian Bedouin in the 1948 Nakba, Israeli forces began to attack the Jahalin, closing their pastures and dispatching military patrols to chase down the shepherds. These patrols intimidated and arrested shepherds, and confiscated their animals, with the goal of forcing the people to leave.⁴

In addition, the Israeli military barred the Jahalin from accessing the main water wells.⁵ The areas around the wells were classified as natural reserves, and the soldiers used this pretext to prohibit shepherds from using them. Following this de facto annexation, the wells were often used to supply water to Israeli settlements. The annexation of water sources and the closure of pastures were used by the occupation as means to exert direct pressure upon the Jahalin Bedouin.

“ They came, 200 – 300 soldiers, with lorries. They carried away [the animals] by force and told us, ‘You have to pay the transportation costs.’ If it costs 200 shekels (\$50) from here to Bir Saba’, you pay 2000 shekels. They used 4 or 5 lorries to carry the sheep, so you had to pay such an amount. They fed the animals, during 3 or 4 days, so you have to pay for the food. It was all done by force, and you paid by force.”

--Abu al-Fahed

In mid-1970s, the Israeli administration attempted to actualize their master plan for “Great Jerusalem,” which calls for Jerusalem as the “eternal and undivided” Jewish capital through the annexation of large amounts of land around Jerusalem, as well as the construction of settlements to be included in Jerusalem’s new municipal borders.⁶ For that purpose Israel directed more effort towards transferring the Jahalin in Jerusalem by pushing them in the direction of Palestinian villages and towns, such as Abu Dis, al-‘Eizariya, al-‘Isawiya and Anata. The occupation forces began to demolish Jahalin camps and tents without prior warning, while simultaneously founding new settlements and expanding existing ones.

In 1976, Israel established its first major West Bank settlement block, Ma’ale Adumim.⁷ Directly after it was completed, the Israeli military destroyed the tents of the nearby Jahalin community and transferred them to an area a few kilometers away from the bulldozed area. This kind of operation became the norm, and every time a new settlement was established around Jerusalem, another expulsion was undertaken against the Jahalin communities living on the coveted land.

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the Jahalin Bedouin in the West Bank were spread out and mainly divided into two areas. Part of them remained steadfast in Khan al-Ahmar and east of Jerusalem. The other part was forced to move to an area northwest of Jerusalem, where they established themselves on the outskirts of Beit Hanina, Beit Iksa and Nabi Samuel.

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Jahalin depend largely on pasture for their livelihood. In the background, Jerusalem waste dump (Anne Paq).



After Oslo: A third Nakba for the Jahalin Bedouin

The 1993 Oslo Accord was devastating for the Jahalin Bedouin as it classified the land in which the Jahalin Bedouin live as Area C, namely under complete control of the Israeli military. The C zone was considered an area devoid of Palestinian inhabitants. In this context Dr. Saeb Erekat, Chief Palestinian Negotiator, reportedly stated that the negotiation team considered the Jahalin land as empty because they were not aware of their presence.

During the Oslo years, the Jahalin became fully aware of the extent of the Zionist settlement plans in Jerusalem and what it meant for their future. Directly after the Oslo Accords were signed, the occupation force issued a military order requiring the expulsion of dozens of Jahalin families for the purpose of settlement expansion. The Jahalin Bedouin felt as if the Palestinian negotiators had abandoned them to face their fate alone, and there was no possible place to take refuge in the case of the future expulsion.

Since the mid-1990s, Jahalin Bedouin communities have received hundreds of military orders, most of which are demolition and stop-work orders. The exact number of military orders issued and pending is unclear, but nearly all Jahalin Bedouin families near Anata have had their homes destroyed two, and in some cases, three times since 1998, and still have pending demolition orders.⁸

Between 1997 and 1999, another 120 families were arbitrarily displaced on so-called security grounds from the vicinity of Ma'ale Adumim to the land of Abu Dis to make room, once again, for the expansion of the Qedar and Ma'ale Adumim settlements. The first group of Jahalin that challenged the displacement in court eventually was evacuated in winter 1997 by the Israeli army and transferred to Abu Dis hill, nearby Jerusalem's garbage dump.⁹ A second group who used a different lawyer in 1998 was able

"Some of us were being expelled in the 1970s, some in the 1980s and some in the 1990s. This was according to the time when they set up new settlements, and their turn came to be expelled. In the 1970s there were no demolition orders. They came to the Bedouin, tied the tent to the Jeep and drove off. This happened until 1981, when the came and expelled us."

--Ibrahim Deyfallah Abu Dahuk (Abu Ahmad)

"After Oslo, I considered myself dead and buried in the grave. They demanded of me that I forgot the land of '48 as I forgot my mother's milk. Area C, where I live, is off limits [to me]. I cannot continue to exist; it is like they put me in a grave. To whom should we go?"

--Abu al-Fahed

Ongoing Forced Displacement

to move to Abu Dis at a slower pace. Being aware that their expulsion was unavoidable, the Jahalin were forced to accept the offer given by the Israeli occupying power. They moved to Abu Dis hill, while receiving some form of financial compensation which fell short of being an appropriate remedy. Despite the fact that the Jahalin refused to resettle on land belonging to other Palestinians, the land offered to them for resettlement is privately owned by residents of Abu Dis, contrary to Israel's argument that it is state land. The owners of this land protested against this de facto appropriation of their lands.

Moreover, the Jahalin Bedouin expressed a strong desire to preserve their traditional semi-nomadic way of life while improving their living conditions. However, the land slated for the Jahalin resettlement falls short of achieving these ends. This land is not only uninhabitable as it poses a serious health risk as a result of its proximity to the garbage dump, but also is unsustainable to the size and needs of the Arab Jahalin community, which prevents them from pursuing their traditional life and maintaining their livestock and earn a living. Today, there are close to 2,000 people living on Abu Dis hill. In total 120 families live on 120 pieces of land.¹⁰ Many of them now work in low-paid jobs in the Jewish settlements and have become semi-urbanized, whereas the vast majority is unemployed.

The Nakba Continues: The Wall around Jerusalem

The path of the Wall around Jerusalem and the huge network of settler roads constitute the latest phase of the Nakba for the Jahalin. The route of the Wall around Jerusalem is integral to supporting the Zionist settlement plan of Jerusalem, as it annexes these settlements into the Jerusalem municipality at the expense of the Palestinian communities. The Wall around Jerusalem is the latest manifestation in the creation of a "Greater Jerusalem" and of a new demographic balance by transforming Jerusalem into a "Jewish city". It serves to cut off vast tracts of land from the Ramallah and Bethlehem districts, annexing them into the Jerusalem district. At the same time, the route of the Wall serves to isolate Palestinian villages, towns and neighborhoods from Jerusalem, even if the residents carry Jerusalem IDs. In this manner, the Wall constitutes another strategy in the continuing forced displacement of the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, including the Bedouin living on the peripheries of the city.

"The biggest problems caused by the Wall are that it closes the access of our animals to grazing land and that we cannot go to Jerusalem for treatment at UNRWA clinics and hospitals and for services...Some families have no cattle and no money to buy food."
--Displaced by the Wall (BADIL Report, 2006)

In the North, East and South of Jerusalem

Almost 150 families of the Jahalin Bedouin live in the peripheries of Jerusalem, in three different areas: (1) Wadi Abu Hindi area, few meters from the Qeder settlement, east of Abu Dis; (2) on a hill of Abu Dis on the southwest side of Ma'ale Adumim settlement; and (3) along the historic Jericho – Jerusalem road around the factory districts of Mishor Adumim. These families are under a threat of another wave of forcible displacement as the Wall is projected to encompass these areas, thus annexing the settlement blocs and their environs. The occupying power does not recognize the Bedouin living in these areas and a number of military warnings have been dispatched to the residents requiring the demolition of their structures, which were ostensibly built without permits and to vacate the area.

In 2006, the Israeli Civil Administration – the military unit dealing with administrative issues of the occupation – held negotiations with the Jahalin Bedouin in these areas in order to transfer them to Nabi Musa. However, the offer was withdrawn on the grounds that the area would fall inside the route of the Wall. The second offer by the Civil Administration was for land located in eastern Sawahre which is actually a pastureland belonging to resident of that village who are of Bedouin origin and continue to keep large numbers of animals and graze them on this particular plot of land. In an effort to avoid infringing on the needs of the residents of Sawahre, the Jahalin refused the offer. The Administration broke off the discussions due to the breakout of the July 2006 war against Lebanon, and negotiations have not been resumed since.

The third offer was to put the Jahalin around the hill in Abu Dis where other groups were transferred aiming at concentrating all the Bedouin across the West Bank in this area. The Jahalin Bedouin refuse to accept this offer because of the proximity of the

slated area to the garbage dump of Jerusalem, and secondly, because the land belongs to the village of Abu Dis. Before 1967, the village owned some 28,000 dunam. Today, the 13,000 residents are left with only 4,000 dunam of their original land. The addition of a large Bedouin community to the area is not feasible and will cause serious social and economic problems.

It is worth noting that while writing this article, in December 2008, Israeli issued military orders to 15 Jahalin families ordering them to vacate their homes and installations within seven days. These families live in the area slated for the future expansion of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement.

In the Northwest of Jerusalem

Around 45 families of the Jahalin Bedouin who were previously expelled from Khan al-Ahmar in the 1970s now live in the areas northwest of Jerusalem. They reside in Nabi Samuel, and on the edges of old Beit Hanina and Beit Iksa. The Israeli military authorities have issued orders requiring their removal as well as the demolition of their homes, which the authorities claim were constructed without the permits imposed by the occupation. The real reason, however, revolves around the planned route of the separation Wall that is set to annex the Ramot, Giva'at Ze'ev, Har Smuel and Giv'on Ha'Hadasha settlements.¹¹

On 18 January 2007, a large contingent of the Israeli military attacked some of the Jahalin families living on the northwestern edges of Nabi Samuel, demolished their tents that happen to fall on the route of the Wall which is set to enclose the Ramot settlement. The other families in the area were informed that they will also be expelled because they reside the "security zone" near the Wall, however, the expulsion has not been carried out yet.

Conclusion

For the last six decades the Arab Jahalin have been ongoing victims of an ongoing Nakba. Their forcible displacement by the Israeli military began in the 1948 war, then again in the 1967 war, throughout the 1970s. The Oslo Accords failed to halt the forcible displacement of the Jahalin Bedouin communities who are still under threat of expulsion by the Israeli occupying power until the present day. The Wall that aims at unilaterally drawing de facto borders for the state of Israel is the most recent manifestation of the ethnic cleansing campaign against the Jahalin Bedouin, and adds another chapter to this history of assault, massacres, land confiscation and the ongoing displacement of the indigenous Palestinian population as a whole.

The Israeli military applies two methods to forcibly displace the Jahalin in the West Bank. The first is the direct expulsion and forcible resettlement on lands owned by other Palestinians, thus encouraging intra-Palestinian rifts and conflicts/ These lands are unsustainable for the size and needs of the community, and often uninhabitable given health and safety hazards. The second method utilizes a number of military procedures, including closing pastures, annexing water sources and confiscating animals. These procedures aim at making life in a given area impossible, bringing about a "quiet" or "silent" population transfer that Israel can characterize as "voluntary".

Arab Jahalin are aware of the complex reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They are willing to settle in lands such as Nabi Musa and Khan Al Ahmar, which are state lands, until a durable solution to the Palestinian refugee plight is found and they can return to their homes of origin, Tal 'Arad. However, the practices of the Israeli occupation do not only threaten the cultural existence of the Arab Jahalin by undermining their unique life style, but also threatening their physical existence as a community.

**Reem Mazzawi is the Coordinator for Legal Advocacy at Badil. She can be reached at legal@badil.org. This article is largely based on the report Arab Jahalin: From the Nakba to the Wall produced by the Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign.*

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Jerusalem: A Displacement Master Plan

Interview with Khalil Tafakji by Badil Staff

View of Damascus gate and the old city Jerusalem (© Badil).



This is the transcript of an interview conducted by *al-Majdal* with Mr. Khalil Tafakji of the Mapping and Geographic Information Systems Department of the Arab Studies Society in Jerusalem. The interview was conducted on 30 December 2008.

al-Majdal: You work at the Mapping and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department, what is this organization?

KT: We were founded in 1983 as part of the Arab Studies Society by the late Faisal Hussein. Our goal from the very beginning was to research and document the effects of Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) affecting land and property, and to be able to produce maps showing these effects. Since its inception, the Department has accumulated a vast wealth of expertise and information; we have produced maps of historic Palestine as it was in 1945, a map of Israeli illegal settlements from 1967 to 1994, and a series of books and articles detailing various aspects of Israeli policies and practices in the OPT.

This expertise enabled us to play an advisory role in the negotiations process in the early 1990s when we moved to the Orient House (later shut down by Israel). We have focused especially on 1967-occupied Jerusalem (East Jerusalem), and in 1998 undertook a pioneering project to survey all Palestinian property in the city through which we became the major information reference point for people engaged in land transactions, zoning proposals, and actually played an important role in limiting fraudulent sales of property by people forging title deeds to properties they do not own.

al-Majdal: How was the city of Jerusalem affected during the 1948 Nakba?

KT: Before 1948, Jerusalem was a major hub of Palestinian social, spiritual, economic and cultural life, second only to Jaffa. It was also the headquarters for many of the Palestinian political forces which, to varying degrees had mobilized to defend Palestine from the violent Zionist takeover. The military wings of these organizations set up their military front in

the villages to the west of the city in an effort to halt the Zionist forces before they reached the city, and in the early months were somewhat successful despite their very poor training and lack of arms. On 6 April 1948, the Haganah (the main Zionist military force) launched Operation Nachson to push towards Jerusalem. Three days later, the Irgun and Stern committed the infamous Deir Yassin massacre as their part of the operation, and the following day, the main Palestinian resistance force led by Abdel Kader al-Husseini was defeated at al-Qastal.

By early May, the British forces essentially handed over the western part of the city to the Haganah, and the Jordanian military held on to the walled (old) city and the eastern part. The 23,000 Palestinian residents of the western part of the city became refugees, many of them in Shufat and Qalandiya refugee camps on the outskirts of the city, and others went to Jordan and elsewhere. In terms of land and property, practically the whole western part of Jerusalem was confiscated by the Absentee Property Law. As for the tens of Palestinian villages to the west of Jerusalem, all were depopulated and destroyed, with the exception of Abu Ghosh, 'Ayn Naqquba and 'Ain Rafa.

al-Majdal: Between 1948 and 1967, Palestinians who managed to remain within the armistice boundaries (the 'green line') lived under Israel's discriminatory military rule; in cities like Jaffa, Ramleh and al-Lydd they were segregated into ghettos in these cities. What was the Palestinian experience in Israeli-controlled Jerusalem in these years?

KT: To the best of my knowledge, there was no significant Palestinian population left in western Jerusalem (Israel confined the remaining families to the Baq'a neighborhood, known at the time as the Bak'a Zone). I know that today there are only five Palestinian families still living in that part of the city. For all intents and purposes, that area had been depopulated, so we cannot really compare it to Ramleh or Jaffa, let alone Nazareth where most Palestinians of that city were able to remain in the city. I should also point out that this thorough and systematic forced displacement of Palestinian residents of the city was not by chance, but because the Zionists very clearly and consciously saw, and continue to see, Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state, and having any Palestinians in the city did not fit with that idea of the city. Also, this is why for us Palestinians, the issue of refugee rights, particularly the right of return is as much a part of the Jerusalem issue as the wall and zoning and all the rest of it.

al-Majdal: The eastern part of Jerusalem came under Jordanian control in 1948 until Israel occupied it in June 1967. What was the effect of Israeli control in the aftermath of the occupation?

KT: The days in which the Israeli forces entered the city and established control were themselves quite significant. I was seventeen at the time and remember the buses that the Israelis brought to Bab el-Zahreh (Herod's Gate), right in front of al-Rushaydiyyeh School, on which they loaded Palestinians and bussed them to the Jordanian border. This was in addition to many who fled the intense bombing and fighting that took place during the war; around 30,000 of the 100,000 Palestinians in the eastern part of Jerusalem became refugees during and just after the Israeli occupation in 1967.

Another very important event was the destruction of *Haret al-Magharbeh* (the Moroccan Quarter) just south west of the Aqsa mosque inside, and its extension outside, of the old city walls. The part of the city wall separating the two parts of the neighborhood is the wailing wall, a very important religious site for adherents of Judaism. Historically, this neighborhood is where Moroccan immigrants to Jerusalem and their descendants lived for most of the past seven or eight centuries, and the Ayyubid, Mameluke, and Ottoman architecture of the neighborhood was quite distinct from the rest of the old city. The destruction order was issued by the military commander Shlomo Lahat, who was previously the mayor of Tel Aviv, and on 11 June 1967 the bulldozers began to demolish the homes within the old city near the wall, and over several days most of the neighborhood on both sides of the wall was flattened. Many of the neighborhood residents refused to leave, and their homes were destroyed while they were inside which meant that many of them were killed. Today, when people go to pray at the Wailing Wall, they are standing on the site where these people's homes once stood, and where many of them were killed. One-hundred and thirty two Palestinian families were forcibly displaced from this neighborhood in 1967.

Ongoing Forced Displacement



Um Kamel al-Kurd was one of the Palestinian refugees expelled from Talbiyyeh neighborhood (western Jerusalem). The Jordanian government provided her a home in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood (eastern Jerusalem) in 1956 in return for giving up her UNRWA registration. In 2008, her home was confiscated and taken over by Israeli settlers an event which was followed by her disabled husband's death. She and her community set up a tent to protest her eviction, which in turn has been demolished three times by the Israeli authorities. She and her family continue to live in this tent in Sheikh Jarrah as she demands implementation of her right to return to Talbiyyeh and restitution of her home there.

al-Majdal: Did the fact that the city was no longer physically divided have any significance?

KT: A different aspect of the occupation was that we could access the western part of the city for the first time since 1948. Many of the refugees from the western part went to reclaim their homes and properties, and some of them mounted legal challenges to get their property back. The Israeli courts applied the 1950 Absentee Property Law quite strictly, so the vast majority lost their cases. The very tiny minority, specifically those who had western passports in 1948, won their cases because of a loophole in the text of the law.

al-Majdal: In the years that followed the 1967 occupation, how did Israeli policies affect Palestinians in Jerusalem?

KT: Until the Likud election victory in 1977, Israeli interests in the West Bank can be summarized in four main points. The first two apply to Israeli policies generally since 1948: making sure that no refugees return to their original homes, and making sure that any form of Palestinian political organization to resist the occupation was severely repressed. The other two are specific to the West Bank and are quite clear in the Allon Plan, which was the Israeli plan on how to deal with the West Bank: to make sure that Palestinians in the West Bank are cut off from any direct access to Jordan, which has meant that the occupied Jordan Valley has been annexed *de facto* by Israel, and finally that Jerusalem become the 'indivisible and eternal capital of the Jewish state.'

This idea of Jerusalem has an ideological Zionist dimension, but also a practical geo-political aspect which in the Allon Plan serves to separate the occupied West Bank into two parts – north and south – by expanding Jerusalem eastward to the Jordan Valley through the establishment and expansion of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement block. For both ideological and geo-political purposes, policies implemented within the city of Jerusalem have aimed to transform the demographic character of

the city into one with a guaranteed and overwhelming Jewish majority. This translated into major waves of land confiscation, specifically in 1968 when the Israeli authorities confiscated land in the northern part of the city to build the illegal settlements known as the French Hill, and Ramot Eshkol; and again in 1970 when Israeli authorities confiscated 12km² from Jabal al-Mukabbir, Shufat, Beit Hanina, and the old Jerusalem airport, and Beit Safafa to build the illegal settlements Talpiyot, Neve Ya'cov, and Gilo. Also that year, land was confiscated to create 'green areas' or nature reserves that are now Ramat Shlomo and Rehet Shufat. Since 1967, one of the many tactics the Israeli authorities have used is to confiscate land for proposed ecological reasons, and to later transform these 'green areas' into Jewish-only settlements.

al-Majdal: What changed when Likud took power in 1977?

KT: It was largely an ideological shift with brutal implications for the rest of the West Bank. Instead of being an area to keep under control, the West Bank became Judea and Samaria (even administratively the name of the area was changed), the historic Jewish kingdom which Likud wanted to reclaim, and so the policies and practices aimed at taking as much Palestinian land as possible that had been practiced within the green line during and since the 1948 Nakba began to be implemented in the West Bank as well as Gaza. This is what sets the Ariel Sharon plans of the late 1970s apart from the Allon Plan; Sharon envisioned massive illegal settlement in all parts of the West Bank leading to annexation. It was this criminal vision which has been transforming into a reality for the past fifteen years.

For Jerusalem, this change meant actively expanding the borders of Jerusalem as part of this project of taking as much West Bank Palestinian land as possible. In 1980, the Israeli authorities confiscated another 4.4km² for the Pisgat Ze'ev settlement while expanding others. Since 1995 and the Oslo climate in which Israel legitimized its accelerated settlement expansion program by pointing to the negotiation process, more settlements were created and others expanded, most notably Har Gilo (on Wallajeh and Beit Jala land), Har Homa (on Abu Ghuneim), and the Gush Etzion bloc all of which became part of the the expanded Jerusalem metropolitan area in their municipal zoning.

If you look at it on a map, the land confiscated and settlements created in the 1967-1977 period created a kind of ring around the old city within Jerusalem, after 1977 the Israeli authorities began to work on acquiring land within eastern Jerusalem's Palestinian neighborhoods themselves such as the old city, Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan and Ras al-'Amud; today, around 35 percent of Occupied East Jerusalem is under exclusive Jewish-Israeli control. The additional aspect post-1977 was the creation of a new fact on the ground labeled 'greater Jerusalem' illegally annexed to Israel, and with arms reaching north, east and south which are built on West Bank Palestinian land but off limits to West Bank ID-carrying Palestinians.

al-Majdal: The Israeli Separation/Apartheid Wall is often used as the prime example of the Israeli creation of facts-on-the-ground. How does the Wall fit into this map of 'greater Jerusalem'?

KT: The most basic part of the answer to this question is that the Wall separates between what is now considered the West Bank, which is the Palestinian Authority administered areas, and Jerusalem, which as I said has been *de facto* and illegally annexed by Israel, even though this is theoretically still under negotiation. To understand it better we need to realize that since 1973, a central part of the stated policy of the Jerusalem municipality has been to limit the relative size of the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem, to ensure that Palestinians continue to be a small minority within their historic city. So while the wall itself is a brutal monstrosity, the effects and goals of the wall are the real crime, and this is what the International Court of Justice realized and stated in their advisory opinion of 9 July 2004.

What the Israeli planners who planned the route of the Wall did was to use it to physically exclude densely populated Palestinian areas, like the Shu'fat refugee camp and Anata, from Jerusalem – instantly removing a large portion of the city's Palestinian population from the city. Add to this that many of the people who depend on Jerusalem for their jobs, schools,

Ongoing Forced Displacement

hospitals, etc.. live just on the other side of the wall, and that historically Jerusalem is the main hub of West Bank economic, cultural, and social activity. The wall thus severs all of these relationships.

There is also a housing crisis that the Wall has created; Israel systematically strips Palestinians of their Jerusalem residency if they cannot show that they are habitually resident within Jerusalem. As such, there was a frenzy of people moving into increasingly overcrowded and overpriced housing within the already overcrowded Palestinian neighborhoods in order to keep their Jerusalem residency status. Without this status, Palestinians are forced to acquire West Bank residency which means they can no longer enter the city without military permits, and can no longer receive health, family and retirement benefits for which they've been paying taxes for as long as they have been Jerusalem residents. The result is that those unwilling or unable to move into the city have lost their residency status, and that there has been a serious deterioration of Palestinian quality of life for those within the city.

al-Majdal: You said that the Israeli controlled Jerusalem municipality has an official policy of maintaining a ceiling on how many Palestinians live in Jerusalem. Can you tell us more about the ways in which this policy works?

KT: We can look at the workings of the municipality's Local Outline Plan Jerusalem 2000, a published document that does very little to conceal the objectives of the Israeli authorities which can be described as the Judaization of Jerusalem, that is to change the demographic composition of the city to favor the Jewish-Israeli population. The plan is quite clear that the planning objectives of municipal policy and practice are to maintain a Palestinian population that is no more than 30 percent of the city's total population. Towards this goal, there are two kinds of policies and practices, those that aim to increase the city's Jewish population, and those that aim to decrease the city's Palestinian population.

In terms of increasing the Jewish population, the main tactic used is that of settlement construction and expansion. For instance, the plan calls for the construction of at least 17,000 new illegal settlement housing units in the coming years. Another aspect is support at all levels – from the Jerusalem municipality, to the Israeli government, to Zionist para-state organizations like the Jewish National Fund – for settler groups like Elad and Ateret Kohanim which actively work to take over Palestinian homes and real estate within the city to establish settler communities in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods. This is clearest in the old city, but takes place across the eastern part of the city. For instance, the municipality allocated a \$13 million budget for an eight-year project to establish a 'national park' in the al-Bustan Valley of Silwan, a Palestinian area, with a large proportion of the funds for the project going to the Elad settler organization. Another side of increasing the number of Jewish settlers in Jerusalem is the major development of settler infrastructure in the city. The most significant example of such infrastructure is the Jerusalem Light Rail project, a massive transportation system which will almost exclusively service the settlements in and around Jerusalem connecting them with the western and central parts of the city, and greatly enhancing the settlement expansion project's chances of success.

We can take the same 'national park' project in Silwan to show the other side of the equation, displacing Palestinians from Jerusalem. In order to create this national park/settlement complex, with its 'for-Jews-only' apartments, kindergarten, library, car-park and synagogue, 88 Palestinian homes in al-Bustan were served with demolition orders. Usually in the past, the municipality has used section 205 of the 1965 Israeli Planning and Building Law which allows for demolition on the basis of unlicensed construction. This has usually been enough because the authorities discriminate quite clearly against Palestinians and it is very difficult for Palestinians to renew, let alone acquire, licenses for their homes. For al-Bustan, many of the demolition orders were based on section 212/5 of the 1965 Planning and Building Law which allows for demolition on the basis of "public interest". This is extremely dangerous since it means that the master-plan goal of Judaization is a public interest, and will essentially allow unhindered demographic and social engineering by the municipal authorities.

Demolition of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem has been rapidly accelerating over the past few years. In the last six months of 2007, 20 Palestinian homes were demolished by the Israeli authorities. In first six months of 2008, 44 Palestinian homes in the



Family eviction and home demolition in Silwan neighborhood of Jerusalem, November 2008 (© Mats Svensson)

city were demolished displacing 269 people, 159 of them children; and this was before the Local Outline Plan was officially adopted by the municipality which means that these numbers can only grow if there is no action to stop the Israeli authorities from displacing and taking our city away from us, and if the world continues to allow Israel to grossly violate international law without scrutiny or accountability.

al-Majdal: What kinds of actions have Palestinians in Jerusalem taken to defend their rights in the city?

KT: The options are quite limited in light of the massive imbalance of force in Israel's favor combined with the blind international support for the Israeli regime. There are increasing efforts at international advocacy both at the grassroots level with the campaign for Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) as well as on the more formal level by working with international agencies operating here, as well as making detailed submissions at appropriate international venues. As a result, the plight of Jerusalem's Palestinians figures prominently in UN reports and resolutions dealing with Israeli human rights abuses.

On the ground, and especially in cases of house demolition orders, there continues to be social solidarity among Palestinians, with some support from international solidarity activists and some Jewish-Israelis who work to fundraise for advocacy campaigns, legal challenges, house rebuilding, and in some cases try to physically stop demolitions from being carried out. A case where such solidarity was clearly manifested was that of Um Kamel al-Kurd whose home was destroyed along with 27 others in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood; the community set up a solidarity tent, which itself was subsequently destroyed and rebuilt three times, and was accompanied by an important action in which Um Kamel, a refugee from the Talbiyeh neighborhood in the western part of the city, marched to her old home in Talbiyeh.

Part of what we work on in the Mapping and GIS Department is to fundraise for and develop detailed zoning plans for certain parts of the city where we can get all of the residents' consent which are subsequently submitted to the municipality for approval. There are huge complicating factors, that are confounded by the various kinds of property title held by Palestinians, as well as the time, great financial and skilled human labor costs required. The other difficulty is that even if we overcome all of these obstacles, there is no guarantee that such zoning plans will be accepted by the municipality, especially given the stated goals of this Israeli institution. In cases where we have been successful, however, we have managed to ensure that Palestinians will be able to remain in their city for the foreseeable future.

**Khalil Tafakji works at the Mapping and GIS Department of the Arab Studies Society in Jerusalem. He can be reached at toufakji@hotmail.com*

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Palestinians in Burj al-Luq Luq: Between the Israeli State and a Jewish-Only Settlement on the North East Corner of the Old City

by Emad Jaouny

Burj al-Luq Luq is one of the neighborhoods of the Hutta quarter of the old city of Jerusalem. This neighborhood sits on one of the highest points within the walled city, where the north and eastern walls meet. The neighborhood's name translates into English as, "The Tower of the Stork" as musters of storks would rest on this old city hilltop as they migrated across the city.

The 10,000 Palestinians living in the Hutta quarter suffer very high population density, poverty, very high drop-out rates, lack of employment opportunities, proliferation of drugs within the community, systematic harassment from Israeli settlers and soldiers, and the neighborhood is a target of Jewish-Israeli settler activity. Under the municipality's policies and practices, Palestinians are prevented from building in the old city in light of the unofficial quota on Palestinian building permits and the near-impossibility of obtaining such permits. Settler organizations offer incentives to Palestinians to vacate their homes, which can take the form of financial incentives, but often involve harassment compounded by the heavy presence of the Israeli military in the old city which invariably intervenes to implement the wishes of the illegal settlers.

The Burj Al-Luq Luq Community Center was established in 1991 to protect Palestinian land from an Israeli settlement to be built in the heart of the neighborhood. Since then, the center has been active in resisting Israeli settlement activity in the old city through ensuring that the land is used for children's sports and educational activities. More recently, the Center has worked to support local families threatened with eviction from their family homes by Israeli settlers, which is done through providing legal support, bringing in civil engineers for technical support, visiting families, carrying out children's activities at threatened sites, and locating funding to support these activities in a more sustainable way.

Local community organizations have been playing a role of resistance since 1967, through supporting the local population and providing much needed additional services in the fields of education, sports, social activity and others. More recently, as the numbers of local families being threatened by eviction has risen, local organizations have taken on a support role with regards to these families, including remaining in threatened homes in attempts to physically stop demolitions from taking place. Currently, at least seven families have received demolition orders with a minimum number of 124 inhabitants under this threat.

Emad Jaouny is the Executive Director of the Burj al Luq Luq Community Centre which can be reached at burjluqluq@palnet.com.



Burj al-Luq Luq neighborhood in the old city of Jerusalem (courtesy of ActiveStills).

The “Eastern Border”: Palestinians of The Jordan Valley

by Fathy Khdirat



Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley are surrounded by Israeli agricultural settlements (Anne Paq @Badi).

Known in Arabic as *al-Aghwar*, the valley of the River Jordan is the part of the Great Rift Valley that stretches from the horn of Africa and the Red Sea in the south to Baniyas and the Hasbani in the north. The Palestinian part of this Valley is that to the west of the River Jordan, and at 380m below sea level is the piece of land with the lowest altitude in the world. The Jordan Valley is also unique in that it is home to the Dead Sea, the saltiest body of water on the planet deriving its name from the fact that no living creatures can survive in it due to the high salinity. The Valley also has a special climate, warm in the winter, hot and dry in the summer, which together with the presence of plenty of springs and ground and surface water make it an ideal place for farming all year round. Jericho, the *City of the Moon*, is the main population center in the Jordan Valley, and is considered the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, dating back to around 9000 BCE.

The 2400 km² plain occupied by Israel in 1967 is home to approximately 56,000 Palestinians living in 24 population centers in addition to several Bedouin and pastoral nomadic communities. Around 70% of this population lives in Jericho with the remaining population mainly concentrated in the central part of the Valley, which includes the towns of Jiftlik, Marj Na'jah, Zubeidat, al-Nassariyah, Beit Hassan and others. The main villages of the northern part of the Valley are Bardala, Ein al-Baida, and al-Malih. The primary source of livelihood for the Palestinians of the Jordan Valley is crop and livestock farming, followed by commerce and tourism, and finally some work as day-laborers in Israeli settlements.

The 1967 Occupation and Subsequent Displacement Policies

The Israeli military expelled most residents of the Jordan Valley during the 1967 war, most of whom became refugees in Jordan. Approximately 10,000 Palestinians remained in the Jordan Valley, including Jericho, after the war. It was not until later that Palestinian activists discovered that the Jordan Valley, together with Jerusalem, were singled out for complete Israeli

Ongoing Forced Displacement

control under the recommendations of the Allon Plan, and subsequent Israeli plans for control of the West Bank. Soon after the occupation, the Israeli occupation authorities began the implementation of policies aimed at displacing the remaining Palestinian population.

Within the first six months of the occupation, and armed with detailed maps and reports about the area, Israeli settlers set up the first illegal colonies in the Jordan Valley. Following this, the Israeli military set up a security border zone, 1-3km in width along the Jordan River, from the Dead Sea in the south to the “green line” in the north. Palestinians were barred from entering this area, which meant that thousands of families who depended on farming for their livelihood could not access their lands along the river. The farming equipment of many of these families still sits rusting along the western bank of the river as a testament to the rightful owners and tillers of the land.

The Allon Plan (1967-1970)

After the June 1967 war, Israel's military leadership sought ways of dealing with the newly occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Barely six weeks after the occupation, then Labor Minister Yigal Allon presented his proposal to the Knesset, a plan which since then has operated as the basis for Israel's military administration of the West Bank.

The main tenets of the Allon Plan are the division of the West Bank into two parts (north and south) by the complete annexation of Jerusalem and extending the Jerusalem corridor to the Jordan Valley. This area is also completely separated from Jordan by the annexation of the Jordan Valley. In the initial Allon Plan, refugees in Gaza (three-quarters of the population) were to be transferred to the two West Bank reserves, and the Gaza Strip was to be annexed to Israel through colonial settlement.

Since 1967, the Allon Plan has been revised and developed in numerous ways. In 1976, under Yitzhak Rabin's leadership, the Israeli government began expanding settlement areas deep into the West Bank, a process that was accelerated after the 1977 Likud victory which brought in Ariel Sharon as the Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Settlement Committee and who put in place plans for massive settlement expansion in the West Bank.



Map of the Allon Plan (Source: PASSIA)

Among these displacement policies and practices was a daily curfew that often lasted several days at a time; our elders say they sometimes forgot what day it was as a result of being imprisoned within their own homes. Curfew was always accompanied by a shortage of food and essential services, and anyone caught outside of their homes before 6 am or after 6 pm would be shot on the spot; hundreds of Palestinians were killed or injured in this way, especially during the first year of the occupation. The Israeli military also targeted Palestinian shepherd's livestock, and tens of thousands of sheep and goats were killed in the Jordan Valley particularly in the first two years of the occupation.

Soon after the 1967 occupation, the Israeli authorities undertook a census of Palestinians in the Valley who were issued ID cards stating their place of residence as the Jordan Valley. Palestinians with addresses other than the Jordan Valley were not allowed to enter the area with the exception of Jericho, a segregation practice that continues until today, albeit more effectively given Israel's Wall and its associated regime. In the first years after 1967, the Israeli occupation authorities issued tens of confiscation orders that resulted in the removal of Palestinians from hundreds of thousands of dunums under the pretext of Israeli security needs. Confiscation was undertaken under numerous pretexts, including military necessity, which transformed the land into military training areas and military

bases, as well as more seemingly benign purposes such as the creation of closed ecological and natural reserves. Eight percent of the Jordan Valley was expropriated as absentee property, land which rightfully belongs to Palestinian refugees expelled during the 1967 war.

Segregation: The Wall and its Associated Regime in the Jordan Valley

While the first civilian settlements were set up in the early days of 1968, it was with the onset of the 1980s, and especially as the world focused on the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon, that the Israeli government began an intensive campaign of settlement construction and expansion in the Jordan Valley. Much of the land that had previously been confiscated under a security pretext, becoming closed military areas or even military bases, was transformed into settlement colonies for Jewish-Israelis, completely integrated into the Israeli water and electricity grids. These “Jewish-only” areas were then expanded and other plots of land confiscated for new settlements.

Throughout the 1980s, the Israeli government implemented policies to encourage Jewish-Israeli civilians to move into the illegal settlements, including subsidizing the cost of utilities and housing. After the Oslo agreements of the mid-1990s, Israeli settlements greatly expanded, increasing in size and number. The "development" of the agricultural production in these settlements during this period involved pumping millions of dollars into “strategic crops” like palm trees to bolster Israel's competitiveness as an exporter of these crops despite the formal reticence of most of the international community to import settlement products.

A further increase in the number of Jewish-Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley came with the 2005 Israeli "disengagement" from Gaza in which a number of Gaza settlers were relocated to the Valley. Today, there are approximately 9,000 settlers living in 36 Jewish-only settlements in the Jordan Valley directly controlling 1200 km² of the most fertile and resource-rich land in this important area. It is also important to note that eight of these illegal settlements are home to no more than twenty or so Jewish-Israelis; an indication that the occupation authorities have no qualms confiscating the land of tens of Palestinian families and depriving them of essential services just to settle one or two Jewish families on large farming estates with all the luxuries and amenities of life provided courtesy of the Israeli regime.

The fact that a portion of the land of the Jordan Valley is still inhabited by Palestinians does not mean that Palestinians exercise any control over this territory. The city of Jericho, supposedly under full Palestinian Authority control (Area A) according to the Oslo agreements, was victim to military assault several times during the Second Intifada. These assaults involved the demolition of Palestinian homes and the destruction of roads, water pipes, and other important infrastructure. Israeli military jeeps are regularly seen patrolling the outskirts of the city, which has been locked in an Israeli stranglehold since 2000. The two roads leading in and out of the city are completely controlled by Israeli military checkpoints, and the military has dug a trench around the rest of the city to prevent the city from geographically expanding. Furthermore, no major

The Campaign to Boycott Carmel-Agrexco



BDS activists in Belgium confront a Carmel-Agrexco truck (courtesy of COBI).

One of the Israeli companies directly profiting from the occupation is Carmel-Agrexco. Carmel-Agrexco is 50% owned by the Israeli government and imports produce from Occupation settlements in the West Bank. Agrexco is a partnership between Gol (50%), Israeli growers (25%) and the Tnuva cooperative (25%). Agrexco is the largest exporter of settlement produce, primarily selling produce from settlements in the Jordan Valley. The company is responsible for 70% of Israeli fresh produce sold abroad, with annual sales amounting to \$750 million in 2006 (80% from exports). In the UK Agrexco is known under the Carmel, Coral and Jaffa brands. While Agrexco and the occupation profit, Palestinian farmers continue to suffer as Israel insists on blocking Palestinian exports. Additionally, occupation forces continue to steal crucial land and water resources. These factors, along with the Wall, settlers' roads and military checkpoints have devastated Palestinian agriculture and forced many Palestinians to seek jobs inside Israel, where they suffer from low wages and a lack of workers' rights.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign activists in the UK (largest importer of Israeli agricultural exports) and Belgium have launched campaigns to boycott Carmel-Agrexco until Israel complies with international law.

More on the BDS campaign at <http://www.bdsmovement.net>

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Family home demolished in Jiftlik village home to 5,500 Palestinians in the Jordan Valley. Any home or renovation done after 1967 is considered illegal by Israel and results in demolition (Anne Paq ©Badil).



Palestinian construction projects, including irrigation and drinking water networks, water storage facilities, and sewage networks, can be carried out without the approval of the Israeli military authorities.

Al-'Auja is the other "Area A" community, but is a prototype of a Palestinian village subjected to daily military and settler harassment, military-imposed curfews, prevention of access to essential services, colonial settlement expansion, as well as home and workplace demolition.

The situation is much worse in the five Palestinian population centers classified as "Area B" (Palestinian civil control, Israeli security control) under the Oslo arrangements. The Palestinian Authority is responsible for issuing building permits, and as such Palestinians are allowed to build in these towns and villages. The Israeli occupation authorities, however, have banned any expansion of the boundaries of these localities, the area on which Palestinians are allowed to build, since the 1967 occupation. The result is that these five towns and villages have some of the highest population density in Palestine. The problem of high population density is intensified by the fact that Palestinians displaced from the rest of the Jordan Valley as a result of Israeli policies and practices (twenty or so communities classified as Area C – complete Israeli control) seek refuge in these "Area B" towns and villages. The Israeli authorities have sealed off the "Area B" population centers segregating them from the rest of Palestine by banning anyone who is not resident there, including Israeli citizens, from entering without Israeli military permission. In short, each of these places is an overcrowded open-air prison.

The Jordan Valley: Daily Life Under a Colonial-Apartheid Occupation

The clear strategic goal of the Israeli establishment in the Jordan Valley has been to maintain complete control over the Valley. In an televised interview in which he set out the bare minimum that Israel would accept in the negotiation process, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stated that "[i]t is impossible to abandon control of the eastern border [the Jordan Valley] of Israel."¹ This goal has involved the concentration of the Palestinians in the Jordan Valley mainly in Jericho and Al-'Auja ("Area A"), and in the "Area B" towns and villages – i.e., displacing them from the rest of the Valley – while also making life in these Area A and B population centers very difficult as a disincentive for people to stay.

In addition to the overt military and settler policies and practices such as segregation and violence leading to forced displacement, the occupation authorities have systematically assaulted the Palestinians of the Jordan Valley at the level

of daily life. This assault has been concentrated on our essential needs such as electricity, water, housing, work, and, as described above, mobility.

Electricity

The vast majority of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley suffer shortages of electricity, albeit with varying intensity. Al-'Auja, Jericho and the surrounding refugee camps (Ein Sultan and Aqabet Jaber) received their electricity from the Jerusalem Electricity Company, but brown-outs and blackouts were common, and more recently these areas have been connected with the Jordanian electricity grid. Approximately fifteen percent of Palestinians in the northern Jordan Valley receive electricity through the Israeli electricity grid. The remainder of the Palestinians in the Jordan Valley (area C) rely completely on power generators for which they purchase fuel. This is in sharp contrast to the subsidized electricity of the Israeli settlers in the illegal Jordan Valley settlements.

Water

Within the first months of the occupation, the Israeli military took control of all major water resources in the Jordan Valley, which came under the control of the Israeli Water Authority. The means of Israeli control over water varied from limiting the amount of water Palestinian farmers could draw from their wells, to banning the digging of new wells and renovation of existing wells, to outright seizure of the land in which water springs or wells existed. The Water Authority handed these water resources to Mekorot, Israel's national water corporation, which immediately set out to dig hundreds of wells to service the illegal Israeli settlements of the Valley. Palestinians were, and continue to be, banned from digging wells beyond 200 m in depth, a restriction that has never applied to Israeli settlements let alone Mekorot. As a direct result, the vast majority Palestinian water wells and the springs to which Palestinians have access are salinated, polluted or have completely dried up. Today, Palestinians in the Jordan Valley have little or no access to drinking water, let alone water for use in agriculture or industry.

The Israeli policy of limiting and eliminating Palestinian access to water, combined with the resulting sharp increase in the price of water resulting from Israeli policies, has been one of the main reasons for displacement of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley since 1967. Palestinians are still banned from building any water-related infrastructure connecting Area C communities to the water grid in Areas A and B in the Jordan Valley, and attempts at expanding the water networks of A and B areas have resulted in swift Israeli demolition of the pipes and pumps. Palestinians who have remained steadfast on their land outside of Areas A and B are forced to purchase their water by the tank at the cost of 33 Israeli Shekels (approximately US \$9) per cubic meter; often the only vendors are the nearby illegal Israeli settlers! The result is that Palestinian families in "Area C" communities in the Jordan Valley pay anywhere from 30-80 percent of their gross monthly income on water.

A very clear example of the workings of Israeli policy regarding water in the Jordan Valley over the past year have been the villages of Humsa and al-Hadidiya, both of which attempted to establish water reservoirs and a water network, both of which faced a brutal Israeli response involving the confiscation of all the equipment used in creating these reservoirs, including the water tanks and trucks, and both of which experienced the displacement of approximately half of their residents as a result.

The discriminatory aspect of the occupation's water policy in the Jordan Valley is very clear when we compare the Palestinian access to water with that of the Israeli settlers. Palestinians in communities connected to the Mekorot water grid are charged higher prices for water in comparison to settlers who receive subsidies on water that is for domestic use. This water discount for settlers can reach up to seventy-five percent. Settlement municipal councils cover the water expenses for the lush parks, swimming pools and other public services in the illegal settlements. Settlers have access to "unlimited" water, with irrigation water provided almost for free – they pay the “pumping fees.”

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Labor and Livelihood

Considering that the vast majority of Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley, with the exception of Jericho, are agricultural and pastoral communities, and that most of their land and access to water has been severed by Israel, these Palestinian communities face a crisis in both their way of life and their livelihood. Unemployment rates in the Jordan Valley are among the highest in Palestine, and the only real employment opportunities exist in the form of cheap exploitable labor in the settlements, since there are little to no institutions that have offices in the Jordan Valley and employ people from the local communities. It is important to note that even employers in the settlements looking for exploitable workers generally prefer not to employ Palestinians from the Jordan Valley, and as such the proportion of people who find work in the settlements is not more than three percent of the Jordan Valley population. The poor level of education, access to electricity, computers, the Internet, and communications networks also plays a role in limiting potential employment opportunities of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley.

The Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign

In 2003, several community members in the Jordan Valley came together to try to build a community-based campaign to defend the indigenous community's presence. Five years later, the campaign continues to grow, and has spread to all of the Palestinian communities in the Valley. The capacities of the Campaign are still quite limited since it is based on community members volunteering their time and energy, with no budget to speak of or any sources of funding except in the rare cases that a person or an institution comes forward who is willing to fund a project that the campaign has undertaken. Since its inception, the campaign has been open to working with any individual or organization that shares its political analysis of the problem facing the Palestinians of the Jordan Valley and shares the commitment to maintain and strengthen Palestinian presence in the Valley.

The Campaign's activities center around non-violent actions, which strengthen the steadfastness of Palestinians in the Valley. This has ranged from raising funds to deliver water to those most in need of it, to mobilizing local communities around rebuilding structures destroyed by the Israeli occupation. One of our current campaigns involves mobilizing and educating Jordan Valley communities about the traditional methods of building using homemade hay-and-clay bricks. In the past two-years we have also built a school in the village of Fasayel.



Fasayel Friendship School built by the Campaign boasts a map of the Jordan Valley. (Anne Paq, ©Badil).

Ongoing Forced Displacement



The Campaign works to educate people to use traditional building methods (hay and clay bricks), and in cases of emergency will fundraise to purchase water for families that would otherwise be unable to afford it. (Anne Paq, ©Badil).

The second major task of the campaign is raising awareness about the plight of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley and the urgency of supporting them both at the national and international level. This is particularly important given that it is a topic most often ignored in discussions about Palestine and the occupation. This advocacy work is carried out through preparing written, audio, and visual materials that advocates of Palestinian rights can use, trying to attract media attention to the situation in the Jordan Valley, offering eyewitness tours for visitors to Palestine so they can see for themselves what is described above. A part of this advocacy work is also trying to get international agencies operating in the region, and often pressuring them to operate in the Jordan Valley, to provide the services most needed by the local community, and to monitor the effects of the Israeli policies and practices on the people and the land.

The Campaign continues to face several challenges. One of the first obstacles to mobilizing the local community is the large distance between the communities of the 150 km long Jordan Valley. There is no cost-effective means of public transportation available to Palestinians in the Valley, which includes the Campaign organizers. While dealing directly and in-person with community members is the ideal means of communication, the use of phones and other communication technology is also very expensive, since there is no Palestinian communication infrastructure outside of the Area A and B towns and villages, and the Israeli alternative is costly. The Internet is completely useless as a means of communication within the Valley given that only an extremely tiny minority has Internet access. The dearth of sources of funding that would allow for the Campaign to sustain itself as an independent grassroots initiative is a further major challenge.

Despite these challenges the Campaign continues based on the determination of the people of the Jordan Valley to remain steadfast on their land, and in the ongoing struggle to regain the land and resources taken from them, the Palestinians of the Jordan Valley.

**Fathy Khdirat is the Coordinator of the Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign.*

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Between Isolation and Expulsion: Segregated Palestinian Towns and Villages of the West Bank¹

by The Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

At the only gate leading into
and out of the West Bank city of
Qalqilya (© Anne Paq).



Today, 266,422 Palestinians residing in 77 West Bank localities have been surrounded and isolated by apartheid infrastructure and settlements and are facing displacement.² The current crisis in the West Bank is one of the most wide-scale attempts at dispossession in recent years, with the occupation systematically targeting villages located in strategic areas along the 'green line' and near settlements. Palestinian communities are set to be expelled from areas required for settlement expansion, or are marked for inclusion outside *de facto* borders of the Palestinian ghettos delineated by the path of the Wall.

This wide-scale assault has been made possible by the construction of the Wall and the division of the West Bank into five separate ghettos.³ The Wall and the apartheid system with which it is associated is emblematic of the key tenets of Zionist policy, namely the control of land and maintenance of a Jewish demographic majority. A system has been created wherein wide-scale displacement of the Palestinian population is possible without the international political fallout that has tended to follow today's more brutal population transfers. In the West Bank, forced displacement is conducted primarily through practices that affect gradual, piecemeal expulsion. Collectively, these practices slowly strangle the social and economic life of affected communities, creating conditions in targeted areas under which a normal life is untenable, and paradoxically forcing the residents to leave under their own "free will." Creeping expulsion is viciously destructive and undermines the social and economic foundations of affected communities with the aim of creating a general collapse. These practices do not replace brutal military strikes and demolitions, but rather compliment them in the general colonization of the West Bank.

This article will examine the three primary strategies used against the threatened towns and villages in the West Bank. The vast majority of these villages are walled-in on three sides, with the fourth tightly controlled by a gate. This has resulted in the economic strangulation of a number of these centers. The second type of isolation affects a number of smaller communities

that are located between the Wall and the Green Line. These communities face a more serious closure regime that undermines even the most basic social relationships. Of these two types, there are 14 villages that face the imminent destruction of their homes and expulsion from the land. Finally, we will conclude by looking at ways in which villagers, in the absence of central support, have engaged in resistance to the expulsion project.

Walled from three sides and tightly controlled

A staggering 60 population centers, with a combined population of 257,265 residents, are affected by this type of isolation. This may include individually isolated centers, such as Qalqilya city or Anata, or enclaves that are collectively isolated by the Wall from free access to the rest of the West Bank.⁴ The Wall has served to constrain growth and slice through traditional inter-city routes. Remaining access points to these localities are limited to gates that are under military control. This has functioned to slowly bleed a number of these communities, many of which are larger and were former business centers of economic viability.

In certain areas, most notably in the Qalqilya district, the Wall has been constructed in such a way as to physically limit urban expansion. In Qalqilya city, the Wall falls only meters away from the built up area, making natural growth impossible. The Wall and settler roads around West Bank population centers have also resulted in the destruction of traditional access routes. Palestinian roads have been forcefully re-routed around and under the Wall and apartheid roads, further separating neighboring communities from one another. In the Jerusalem area, for example, the Bir Nabala – al-Ram road was cut and re-routed, meaning a journey that was previously 2km long, now requires a 14km trek. This has hit local students especially hard, and many children are now unable to reach local schools.

Occupation forces have full control over the access points to the various isolated enclaves. These gates assume a variety of forms, as physically guarded military gates or tunnels. Tunnels, such as the one that connects Habla to Qalqilya, pass under fortified settler roads, which are off-limits to Palestinians. These gates put large populations under the control of small groups of soldiers, who have the power to close the gates at their discretion. It is the arbitrariness of the gate closures that is one of the most destructive elements of the system; it deters potential investors, disrupts social relations and discourages travel.

In these areas, the commercial activity at the core of any urban center, has collapsed. Bir Nabala, al-Jeeb, al-Jadeira and old Beit Hanina, all part of the north Jerusalem enclave, had attracted large scale investment on account of their proximity to Jerusalem as well as their central West Bank location. Bir Nabala grew as the central hub, which until 2002 was filled with burgeoning commercial centers, garages and workshops. As a result of the construction of Wall and the fortification of military checkpoints and gates, however, the business climate in Bir Nabala deteriorated. By 2004, investors and businessmen withdrew their investments under the correct assumption that the city would be sealed off and would cease to be commercially viable.

The Qalqilya district is victim to a similar economic pattern, particularly Qalqilya city. The city of Qalqilya historically linked the district together and provided a central market space for local agricultural produce from the surrounding villages. Located near the 'green line', the city also served as a key commercial center for consumers on both sides of it. At one point, more than 85,000 shoppers were flowing into the city every week. This changed drastically following the construction of the Wall, and Qalqilya was sealed off and access to the city was limited to two bottleneck entrances to the east and the south. As was the case in the north Jerusalem enclave, economic life evaporated, leaving 67% of the working-age population unemployed. Many have left the city and moved to other areas of the West Bank or abroad.

This process affects large and small population centers differently. Smaller population centers may eventually dwindle away, their lands swallowed up by nearby settlements. It is unlikely that occupation authorities conceive of wiping out larger population centers, such as Qalqilya city. Instead, these large bastions of unemployed labor will serve the interests of Israeli

Ongoing Forced Displacement

(and Palestinian elite) business interests, providing a pool of exploitable workers for the various “border” industrial zones that are planned for the West Bank.

Between the Wall and the Green Line

A smaller number of villages, 16 communities with a total of 8,557 inhabitants, are trapped between the Wall and the ‘green line’. These villages, whose lands fall to the west of the Wall and are set to be annexed by Israel, touch on the demographic concerns of the occupation authorities. Disconnected both from the rest of the West Bank as well as from communities of Palestinian citizens of Israel to the west, daily life is a constant hardship for the residents. The majority of these areas, with the exception of Barta’a al-Sharqiyya and to a lesser extent ‘Azzun ‘Atmeh, are smaller communities that rely completely on larger population centers for education, social and medical facilities and as such are especially hard hit by the repressive closure regime that has been imposed upon them. Under this system, real economic growth is impossible. Access to education is disrupted, obtaining medical care is difficult, and even marriage and the maintenance of family ties are governed by a hostile occupying power.

Similar to the first type of isolation, villages between the Wall and the Green Line find their movement controlled by occupation gates. However, these gates are much more closely guarded, with limited opening hours and soldiers on hand to implement systematic searches. The occupation also closely monitors the traffic of goods, services and people into and out of these areas. ID, or birth certificates in the case of children, showing residence in one of these villages is required for entrance; non-residents must obtain occupation permits issued by the Israeli military through a complicated, time-consuming and difficult system. NGO, medical and humanitarian groups cannot enter these zones without previous coordination with the military authorities. Restrictions have been imposed on food products entering the areas. Pesticides, medicine and certain agricultural products are all banned under security pretexts. Humiliation is commonly reported, and soldiers have been known to assault residents at checkpoints, destroy permits and deny access on a whim.

The conditions within ‘Azzun ‘Atmeh, located south of Qalqilya city, are representative of the dire situation collectively faced by villages isolated between the Wall and the Green Line. ‘Azzun ‘Atmeh was never an insular community, but rather it was interlinked with the nearby villages of Sanniriya and Beit Amin. The village was founded by landowning farmers from Sanniriya.



The Wall on the western side of Qalqilya. On the other side of the wall, the Trans-Israel highway
(© Anne Paq)

In an effort to move closer to their agricultural land, some of these farmers first moved to Beit Amin and then to 'Azzun Atmeh, where they established homes. Ownership of 'Azzun Atmeh land is thus held by residents of these three villages. Families are spread between the three and 75 percent of 'Azzun 'Atmeh families have daughters living outside the village.

With the building of the Wall and the isolation of the community, these once closely-knit social and economic networks were shattered. Families are now separated from one another; the 1 km trip to Beit Amin from 'Azzun 'Atmeh may take up to three hours if the gate is open. Permits are needed to visit immediate family, and some residents have struggled for years for the right to live with their spouses. Landowners have seen their agricultural land confiscated for settlement construction and isolated while farmers and laborers are often stopped at the gate, unable to cultivate what remains.

Education and medical care is also a serious problem. There are two primary schools in the village that also serve students from Beit Amin. These students face the same problems at the gate and are frequently barred from entering. Pursuing higher education outside the confines of the area is also difficult; even when the gate is open occupation forces often arbitrarily block students. On the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year, to cite one example, soldiers arbitrarily confiscated ID cards belonging to a group of female students from al-Quds Open University in Qalqilya. Medical care, which is under the charge of a visiting medical clinic, is only made available at the whim of local soldiers. Although the doctor has a permit, he too may be denied access under a variety of pretexts. The lack of medical care has created a dangerous situation in the case of emergencies, and a few years ago a woman in labor was denied permission to leave the village. Forced to deliver near the gate, she and her husband lost the child. Now, pregnant women leave the village months in advance to live with relatives, only returning after giving birth.

This situation is not sustainable, with a growing number of youth moving out of the isolated villages to other parts of the West Bank. Without a viable economy and access to neighboring communities, there is little incentive to build a new life in these villages. With the largest village isolated between the Wall and the Green line being no bigger than 4,000 inhabitants, the continuation of the status quo will result in the complete depopulation of these areas in the coming years and ultimately their annexation by Israel.⁵

Under Threat of Imminent Expulsion

Of the communities previously mentioned, 14 villages home to 6,314 persons face imminent expulsion at the hands of the Occupation. These villages are small and aside from the Yatta area, the largest community is 'Ayn Jwaiza in the village of al-Wallajeh, with a population of 600.⁶ Further, these communities are the most vulnerable in the West Bank. Many of them, like the 'Arab ar-Ramadeen in Qalqilya and the 'Arab al-Jahalin in Jerusalem, are Bedouin communities that have a history of being targeted by the Occupation and have been displaced on a number of other occasions. Others, like the people of Khirbet Zakariya, have been totally isolated from local support centres and are surrounded by settlements and related apartheid infrastructure.

In addition to the oppressive movement restrictions mentioned above, these villages all suffer from ongoing structure demolitions. Occupation authorities have attempted to produce a veneer of legality to their actions under various illegal re-zoning strategies following the 1967 occupation. Some villages such as Izbit at-Tabib found their land re-classified as "green areas," meaning that the land was allotted for agriculture, thus rendering residential building in the area illegal. Other communities found themselves part of the Jerusalem municipality after Occupation authorities expanded the city's municipal borders in 1967. Communities historically part of the Bethlehem district, like Nu'man and 'Ayn Jwaiza, fell within the new Jerusalem lines but their inhabitants were not given Jerusalem IDs, which meant that these inhabitants were "illegally" within the Jerusalem municipal boundary while they sat in their own homes. Still other communities were zoned as Area C after the signing of the Oslo accords. While the pretexts are different, each of these communities is isolated in zones clearly allotted for impending settlement expansion, meaning that their removal is a strategic priority for the Israel.

Ongoing Forced Displacement

al-Wallajeh: Ein Jwaiza - A Story of Multiple Displacement

On 21 October 1948, nearly all the homes of Wallajeh, located in the district of Jerusalem, were demolished by the Israeli army. Most of the residents were forced to flee to refugee camps in the West Bank and Jordan, where they number 12,500 today. More than two-thirds of the village lands were annexed to Israel, inaccessible to the villagers themselves.

Between the wars of 1948 and 1967, many of the villagers had set up temporary housing, living in caves or makeshift structures until, realising that it may take a long time before they would be allowed to return, they rebuilt homes on the village lands that had remained in the West Bank under Jordanian rule. In 1967, after Israel occupied the West Bank, including the new Wallajeh and nearby Bethlehem and East Jerusalem, it became very difficult to obtain building permits in Wallajeh. Homes built after 1967 without permits were now subject to Israeli demolition proceedings.

Furthermore, Israeli government surveyors who mapped the occupied West Bank lands that were slated for annexation to Israel as part of the metropolitan Jerusalem included the Ein Jwaiza neighbourhood of Lower Wallajeh. The move was not made public until 1981, when Israel's Jerusalem municipality was "correctly" placed in charge of demolishing "illegally-built"

Wallajeh homes. For more than 14 years, these residents with West Bank identity cards had no idea that they were living within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, since the Israeli municipality had provided no new schools, utilities, or services to the growing population.

Meanwhile, Wallajeh's land was coveted. Its springs, fields, and olive trees had been eaten up by the Biblical Zoo, Jewish settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo, and the Teddy Kolleck Stadium. Israeli municipal authorities have asked Ein Juweiza residents, who comprise about half of Wallajeh, to sign a document recognising that their homes are in eastern Jerusalem, and that they, holders of West Bank IDs, are residing there illegally. Moreover, Israeli soldiers commonly arrest and fine Wallajeh residents while in their homes for 'entering' Jerusalem without the proper papers.

In 2004, Israeli city officials announced a new plan to construct Giv'at Yael, a settlement planned to house more than 55,000 Jewish residents, on the lands of Wallajeh and nearby Palestinian communities. In addition to the 49,000 dunums taken from the villagers in 1948, an additional 7,000 dunums have been confiscated for the settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo, 1,000 dunums have been confiscated for Israeli by-pass roads, and approximately 4,000 dunums have been confiscated for the Wall and settlement expansion. The houses on the remaining 3,000 or so dunums of Wallajeh are under constant threat of demolition; 50 homes have already been destroyed by Israeli authorities, and 86 cases of demolition orders are currently being examined by the Israeli courts. The small Palestinian community is now completely encircled by Jewish settlements and the Wall, enabling the Israeli army to imprison its residents simply by closing down the one remaining access road.



Ein Jwaiza, part of new Wallajeh facing imminent expulsion (most of the homes in this photo have been demolished at least once). Background: the other side of the 'green line' - the hill on which the old village of al-Wallajeh stood before 1948 (© Badil)

These communities are not being slowly bled, but actively besieged. In Izbit al-Tabib and Khirbet Zakariya, all buildings constructed after 1967 are possible targets. In Izbit al-Tabib, more than half of the structures in the village are under demolition orders. This small community, which lacks educational and health facilities, has seen its main access routes blockaded with rock and dirt mounds, leading to a near-total isolation. A similar situation exists in Khirbet Zakariya. Of the 58 structures in the village, 18 of them including the local school and health clinic, have pending demolition orders. A number of homes and cisterns have already been razed, with villagers attempting to rebuild with what little materials they have. During the second Intifada, the village was put under a 40-day curfew. Under sniper fire from soldiers and settlers, villagers were forced to sneak across the hills to retrieve basic supplies from Beit Ummar and Beit Fajjar.

Nu'man village also faces an ongoing assault. After being annexed by the Jerusalem district. Residents were informed in 1992 that since they lacked Jerusalem ID, they would have to vacate their homes. The situation has since escalated, with the occupation authorities denying children access to local schools in 1994. Villagers found a temporary solution and hired buses to send their children to school in Beit Sahour. In response, cars with West Bank plates were banned from entering the village

Ongoing Forced Displacement



Getting to school from Azzun Atmeh, a village trapped between the Wall and the Green Line (© Anne Paq)



View of the Illegal Har Homa settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim from the Badil office (© Badil).

in 1998. Further land confiscations occurred, with land annexed for the Har Homa settlement as well as for the creation of the Mezmouria commercial terminal. In 2007 the siege has tightened. Even those who provide general services, such as garbage collectors, have been turned back by Occupation forces.

Village Resistance

Since the beginning of the construction of the Wall, affected villages have mobilized in defense of their lands. Resistance in the isolated communities has taken both passive and active forms. In the absence of a functioning political body, this resistance is organized predominantly at the grassroots level.

The dictum “to exist is to resist” resonates in many of the threatened areas. Villagers who make the decision to remain face hardships in all spheres of social and economic life, meaning that maintaining a family, a job, or an education requires a daily struggle. Many rebuild their homes with the knowledge that they will be destroyed again. In ‘Ayn Jwaiza, the community has collectively paid for the rebuilding of demolished homes. In other communities, residents reconstruct their homes using the rubble left behind by the bulldozers. In response, Israeli demolition crews have begun confiscating salvageable and reusable material. Many villages have continued this tit-for-tat exchange for years; with each step the residents take in fighting against their eviction met by further repression. Although the current situation does not lend any hope for social or economic recovery, many villagers continue to remain, purely in defiance of Israel’s transfer policy.

Active resistance has also characterized the struggle in the isolated villages. Organized marches, demonstrations and media campaigns have been waged in a majority of the communities. Izbit at-Tabib, one of the initial points of protest, and in coordination with Stop the Wall, initiated a campaign against the expulsion of the village. This campaign involved a number of protests, the largest of which was attended by Palestinians from across the West Bank as well from inside 1948-Palestine on the other side of the "green line." A media campaign was also undertaken in an effort publicize the state of siege on the community.

Most recently, the people of Ni’lin have been conducting a highly visible local campaign against the Wall that involves actions and demonstrations on an almost daily basis. These ongoing actions have succeeded in frequently interrupting the work of the bulldozers and in drawing attention to the local struggle against the Wall. The people have also been able to create a highly visible media campaign, generating both national and international coverage. However, Ni’lin has paid dearly for continuing its fight; six young boys have been martyred and thirty more have been seriously injured. Olive groves have been burned, and soldiers have recently taken to barricading all entrances to the villages, allowing only local residents to enter. Despite mounting repression and losses, however, Israeli soldiers have so far failed to crush the local movement.

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Bil'in protest against the Wall as part of international conference on non-violent resistance against the Israeli Apartheid Wall, summer 2008 (©Anne Paq).



Conclusion

The forced displacement facing Palestinians living in the isolated communities is being undertaken in a variety of ways. Some face expulsion in the near future, but most will be able to survive for a number of years until their communities completely waste away. The varying methods and time frames, however, should not distract us from the systematic nature of the expulsion campaign, which is not limited to the isolated villages of the West Bank, but also includes the tightening of control over the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem.⁷ Its three components, namely the implementing various methods of transfer, increasing settlement activity, and maintaining control over the West Bank population, have materialized in the form of the current ghetto and reserve system that characterizes the West Bank.

So far, this project has been viciously successful. While the continuing land confiscations and the construction of the Wall has not elicited a peep from global powers, the ongoing settlement construction has received only a few faint-hearted critiques. Perhaps one of the greatest dangers to the majority of the isolated communities is the failure of the international community to understand the Wall as a mechanism effecting creeping displacement. Recent development projects for instance, initiated by western donors and international financial institutions with the blessing of the Fayyad government, threaten to incorporate and legitimate the current regime. In doing so, these projects will bolster the Wall, crushing any hope of a viable future and furthering the displacement of thousands of Palestinians.

**The Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (Stop the Wall) is a coalition of Palestinian non governmental organizations and popular committees that mobilize and coordinate efforts on local, national and international levels. These efforts are focused upon stopping and dismantling the Apartheid Wall, and resisting Israeli occupation and colonization. Stop the Wall is a member of the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, Sanction Campaign National Committee. For more, visit www.stophthewall.org*

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

No strategy or vision that aims to end internal displacement

Assessing the response to situations of internal displacement in the OPT

by Karine Mac Allister



Home demolition in al-Nuqar (Qalqilya district) on 29 August 2007 (Badil).

This article presents some of the main findings and recommendations emerging from an assessment of the response to situations of internal displacement in the OPT conducted by Badil with the cooperation of communities affected and members of the Inter-Agency Displacement Working Group and the financial support of Oxfam-Québec. The assessment stemmed from the identified need to better understand how we – UN agencies, local and international NGOs, donor governments and the Palestinian Authority – assist and protect internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people at risk of displacement in the OPT. It stemmed also from the desire to implement the Collaborative Response to Situations of Internal Displacement in the OPT in a manner that respects international law and best practices.

Internal displacement is the forced displacement of people from their homes or places of habitual residence within an internationally recognized state border. Internal displacement encompasses the forcible movement of people as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. Central to the concept of internal displacement is the *involuntary* character of movement *within national borders*.

Although internal displacement is not recent in the OPT, and only a subset of the forms of displacements affecting the Palestinian people, which has historically been characterised more by external rather than internal displacement, it only recently became a subject of concern among local and international organizations. This increasing awareness about internal displacement, also described as a component of the ongoing forced displacement of Palestinians, results partly from the reports of a number of observers, most notably John Dugard, former UN Special Rapporteur to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the construction of the Wall in the occupied West

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Bank and the work of a number of local and international NGOs, also warned in their reports about the role of the Wall and its associated regime and other elements of Israel's regime in the OPT, such as the colonies (settlements), are forcibly displacing Palestinians and changing the demographic composition of the occupied territory. This recent interest in internal displacement also results from the emerging and evolving body of soft law and policy documents that have been developed in the last 10 years, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998), the Collaborative Response to Situations of Internal Displacement (2005), and the UN Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons (2005). These instruments undoubtedly gave tools to advocates of the rights of displaced persons, including internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In January 2008, organizations concerned with internal displacement in the OPT formed the Inter-Agency Displacement Working Group (hereinafter DWG) under the auspices of the protection sector (now called the Protection Cluster) of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the OPT. The DWG was established after nearly two years of efforts by a small number of local and international NGOs, who worked to raise awareness of the problem and its solutions. At first, most international organizations did not recognize internal displacement as a problem or Palestinians as IDPs; in fact, they considered displaced Palestinians as "migrants" or focused on house demolition and land confiscation and not on the people before and after they lose their homes and their land. Moreover, the displacement of Palestinians was not understood within the overall legal, political and historical context of the conflict, but as one element that could be dealt with by the current humanitarian programmatic response. It took numerous meetings to convince UN agencies and NGOs to take internal displacement seriously and look into developing a specific response. An important, albeit short impetus, was provided by the Norwegian Refugee Council, who helped kick-start the DWG.

Protection

Based on workshops conducted by the ICRC between 1996 and 2001, protection was defined as encompassing "all activities, aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., human rights, humanitarian and refugee law). Human rights and humanitarian actors shall conduct these activities impartially and not on the basis of race, national, national or ethnic origin, language or gender."

Protection activities include any activity which:

- prevents or puts a stop to a specific pattern of abuse and/or alleviates its immediate effects;
- restores people's dignity and ensures adequate living conditions through reparation, restitution, and rehabilitation,
- fosters an environment conducive to respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with the relevant bodies of law.

Protection activities may include responsive action, remedial action and environment-building and may be carried out concurrently.

Source: ICRC, "What Is Protection?: A Definition by Consensus."

Available from: <http://www.icva.ch/doc00000663.html>

At the end of July 2008, the DWG included over one hundred members, such as UN agencies, international and local Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, and donors. The DWG has recognized that forced displacement is both a root cause and consequence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has endorsed the working definition provided by the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which defines internally displaced persons (IDPs) as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." The DWG aims to respond to situations of internal displacement by implementing the Collaborative Response to Situations of Internal Displacement (hereinafter Collaborative Response) in a manner that is efficient, predictable and accountable.

But implementing the Collaborative Response in the OPT is challenging. The traditional protection agency, UNHCR, is absent in the territory and most organizations, apart from UNICEF, ICRC, and increasingly UNRWA, do not have a protection mandate. And even if the UN agencies have a protection mandate, they undertake very limited, usually non-confrontational and rarely politically sensitive activities. In fact, the lack of protection has been one of the main problems affecting the Palestinian people, including displaced Palestinians, and once again, re-emerges as one of the main gaps affecting IDPs in the OPT.

Ongoing Forced Displacement

The DWG also realized that in order to efficiently implement the Collaborative Response, it needed more information on internal displacement and IDPs in the OPT, including on the current response to situations of internal displacement. And although it was widely believed that the current response was *ad hoc* and ineffective, it was also recognized that more information was needed in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses. The assessment thus aims to fill part of this gap by contributing to a better understanding of the ways in which we address situations of internal displacement in the OPT.

The assessment was conducted between December 2007 and June 2008 and is based on a review of five cases of internal displacement; two in the Gaza Strip and three in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, the evaluation comprises the responses to the displacement of between 1,000 and 3,400 persons in the neighbourhood of al Shoka (Rafah) in August 2006 as a result of an Israeli military operation/collective punishment, and of about 1,450 persons in Um al Nasser (Beit Hanoun) on 27 March 2007 as a result of a human-made disaster. In the West Bank, the assessment included the responses to the displacement of around 200 persons in Qassa (south Hebron) on 29-30 October 2007 because of the construction of the Wall and its associated regime, in particular Tarqumiya terminal; 70 persons in al Nuqar neighbourhood (Qalqilya) on 29 August 2007 as a result of collective punishment/military operations; and 39 persons on two occasions (3 January and 11 March 2008) in Furush Beit Dajan (Jordan Valley) as a result of Israeli pressures to limit Palestinian control over land in Area C and facilitate the expansion of settlements and other related infrastructure.

The population of al Shoka in Rafah is mainly composed of Bedouin communities who were expelled from Beersheba in 1948 (Nakba). The total population of al Shoka varies between 9,000 and 14,000 (12,000 according to the Palestinian Population Center) according to estimates and 79% are registered with UNRWA. The population was repeatedly displaced after Israel launched "Operation Summer Rain" in June 2006 after Gilad Shalit was taken prisoner. More than 3,400 persons were displaced and found refuge in three UNRWA schools in Rafah. Al Shoka was invaded three times in less than a month, leading to repeated displacement. The community generally feels they have been collectively punished because Gilad Shalit was taken prisoner. Although some of the development needs of the community remain, their overall situation, especially economic, social and psychological, has continuously deteriorated since the invasion. In general, members of the community and village council felt that the consequences of the military operation were bigger than the capacity of organizations to respond, especially in the intermediate and long-term periods. Representatives of the community denounced the fact that the ongoing emphasis on emergency assistance and "crisis management" is creating a "culture of coupons." They are highly aware of the fact that this situation has led to the de-development of their society; making them go "backward" instead of "forward." The destruction caused by the invasion has seriously affected the self-reliance and development of the community and the response provided has been unable to address the new needs of the people.

Flooding in Um al-Nasser (Badil)



Ongoing Forced Displacement

Um al Nasser is a Bedouin community of approximately 2,500 persons originating from Yibna and Rubin in historic Palestine. They are 1948 refugees and the majority are registered with UNRWA. In addition to their displacement in 1948, residents of Um al Nasser were forcibly displaced in the mid-1990s by the Palestinian Authority to make way for the construction of the town of Sheikh Zayed, an urban development project for needy families. The risk of flooding was known, expected and documented. Israel refused to allow work on the water treatment plant, which created leakages as well as unsanitary and insecure sewage lakes around Um al Nasser. The community had clearly identified their three main protection risks as: (1) sewage lake/basins; (2) Israeli incursions, in particular the arrest of young men at night; (3) and Qassam rockets, which have in the past fallen on the community. Despite the active involvement of the community and efforts of local and international organizations, at 9:30 am on 27 March 2007, two months after the beginning of its operations, a newly built emergency basin collapsed and flooded 30,000 cubic metres of sewage unto the village. Two children and three women were killed and 18 to 30 injured¹ while approximately 110 houses were totally and partially destroyed and damaged.² As a result, over 250 families, 1,450 persons, fled a few metres away on to higher ground where a temporary emergency camp was set up by UNRWA. A number of animals (goats, sheep and chicken) died, and water, electricity and telephone networks were destroyed. A resident of Um al Nasser felt that organizational responses centered on reporting about the sewage lake and its basins, which he believes “does not make a difference in our lives; people in the community do not see any results from these efforts, there is no justice. The PA and Israel should be held accountable.”

In Qassa, the majority of people are refugees registered with UNRWA and originate from Beit Jibrin and Zakaria. They lost land in 1948, 1967 and more recently because of the construction of the Wall (parts of Qassa are located on the other side of the Wall). The herders and their families depend on the land and its resources to support their 3,000 animals, their main source of income. Qassa is the perfect location for grazing because it has water (spring), caves and land. In February 2007, construction of the Wall in the area was completed, severing Qassa from the rest of the West Bank (Qassa is now located within the "seam zone" [closed area]). In May 2007, the community received an eviction order. On 24 October 2007, the community received a notification of eviction and demolition orders; they were given three days to contest the orders. They refused to leave the area. On 29 October 2007, the army, along with a private contractor, came and destroyed the properties and forcibly evicted the people from Qassa. The entire community and their 3,000 animals were physically and violently displaced to the other side of the Wall. Their forced eviction and displacement on 29 October is directly linked with the opening of the newly rebuilt Tarqumiya checkpoint/terminal (30 October 2007). All people consulted were adamant that the people of Qassa were displaced because of the Wall and the new Tarqumiya terminal. One of them said, “we should not wait until people are displaced before we react” because in doing so, “we are helping the Israelis to implement their plan.” As one displaced man explained, “I am now 38 years old, we never asked for anything because we were happy, but we lost our life.”

In al Nuqar neighborhood in Qalqilia, most inhabitants, as is the case in the city, are refugees. The army not only completely destroyed five houses and damaged two others, but also destroyed the sewage and water system, agricultural land as well as shops and cars. Families consulted said that they lost everything; most if not all of their savings had been invested in their houses. They also lost a place to call home, a place where they can feel secure and safe. The destruction took everyone by surprise because it was the result of a military operation during which the army decided to punish the residents for allegedly allowing wanted persons to pass through their property. These allegations were never proven and the army did not find any evidence confirming their accusations. The army occupied one house which they used as an interrogation center. A woman who was interrogated by the army captain recalls that he wanted information about wanted men and told her: “I will flatten the whole neighborhood even the mosque.” During her interrogation, another woman remembers that the captain told her: “we have information that wanted people entered your house, if you don’t tell us everything, we will destroy your house.” As she was still detained, she saw the bulldozer approaching from the window and piling earth on top of two houses, nearly covering them, after which they were destroyed; a practice that was until then unknown to people.

Aware of the dynamics and power imbalance that characterizes the conflict, the municipality and families consulted said that for them, the biggest and most important challenge was justice; justice for what has been done to them and at the broader,

Ongoing Forced Displacement

wider level, calling on international organizations to address the "bigger picture" of Israel's regime. According to them, the use of soft diplomacy will not impact Israel's regime and policies in the OPT; it requires more robust pressure. According to some field staff, Israel's sophisticated policy of displacement (population transfer and demographic engineering) is a well-known and understood phenomenon *sur le terrain*, but for political reasons, is not taken up by the heads of agencies and international organizations operating in the OPT. People also denounced the cycle that results from the dynamic created by the international response, whereby Israeli authorities destroy and the international community rebuilds, without ever addressing the practice, its cause or enforcing international law. In other words, the international community pays the price of reconstruction because it is unwilling to challenge the cause of the destruction. At the time of the research, no house had been rebuilt and when the rental assistance from the municipality expires, most families will have nowhere to go. The acting mayor of Qalqilia said, "in the end, it is the victims who pay for the poor and slow response." For people, it is also crucial that they rebuild their house in the same place, on their land, and that the destruction of homes does not serve to impose a *de facto* reality, preventing people from returning to their land and rebuilding there.

In Furush Beit Dajan in the Jordan Valley, most inhabitants are Bedouin or of Bedouin origin and came to the area after being expelled from the village of Yattir in the Naqab in the 1950s or Samoa and other villages in Hebron as a result of the 1967 War. Around 15 percent are registered refugees with UNRWA. They are farmers and/or graze sheep and goats. Around 1,500 persons live in the village, where much of the land has been declared a military area and is thus inaccessible. Most people do not have proof of ownership; they use the land according to traditional customs. The village is also located in Area C. Therefore, no proper planning has been done by the Israeli military's Civil Administration, and the village has no master zoning plan. As a result, most structures have no building permits and can be demolished at any moment while residents can be evicted from their land and home. The majority of the structures and houses in the village are made out of *zinco* (corrugated metal sheet) and makeshift tents. Residents explained the situation in these terms: "we cannot dig deeper to get water, they don't want people to get water so that they will leave"; "water access for us diminishes each year"; "water is the artery of life, once the water is gone, that's it."³

According to OCHA, which has compiled statistics on house demolitions since it became operational in the OPT, UNRWA-built houses were demolished in Furush Beit Dajan in September 2005 (5 demolitions and 33 persons displaced), January and August 2007 (3 demolitions and an unknown number of displaced people), and January and March 2008 (22 demolitions



Families' often have nowhere to go after their home is demolished. Al-Nuqar 29 August 2007 (Badi)

Ongoing Forced Displacement

Prohibition of Arbitrary Displacement

"1. Every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence.

2. The prohibition of arbitrary displacement includes displacement:

- (a) When it is based on policies of apartheid, 'ethnic cleansing' or similar practices aimed at/or resulting in altering the ethnic, religious or racial composition of the affected population;
- (b) In situations of armed conflict, unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand;
- (c) In cases of large-scale development projects, which are not justified by compelling and overriding public interests;
- (d) In cases of disasters, unless the safety and health of those affected requires their evacuation; and
- (e) When it is used as a collective punishment."

Principle 6 of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

and 39 and 22 persons displaced respectively). On 23 January 2008, nine families (39 persons) had their homes, mainly makeshift tents and barracks, demolished. The demolitions were carried out by Israeli soldiers and with bulldozers. Of the nine families affected, four are registered refugees. Two months later, on 11 March 2008, the army came back and re-destroyed some of the homes it had destroyed in January as well as new ones. Again as part of a series of demolitions in the area, the Israeli army destroyed houses in Furush Beit Dajan.⁴ Five families (22 persons) were displaced, three of whom are registered refugee families. The homes of these five families, two of which had already been demolished in January, were destroyed. Their tents, which were given to them by the ICRC after the demolition in January 2008 were taken away, with all their belongings as well as water tanks for personal consumption and for animals. The tents and barracks were picked up by the army and taken away in a truck. When the truck was full, all other properties were destroyed by the bulldozer and buried. This displacement was much more violent, as people received no notice or warning and were prohibited from removing their personal belongings before the demolitions took place. Despite repeated demolitions, one person affected said, "we have to live this life, to sleep here, because we have no choice" because "who is right, fights for his rights." Others, however, are said to have moved out of the village because they cannot build a house. The long-term needs identified by people are basic; they

want to get married and have a family in their village, build a house and other public infrastructure, dig wells, plant trees, access their land and move freely without harassment.

These cases have been selected to cover urban and rural communities, including Bedouin, as well as situations of mass and localised displacement. Information was collected through field visits and interviews with families and communities affected, as well as by responding to local and international NGOs and UN agencies. Throughout the research, priority was given to the positions and perceptions of people affected by forced displacement.

There are, however, a number of limits to the assessment, chief among which is the difficulty to re-create exactly the response to a particular event, because of the subjective and partial nature of such exercise and the often numerous actors involved. It is also limited because it covers only cases where there was a clear instance of displacement, generally as a result of house demolitions, thus excluding "silent" displacement, whereby people moved by themselves because their situation had become unbearable or in order to avoid such conditions.

Nevertheless, interesting and useful findings emerge from the assessment. The major component of the current response is at the emergency stage (within one month); prevention or protection from, i.e. before, displacement and medium-to-long term responses (one month after and until a durable solution is found) are often very limited, and usually non-existent.

Prevention of displacement or protection from displacement is based on the right to freedom of movement and to choose one's residence. It reflects the duty of states to respect international law and avoid situations that may lead to displacement. It is also founded on the right not to be arbitrarily displaced.

One of the main conclusions of the assessment is that prevention of displacement, or protection of those at risk of displacement, is inadequate in the OPT. In all cases where displacement was foreseeable (Umm al Nasser, Qassa and Furush Beit Dajan)

prevention was ineffective or very limited, indeed practically inexistent. In no case reviewed has prevention managed to stop displacement. Moreover, prevention efforts did not focus on internal displacement, the rights of people not to be displaced and on the pattern of abuse (violations of human rights and humanitarian law) leading to displacement. This can be attributed to a number of factors:

First, the personnel of most responding organizations are not familiar with the international framework pertaining to internal displacement, in particular international law relating to the right not to be displaced and the right to be protected against arbitrary displacement.

Second, while it was agreed by members of the DWG that forced, and often arbitrary, displacement is a root cause and consequence of the conflict; the cause(s) and consequences of internal displacement have not been defined nor strategically integrated into the communication or advocacy strategies of most organisations. This may explain why practically no organization undertakes high-level advocacy activities that aim to prevent or stop internal displacement with key stakeholders. In addition, most organizations are reluctant to contextualize internal displacement – to identify the root cause(s) and consequences of internal displacement -- because it is perceived as outside their "humanitarian" mandate; in other words, it is deemed to be too political. This is especially true of international NGOs and UN agencies. These organizations are consequently reluctant to put forward a rights-based approach and tend to focus solely on non-political humanitarian aspects, thus limiting their ability to prevent or put a stop to a specific pattern of rights violations and abuse.

Third, most organizations tend to react post-factum rather than preventively. Hence, while they may know of persons or communities at risk of displacement through monitoring, they will only intervene once displacement occurs. For instance, projects or aid that could be implemented or channelled strategically to help people sustain pressures that may lead to displacement – in other words, to resist displacement – have not been integrated into the programmatic response of most organizations.

This is directly related to point **four**, whereby the majority of organizations are unwilling to challenge Israeli rules and regulations that directly affect their work, such as the provision of humanitarian assistance and development projects. This is particularly true in Area C, where the majority of organizations have complied with Israeli restrictions concerning access and building permits and, as a result, have failed to respond to the basic needs and fundamental rights of the most vulnerable, many of whom are at risk of displacement.

Fifth, many organizations lack preparedness or contingency plans to deal with cases of displacement and are thus unable to provide immediate emergency response (within hours) and in a coordinated manner. This last observation is particularly true in the West Bank, where coordination to prevent and alleviate the effects of displacement has undermined the effectiveness of the emergency response.

The emergency response is a response that takes place during and immediately after displacement and which aims to alleviate the effects of displacement. The Guiding Principles calls on organizations to “give due regard to the protection needs and human rights of internally displaced persons and take appropriate measures in this regard.”⁵ The emergency response is the core of the current response, yet, it is lacking in important ways. In the West Bank, in particular, the emergency response is inconsistent, uneven, and insufficient with respect to alleviating the effects of displacement and accountability. The response is inconsistent, or unpredictable, because it lacks a preparedness plan and a coordinated emergency response mechanism. This is probably why most organizations say they are often taken by surprise when people are displaced and are unable to respond to the basic needs of people in a timely fashion (with the notable exception of the ICRC). The response is also uneven in a number of ways. For instance, in some cases, a distinction is made between UNRWA registered refugees and non-registered persons (Qassa, Al Nuqar, Furush Beit Dajan and al Shoka) while in others, no such distinction exist and all displaced persons are assisted equally (Um al Nasser). Moreover, the distinction between UNRWA registered refugees and

Ongoing Forced Displacement



Palestinian Home in Furush Beit Dajan (Area C). The home was built before 1967, and therefore 'legal' - but when it collapsed, Israeli authorities banned the owners from fixing or renovating the home, forcing the family to live in a tent nearby. (Anne Paq © Badi)

non-registered persons has had discriminatory effects, albeit unintentionally, because in some cases registered refugees have received more, albeit insufficient, assistance than non-registered persons. For instance, registered-refugees have received cash and/or rental assistance while non-registered persons, who should be getting similar assistance from the Palestinian Authority, received very little or nothing.

Assistance provided by the Palestinian Authority depends on available funding, which is very limited, in particular in the Gaza Strip. It has also been alleged that the Palestinian Authority throughout the OPT provides assistance based on political affiliations, which is also discriminatory. The response is unaccountable in two ways, first organizations tend to make many promises and pledges to displaced persons, but few ever come through with concrete results. Second, during or immediately following a situation of displacement, organizations are generally silent; they do not, for instance, send a letter of complaint/concern to relevant authorities or undertake actions to hold the perpetrator(s) into account. Although displaced persons and a number of local NGOs have systematically requested that responding organizations publicly denounce the fact that they were displaced, often in an arbitrary manner, and take actions to hold the perpetrator into account. Lastly, and on a positive note, in the Gaza Strip, many responding organisations have drawn lessons from and improved their emergency response, including to situations of internal displacement. The response in the Gaza Strip should be more transparent, accountable and adapted to the different needs of IDPs.

According to the Guiding Principles, the medium-long term protection response should restore people's dignity and ensure adequate living conditions through reparation, restitution, and rehabilitation. This includes the duty to ensure that a durable

solution is found, as the UN Guiding Principles stipulate that “competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country.”⁶ The medium-long term response to situations of internal displacement in the OPT is however extremely limited. In fact, the response often ends when the emergency phase is scaled-down or in some cases (Qassa and Furush Beit Dajan in particular) a partially delayed emergency response becomes the medium-term response.

The limited medium-long term response is imputable to two main factors. First, it seems that few organizations have programs targeting IDPs and few stay in contact with displaced persons to monitor their situation and needs in the months following displacement, despite the fact that distress and trauma often emerge during that period. In some cases (al Shoka, Furush Beit Dajan) displaced persons have not regained, or only partially regained, their source of livelihood (e.g., chicken farms, greenhouses, fruit trees, etc.). Others are seeing their way of life changing (as in the case of Qassa). Many have sold their possessions and exhausted all coping strategies and are unable to cover basic needs, in particular in the Gaza Strip. Second, and this is the main weakness of the medium-long term response, is the absence of a search for durable solutions based on the preferred choice of IDPs. The only exceptions are cases involving house demolitions, whereby destroyed houses are sometimes rebuilt with the support of the Palestinian Authority, by UNRWA or local NGOs. Most IDPs (Qassa, al Shoka, al Nuqar, Furush Beit Dajan), however, do not return to their habitual place of residence.

In conclusion and in order to strengthen the response to situations of internal displacement in the OPT, some recommendations for responding organizations include:

- (1) Jointly prioritizing issues relating to internal displacement at the highest institutional level;
- (2) Building institutional capacity, in particular protection expertise;
- (3) Making operational the UN Guiding Principles by incorporating them into policies and most critically programs relevant to displacement;
- (4) Defining and challenging the cause(s) and/or the policies that have led to internal displacement;
- (5) Developing joint strategic communication/advocacy campaigns and programs in consultation with affected communities in order to prevent their displacement, in particular when arbitrary, and identifying its causes and consequences on their rights;
- (6) Mapping communities at risk of displacement and creating an online database monitoring internal displacement;
- (7) Improving coordination at all levels, in particular by developing preparedness plans and a coordinated response mechanism;
- (8) Providing the same response to all those at risk of displacement regardless of status (refugee or otherwise);
- (9) Registering IDPs, including refugees registered with UNRWA;
- (10) Searching for and working to implement durable solutions for and with IDPs, in particular return and property restitution;
- (11) Activating efforts pertaining to the accountability of the occupying power, Israel.

Lastly, while the current response is limited to the OPT, because most organizational members of the DWG have a mandate limited to this area, responses and mandates should nevertheless be adapted to address internal displacement inside Israel.

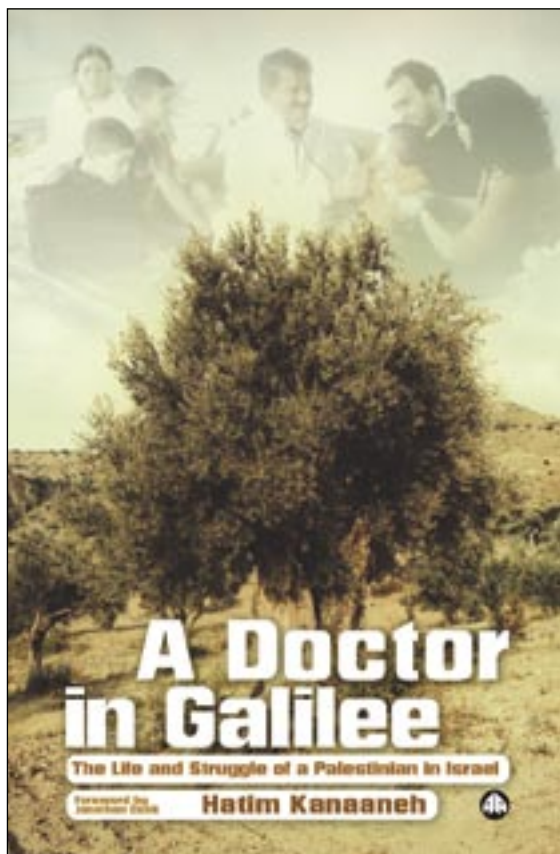
**Karine MacAllister is a Doctoral Candidate in Law at Montreal University in Montreal, Quebec and the former Coordinator for Legal Advocacy at Badil. This article is adapted from research she conducted for the Inter-Agency Working Group on Forced Displacement.*

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Hatim Kanaaneh's *A Doctor in Galilee*

Reviewed by Janet Walker



Exclusive offer for readers of *al-Majdal*:

To receive 20% of the RRP of ***A Doctor in Galilee*** (AND free UK P&P) (RRP £18.99. Offer price £15.19 please call +44 (0)208 348 2724 or email pluto@plutobooks.com quoting reference code PLUDOCTOR

Society as a means of consciousness raising, reaching out to international circles, and creating alliances with other marginalized minority groups and activists. Local primary care needs were served with mobile clinics to unrecognized Bedouin villages. But as some of his dreams were about to be realized, a confrontation over the proposed site of an Israeli military industrial complex with adverse environmental implications for the Galilee, together with internal intrigues resulted in his departure from the Galilee Society. After a brief sojourn as consultant to UNICEF's mission to the Palestine National Authority, he left in 1997 to establish a centre for child rehabilitation in his home village of Arrabeh.

The historical and political background to the situation is provided in an excellent foreword by Jonathan Cook. He explains that the philosophy behind the Israeli government's discriminatory policies towards its Arab community derives from Zionism's central tenet: that a pure Jewish state should serve as a sanctuary for Jews all over the world. This accounts

One of Israel's best-kept secrets is the existence of its hidden Palestinian Arab community that now accounts for roughly 20% of Israeli citizens. After the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the 150,000 Palestinians who managed to stay found themselves marooned in the new state; an unwanted, alienated and marginalized minority. Without leadership, internally displaced and dispossessed of their land, they experienced 18 years of a harsh military administration. It was lifted in 1966, but they continued to face oppression, discrimination and the open hostility and suspicion of the state towards them.

In the preface to his book Hatim Kanaaneh explains that his purpose in writing this intimate memoir of his struggle to improve the health of his people in the Galilee is to introduce readers too this "little-known and often misunderstood population that is nonetheless key to understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict."

A personal biography describes how in 1960 his father sold a plot of land to buy a ticket for him to go to the US to study. In 1970 he returned to the Galilee with his Hawaiian wife and qualifications in medicine and public health. In his role as the only physician in his area, poverty, malnutrition, lack of proper water supplies, rubbish collection and sewage systems militated against his attempts to care for his patients. In his job in the Ministry of Health, state systems openly hostile to the Arab community constantly frustrated his attempts to introduce sensible public health measures to improve the general health of the community.

In 1981, "with three other disgruntled local physicians" he founded the Galilee Society as a way of circumventing the discriminatory and antagonistic governmental system. It was dedicated to improving the health and welfare of the Palestinian minority in Israel. This actively challenged the system he was part of and eventually he was ousted from his Ministry of Health job. For four more years he used the Galilee

for Israel's strategy of separating Palestinian citizens from Jewish communities, and a "divide and rule" policy between Palestinian religious communities Druze, Bedouin, Christian and Muslim forcing them to compete for the support of the authorities; the starving of towns and villages of the funding available to Jewish villages and the rewarding of compliant Palestinian community leaders. Jonathan Cook notes Ian Lustick's comment that by the 1970s, when the doctor returned to the Galilee, the minority's leadership were now hoping, not for Palestine's liberation, but for a "liberal, secular democratic state with full equality of Arabs and Jews." This was Dr Kanaaneh's hope also, but as the narrative unfolds the disappointment and frustration is palpable.

However, this is not a depressing book; rather, a delightfully readable and absorbing memoir. In journal form, the narrative is chronological, the subject matter is the politics of dispossession, and interspersed throughout are Dr Kanaaneh "contemplative pauses, flashbacks, village scenes and foibles from rural Palestine and from my childhood days." Working with the dominant Jewish majority and living with the disadvantaged minority gives him opportunity for particular insights, upon which he muses throughout the narrative. He recounts numerous conversations with colleagues about how liberal and kindly Jews, working within the system, can reconcile their knowledge that the state has dispossessed an entire people of their lands and rights, with their own continuing acquiescence in that situation. After a day out with a colleague and his family he relates a conversation in which the colleague acknowledges the lies of the state and the Jewish agency about the illegal theft of Palestinian land. However, he continues:

"That said, as a Zionist, I consider it my duty to contribute to the success and progress of the settlements that have been already established. I suppose you can explain that by my commitment to the Zionist ideal of 'redeeming the land' and by my upbringing and training in the Zionist youth movement." The colleague's subsequent remarks about fostering coexistence and friendship with the Galilee's Arabs in general and Dr Kanaaneh's family in particular met with characteristic sarcasm. The doctor retorted that it was "nice of him to consider putting up with natives, but having taken that gracious decision he should realize that I was unlikely to commit wholeheartedly to his lofty Zionist ideals."

Throughout his time working as an employee of the state himself he constantly examines his own conscience and behaviour in working for a system devoted to discriminating against his own people. He reflects sadly that instead of being able to initiate projects to help improve the health and welfare of the Palestinians in Israel, his remit was very often restricted to vetoing.

One chapter is called "Suffering the Lashes," a reference to a local saying, "counting lashes is not like suffering them." Kanaaneh acknowledges that he has not experienced the actual pain and deprivation of the people of a particular unrecognized village and for that reason feels that he has failed them. But in this book, through his sharing of his thoughts and observations in "real time," the reader is intimately drawn into the events and memories he describes. This is what gives it a raw edge. Anxieties about the quality of teaching at his son's nursery school leads to musings about the involvement of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, in the recruitment and monitoring of teachers. Personal experience confirms that promotion of teachers - and other professionals - depends on their service as collaborators with the Shin Bet, not their understanding of child psychology or ability to do their job well. A former teaching colleague who informed on the political views of his fellow teachers was promoted while his informed-upon peers lost their jobs; the doctor's nephew was sacked from Arrabeh's high school because he said publicly on television that he thought Arabs did not enjoy equal rights. He muses on how the Shin Bet tried to recruit him as an informer on his own family's traditional leaders and friends shortly after his return from the US.

Recollections about his family's diwan (guest house and meeting place) lead to fascinating memories about the traditional peacemaking process between feuding families, legendary family stories about power struggles between clan heads, marriage and traditional customs. All are told with affection and gentle humor. And if he is merciless in his condemnation of the state's Zionist attitudes and structures, he is not blind to the imperfections in his own society. He pokes gentle fun at the village's popular but rather opinionated religious leader who broadcasts his views in his Ramadan sermons:

Reviews

"The other day he got mixed up between the missionary high school that our children attend, the Galilee Christian Gymnasium, and the Galilee Society. He attacked the 'Christian Galilee Society' for poisoning the minds of our youth and declared that there was no need for such a foreign institution. He added that, as a Muslim society, we should develop our own Islamic civic institutions, including a Young Men's Muslim Association instead of the imported YMCA. The trigger for his outburst was the attempt by a group of young professionals to establish a Rotary Club, which in the sheik's view, is the same as the Masonic movement whose central mission, he says, is to spread the Jewish faith and hence should not be allowed to function in Arrabeh. And somehow the Galilee Society was mixed in with this hodge-podge of foreign institutions."

Dr Kanaaneh delves deep into the subject of land, which is a recurring theme. He shares his shock at seeing the tanks in his village in March 1976 when the army suppressed legitimate demonstrations at the continuing confiscation of Palestinian land and killed six unarmed protesters. When Area 9, the land designated by the military a closed zone, was eventually reopened, he remembers moving conversations with villagers on their way to clear and plant their land with olive seedlings. There is the proud father describing how his son sold his beloved car to rent a bulldozer to clear the land, the poor peasant who was going to clear his land with his bare hands and the hilarious story of old man Abu-Hussain who went to court to establish title to his family's land. The law invoked by the state to deprive the family of its land was one of many passed after 1948. This one stated that if land had lain fallow for over three years (because the land had been declared a closed military zone) it reverted to state ownership. Aerial photographs showed untended land. When it looked as if the judgment was going against him he shaved his beard.

"Your honor, I am afraid for my own beard" (the Arabic equivalent of being afraid for one's own neck or one's own soul). "It has dawned on me that anything with natural growth on it is likely to be confiscated by this court. I have decided at least to escape with my own head on my shoulders." He went on to win the case.

This happy outcome has not been the experience of any of the many internally-displaced Israeli Palestinians who have gone to court to try to win back their land and property from the state. Through the determination of his mother who refused to leave her house when others left to escape the fighting in 1948, Dr Kanaaneh's cousin-in-law, Abu-'Atif still lives in his house in Sha'ab.

"But as far as the Israeli authorities are concerned, Abu-'Atif and his family are 'present absentees,' refugees who have abandoned their home, and thereby forfeited their right to it. So Abu-'Atif no longer owns any land in Sh'ab – or rather, the state holds it in trust while he seeks justice in a judicial system designed to legitimize the theft of his property. But while the infinitely slow wheels of Israeli justice turn, he continues to live in his family's home, a house which officially he does not own. In short, Abu-'Atif is a squatter in his own home, which now belongs instead to a state bureaucrat, the Custodian of Absentee Property. This proud 'landless landowner' is unable even to fix the roof over his head without a permit from the state, and the state always refuses to grant him a permit because it does not recognize him as the house's rightful owner."

Dr. Kanaaneh's very personal story is told with affection, humor and a wicked acerbic wit that exposes the Kafkaesque machinations and contradictions of the Israeli state. The penultimate chapter is a poignant update on the current situation, which despite the life's work of the author and his colleagues continues to be a catalog of discrimination and injustice. But in the concluding chapter he again takes up the theme of the land with an engrossing account of how he fulfilled his ambition of transplanting a 3,000-year old olive tree in his garden. Despite the personal and collective frustrations and humiliations of the past 60 years, and state attempts to silence Palestinian history, this ancient tree stands as a witness to the Palestinians' deep connection to their land.

"My tree knows and attests to all of that; that is how it all started. This gnarled behemoth, with its two-meter wide, beautifully sculpted trunk and over ten square meters of exposed root system saw it all. I can prove my belonging to this piece of the earth's crust through it; its roots are my surrogate roots. And they are taking hold in my land that I inherited from my father, who inherited it from his father, who....."

** Janet Walker is currently writing a dissertation about Christian Palestinians in Israel for an MA in Pastoral Theology. She is a member of the Cambridge Palestine Solidarity Campaign.*

Writing my Life and Struggle

by Hatim Kanaaneh, MD, MPH



"The closing chapter in the book tells of an ancient olive tree that I transplanted to my garden. The passage encapsulates, conceptually and emotionally, the entire narrative of this book of memoirs. The olive tree serves as a metaphor for my community's struggle for survival and its sense of belonging."

-- Hatim Kanaaneh

Since high school, writing has been my way of dealing with crises and with the imponderables of the ebb and flow of life. Together with gardening, it has been my psychotherapy. Whenever a major issue weighed heavily on my mind, whenever I wanted to maximize the pleasure from an experience I enjoyed, to savor the aftertaste of an achievement or to lick the wounds of a defeat, I would steal time from my busy schedule to sit in a quiet corner and write. I would read each piece I wrote after I had finished it and then I would put it away never to look at it again.

On occasion I would find what I wrote in a letter to a friend or relative meaningful enough to make a copy of it and to store it away as well. Soon I realized that the experience of putting my especially troubling and indigestible thoughts to paper was therapeutically more effective if I addressed them to a specific person, even when I had no intention of sending the material to her or him. When in the United States I would address my brother Ahmad or my childhood friend Toufiq. When in Israel I had a different set of imaginary confessors, recipients of my telepathic communications: my adopted Indonesian, Indian and Dutch brothers from college days. Especially to Bessel, my Dutch psychiatrist friend, I related as my "confidant in absentia" because of his professional competence, everlasting childlike innocence, open mindedness, and creative appreciation of much of what I say or do. Whenever I was in a tight spot where I felt particularly vulnerable, I would speak to him in my mind.

I have always enjoyed penning down my thoughts. But, alas, I became a physician; in 1970 I returned to practice my profession in Arrabeh, my home village in the Galilee. With the mounting demands on my time at the prime of my professional, family and public life, as my sleep deprivation turned every quiet period into naptime, and with the enticement of technical gadgetry, I found an easy-out; I shifted to recording my 'compositions', my soul-searching diatribes, and my confessions, on audiotapes that I stored away never to hear again. The act of facing myself across the page or vocally, not the content, had the therapeutic effect I sought in my many hours of need.

Reviews

In 2004, upon formally retiring, I found myself at a loss, as who doesn't upon retiring. The urge to further serve my community, my people and humanity at large, in that order and using the former as the conduit to the latter, was still the driving force of my life. But how could I serve? I could afford the time and effort for personal enjoyment, a luxury I had always been short on. But what pleasurable activity could I engage in that would be productive? I traveled and, between trips, I gardened, but both activities failed the criterion of significant benefit to others. And I felt tethered to my past; my future perspective was too limited to permit movement in new directions.

Why not, then, indulge myself in reminiscences? I had a vague premonition that something significant may lurk in the shipping box in my study full of old papers and shoe boxes stuffed with audiotapes. Why not start to read my old "compositions" and to put them in order. I found much in those reams of handwritten papers, but even more, much more, in the audiotapes. After listening to a few, I set out to transcribe them. I had not realized how efficient the audio-storage system was; I must have had several thousand pages of material on tape. The transcribing proved to be a daunting exercise in self-reinterpretation. Some of the sensitive recorded episodes of soul searching and self-questioning were emotionally devastating to listen to, too intimate for me to stay focused on the transcribing task. The audiotapes captured not only the words spoken, but also my mood and emotions. In retrospect, it is clear that much of the material would be highly charged, for it was when I sought to relieve myself of mental anguish that I turned to this escape route. On occasion, the narrator on those tapes sounded so downcast, defeated and tormented that he would mumble under his breath; he would recoil, dim-out and hide behind his inaudible speech. I could hardly make out the words or guess at the content. Had it been on videotape, the body language would have been something to behold.

Some of what I wrote was in Arabic, my mother tongue, but of a quality and style that required little more than straightforward translation. I always 'composed' my written pieces, never permitting spontaneity to take over or random thoughts to be jotted down uncontrolled. Taping was a different kettle of fish, sometimes in Arabic, other times in English, but always done extemporaneously, more casually and sufficiently disordered to warrant redrafting in a consistent style and order. Additionally, I assumed the role of interpreter in enunciating thoughts half-expressed in the original material. Quickly, the task evolved into a full-blown writing exercise, pleasurable at times, painful at others, but always fulfilling in the utmost.

Putting the contents of each tape in their final written form was a major achievement and I rewarded myself by sharing the final product with family and friends. Slowly, that narrow circle of reviewers receiving my weekly emails turned into a small fan club; they thought the material was publishable. By the time the process of transcribing ended, I had started speaking of "my book of memoirs." That raised the mother of all questions in publishing a book: Who would my target readership be?

That is when it all clicked; it all came together. A 1969 clipping from the *Christian Science Monitor* brought back memories of the time I still thought I could change the world. In a letter to the editor I had advised the readers of the existence of an Arab minority in Israel and expounded its potential as a peace bridge in the Middle East. A photo I had kept shows me, much later, proselytizing from the same clipping to Ephraim Katzir, the president of Israel at the time; the look of disenchantment on his face sums up the standard response my ideas have received in "my" country over the years. It suddenly dawned on me that that statement summed up my life mission. Throughout my professional years of service, whether in medicine, in public health or in development, and especially in my proactive role in the NGO movement, I had one overarching goal: to introduce my community to the world, to transcend the wall of seclusion and concealment behind which Israel had isolated us. That had been my strategy for fighting the racial discrimination practiced against my community. And it all was right there, on audiotapes. Here was my chance for a last attempt at exposing our secret existence, suffering and promise to the world. Here was my chance finally to gain what Edward Said calls "permission to narrate".

Then a chance meeting with Jonathan Cook, a fellow Galilean, inspired me with a working scheme. I should go on the strength of the shock element in the strange and schizoid life I had led and the fact that its events had unfolded in the shadow of one of the world's major ongoing conflicts, not to mention the area's sacred fascination to much of the English speaking

world. With Jonathan's guidance, I focused my selection on the socio-political struggle of my people as reflected in my own life in their midst.

With the one-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict materializing as the default option, airing the experience of our community as Palestinian citizens of Israel may serve as a warning to all concerned that we need to visualize democracy in a light other than the ethnic/religious definition in which Israel has configured it for its citizens so far. With that in mind, I hope that my book will reach the widest possible circle of relevant readership. Aware of my limitations as a first-time writer and a novice in the field, I feel that I have my foot already in the door as far as addressing the Palestinian community at large. Despite the brief period since the book's publication it has received positive, even glowing, reviews in Palestinian and activist international media. I am also confident that the Israeli public will soon be made aware of my message, much as the average Zionist Israeli reader may disagree with it. The hardest nut to crack is how to reach the opinionated and misinformed majority of readers in the west, and particularly in America, the human terrain underlying policy decision by the powerful regarding our fate. A fan who just read *A Doctor in Galilee* wrote me: "I just wish I could grab Carter, or Oprah, or Zogby by the necks and tell them 'This is your assignment, bearing on the humanity of all of us, and you may not read anything else or become involved in any other distraction until you finish it!'"

* Dr. Hatim Kanaaneh completed his medical and public health degrees at Harvard University in 1970. He then returned to Galilee where, in 1973, he became the Public Health Doctor of the sub-district of Acre. He is the founder of the Galilee Society (the Arab National Society for Health Research and Services).

Ongoing Forced Displacement of the Palestinian Population on Both Sides of the “Green Line”: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Human Rights Council Third Universal Periodic Review Session on 8 December 2008: Review of the State of Israel

*This is the revised version of the joint submission which was submitted in July 2008 by Badil Resource Center, Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, Arab Human Rights Association, Association for the defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced, Housing & Land Rights Network, and Zochrot in Cooperation with Ittijah.**

BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, the Arab Human Rights Association (HRA), the Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced (ADRID), the Housing and Land Rights Network-Habitat International Coalition and Zochrot in cooperation with Ittijah – Union of Arab Community-based Association, welcome this opportunity to submit information to the UN Human Rights Council in advance of its Universal Periodic Review of Israel. Four of the seven organizations party to this submission (BADIL, HIC, HRA and ITTIJAH) are in Consultative Status with ECOSOC.

This report seeks to highlight the scope of the reoccurring and pervasive phenomena of the forcible internal displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian population in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), on the grounds of their nationality, ethnicity, race and religion. We hope this information assists the Council members in its UPR of Israel.

I. Introduction

1. While this year the United Nations is celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Palestinian people are commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the 1948 Nakba (Catastrophe); the systematic ethnic cleansing of more than 750,000 indigenous Palestinians and the destruction of hundreds of their villages. As a result, the Palestinian People are still denied the right to self-determination, justice and equality by the State of Israel.
2. Today, 70 percent of the Palestinian people are refugees and internally displaced persons. The Palestinian refugee plight constitutes the largest and longest unresolved refugee case in the world. There are approximately 7 million Palestinian refugees (including circa 2.7 million children), and more than 450,000 internally displaced Palestinians in Israel and the OPT.¹
3. Israel has induced more ongoing forcible internal displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian population on both sides of the “Green Line”, namely Israel and the OPT, on the ground of nationality, ethnicity, race and religion. For six decades, the State of Israel has prevented the Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons from returning to their homes of origin.
4. Institutionalized racism and discrimination on the grounds of nationality, ethnicity, race and religion are root causes of the ongoing forcible internal displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

II. Institutionalized Racial Discrimination

5. The principles of equality and prohibition of discrimination are not guaranteed in Israel’s Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which serves as Israel’s Bill of Rights. As a result, and in conjunction with Israel’s self-identification as a Jewish and democratic state, the Palestinian citizens of Israel are afforded no constitutional protection against racial discrimination. By this Israel is failing to comply with its obligations under international human rights law.
6. Nationality and Citizenship - Institutionalized racism and racial discrimination is reflected in the Israeli legal system, which makes a distinction between “nationality” and “citizenship”. The Law of Return (1950), entitles all Jews and Jews only to the rights of nationals, namely the right to enter “Eretz Israel” (Israel and the OPT), and to immediately enjoy full legal and political rights. This law of nationality excludes non-Jewish citizens of Israel from nationality rights and includes Jewish citizens of other countries, who, if they wish to immigrate to Israel,

automatically become citizens. The Citizenship Law (1952) regulates the acquisition of Israeli citizenship by Jews and non-Jews. Thus, this legal framework creates a discriminatory dualistic arrangement whereby Jews hold nationality and citizenship, and non-Jews (Palestinians) hold only citizenship. Under Israeli law the status of Jewish nationality is accompanied with first-class rights and benefits which are not granted to non-Jews (Palestinian citizens of Israel).²

7. Discrimination in Land and Housing - While the above laws create the legal basis for differential treatment of Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel on prohibited grounds, the enactment of other laws, provide legal mechanisms to enforce the preferential treatment of Jews in the fields of land and housing. These laws provide, inter alia, para-statal status to Zionist organizations such as the World Zionist Organization (WZO), the Jewish Agency (JA) and the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which all cater to the exclusive benefit of the "Jewish nationals" under their mandates.³ These organizations carry out various public functions on behalf of the State, including development projects, planning, funding and the establishments of Jewish-only settlements, managing the property and land in both Israel and the OPT.⁴ As a result, Palestinians who are not and can never be Jewish nationals, are subject to racial discrimination in the field of housing and land allocation. Thus, for instance, the State of Israel has not established any new Palestinian towns/communities since 1948, whereas Jewish-only settlements continue to increase and expand in Israel and the OPT.
8. Since 1967 the State of Israel has extended its regime of racial discrimination to the OPT. Irrespective of the fact that Israel, as a temporary occupying power, is bound by international law to end its occupation, Israel has not done so for 41 years. The State, moreover, argues that it is not bound by and does not apply international human rights law in the OPT. It rather applies to different sets of laws: the Israeli domestic (civil and criminal) law to Jewish settlers (nationals) on the one hand, and a repressive military regime to the IHL-protected Palestinian civilian population, on the other hand. This two-fold legal system has institutionalized the racial discrimination against the Palestinian population in the OPT.
9. With regard to movement, major roads in the OPT are reserved exclusively for Jewish settlers/nationals. The latter are also entitled to enter the "closed zones" between the Wall and the Green Line without permits, whereas Palestinians require permits to enter and reside in their own homes if these are located in the closed zones. In addition, house demolitions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are carried out in a fashion that discriminates against Palestinians on the ground of their nationality, ethnicity, race and religion. Moreover, building rights, use of resources, including water, and the military orders governing the right to enter the country and family reunification discriminate against Palestinians on the abovementioned prohibited grounds.
10. The ongoing forcible internal displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the IHL-protected Palestinian civilian population of the OPT, are also the result of the same regime of institutionalized racial discrimination, including laws, policies and practices employed by the State of Israel.

III. Ongoing Internal Forced Displacement in Israel

11. First Waves of Internal Displacement – in Israel there are approximately 338,000 internally displaced Palestinians, citizens of Israel and their descendants, who were displaced in the 1948 war and its immediate aftermath.⁵ To date, the State of Israel continues to block these Palestinian communities from returning and repossessing their property, irrespective of the fact that the Israeli Supreme Court has recognized the right of several internally displaced Palestinian communities (e.g. Iqrit, Kfar Bir'im and Al-Gha'bsiyeh in the Galilee) to return to their villages of origin.⁶ The State of Israel has confiscated the land of these displaced communities and transferred it to nearby Jewish settlements for use as grazing fields or otherwise.
12. Israel's Supreme Court has been complicit in institutionalized racial discrimination. In 2003, for example, it reversed its previous decision pertaining to the village of Iqrit and ruled that the internally displaced Palestinian community cannot return and repossess their properties since this would set a legal precedent for millions of Palestinian refugees whose claims are to be resolved in future political negotiations.
13. Ongoing forced displacement – the legal regime applicable in Israel forms the basis for large-scale expropriation of Palestinian-owned land by the State. Official development policies and plans, such as current plans to increase the Jewish population in the Naqab (Negev) and the Galilee until 2015, discriminate against

Documents

Palestinian citizens of Israel in resource allocation.⁷ While all Palestinian communities in Israel are vulnerable to forced displacement on the ground of their nationality, ethnicity, race and religion, the Palestinian Bedouins (the herding communities) and Palestinians in the “mixed population-cities” are particularly at risk.

14. Bedouin in Israel are part of the indigenous Palestinian people. Over 100,000 Bedouin, Palestinian citizens of Israel, live in so-called “unrecognized villages” which are deprived of all basic services, including water, electricity, health clinics and state funded education, and face difficulties in obtaining building permits. These communities face the ongoing threat of displacement as the State of Israel aims to collect the Bedouin of the Naqab in seven “concentration areas” (in Hebrew: rikuzim) and confiscate what remains of their traditional ancestral land. As a result, tens of thousands of Bedouin’s homes and property in the Naqab are slated for demolition.⁸
15. With reference to the mixed-population cities, for instance, in the historic Palestinian town of Jaffa, some 3,000 Palestinian inhabitants of this town were recently issued 500 demolition orders, because they are considered squatters in their own homes.⁹ Similar discriminatory practices are implemented by the state of Israel in the mixed-cities Lod, Ramla and Acre.

IV. Ongoing Forced Internal Displacement in the OPT

16. As a continuation of Israel’s discriminatory policies and practices towards the Palestinian citizens of Israel, forcible internal displacement in the OPT has accelerated in recent years. More than 115,000 Palestinians are estimated to have been internally displaced during the last four decades of Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian Territory.¹⁰ In the Gaza Strip, Israeli military operations caused the temporary forced displacement of over 50,000 between 2000 and 2004 alone.¹¹
17. Areas at Risk – Palestinian communities at imminent risk live in occupied East Jerusalem, where – following the illegal annexation of occupied territory – the State of Israel segregates and discriminates against Palestinians in the guise of development planning.¹² At imminent risk are also rural areas of the West Bank (Area C), mainly in the closed areas between the Wall and the Green Line, in enclaves east of the Wall, in western Bethlehem, the Jordan Valley and south of Hebron. Also at risk are the center of the town of Hebron (H2) and the buffer zone in the Gaza Strip. So far, the ad hoc and limited international response has failed to prevent and effectively respond to the ongoing forcible internal displacement of Palestinians. The continued forced displacement and dispossession are a result of, inter alia, the following measures:
18. Home Demolition – Israel has demolished almost 19,000 houses in the OPT between 1967 and 2007.¹³ Between January and June 2008, 245 Palestinian structures were demolished by Israeli authorities, while 112 of these were residential and led to the displacement of 715 Palestinians, including an estimated 368 children.¹⁴ Between January 2000 and September 2007, more than 1,600 Palestinian buildings were demolished in Area C, whereas over 3,000 houses are at risk of demolition.¹⁵ In Gaza Strip, over 4,000 houses were demolished between 2000 and 2004.¹⁶
19. Land Confiscation and Colonization – Israel occupies the entire surface of the West Bank (some 5,860 km²) and has confiscated or de facto annexed more than 3,350 km² for the exclusive benefit of its Jewish population.¹⁷ The lands confiscated from Palestinians are turned over to the use of Jewish settlers and to building and expanding the Jewish-only colonies (settlements) and related infrastructure. Since Annapolis Summit, Israeli tenders and plans announced for construction in the OPT amount to almost 30,000 Jewish-only housing units.¹⁸ By March 2008, constructions were under way in over 100 colonies and 58 “outposts”, including 16 new outposts/settlements. In occupied East Jerusalem alone, new plans and tenders have been announced for construction of almost 14,000 housing units since December 2007.¹⁹
20. Israel’s belligerent occupation has become a system of institutionalized racial discrimination employed by the State of Israel, in order to assert control over as much “de-Palestinized” land as possible by forcibly displacing the Palestinian owners and users and subsequently to build and expand Jewish-only colonies on these lands.
21. The Closure Regime including the Wall and its Associated Regime – There is also clear evidence of internal displacement as a result of lack of access to essential services because of the ‘closure regime’, which is making the situation of Palestinians, especially those in enclaves, untenable. Freedom of movement is

systematically denied through an elaborate regime of Israeli military checkpoints and obstacles (678 as of 12 April 2008), bypass roads and infrastructure dividing the OPT.

22. Violence and Harassment by Jewish Settlers – internal displacement of Palestinians is also a result of the harassment and attacks by the Jewish settlers who prevent Palestinians from accessing their land. In 2006, over 275 incidents of settler violence were recorded, ranging from uprooting trees to seizing land and shooting children. The Israeli authorities have failed to protect Palestinian residents and enforce the law against the settlers.²⁰
23. Israel's protracted military occupation cannot be considered an interim measure that maintains law and order in a territory following armed conflict, but rather an oppressive and racist regime of a colonizing power under the guise of occupation. This regime includes many of the worst features of apartheid, such as: the fragmentation of the OPT to Jewish and Palestinian areas, the construction of the Wall and its associated regime, system of separate roads, closure and permits which restricts freedom of movement on the grounds of nationality, ethnicity, race and religion.²¹

V. Conclusions

1. The severity and consistency of the forcible internal displacement of Palestinians by the State of Israel amounts to a policy of population transfer for the purpose of acquiring land and altering the demographic composition of the territory under Israel's control.
2. Internal forcible internal displacement and dispossession of Palestinians have been largely ignored by the international community. Rarely do UN bodies stress upon the population transfer that is taking place in Israel and the OPT despite the manifest displacement that is occurring daily. In a context of siege against the people of the Gaza Strip, ongoing construction of the Wall, house demolition, settlement expansion and settler violence, Israel's policy and practices of forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinians must be scrutinized and proper action must be taken in accordance with international law.
3. In this context, we call upon the Human Rights Council to address Israel's regime of institutionalized racial discrimination, which is a root cause of the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line, and to urge Israel to revoke and annul its discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and ensure just and effective reparation of the Palestinian victims, including return and restitution of their land and properties.²²
4. Israel's policy and practice of applying a similar regime of institutionalized racial discrimination against Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line effectively erases the internationally recognised borders of the State of Israel, asserts Israel's control over maximum amount of land with a minimum number of the indigenous Palestinians, and renders unfeasible a two-state solution of the protracted conflict.

Endnotes

See online version at: <http://www.badil.org/al-majdal/al-majdal.htm>

Open Letter to President Mahmoud Abbas: The Rights of Palestinian Refugees and the Final Status Negotiations

25 September 2008

To: President Mahmoud Abbas

Chair of the Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee

President of the Palestinian National Authority

Dear Mr. President,

Greetings of Return

We, the undersigned Palestinian refugee organizations, civil society movements and institutions in the Palestinian homeland and in exile, are national organizations working to defend the right of return. We appeal to you now because we are convinced that the alignment of the official Palestinian position and the position of the Palestinian people with regards to the final status negotiation issues is of the highest priority. Foremost among these issues is the cause of the Palestinian refugees.

We are convinced that the alignment of popular and official positions is the main guarantee of a strong Palestinian position in the current negotiation process, which is taking place in a local, regional and global context that jeopardizes the national rights of the Palestinian people. In this context, we are concerned in particular about the rights of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their original lands and properties, restitution of their homes, lands and properties and compensation for damages incurred over the past 60 years. Based on the fact that all of these rights are guaranteed under international law, and based on our awareness of the enormous pressures faced by Palestinian negotiators and the tactics of negotiations, such as secrecy with regards to the negotiation proceedings, we call upon you to adopt a negotiation strategy that is based on openness with the entirety of the Palestinian people -- irrespective of their current place of residence -- regarding all aspects and details of the negotiation process. Implementation of the Palestinian refugees' right of return was and continues to be the main purpose for which the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established, a purpose which forms the central pillar of the PLO's legitimacy as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Transparency and candidness of our representatives with all sectors of our society will guarantee that our rights are best defended, and strengthen our position in the face of enormous pressures.

It has been clear at all stages of the negotiations that this process aims to eliminate the core issue of the Arab/Palestinian struggle for freedom and justice: the Palestinian refugees and their rights of return and restitution. In fact, elimination of these central Palestinian/Arab demands form the center-piece of both Israeli and US policies. It is also no secret that during the so-called "Oslo Peace Process" these policies have employed insidious tactics in order to nullify these rights altogether. Such tactics include attempts to substitute the return and restitution of the refugees with monetary compensation; to reduce the number of those entitled to exercise these rights from over 7 million Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to a tiny minority, including so-called "hardship cases" that would be arbitrarily defined by Israel; to suggest that the refugees return to homes located in the areas administered by the Palestinian Authority; and other humiliating "trade offs" whereby Palestinians are expected to surrender the right of refugees to return to homes, lands and properties of origin in exchange for other rights and demands, such as self-determination, borders, the reclamation of Jerusalem and removal of the illegal settlement-colonies. The Palestinian leadership has rejected such degrading bargaining tactics in previous negotiations, notably those known as the second Camp David summit and the Clinton initiative. The late President Yasser Arafat rejected these tactics, and he was made to pay for that with his liberty and his life.

Whereas the rights of return, restitution and compensation are enshrined in international law and specifically affirmed in UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and UN Security Council Resolution 237;

Whereas we see that increasing US pressure aims to force Palestinian negotiators to agree to an obscure framework for a solution that is to be achieved by any means and at the soonest date, and that such a framework is largely for internal US consumption in the context of a US Presidential election;

Whereas it has become clear that the US administration is working on other fronts to market its obscure framework for

a solution in the September 2008 session of the UN General Assembly;

Whereas we realize, as a result of our movement's long and difficult experience with Israeli politics, that Israeli political actors seek to solve the internal Israeli political crisis by venting destruction on the Palestinian front through various policies and practices, all of which work to entrench Israeli occupation, colonialism, and apartheid, and aim to attain international recognition of Israel as a 'Jewish State;'

Whereas Western and Israeli election platforms must not be employed to put pressure on the Palestinian negotiators, who should in no way be a party to the political maneuvers of US and Israeli political candidates, particularly in order to protect the legality, legitimacy, and sanctity of Palestinian national rights regardless of who emerges victorious in foreign elections;

Whereas we perceive the retreat of the once principled European position, and the transformation of this position into one that conforms to the US policy of total complicity and support for Israel;

Whereas we clearly see the weakness and inability of the Arab countries to take action or play any effective role;

Whereas we witness the sharp, painful and unprecedented deterioration in the internal Palestinian political arena;

Whereas it has become plain and obvious that powerful external pressures aim to annul Palestinian refugee rights, particularly the right to return to their original lands and properties and the restitution of these lands and properties;

Whereas Israel and the US, according to Israeli officials, are intensifying their efforts to reach a framework for a solution that is acceptable to both Israel and the US and will be viable regardless of the ruling party;

Whereas the primary measure of the legitimacy of any solution remains the extent to which it will lead to the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Palestinian people, including foremost the right of Palestinian refugees to choose to return to their original homes and lands regardless of their current place of refuge,

We approach you with this statement based on our strong desire to chart a way forward that is built on the highest levels of clarity and candidness with the Palestinian people; a way forward that aims to strengthen the Palestinian position in this sensitive stage of the Palestinian struggle; a way forward that ensures that any framework for a solution will include the following principles in clear and immutable language:

- The rights of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to return, restitution and compensation are fundamental rights under international law and relevant UN resolutions – particularly UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and UN Security Council Resolution 237. The content of these rights is non-negotiable irrespective of the manner in which they will be exercised;
- The right of return is an individual right held by every Palestinian refugee and internally displaced person. This right is passed on from one generation to the next, based on the individual's choice on whether or not to return, an inalienable and indivisible right, and not affected by any bilateral, multilateral, or international treaty or agreement. Any such agreement must respect the fundamental precepts and principles of international law;
- The right of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to return is a collective right that is not limited to one group or another, and it is an integral part of the Palestinian right of self-determination;
- The right of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to return is not subject to referendum.

May you remain steadfast in our struggle for freedom and dignity

Drafted: August 2008

Signed:

1. 194 Association (Syria)
2. Abassiya Association (Palestine)
3. Abnaa Al-Balad Center for the Defense of the Right of Return (Syria)
4. Aidun Group (Lebanon)
5. Aidun Group (Syria)
6. Al-Awda Palestine Network (Holland)
7. Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition (North America)

8. Arab Cultural Forum (Gaza, Palestine)
9. Arab Liberation Front
10. Arab Palestinian Front
11. Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced (Palestine)
12. Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights (Palestine)
13. Beit Nabala Association (Palestine)

14. Bisan Association (Syria)
15. Coalition of Right of Return Defense Committees (Jordan)
16. Coalition of Right of Return Defense Committees (Jordan)
17. Committee for the Rights of Palestinian Women (Syria)
18. Coordinating Committee of Palestinian Organizations Working in Lebanon (Lebanon)
19. Democratic Palestine Committee

Documents

20. Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine (Palestine)
21. Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
22. Confederation of Right of Return Committees (Europe: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Greece, Germany, France, Holland, Poland, Finland)
23. Depopulated Towns and Villages Associations (Gaza, Palestine)
24. Farah Heritage Society (Syria)
25. Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (Palestine)
26. Higher Follow-up Committee on Prisoners (Palestine)
27. Higher National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return (Palestine)
28. Inevitable Return Assembly (Syria)
29. Islamic Jihad Movement
30. Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas]
31. Istiqlal Youth Union (Lebanon)
32. Istiqlal Youth Union (Syria)
33. Ittijah: Union of Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (Palestine)
34. Jafra Youth Center (Syria)
35. Jimzo Association (Palestine)
36. Lajee Center, Aida Camp (Palestine)
37. National Assembly of of Palestinian Civil Society Organizations (Palestine)
38. National Committee to Commemorate the Martyr Ahmad Al-Shuqairy (Jordan)
39. National Nakba Commemoration Committee (Palestine)
40. Palestine Democratic Union [Fida]
41. Palestine House Educational and Cultural Center (Canada)
42. Palestine Liberation Movement [Fatah]
43. Palestine Remembered (USA)
44. Palestine Right of Return Coalition (Global)
45. Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (Palestine)
46. Palestinian Civil Society Coordinating Committee in Palestine and Abroad (Global)
47. Palestinian Liberation Front
48. Palestinian National Democratic Movement (Palestine)
49. Palestinian National Initiative
50. Palestinian People's Party
51. Palestinian Popular Struggle Front
52. Palestinian Refugee Rights Defense Committee (Balata Camp, Palestine)
53. Palestinian University Professors Union (Gaza, Palestine)
54. Palestinian Women's Grassroots Organization (Syria)
55. Palestinian Youth Democratic Union (Syria)
56. Palestinian Youth Organization (Syria)
57. Palestinian Youth Struggle Union (Syria Branch)
58. People's Assembly of the Towns & Villages Depopulated in 1948 (Palestine)
59. Platform of Associations in Solidarity with Palestine (Switzerland)
60. Popular Committees to Defend the Right of Return (Gaza, Palestine)
61. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
62. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command
63. Refugee and Right of Return Committee (Syria)
64. Refugee Camp Popular Committees (West Bank & Gaza, Palestine)
65. Refugee Executive Office (Palestine)
66. Right of Return committee (Switzerland)
67. Ruwwad Cultural Center (Aida Camp, Palestine)
68. Salameh Association (Palestine)
69. Secular Democratic State Group (Gaza, Palestine)
70. Union of Right of Return Committees (Syria)
71. Union of Women's Activity Centers, West Bank Refugee Camps (Palestine)
72. Union of Youth Activity Centers, Refugee Camps (Palestine)
73. Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War [Sa'iqa]
74. Women's Activity Centers (Gaza, Palestine)
75. Yaffa Charitable Fund (Jordan)
76. Yaffa Cultural Center (Balata Camp, Palestine)
77. Youth Assembly (Gaza, Palestine)
78. Youth Struggle Union (Lebanon)

The Bilbao Initiative – Civil Society Action for Justice in Palestine *Final Declaration and Action Plan*

31 October 2008

For the past 60 years, the indigenous Palestinian people has been scattered in the Diaspora and fragmented within its homeland by walls and policies of segregation and domination. However, the Palestinian national struggle cannot be divided, and the rights of the Palestinians to return to their homes of origin, enjoy freedom, and exercise self-determination can only be achieved if the root causes of their denial are addressed and if Palestinian national unity is preserved.

During the Bilbao Initiative gathering, we, Palestinian, progressive Israeli and international organizations and social movements discussed and embraced the latest Palestinian in-depth examination of Israel's legal and political regime over the Palestinian people. This analysis exposes Israel as a state which is built on the massive ethnic cleansing of 1948 and which for six decades has systematically committed injustices against all segments of the Palestinian people – refugees in exile, citizens of Israel and those in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) – on grounds of their national identity, in order to prevent Palestinian self-determination and to cement colonization and domination via racist laws, including promoting exclusively Jewish immigration while barring the Palestinians' right to return. From a legal perspective, this study has concluded that Israel's regime is a system that uniquely combines apartheid, settler-colonialism and belligerent occupation.

We, representatives of international civil society meeting in Bilbao, agree that the State of Israel must be held legally accountable. By granting Israel impunity for its persistent and systematic violations of international law and fundamental human rights, treating it as an exception above the law of nations, and providing it with unlimited political, economic, scientific, cultural and diplomatic support, the United States, the EU and other players in the so-called international community are guilty of complicity in perpetuating Israeli apartheid and colonial rule. Only by ending this complicity can justice and dignity be restored to the Palestinian people and lasting, comprehensive peace be established in the Middle East.

Furthermore, given the failure of the international community, particularly the United Nations, to recognize and effectively address racism and racial discrimination as a root cause of Israel's systematic and persistent oppression of the Palestinian people and to counter this oppression, we call upon international civil society at large to shoulder the moral and political responsibility of effectively supporting the struggle to end Israel's multifaceted injustice, as was done against apartheid South Africa, thereby promoting justice, equality and sustainable peace in a region free of nuclear weapons.

Action Plan

Assembled in Bilbao on October 31, 2008, we hereby call upon civil society organizations, political parties, networks and conscientious individuals:

1. To raise awareness about and implement the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign against Israel, based on the 2005 Palestinian civil society BDS call, in a gradual, sustainable manner that is sensitive to context and capacity. In particular, we call upon international solidarity movements, social movements, faith-based organizations, unions, NGOs, cultural and academic figures and associations, human rights organizations, and independent legal experts to undertake practical and effective measures to counter Israel's occupation, apartheid and systematic violation of Palestinian human rights.
2. To develop and sustain public awareness-raising campaigns to expose the facts about Israel's regime of apartheid, colonialism and occupation; promote and support the struggle of the entire Palestinian people – in the OPT, Israel, and exile – to attain their right to self-determination, justice, return, and equality as individuals and as a people. To this effect, media organizations are called upon to allow the authentic voices representing Palestinian civil society and supporters of a just peace to be expressed freely, without censorship, distortion or omission.
3. To demand the compliance with the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice – condemning Israel's Wall and colonies built on occupied territory – by refraining from providing aid or assistance to Israel or to any of the institutions complicit in its crimes and violations of international law during the implementation of humanitarian and development operations; and hold Israel accountable for damages incurred to infrastructure and services financed and supported by the international community in the OPT.
4. To act to end Israel's gradual ethnic cleansing in occupied Jerusalem and its criminal siege of the occupied Gaza Strip, where its illegal and immoral policy of collective punishment against 1.5 million Palestinians may amount to acts of genocide, according to leading international law experts. The collusion of the international community in maintaining the siege must also be exposed and brought to an end.
5. To build pressure on the United Nations, governments, local authorities, multilateral bodies, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the private sector to suspend cooperation with Israel, with all its complicit institutions and with all institutions that support its occupation and human rights violations, and to investigate their respective compliance with international law and UN resolutions.
6. To build pressure on the European Union to uphold and respect its obligations under international law and its own human rights standards in its relationship with Israel, in particular by demanding a suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, based on Israel's grave and persistent violations of its articles 2 and 83.
7. For independent human rights organizations and legal experts to continue their legal efforts for the prosecution and punishment of Israeli perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity, for reparations for the Palestinian victims, and for accountability of the State of Israel and all parties complicit in such crimes. We urge the exploration of new strategies whereby Zionist organizations, especially the Jewish National Fund (JNF), as well as all foreign companies and governments that collaborate with Israel's regime of oppression can be held accountable in international courts, including the European Court of Human Rights.
8. For the Assembly of Social Movements and other international networks in the context of the World Social Forum to endorse the above analysis and adopt the Action Plan in their respective programs of action.
9. To develop solidarity with all the nations, and particularly the people in the Arab world and other countries in the region that are struggling for freedom, justice and self-determination.
10. To strengthen the coordination and cooperation among international civil society actors for the purpose of implementing the above clauses of this Action Plan.

Fourth National Conference to Defend the Right of Return *Final Statement*

“There is no alternative to returning home”

To our Palestinian people, freedom fighters in historic Palestine and in the exile, and to all people of conscience worldwide we extend our greetings.

al-Bireh, Palestine, Saturday 29 November 2008 - Today, on the day of the anniversary of UN Resolution 181 for partition of historic Palestine which was later declared the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the National Committee for the Commemoration of Nakba-60 / the High National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return convened, in the city of al-Bireh, 1967 occupied Palestine, the Fourth* National Conference in Defense of the Right of Return.

[*the first two conferences were held in Nazareth and in the former Israeli detention center of al-Far'a in 1995, followed by a popular refugee conference convened in the Dheisha refugee camp and in Gaza city in 1996.]

Proceedings

Numerous actors participated in this Conference, including national and Islamic forces, organizations and institutions, civil society, and public personalities involved in the defense of the right of return. Hussam Khader, activist and member of the Palestinian National Council, opened the event and stated: “During the commemorations of the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba, we have chanted much for our right to return to our homes of origin, from al-Naqoura (Rosh Hanikra) to Um-Rashrash (Eilat), which is sacred, indivisible, inalienable and non-negotiable. Time has come now to join forces and work hard for our return.” Dr. Rafiq Hussein, speaking on behalf of PLO Chairman and PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), affirmed the importance of the conference and the responsibility of the PLO, as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, for the Palestinian refugees and their rights.

Abdelrahim Mallouh spoke on behalf of the PLO Executive Committee and stressed that the right of return has been one of the pillars of the Palestinian national struggle.

In appreciation of the heroic resistance of Umm Kamel al-Kurd and her family in occupied Jerusalem against Israel's arrogant police forces and racist courts who work to expel Palestinians from their city in order to maintain a Jewish majority, Umm Kamel was invited to address the Conference as honorable guest. Her message was proud and clear: “Do not despair. Those who remain steadfast and defend their rights will return. Even if I were forced to live in a poor, squalid and isolated tent, the sky and the breeze of Palestine would suffice for me to continue the struggle until we return to our homes.”

Muhammad Alayan, on behalf of the High National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return, addressed current threats to the Palestinian people; he called to end the state of internal division, build unity and cohesion and confront the political schemes and projects which aim to abrogate the rights of our people, in particular the right to return to our homes and places of origin.

The second session was chaired by Tayseer Zibri, Jamal al-Shati and Dalal Salama. A report about the regional preparatory workshops (mid-October until mid-November 2008) was followed by discussion of the working papers submitted to the Conference, including review of their recommendations. Three papers which were already presented to the preparatory workshops were discussed first: “The Right of Return, Proposals for Peacemaking and International Law” presented by Walid Rajab for the Consortium of the Displaced and the Destroyed Towns and Villages; “The Right of Return between the Two-state and One-state Solution” presented by Nidal al-Azza for Badil Resource Center; and, “Mechanisms for the Exercise of Refugees' Right of Return” presented by the secretary of the Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps. Two new papers which were not presented to

the preparatory workshops were discussed subsequently: “Mechanisms of Public Activation for the Defense of the Right of Return and Overcoming the Obstacles to its Implementation” presented by Iyad Barhgouti for the Union of Arab Community-based Associations (Ittijah); and, “The Role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Awakening of the Arab Masses” presented by Abdullah Hourani for the Palestine Popular Assembly for the Defense of the Right of Return, Gaza Strip.

The closing session was led by Omar Assaf, and Yasser Abu Kishk. Following a presentation of the recommendations to be included in the final statement by Mohammed Abu al-Kheir (High National Committee), the Conference requested the Drafting Committee to proceed with the preparation of the final statement. A decision was taken to broaden membership in the High National Committee and to invite all bodies active in defending the right of return to join.

Vision and analysis

1– Contemporary threats: the Fourth National Conference to Defend the Right of Return convened at a very critical stage in the struggle of the Palestinian people. First, the internal Palestinian conflict has consumed most of the popular energy and re-directed it in ways that do not serve the struggle for our rights, nor preserve the dignity of our people. Second, Israel continues the aggressive and racist policies of its settler-colonialism which targets the land and the existence, the rights and the identity of the people. Third, the international community, led by the powerful United States, is complicit with Israel, the apartheid state, the colonial settler state and aggressive occupying power. Fourth, the unprecedented weakness of the Arab states has cleared the way for further deterioration and decline. Accordingly, we believe that the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of refugees and internally displaced Palestinians to return to their homes of origin, are seriously threatened and that organized, sustained and focused work is required from all forces, institutions, organizations and individuals in order to protect these rights and achievements.

2 – The PLO and the home front: the internal division is deeper at a time when the national interest requires a united effort. We believe that the continuation of this division only serves the enemies of our people. We also believe that our home front has been weakened due to the replacement of the PLO by the Palestinian Authority, resulting in threats to past achievements and the contemporary Palestinian struggle at all levels. Historically, the struggle of the PLO in defense of its existence and independence have never been a matter of internal dispute, despite the differences among the various Palestinian political forces, and the PLO has never failed to defend its existence and independence, irrespective of the limited resources and capacities. The PLO, however, became trapped in negotiations and public relations efforts with Israel and the international community, and our fundamental rights became hostages to international donors and conditioned aid and at best have been described as being “unrealistic.” Aware of the fact that the balance of power is not in our favor, we believe that our people have the faith, energy and will to contribute what is required the continuing violation and erosion of our rights. We believe that the re-construction and re-activation of all institutions of PLO - the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the unifying national framework, the organizational and political tool and the supreme Palestinian authority - is an urgent national priority that must not be delayed.

3 – The conflict, the ongoing Nakba and the state of Israel: Sixty years of Nakba (since 1948), 41 years of occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (since 1967) and nearly 20 years of the indirect and direct negotiations, highlight the urgent need to re-examine the nature of the legal and political system which Israel has imposed on the indigenous Palestinian people. In-depth analysis of Israel’s regime leads to the conclusion that it is a repressive system of racial discrimination which, on grounds of nationality, targets all Palestinians: refugees in exile, those holding Israeli citizenship and those under occupation in the 1967 OPT. It is a regime through which Israel seeks to prevent the exercise of the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to return to their homes, self-determination and the right to establish an independent and sovereign state. The Israeli regime is an expression and manifestation of the racist ideology adopted by the political movement called Zionism. In other words, we affirm that Israel is a unique system which combines the characteristics of apartheid, settler-colonialism and belligerent occupation.

Documents

4 - The international community and Western diplomacy: the United Nations, in particular its Security Council and General Assembly, as well as US-led international diplomacy have failed to recognize the particular racist nature of the Israeli regime. They have thus failed to recognize and address the root cause of the conflict, as well as major manifestations and consequences which drive its continuation, foremost among them the colonization of Palestine, oppression and forced displacement of the Palestinian people in/from their homeland, confiscation of their property and denial of the exercise of their fundamental rights under international law. By providing Israel with political, economic and military support, protecting it from international sanctions, or through complicity or silence, the international community has contributed to the entrenchment of Israel's racist policies and practices and strengthened its system of apartheid, settler-colonialism and aggressive occupation.

5 - Official and popular Arab support: we hold that both official and popular Arab activity is in a steady decline and no longer provides, morally or in practice, strategic depth for the struggle of the Palestinian people. At best, Arab efforts are no more than acts of solidarity that have no influence on international policies which aim to deepen Arab fragmentation and to plunge the region into secondary conflicts, thereby ultimately undermining fundamental rights and principles.

6 - Global civil society: in light of the absence of political will among states and the United Nations for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, we note with interest and attention that the forces of global civil society have begun to work actively for the Palestinian cause and the rights of our people. While we understand that we will have to wait patiently for the benefits from those efforts, we also recognize their importance and the need to undertake and develop work at this level. This is true in particular in light of the strong response by civil society actors, such as churches, unions, community-based organizations, academic and cultural associations and individuals, to calls for effective action, including boycotts, divestment and sanctions, as well as legal-judicial measures against Israel in order to put an end to its violations. There is a need to adopt practical measures aimed at creating political will among states and the United Nations to respect their legal obligations towards the Palestinian people and their rights.

Principles

Based on this vision and the firm belief in the justice of our cause, in our great struggling people and its capacities, and by virtue of our responsibilities as individuals and organizations, we who are gathered here today, consider it important to re-affirm the basic principles which guide the national effort aimed to protect, defend, and achieve the right to return to our homes of origin.

First, the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their homes of origin is both an individual and a collective right that is an integral part of our right to self-determination which cannot be abrogated by referendum, negotiations or political compromise. It is indivisible, non-negotiable, without substitute and passed on from generation to generation. Customary international law and principles of justice and equity, as well as UN resolutions 194 and 237 are considered the basis and define scope and content of the rights of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons.

Second, the cause of the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons in historic Palestine and in the exile is one indivisible cause; it is a matter of national identity and struggle which concerns all, not only the refugees.

Third, the Palestinian people in historic Palestine and in exile are one; the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the national framework for organizing and political action. Protection, activation and reconstruction of the PLO and its institutions are a national obligation.

Fourth, all political solutions which do not allow refugees and displaced Palestinians individually or collectively to return to their homes of origin based on their free choice, are invalid and rejected. Just and lasting peace can be achieved only through the return of the refugees to their homes, restitution of property and compensation.

Fifth, the rights of refugees and displaced Palestinians to return to their homes of origin, restitution and compensation are basic parameters of any model for a political solution.

Sixth, Israel, the colonial apartheid state and aggressive occupying power persecutes and oppresses the entire Palestinian people in historic Palestine and in exile by means of a system of institutionalized racial discrimination. Israel is responsible historically, legally and morally for the Ongoing Nakba of our people. .

Seventh, the international community, especially the United Nations and its agencies, are responsible for providing international protection to the Palestinian people, in particular the refugees and displaced persons, until it is able to find a just and permanent solution that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people through implementation of the UN resolutions, in particular Resolution 194.

Eighth, ending fragmentation and internal division is a prerequisite for liberation. The principles of pluralism and cooperation are to be adopted in theory and practice for this purpose.

Ninth, exercise by the refugees and displaced Palestinians of their right to voluntary and safe return to their homes of origin is a prerequisite for the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people

Recommendations

Guided by our vision and principles, and based on the recommendations of previous conferences in al-Far'a, Dheisha, Gaza, and Nazareth as well as the regional preparatory workshops and discussion leading up to this conference, we recommend:

To the PLO and the Palestinian Authority

- 1 – Immediately and without delay, re-build and activate all PLO institutions and committees, particularly the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the Department of Refugee Affairs.
- 2 - Immediately and without delay, taking action to end internal division through a comprehensive national dialogue.
- 3 – Set up transparent mechanisms, particularly with regard to political negotiations, in order to re-connect the leadership with the Palestinian people wherever they live.
- 4 – Abstain from the use of ambiguous and diplomatic language when speaking about the right of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes; do not engage with international, Israeli or Palestinian proposals that do not meet the standards of UN Resolution 194 in form and content.
- 5 - Activate the PLO to provide protection and assistance to Palestinian refugees in all regions of exile, in particular in Lebanon.
- 6 - Develop a mechanism of monitoring and control of the Palestinian Authority operations and political negotiations whereby ultimate authority is vested in the PLO.
- 7 – Ensure representation of Palestine in all international fora and conferences, especially in the United Nations, by the PLO; do not delegate this role to representatives of the Palestinian Authority as an alternative, because the Palestinian Authority is at an inferior level.
- 8 – Separate between PLO and Palestinian Authority finances and secure a separate budget for the PLO and its representative offices in all locations of Palestinian refugee communities.
- 9 – Suspend, criminalize and prosecute all Palestinian officials formally or informally engaged in, calling for, or promoting initiatives and projects that explicitly or implicitly jeopardize the rights of Palestinian refugees, especially their right to return to their original homes.
- 10 – Reject the idea of a referendum on the right of return to homes of origin, because this right belongs to future generations.
- 11 - Support and participate in all initiatives and grass-roots activities that aim to highlight and affirm the rights of Palestinian refugees, locally, regionally and internationally.
- 12 – Develop an educational curriculum that promotes a culture of return among the younger generations by addressing the rights of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons, in particular the right to return to homes which their grandparents and parents were forced to leave.
- 13 – Build and strengthen relations with political parties, movements and popular organizations in the Arab world, not limited to governments.
- 14 – Provide attention and care to Palestinian refugees and displaced persons living outside refugee camps.

Documents

To the international community

States, the United Nations and its agencies, and the Quartet are to respect their legal and political obligations:

- 1 - Respect, protect and promote the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people, in particular our inalienable rights to self-determination and refugee return to homes and properties, and the right to equality.
- 2 - International actors, in particular those not allied with Israel, including Arab and other states and their regional organizations, the United Nations and civil society, should implement measures that can build political will to recognize Israel's institutionalized racial discrimination and eliminate the apartheid, settler-colonialism and military occupation imposed on the Palestinian people, including boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel and ending all forms of economic and diplomatic cooperation.
- 3 - The UN General Assembly should use its authority under the "Uniting for Peace" procedure, because the Security Council has failed to carry out its responsibilities and functions to end Israel's racist crimes which represented a serious threat to international peace and security; the right of return (resolution 194) should be made binding in this context.
- 4 - Promote and expand the role and mandate of UNRWA in its five areas of operation and make state contribution to UNRWA's budgets compulsory rather than voluntary.
- 5 - Support and enhance capacity and resources of the UN Committee for the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in particular for cooperation with civil society.
- 6 - Provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to the refugees and displaced Palestinians as a matter of legal responsibility and not charity. Do not use support of the Palestinian Authority as a pretext for cutting-back on financial support of UNRWA.
- 7 - Provide effective protection to the Palestinian people; in particular prevent the displacement of more Palestinians and empower Palestinians to resist forced displacement.

To global civil society

- 1 - Develop strategies for exposing the racist crimes of Israel's apartheid, settler colonialism and military occupation; support the struggle of the Palestinian people in historic Palestine and the exile so we can exercise our right to self-determination, return to our homes and achieve justice and equality.
- 2 - Maintain and develop the global Campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel in accordance with the Palestinian civil society call. We call in particular trade unions, professional associations, churches and civic organizations to take effective steps in order to ensure the isolation of Israel, including UN sanctions.
- 3 - Pressure governments to adopt policies that support the rights of Palestinian refugees, especially their right to return to their homes of origin; and to condition any relationship or agreement with Israel on the latter's respect for and implementation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

To Palestinian society and communities everywhere

- 1 - Adhere to the principle that the cause of the refugees and their rights are above factional politics and differences; and to maintain complete unity in the defense of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right of Palestinian refugees to return.
- 2 - Develop mechanisms of coordination and cooperation among all organizations, institutions and leadership personalities working among refugees and displaced persons, through the expansion of the scope of work, and the membership of the High National Committee to defend the right of return.
- 3 - Organizing campaigns and advocacy in all communities to preserve the Palestinian identity and to defend the rights of refugees and displaced Palestinians, and keeping alive the memory of the victims of the ongoing Nakba.
- 4 - The direct use of terminology adopted at this conference in all for a including formal and informal conversations, in the media, literature, and/or publications: Historic Palestine, to return to their homes of origin, ongoing Nakba, refugees and displaced Palestinians, Palestinians inside the Green Line.
- 5 - Working on the establishment of interactive symbols that highlight the ongoing Nakba, such as the construction of museums, exhibits of various types on the local and international levels.
- 6 - Develop general and / or specific programs and projects to enable communication among Palestinians in all locations in historic Palestine and the Diaspora can be achieved.

7 – Reinvigorate the national role of camp Service Committee, which should not be limited to service provision, through advocacy to organize democratic elections to enable these Committees to defend the refugee return cause.

8 - Opposing whomever explicitly or implicitly undermines the right of return to homes of origin by all means, including formal protests to the officials, excommunication, defamation, written or verbal response, demonstration, and others.

9 - Declaring 11th of December (anniversary of UNGA resolution 194) of each year a national day to confirm the right of return to homes of origin, organizing events and activities in all the sites in historic Palestine and the Diaspora that highlight the cultural identity of the Palestinian people and their rights.

10 – Benefiting of the potential of youth based in the Palestinian Diaspora through joint work with them in the proceeding, promotion and political mobilization to influence world public opinion.

11 - Play an active role in the civil and political Arab national and regional coalitions and movements, including the formation of a special information platform to defend the rights of refugees.

12 - Giving priority in the coming period to joining forces to develop and expand the existing right of return coalitions, particularly those working together at home and abroad as unifying forces that push to unite the efforts of the return movement by organizing coordinated events among all parts of the Palestinian people.

Glory to the martyrs, Freedom for the prisoners, and Recovery for the wounded, Victory for Palestine. Together till we return to our homes of origin.

Released by the Fourth National Conference to Defend the Right of Return, held in the occupied city of Al-Bireh, Palestine on 29 November 2008.

Final Statement of the 2008 Special Meeting of the Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition

Damascus, 20 December 2008

In light of the fact that the Coalition's 9th Annual Meeting in France was not held as scheduled due to unforeseeable circumstances, the Aidun Group-Syria hosted a Special Meeting from the 18th to the 20th of December 2008 with the participation of members and coordinators from Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Europe.

The meeting explored the challenges facing the Coalition as well as the dangers facing the Palestinian national movement in general and refugee rights in particular. Delegates focused their discussions on formulating strategies and action-plans for the coming period to develop the work of the Coalition on various levels:

I. Matters Concerning the Global Right of Return Coalition

Delegates committed to:

- * Continue to push the work of the Coalition forward as a popular, national, and democratic body working to defend Palestinian refugees' right to return in the face of dangerous efforts against the implementation of this right that are being exerted at the Palestinian, Arab and international levels.
- * Continue to meet annually and redouble efforts to work at the local and regional levels.
- * Improve bilateral and multilateral coordination between Coalition member organizations.
- * Ensure that the funds and resources needed for the work of the Coalition and its continuity are raised through payment of accrued membership fees and development of a comprehensive fundraising plan for the coming years.

Delegates decided that the Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps should continue to assume the role of Coalition Coordinator until the 9th Annual Meeting will be convened as planned and that the Coalition's Coordinating Committee should meet in the first half of 2009.

Documents

II. Strategy and Action Plan

Delegates discussed three focus areas for work in the coming period:

- *Mobilizing for effective participation in Durban Review Conference to be held in Geneva in April 2009;
- *Effective participation and coordination in the work of the European Coordinating Committee for Palestine (ECCP), particularly in the Russel Tribunal initiative to hold Zionist war criminals to account;
- *Continue to build and expand the Campaign for Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it respects and implements international law, particularly by strengthening and developing the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC)

Delegates stressed that the Coalition should work to increase the involvement of Arab and international solidarity networks to ensure the effectiveness and success of these three initiatives.

III. Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return

Delegates discussed current threats to the Palestinian cause focusing particularly on the core issue of the Arab/Palestinian-Zionist conflict, i.e., the struggle of Palestinian refugees to return to their original lands and properties, and restitution of these lands and properties in accordance with their rights under international law. In their discussion, delegates stressed the following principles:

- *Palestinians living in historic Palestine and in exile are one indivisible people; the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and as such the PLO and its constitutive institutions should be rebuilt and revitalized on a democratic basis and founded on its political program for the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;
- *The rights of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to return, restitution and compensation are fundamental, inalienable and indivisible rights under international law; they cannot be abrogated, neither by bilateral, multilateral or international treaty or agreement, nor by referendum. The right to return is a collective and individual right held by every Palestinian refugee and internally displaced person. This right is passed on from one generation to the next and realized based on the individual's choice on whether or not to return;
- *The right of return as a collective right is an integral part of the right to self-determination, which itself is a fundamental right of the Palestinian people;
- *Rejection of all proposals and projects aiming to resettle Palestinian refugees in other countries and/or to place limitations on their right to return to their lands and properties;
- *Rejection of any sort of referendum about the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right of Palestinian refugees to return.

Other issues discussed included ongoing Israeli practices of settlement expansion, construction of the Wall, Judaization of Jerusalem and the closure regime. Delegates stressed the necessity of Palestinian political unity in order to face these challenges and highlighted the need to break the siege of the Gaza Strip as a matter of priority, calling on the United Nations and international humanitarian agencies to fulfill their obligations and pressure Israel to end this devastating and criminal policy.

Delegates also expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the exceptional work of Aidun Group-Syria to ensure the success of the meeting.

Participating Organizations:

Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights; Union of Youth Activity Centers-Palestine Refugee Camps; Executive Office of the Popular Committees-West Bank; Union of Women's Activity Centers-West Bank; Committee for the Defense of Palestinian Refugee Rights and Yafa Cultural Center; Aidun Group-Syria; Aidun Group-Lebanon; Forum of Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon; Palestine Right of Return Confederation - Europe.

“Stop the Massacre in Gaza – Boycott Israel Now!”
Statement of the BDS Campaign National Committee (BNC)

27 December 2008

Occupied Ramallah, Palestine - 27 December 2008: Today, the Israeli occupation army committed a new massacre in Gaza, causing the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including a yet unknown number of school children who were headed home from school when the first Israeli military strikes started. This latest bloodbath, although far more ruthless than all its predecessors, is not Israel's first. It culminates months of an Israeli siege of Gaza that should be widely condemned and prosecuted as an act of genocide against the 1.5 million Palestinians in the occupied coastal strip.

Israel seems intent to mark the end of its 60th year of existence the same way it has established itself – perpetrating massacres against the Palestinian people. In 1948, the majority of the indigenous Palestinian people were ethnically cleansed from their homes and land, partly through massacres like Deir Yassin; today, the Palestinians in Gaza, most of whom are refugees, do not even have the choice to seek refuge elsewhere. Incarcerated behind ghetto walls and brought to the brink of starvation by the siege, they are easy targets for Israel's indiscriminate bombing.

Prof. Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and international law expert at Princeton University, described Israel's siege of Gaza last year, when it was still not comparable in its severity to the current situation, as follows:

“Is it an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not. The recent developments in Gaza are especially disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention on the part of Israel and its allies to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty. The suggestion that this pattern of conduct is a holocaust-in-the-making represents a rather desperate appeal to the governments of the world and to international public opinion to act urgently to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy.”

The most brutal episode of this “collective tragedy” is what we have seen today.

Israel's war crimes and other grave violations of international law in Gaza as well as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, could not have been perpetrated without the direct or indirect complicity of world governments, particularly the United States, the European Union, Egypt, and other Arab regimes.

While the US government has consistently sponsored, bankrolled and protected from international censure Israel's apartheid and colonial policies against the indigenous people of Palestine, the EU was able in the past to advocate a semblance of respect for international law and universal human rights. That distinction effectively ended on December 9th, when the EU Council decided unanimously to reward Israel's criminal disregard of international law by upgrading the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Israel clearly understood from this decision that the EU condones its actions against the Palestinians under its occupation. Palestinian civil society also got the message: the EU governments have become no less complicit in Israel's war crimes than their US counterpart.

The large majority of world governments, particularly in the global south, share part of the blame, as well. By continuing business as usual with Israel, in trade agreements, arms deals, academic and cultural ties, diplomatic openings, they have provided the necessary background for the complicity of world powers and, consequentially, for Israel's impunity. Furthermore, their inaction within the United Nations is inexcusable.

Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockman, President of the UN General Assembly prescribed in a recent address before the Assembly the only moral way forward for the world's nations in dealing with Israel:

Documents

“More than twenty years ago we in the United Nations took the lead from civil society when we agreed that sanctions were required to provide a nonviolent means of pressuring South Africa to end its violations. Today, perhaps we in the United Nations should consider following the lead of a new generation of civil society, who are calling for a similar non-violent campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions to pressure Israel to end its violations.”

Now, more than ever, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee, BNC, calls upon international civil society not just to protest and condemn in diverse forms Israel’s massacre in Gaza, but also to join and intensify the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel to end its impunity and to hold it accountable for its persistent violation of international law and Palestinian rights. Without sustained, effective pressure by people of conscience the world over, Israel will continue with its gradual, rolling acts of genocide against the Palestinians, burying any prospects for a just peace under the blood and rubble of Gaza, Nablus and Jerusalem.

* The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) includes: Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine; General Union of Palestinian Workers; Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions; Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations’ Network (PNGO); Federation of Independent Trade Unions; Union of Palestinian Charitable Organizations; Global Palestine Right of Return Coalition; Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI); General Union of Palestinian Women; Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU); Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (STW); Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI); National Committee to Commemorate the Nakba; Civic Coalition for the Defense of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ); Coalition for Jerusalem; and Palestinian Economic Monitor.

Gross Human Rights Violations and War Crimes in the Occupied Gaza

*Submission to the Ninth Special Session of the Human Rights Council by Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Al-Haq**

For almost two weeks now Israel has carried out military operations in the occupied Gaza Strip from the air, sea and land, killing hundreds and injuring thousands of Palestinian civilians. Many of the casualties are women and children with entire families among the dead. Thus, grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including the Hague Regulations (1907) and the Geneva Conventions (1949) that amount to war crimes have been committed by Israel in the occupied Gaza Strip.

These breaches include willful killing and the extensive destruction of houses and other civilian property not justified by military necessity and have been carried out unlawfully and wantonly. In addition to the above, the already dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip is deteriorating further. It is becoming increasingly difficult for humanitarian relief personnel to reach and evacuate casualties and distribute aid. Almost a million and half a million Gazans, most of whom have been refugees since 1948, continue to remain without food, water or electricity, as they have since Israel imposed its current siege, which was tightened in June 2007 following Hamas take-over of the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, due to the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, including electricity, water, communication services and roads, hospitals are unable to provide adequate care to the high number of casualties. These actions amount to the collective punishment of the entire population of Gaza and endanger the very survival of civilians.

Moreover, Israel’s indiscriminate military attacks have led to unprecedented forcible mass displacement, with tens of thousands of civilians fleeing their homes in search of adequate and secure shelters. Yet, it is evident that even UN installations in the occupied Gaza Strip cannot provide safety and security for those civilians, especially after

UNRWA shelters were deliberately shelled by Israel military forces on 5 and 6 January 2009, an act that resulted in the deaths and injury of more than a hundred innocent civilians.

Without the immediate intervention of the international community, the vulnerable Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Gaza Strip will inevitably continue to suffer heavy losses. Despite the gravity of the situation, the Security Council is failing to fulfill its role and take prompt and concrete steps to end the suffering of civilians in the Gaza Strip. Thus, while reiterating General Assembly President Miguel D'Escoto's statement that "the time has come to take firm action if the UN does not want to be rightly accused of complicity by omission", we respectfully call upon the Human Rights Council to:

- Condemn the Israeli military attacks on Gaza Strip, which have resulted the deaths and injury of thousands of civilians and destruction of civilian property and infrastructure;
- Demand that Israel end its military operations in Gaza and abide scrupulously by the provisions of international humanitarian and human rights law, and cease the collective punishment of Palestinian civilians;
- Call upon Israel as an occupying power to fulfil its duties and responsibilities towards the occupied population of the Gaza strip, in accordance with the laws of occupation;
- Demand that Israel immediately open the Gaza Strip's border crossings in a sustained matter to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and basic supplies in order to mitigate the dire humanitarian situation faced by Palestinian civilians;
- Dispatch an urgent high-level fact-finding mission to Gaza to investigate the countless gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed by Israel, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and to ensure that those responsible are held to account. Furthermore, the fact-finding mission should assess the situation of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, address the needs of the survivors, and make recommendations on ways and means to protect Palestinian civilians against further Israeli assaults;
- Recommend the General Assembly, in light of the urgency of the matter, convene under GA Resolution 377, "Uniting for Peace," with a view to imposing collective measures against the Israeli Government.

* *All the above are non-governmental organizations in special consultative status Gross Human Rights Violations and War Crimes in the Occupied Gaza Strip.* Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association, Ad-Dameer Association for Human Rights, Al Mezan Center, The Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA), The Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations' Network (PNGO) also share the views expressed in this statement.

BDS Update

August – December 2008

US Campaign to End the Occupation Launches Motorola Boycott Campaign Website

August 2008 - Motorola has been actively supplying Occupation forces with weapon parts and equipment that has been used against both the Palestinian and Lebanese people. The US Campaign has identified four key ways that Motorola contributes to the maintenance of military control and apartheid, including manufacturing bomb fuses, supplying Occupation forces with communication equipment, and providing surveillance systems for both settlements and the Apartheid Wall.

Visit the website for more on Motorola and the campaign: <http://hanguponmotorola.org>

Adalah calls upon celebrities and Jewelers of America to Boycott Leviev

August 2008 - Celebrity supporters of Leviev have been called to follow the actions of UNICEF and cut ties with the businessman. Additionally, Adalah-NY has issued a call for Jewelers of America (JA) to cease doing business with Leviev, whose business practices in Palestine and Angola violate the JA code of conduct.

For more information visit: <http://adalahny.org>

Jerusalem Coalition and Stop the Wall call on Saudi Arabia not to Contract Alstom

7 August 2008 - The Jerusalem Coalition and Stop the Wall Campaign called on Saudi Arabia not to contract Alstom for the construction of the new Shoaiba power plant, to phase out existing contracts and not to award the French company any new contracts to pressure Alstom to withdraw from the Jerusalem light rail project. The state owned Saudi Electric Company (SEC) has signed a letter of intent to award the 1.9 Billion Euro contract for construction of a power plant in Shoaiba to Alstom, a French multinational that controls 20% of the shares in Citypass consortium that has been contracted by Israel to build the Jerusalem light rail. In addition, the BDS campaigners called on Saudi Arabia to ensure that Alstom is added to the boycott lists of the Organization of Islamic Countries and the Arab League.

See the full brief at: <http://www.stophthewall.org/downloads/pdf/briefing%20Alstom.pdf>

Israel Ad Pulled Due to Saudi Boycott Threat

12 August 2008 - Nissan Motor Company asked its Israeli distributor to pull a racist commercial broadcast on local television for the new Nissan Tiida (sold in the U.S. under the name Versa) after a Saudi Arabian official threatened Nissan with a region-wide boycott given its offensive content. Upon the release of the commercial earlier in August, Saudi Arabia's Dubai-based MBC TV quoted a Saudi official as saying, "It's my opinion that Nissan made a huge error by igniting these [racist] instincts. We need to apply punishments... against these things. In order for Nissan to keep its interests in the region, it must apologize." Other Arabic newspapers followed suit in calling for a boycott of Nissan.

Five Arrested at Scottish Protest against Israeli Military Musicians

29 August 2008 – The Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign held a picket protesting the Jerusalem Quartet's performance at Edinburgh International Festival. Five of the BDS protesters were arrested. About a dozen music-lovers returned their tickets at the gates after realizing the concert was a means for Israel to legitimize its ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, and others left and expressed their gratitude to the demonstrators inside and out "for awakening our consciences." Visit: <http://www.scottishpsc.org.uk>

Campaign to Boycott Israeli Medical Association (IMA) Launches Campaign Website

Mid-August 2008 - The campaign aims to document the systematic torture of Palestinian people by agents of Israel. It will publicize the practice in order to bring world opinion to bear on Israel, and challenge the IMA which has repeatedly failed to issue advice to doctors who are involved in any way with torture.

To learn more about the campaign, see *al-Ahram's* interview with Dr. Derek Sommerfield at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/910/intrvw.htm> or visit: <http://www.boycottima.org>

BDS Activists in Holland Confront SNS Bank for its Investment in Veolia

26 August 2008 - Representatives of the Amsterdam-based group A Different Jewish Voice as well as a prominent Dutch development organization and two international law specialists attended a meeting in Utrecht at the offices of SNS Asset Management (a subsidiary of SNS Bank) to urge withdrawal of its investments in the French Veolia Corporation. ASN Bank, also part of the holdings of SNS Bank, decided in 2006 to exclude Veolia Corporation from its investment portfolio because of Veolia's involvement in the rail project in East Jerusalem. However, SNS Bank insisted that according to its own assessment, Veolia's involvement with the light rail project did not amount to "direct serious violations" of human rights. For more, see: <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9838.shtml>

Barkan Wineries Completes Relocation away from Illegal West Bank Settlement

Late August 2008 - In 2004, the Barkan Wineries started a process of moving their operations from the illegal Israeli settlement of Barkan over to Kibbutz Hulda within the "green line." The soft drinks company "Tempo" which holds ownership of the Barkan Wineries had entered into a close partnership with the large Dutch beer company "Heineken", becoming part of the worldwide Heineken Group and creating a new company called "Tempo Drinks" of which the Dutch Heineken holds 40% ownership. The Dutch government has been an outspoken opponent of the Israeli policy of expansion onto Palestinian land in the West Bank, and the company responded to pressure by agreeing to withdraw from the Barkan Industrial Park. While it has moved, it has maintained the label "Barkan wine", and more importantly, still maintains a winery in the Golan Heights, a part of Syria that has been illegally occupied by Israel since 1967.

Toronto Community Groups Denounce "Brand Israel" Inauguration

28 August 2008 - Over one hundred Torontonians showed up at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Center (MNJCC) to voice their opposition to the official launch of a 1-million dollar "Brand Israel" re-branding campaign at that venue. Toronto has been selected as a 'test market' for a year-long public relations campaign launched by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve "Israel's image" – a state whose racism against Palestinians has come under increasing scrutiny by the growing worldwide BDS movement. During the rally, organized by the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (CAIA), speakers from No One is Illegal (NOII), the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), The UofT Reparations Committee, the United Black Students at Ryerson (UBSR) and Women in Solidarity with Palestine (WISP, formerly the Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation) addressed the racist nature of the Israeli state and its re-branding campaign. For more, visit <http://www.caiaweb.org>

Coordination Boycott Israel launches Ramadan "Boycott Israeli Dates" Campaign

31 August 2008 - A day before the start of the Ramadan, Belgian BDS activists organized an action in Brussels to protest the import and sale of Israeli dates. A group of 10 activists distributed free dates to visitors of the main Sunday market in Brussels where big quantities of imported fruits and vegetables are sold. Leaflets were also distributed calling on consumers to boycott dates from Israel as they are mainly grown in the occupied Jordan Valley on grounds stolen from Palestinian farmers.

Boycott Israeli Goods (BIG) Campaign RELAUNCHED!

September 2008 – The campaign was re-launched as a renewed effort to call on British shoppers to stop buying Israeli goods, especially from illegal Israeli settlements, and to supermarkets to stop stocking such goods. The emphasis on settlement exports spearheads the general case for the boycott of Israeli goods. This new campaign, led by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and Jews for Boycotting of Israeli Goods (JBIG) is part of a wider international campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Apartheid Israel. The campaign will feature a sustained program of direct action by local branches across the country, with support from trade union members and faith groups. For more information, visit: <http://www.bigcampaign.org>

BDS Campaign in UK Makes September the Boycott Israeli Goods Month of Action

September 2008 - The British-based Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and supporters from over twenty towns created eye-catching and impact-achieving demonstrations in addition to holding meetings and film-screenings as a means of spreading the awareness about the BDS campaign. The highlight of the month came on 28 September,

BDS Update

when activists occupied and shut down the UK freight warehouse and HQ of Carmel-Agrexco. Agrexco is one of the largest settlement agro-businesses and a key exporter of settlement produce to Europe. In addition to the action against Carmel-Agrexco, protesters focused their efforts on local shops, supermarkets, and press offices across Britain. In some cases dressed as Jaffa oranges, activists distributed BIG campaign leaflets and explained to shoppers how buying Israeli herbs, dates, avocados and other produce encourages and legitimizes Israeli apartheid the colonization of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

For more information, visit: <http://www.bigcampaign.org>

Court Case against Veolia Moves Forward

September 2008 - The French court case against Veolia, which started almost a year ago, is moving forward, and the company has submitted legalized translations (in French) of the light rail contract to the court in Nanterre. The lawyers of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Association France Palestine Solidarite (ASFP) are in the process of studying the material. At the end of October 2007, Veolia Transport and Alstom were taken to court by AFPS because of their involvement in the Israeli tramway project. The PLO joined AFPS in the legal action against the two companies, invoking French Civil Code which states in its Articles 6, 1131 and 1133 that any agreement can be discharged of its powers when its aim is in contradiction with the public order or good morals. The legal action undertaken by AFPS is seeking the cancellation of the contracts for the construction and running of the tramway in Palestine between Alstom, Veolia and the Israeli government.

BDS Campaigners in UK, US, and Palestine call on UK not to Rent Embassy from Leviev

18 September 2008 - Following an article in the Guardian detailing UK government plans to rent office space in Tel Aviv from Leviev's Africa – Israel company, a number of organizations and activists are demanding the UK reverse its decision. The large alliance of Palestinian and international civil society that issued a call for letters to the UK's Foreign Office demanding that the government not rent from Leviev included UK-based Architects & Planners for Justice in Palestine, Palestine Solidarity Campaign and War on Want; the West Bank villages of Bil'in and Jayyous, where Leviev's companies have been building settlements; the Palestinian BNC, and US-based Adalah-NY and Jews Against the Occupation. For more information: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/195>

Adalah-NY Disrupts Leviev-Sponsored Fundraiser for Museum of the City of New York

23 September 2008 - The Director of the Museum of the City of New York had failed to respond to phone calls and a letter on September 16th informing the museum of the inconsistency of Leviev's business practices with the museum's mission and with non-profit ethical standards. On the night of the fundraiser, Manhattan's elite were aghast to be greeted this evening by 25 protesters chanting: "Fashionistas and socialites, Leviev denies human rights" / "New York City glitterati, If you wear Lev's jewels, you're naughty" / "Oxfam and UNICEF won't take his dimes, Because they know Leviev's crimes." Information handed out by protesters pointed to: Leviev's companies "Africa-Israel" and "Leader" responsibility in construction of the illegal Israeli settlements Mattityahu East, Zufim, Har Homa and Maale Adumim on Palestinian land in the Israeli Occupied West Bank; accusations in New York Magazine that Angolan security companies employed by Leviev have been involved in torturing, sexually abusing and even murdering Angolans; Leviev's recent firing in Namibia of around 200 striking diamond polishers, some of whom were already struggling to survive on less than \$2 a day; and, in Brooklyn and Manhattan, Leviev's construction of luxury apartments that displace low- and moderate-income residents.

For more see: <http://adalahny.org/index.php/press-releases/237-leviev-new-york-after-dark-press>

Despite Appeals, Paul McCartney Violates the Boycott, Performs in Israel

25 September 2008 – McCartney decided to perform in Israel despite numerous calls on him to adhere to the anti-apartheid BDS campaign. In a statement denouncing the former Beatle's decision, the Palestinian Campaign for a Cultural and Academic Boycott of Israel (PACBI) declared that "[d]espite our denunciation of Paul McCartney's effective complicity in covering up Israel's occupation and system of racial oppression, PACBI strongly and unequivocally condemns any violent threats made against him or, for that matter, against any other cultural or academic figure who decides to visit Israel in violation of the Palestinian boycott of Israel. As a civil resistance movement whose message is anchored in an unwavering commitment to universal human rights and ethical

responsibility, we strive to persuade people, to appeal to their minds and hearts to boycott Israel -- through campaigns of public awareness raising and non-violent pressure -- due to its occupation, racist oppression and unique system of apartheid.”

Bahraini parliament Increases Pressure on Government to Reopen Israel Boycott Office

Late September 2008 – A meeting of the Bahraini legislature’s committee on foreign affairs, defense and national security also called for an end to all formal contacts with Israel. It specifically called for the reopening of Bahrain’s Israel Boycott Office, which had been shut down as a result of US pressure in the form of conditioning the trade agreement between Bahrain and the US on closure of the office. The agreement came into effect in early 2006.

Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign Launches Report on EU Support for Israel

October 2008 - Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign launch a report titled “European Union’s Blind Eye” that will be submitted to the EU and various other prominent bodies and individuals as part of their political lobbying campaign. The document critiques the EU’s biased relationship with Israel, exposing how the EU ignores Israel’s failure to fulfill its obligations under various agreements including the Euro-Med Agreement, The European Neighborhood Policy and the Agreement on Movement and Access. It also questions the recent ‘upgrading’ of relations between the EU and Israel, and reveals the EU’s double-standards when dealing with Israel as compared to Russia and Iran. Download the report at: http://www.ipsc.ie/pdf/ipsc_eu_submission_2008.pdf

Jordanian Workers call for Boycott of Israeli Products

11 October 2008 - Hundreds of Jordanian Islamist and leftist activists and parliamentarians participated in a picket of the country’s wholesale food market to protest against fruits and vegetables imported from Israel being sold. The protesters called on vendors to suspend imports from Israel of a variety of fruits including mangoes, pineapple, avocado, kiwi along with carrots and tomatoes sold in groceries and supermarkets. The protest was organized by professional associations, who represent over 170,000 doctors, nurses and engineers and others, and who have spearheaded an anti-normalization and boycott campaign. Jordanian trade figures show an increase in trade between the two countries since the 1994 Wadi Araba agreement, with the volume of exchange jumping from \$1.6 million in 2003 to \$14 million in 2007, representing a nine-fold increase.

Opposition to Egypt-Israel Natural Gas Continues

7 October 2008 - Following up on the political opposition to the \$2-3 billion agreement involving Egyptian export of natural gas to Israel, a lawyer in Egypt has demanded that the government halt its gas exports to Israel. Ibrahim Yossri, 65, arrived at the court on October 7 to call on the Egyptian government to stop exporting natural gas to its Middle East neighbor. The agreement was signed by Binyamin Ben Eliezer, the Israeli infrastructure minister, and Sameh Fahmi, the Egyptian oil minister, in June 2005.

Dutch Lawyers Seek Ami Ayalon’s arrest / Dutch Authorities Fail to Arrest Israeli former Intelligence Chief

7-17 October 2008 - Lawyers for Khalid al-Shami, a Palestinian tortured in Israeli jails, sought the arrest of Ami Ayalon, a minister without portfolio in the Israeli government and former head of the Shin Bet, the Israeli intelligence service responsible for interrogation of prisoners. According to the Israeli press, Dutch officials had contacted the Israeli Ministry of Foreign affairs in advance, and Dutch “speedy and positive response” to Israel’s subsequent plea was spirit Ayalon out of the country immediately.

Texas Firm Fined for Complying with Boycott

16 October 2008 - The US government has imposed a civil penalty on a Texas-based subsidiary of a German firm for repeated violations of American law regarding compliance with the Arab boycott of Israel. In a settlement announced earlier this month, Rohde & Liesenfeld Inc., a freight-forwarder based in Houston, agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$108,000 to settle charges leveled against it by the US Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security. The bureau, which oversees enforcement of US anti-boycott rules, had accused the company of 36 violations of the law between July 2002 and March 2003 in a series of dealings with the Syrian petroleum company Al-Furat.

Appeal to be heard in the case of UK arms-related licenses agreements to Israel

16 October 2008 – Al-Haq announced that the appeal in the case of *Saleh Hasan v. Secretary of State and Industry* was scheduled for 21-22 October 2008. The claim requests the UK government to clarify its position on arms-related licensing agreements with Israel to reveal how it satisfies the criteria that material sold under these agreements is not used in the commission of human rights abuses. The Court dismissed the claim, finding that while the UK government could provide the information requested, it would involve a “considerable amount of work” and that through the Quadripartite Committee a sufficient level of oversight over arms-export licensing is already exercised, making the claim unnecessary. The Court of Appeal found there to be strategic questions with regard to High Court’s dismissal of the claim and granted the appeal on 11 Feb 2008. For more, visit <http://www.alhaq.org>

BNC Issues Open Letter to the Norwegian Government and Civil Society: Stop the Norwegian-Israeli Business and Research Seminar!

20 October 2008 - Preempting the Norwegian-Israeli Business and Research Seminar scheduled to be held in Oslo on 3 November, for the purpose of enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade and research between Norway and Israel, the Palestinian BNC issued a statement to the seminar organizers and Norwegian civil society. The statement outlined what was known about the seminar and called upon the co-organizers of the event – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Innovation Norway and the Research Council of Norway – to re-evaluate the initiative and cancel the event; and upon Norwegian civil society organizations to mobilize and take action against the strengthening of ties between these two parties and to stop this conference from taking place. The BNC letter was ultimately endorsed by the Transport Workers Union and The Electricians and IT Workers Union, as well as the General Confederation of Trade Unions in Oslo (LO), the Norwegian People’s Aid, the Socialist Youth League, the Labour Youth League, the National Student Union, the Red Youth and the Red party. Read the full text of the statement at: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/209>

Carousel of Hope Ball signals collapse of Leviev PR strategy

24 October 2008 – Having sponsored the Children’s Diabetes Foundation’s (CDF) Carousel of Hope Ball in 2006, Lev Leviev was announced in media reports as a sponsor for the 2008 Ball. Following letters by Adalah-NY and other groups to the Denver-based CDF, Leviev was removed from the list of sponsors for the 2008 Ball. CDF’s lawyer Mark Cohen told Adalah-NY in an October 1 letter that, while Leviev will not sponsor the event, this did not represent a judgment on the merits of Adalah-NY’s claims about Leviev. For the full Adalah-NY press release, see: <http://adalahny.org/index.php/press-releases/247-carousel-hope-collapse-leviev-pr>

Swedish company closes factory in Israeli settlement

26 October 2008 - After being confronted by a coalition of Swedish non-profit groups and the Church of Sweden for operating a branch on illegally-confiscated Palestinian land in the West Bank, the Assa Abloy Company, based in Sweden, decided to close its locksmithing factory in the Barkan settlement in the occupied West Bank and to relocate it within the Green line citing “political reasons.” Barkan Industrial Park is located just outside the Ariel settlement, which is the largest Israeli settlement in the West Bank, and is located 16 kilometers from the Green Line. A company spokesperson told the Israeli media, “We are very sorry that we did not notice it before, but we did not understand that we might be violating international law.”

Oxfam-USA reaffirms position on Leviev Diamonds

27 October 2008 – To clarify its position on its alleged acceptance of support from Lev Leviev, Oxfam-USA issued a statement clarifying that it is the beneficiary of Timothy White’s new book *Hollywood Pin Ups*, for which Leviev Diamonds offered to provide diamonds for some of the photo shoots, of which Oxfam was unaware. After being informed by Adalah-NY that Lev Leviev was promoting the inclusion of Leviev Diamonds in the book and using this to claim to be an Oxfam supporter, Oxfam immediately issued a statement which “reiterates our policy that we are not and never will be partners or beneficiaries of Leviev because of both his mining practices and his support of Israeli settlements on Occupied Palestinian Lands which is in contravention of International Law and a major obstacle in the road to peace.” Read the statement at: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/emergencies/israeli-palestinian-conflict/hollywood-pin-ups-statement>

Green Party Defends Position in Support of BDS and the Right of Return

27 October 2008 - On October 12, Alan Dershowitz, a prominent US attorney and Harvard law professor, published an op-ed column in The Daily News (New York) titled "Both Barack Obama and John McCain are true friends of Israel ..." in which he accused the Green Party and Green presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney of anti-Semitism and endorsed elections limited to two political parties. The co-chairs of the Green Party's International Committee responded to the attack noting that Dershowitz has promoted 'torture warrants' to permit torture of individuals when a threat to US is detected, a position he shares with the Israeli government. In the response, they state "The Green Party takes no campaign contributions from AIPAC, its rightwing allies, or the oil industry.... We continue to oppose Israel's violations of human rights that are recognized as universal by the international community: the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and the right of self-determination."

Read the full statement at: <http://www.gp.org/press/pr-national.php?ID=125>

Bilbao Conference: European BDS in Theory and Practice

29 October-1 November 2008 – Spanish and Basque civil society organizations invited their Palestinian counterparts, along with Israeli activists and solidarity groups from Europe and around the globe to Bilbao to discuss the core elements of the Palestinian struggle, as well as strategies to move the BDS movement forward. On November 1, a delegation from the conference staged a protest in front of the city hall in Bilbao, to pressure the city council to refrain from ratifying the bus transportation contract that it has awarded to Veolia. See the full text of the Bilbao conference declaration at: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/213>

Majority of Somerville and Cambridge Voters Cast "Yes" Ballots

4 November 2008 - 62 % of people voting in Somerville and 73 % of people voting in Cambridge cast YES votes on the question: "Shall the State Representative from this district be instructed to vote in favor of a nonbinding resolution calling on the federal government to support the right of all people, including non-Jewish Palestinian citizens of Israel, to live free from laws that give more rights to people of one religion than another" introduced by the Somerville Divestment Project. These results come after the pro-apartheid side attempted legal maneuvers to block the question from being on the ballot and over the opposition of the mayor, all local elected officials in Somerville, and a main newspaper in Somerville. In 2006 45% of Somerville voters supported the Palestinian peoples' Right of Return - a fundamental human right, despite the opposition from the pro-apartheid governor, congressman and mayor – all of whom opposed the fundamental human right of return.

For more, visit the Somerville Divestment Project homepage at: <http://www.divestmentproject.org>

Palestinian to Boycott of Jerusalem Municipal Election

4 November 2008 – Palestinian community leaders called on Palestinians in Jerusalem to boycott the November 11 municipal elections. Palestinians from Jerusalem, who make up one third of the city's 750,000 inhabitants, have boycotted municipal elections ever since Israel occupied and illegally annexed the city in 1967, considering a vote in the election as an act that would legitimize the Israeli occupation, and the Jerusalem's municipality's racist Judaization policy in the city.

Britain to Crack Down on Israeli Settlement Products

3 November 2008 – British newspaper, The Independent, reports that an internal EU note circulated by the UK expresses concern that goods produced from the settlements may be entering Britain after being illegally exempted from tariffs in violation of an Israel-EU trade agreement. The note calls for the EU separately to consider afresh much more stringent labeling rules for settlement-produced goods in British stores to prevent them being designated as being from the "West Bank" in a way that could falsely imply that they have a Palestinian origin, calling for "targeted" examination of goods imported from Israel to establish whether they were in fact produced inside the 1967 "green line."

UN Special Committee Recommends Sanctions on Israel in face of 'enormous web of unlawful practices' devastating Palestinian society"

4 November 2008 – In its eighth report to the General Assembly (UN Document A / 63 / 273), the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory established itself as the only UN body

thus far that has explicitly called for “sanctions against Israel if it persists in paying no attention to its international legal obligations.” The report details many of Israel’s violations of international law that were compiled by the committee from meetings and submissions in Damascus, Amman and Cairo. Israel does not permit members of the committee to enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Read the full report at: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.nsf/361eea1cc08301c485256cf600606959/67e4d25349874535852574dc004be8e4!OpenDocument>

BNC Calls for a Boycott of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra!

28 October 2008 - The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) called on the hosts in the fourteen American cities scheduled to host the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra (JSO) to rescind their invitations to the Orchestra. The special performance in the US honors the 60th anniversary of the Orchestra and of the establishment of the state of Israel. The BNC call states that such “celebrations of Israeli statehood are a means to cover up the Nakba, or catastrophe, that was inflicted upon the indigenous Palestinian population by Zionist forces in 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were forcefully expelled from their lands in a systematic ethnic cleansing program that continues to this day.” The call also states that “the JSO is one of the primary promoters and exporters of Israeli cultural life, one of its functions is to boost Israel’s image on the world stage. In this way, the truth about the Israeli occupation of Palestine becomes suppressed, and its institutionalized attacks on Palestinian cultural heritage are ignored. Any attempt by the US hosts of the tour to develop ties with this Orchestra, therefore, amounts to condoning Israeli apartheid.” Read the full statement at: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/211>

Groups Call on Marriott Marquis to Cancel Fundraiser for the Hebron Fund

13 November 2008 – Eight groups representing tens of thousands of people in the US, Palestine and Israel have called on the Marriott Marquis hotel in Manhattan to cancel a fundraiser for the Brooklyn-based Hebron Fund. On the Hebron Fund webpage, clicking on the symbol which says “Give to Hebron” leads to a donations page on the website for the Jewish Community of Hebron which says, among other things, “keep Hebron Jewish for the Jewish people.” The contesting groups submitted a letter on November 7th saying, “The Marriot Marquis will be facilitating activities that directly violate international law and US foreign policy, actively promote racial discrimination, and, at least indirectly, support brutal Israeli settler attacks on Palestinian civilians and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Hebron.” For more information and a list of signatories contact: info@adalahny.org

BDS Campaign Opposition to Shimon Peres “Peace” Lecture at Balliol College, Oxford

13 November 2008 – Hundreds of letters were sent by BDS advocates around the world to the College in an effort to bring attention to the Israeli president’s past and present responsibility for war crimes and serious human rights violations. Oxford University students took the lead in the campaign, and their vocal disruption to the lecture itself was widely publicized. The Congress of South African Trade Unions issued an important statement calling on the college to cancel the lecture, as did PACBI on behalf of the BNC, who wrote: “We believe that honoring Peres is an affront not only to Palestinians, but also to a significant segment of UK academics. These academics’ determined support for Palestinian rights, by calling for the isolation of Israel in the world community and refusing to treat it as a normal nation until it fully respects international law, has earned the admiration of Palestinian and solidarity movements across the world.”

Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC) launches day of action against Veolia

15 November 2008 – SCC activists distributed red cards asking passengers of the Stockholm underground to place them to the clothes to protest against Veolia’s involvement in the Jerusalem Light Railway built on stolen Palestinian land. Veolia operates the Stockholm subway system and is currently seeking a renewal of their 8-year contract with the Stockholm County Council. Veolia is under pressure following several protests by civil society groups, media attention and political criticisms from the Stockholm County Council, campaigning for the barring of Veolia from the procurement process due to their disregard for international law.

Egyptian court orders freeze in natural gas exports to Israel

18 November 2008 – An Egyptian court restricted natural gas exports to Israel on the grounds that the controversial deal with Israel was improperly awarded because it was not approved by Parliament. The deal was implemented

through a memorandum of understanding bypassing Parliamentary vote. The decision comes in the wake of a revelation that Egypt is losing \$9 million for each day that Cairo upholds the fixed-price agreement with Tel Aviv. While this court ruling can be appealed against by the government, the controversial 20-year deal on gas exports to Israel continues to be seen by many Egyptians as a betrayal.

Catalan Workers' Union joins the BDS Campaign and passes resolution

23 November 2008 – At their General Assembly, Intersindical Alternativa de Catalunya (IAC) unanimously passed a resolution calling on “world leaders and the United Nations Security Council to demand Israel abides by international humanitarian law and UN resolutions by immediately ending its policy of collective punishment. This requires Israel to immediately halt its siege of the Gaza Strip and stop its construction activities in the Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Separation Wall; Ending the Israeli occupation and colonization of all Palestinian and Arab lands and dismantling the Wall; Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.” Towards those ends, the union also resolved to work to “impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era.” For more information visit <http://www.catac.cat> or contact Luis Blanco at: sindicat@catac.cat

Palestinian Community Leaders urge UK divestment of Israeli Settlement Builders

24 November 2008 – Distinguished Palestinian leaders call on the British government cease its plans to rent space for its new Tel Aviv embassy location from Lieviev's company Africa-Israel, and to publicly guarantee its refusal to conduct business with similar settlement-builders. The Palestinian leaders argue that recent crackdown on settlement exports by the British government is undermined with the renting of space for its embassy from a settlement-builder, and would send a contradictory message making it actively complicit with illegal settlement construction. The Palestinian leaders include: Hussam Khader, Khaleda Jarrar, Hanan Ashrawi, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Archbishop Atallah Hannah, and Sheikh Ikrimah Sabri.

Successful campaign closes depot of Israeli-owned water company in Scotland

25 November 2008 – The Israeli water cooler company Eden Springs has closed its factory in Scotland after losing hundreds of contracts, including ones with mainland and island councils. The councils, along with a number of Scottish trade union and student bodies, have all voted to boycott Eden Springs explicitly on the grounds of Israel's violations of international and human rights law. Keen to conceal its status as an-Israeli owned company, the manager of Eden Springs, Graham Carruthers, has been canvassing customer responses to a name change as one way to limit financial losses caused by increasing association of the brand with and Israel's crimes. This successful closure is recognized within the industry to be due in large part to a resolute publicity campaign by the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign. For more information contact: campaign@scottishpsc.org.uk

President of UN General Assembly Calls for BDS against Israeli Apartheid State

26 November 2008 – UN General Assembly President, Father Miguel D'Escoto Brockman, called on the UN and its member states to follow the lead from civil society organizations in implementing Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions on Israel until it complies with international law. President Brockman made his urgent call during his address to the 57th Plenary of the General Assembly on November 24 as part of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In his speech, President Brockman said: “I spoke this morning about apartheid and how Israeli policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories appear so similar to the apartheid of an earlier era, a continent away. I believe it is very important that we in the United Nations use this term. We must not be afraid to call something what it is.”

To view the speech go to: <http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/specialevents/2008/se081124am.rm>

Unilever to divest from Israeli factory in Ariel settlement in West Bank

1 December 2008 - The food and soap manufacturing multinational Unilever has announced that it will sell its 51% stake in the Beigel & Beigel factory in Ariel settlement, illegally built on land confiscated from Palestinians.

BDS Update

Similar actions by multinational corporations include: the Swedish company Assa Abloy, which removed its Mul-T-Lock factory in the Barkan settlement; the Barkan Winery company, which divested from its branch on the Barkan Industrial Park after entering a partnership with the Dutch beer manufacturer, Heineken; and Harrod's department store, which cleared its shelves of Beigel & Beigel products in August 2008.

For more information see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/01/israel-palestine-unilever>

Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire Calls for Divestment from Israel

4 December 2008 - The Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire passed a resolution to support the call urging divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. The resolution intends to increase awareness of and divest from the companies that actively participate in the oppression of Palestinians and launches a strategy for morally responsible investing to initiate a process of divestment from corporations that allow and profit from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

See: http://www.nhepiscopal.org/convention/diocon_over.html

Dubai activists join campaign against Lev Leviev

12 December 2008 - Activists from Dubai joined the campaign against Lev Leviev, urging residents of Dubai to boycott the jeweler during the screening of the documentary Slingshot Hip Hop at the Dubai Film Festival. Forty T-shirts and one hundred letters from the West Bank village of Jayyous were distributed to the audience at the screening calling explaining the criminal effect of Leviev-built settlements on their villages, and calling for a boycott of his enterprises.

BNC calls for Boycott of L'Oreal

23 December 2008 – Coinciding with the holiday season, the Palestinian BNC called upon people of conscience all over the world to boycott all the products of the French cosmetics giant, L'Oreal due to its deep and extensive involvement in business relations with Israel. L'Oreal's operations in Israel began in the mid-1990s and the company's subsidiary in Israel has operated a factory in the Israeli settlement Migdal Ha'emek in the Lower Galilee. Migdal Ha'emek was established in 1952 on lands belonging to the ethnically-cleansed Palestinian village of al-Mujaydil, whose original inhabitants are still denied the right to return to their homes. Like almost all other Jewish settlements built in the midst of Palestinian villages in the Galilee, inside Israel, Migdal Ha'emek discriminates against Palestinian citizens of Israel, denying them the right to buy, rent or live on any part of the town, simply because they are "non Jews." Read the full BNC statement at: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/231>

BNC Issues Statement Against Gaza Massacres "Stop the Massacre in Gaza – Boycott Israel Now!"

27 December 2008 – Full text of statement in documents section, on page 85.

Palestinian university workers urges immediate boycott after Gaza university bombing

29 December 2008 – The Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees added their voice to the urgent appeal issued two days before by the Palestinian BNC urging international civil society not just to protest and condemn Israel's massacre in Gaza, but also to join and intensify the international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel to hold it accountable for its persistent violations of international law. In the statement, the union president stated that "at the height of the lethal Israeli assault against the Palestinian people in Gaza, we are met with deafening silence emanating from the Israeli academy... Israeli academic institutions are complicit in the entrenched system of oppression practiced by the Israeli state, and their silence at this critical moment is only the most vociferous indicator of this complicity."

Read the full statement at: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/239>

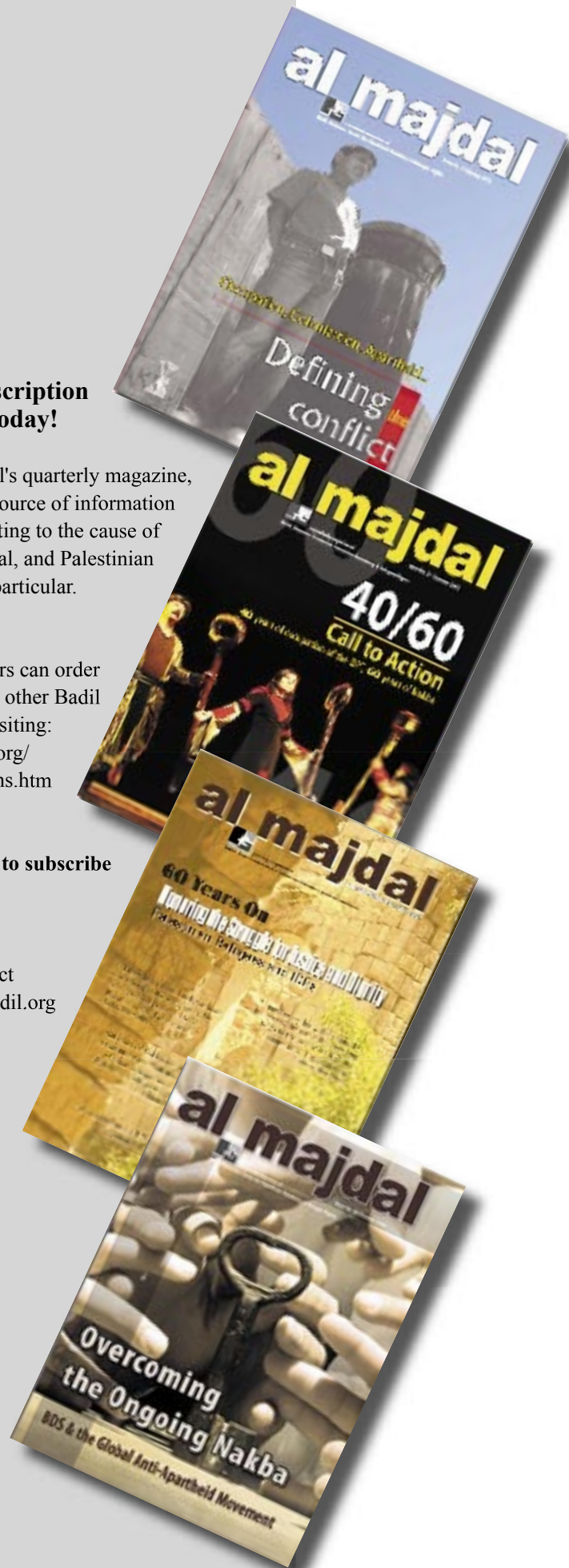
Get your Subscription to *al-Majdal* Today!

Al-Majdal is Badil's quarterly magazine, and an excellent source of information on key issues relating to the cause of Palestine in general, and Palestinian refugee rights in particular.

Credit Card holders can order *al-Majdal*, and all other Badil publications by visiting:
<http://www.badil.org/paypal/publications.htm>

Get your library to subscribe to *al-Majdal*

For more information contact
mediaenglish@badil.org



About the meaning of al-Majdal

al-Majdal is an Aramaic word meaning fortress. The town was known as Majdal Jad during the Canaanite period for the god of luck. Located in the south of Palestine, al-Majdal was a thriving Palestinian city with some 11,496 residents on the eve of the 1948 Nakba. Majdalawis produced a wide variety of crops including oranges, grapes, olives and vegetables. Palestinian residents of the town owned 43,680 dunums of land. The town itself was built on 1,346 dunums.

The town of al-Majdal suffered heavy air and sea attacks during the latter half of the 1948 war in Palestine. Israeli military operations (Operation Yoav, also known as "10 Plagues") aimed to secure control over the south of Palestine and force out the predominant Palestinian population. By November 1948, more than three-quarters of the city's residents had fled to the Gaza Strip. Israel subsequently approved the resettlement of 3,000 Jews in Palestinian refugee homes in the town. In late 1949 Israel began to drive out the remaining Palestinian population using a combination of military force and administrative measures. The process was completed by 1951. Israel continues to employ similar measures in the 1967 occupied West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian refugees from al-Majdal now number over 71,000 persons, and Israel has Hebraized the name of their town as "Ashkelon". Like millions of other Palestinian refugees, Majdalawis are not allowed to return to their homes of origin. Israel opposes the return of the refugees due to their ethnic, national and religious origins. *al-Majdal*, BADIL's quarterly magazine, reports about and promotes initiatives aimed at achieving durable solutions for Palestinian refugees and displaced persons based on international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Back Cover: Photo: "For the Sake of Gaza" Vigil against Gaza Massacre, Bethlehem Church of the Nativity 5 January 2009 (©Badil). jabaliya poem by Suheir Hammad, a Palestinian spoken-word poet living in the United States. She has published a book of poems, *Born Palestinian, Born Black*, and a memoir, *Drops Of This Story*, and is prominently featured in *Listen Up! An Anthology Of Spoken Work Poetry*. We are honored that her latest poem *jabaliya* makes its first appearance in this issue of *al-Majdal*.



jabaliya

by Suheir Hammad

a woman wears a bell carries a light calls searches
through madness of deir yessin calls for rafah for bread
orange peel under nails blue glass under feet gathers
children in zeitoun sitting with dead mothers she unearths
tunnels and buries sun onto trauma a score and a day rings
a bell she is dizzy more than yesterday less than
tomorrow a zig zag back dawaiyma back humming suba

back shatilla back ramleh back jenin back il khalil back il quds
all of it all underground in ancestral chests she rings
a bell promising something she can't see faith is that
faith is this all over the land under the belly
of wind she perfumed the love of a burning sea

concentrating refugee camp
crescent targeted red

a girl's charred cold face dog eaten body
angels rounded into lock down shelled injured shock

weapons for advancing armies clearing forests sprayed onto a city
o sage tree human skin contact explosion these are our children

she chimes through nablus back yaffa backs shot under
spotlight phosphorous murdered libeled public relations

public

relation

a bell fired in jericho rings through blasted windows a woman
carries bones in bags under eyes disbelieving becoming
numb dumbled by numbers front and back gaza onto gaza
for gaza am sorry gaza am sorry she sings for the whole
powerless world her notes pitch perfect the bell a death toll