The abundance of material we received this month reveals that advocacy is deeply rooted in Palestinian society and goes beyond the demand for the respect and fulfillment of Palestinian human and humanitarian rights to include the rights of children and youth, women, prisoners, people with disabilities, animals, and more. Palestinians have created a wide range of advocacy institutions that aim to help disadvantaged members of their society. This is in line with the centuries-old tradition of *auwnah*, which means mutual community support during harvest time and in times of struggle. The sense of responsibility and community is shared by many institutions and individuals who join Palestinians in their quest to make the world a better place. With the growth of social media and electronic communication, advocacy is becoming an increasingly important tool in creating change across a wide range of arenas, from the human and humanitarian rights of Palestinians to climate change and the environment.

While Palestinian students have not yet taken up weekly protests in the streets, Gazans have demonstrated weekly for more than a year. Yet without international pressure, there will be no easing of conditions — and unfortunately, without our advocacy, this pressure may not materialize very soon!

As always, we would like to thank our authors who include Dr. Yara Hawari, Palestine Policy Fellow at Al-Shabaka, The Palestinian Policy Network; marketing and PR consultant Anan Abu Rmieleh; Dr. Benjamin Bouquet, coordinator of the right to health advocacy program, WHO, and Jeanne Dubroca, who is currently an intern with WHO; Lana Bandak, founder and director general of QADER for Community Development; Rania Murra, director of the Arab Educational Institute (AEI), and Dr. Toine van Teeffelen, adviser and manager of AEI’s advocacy project; Nour Odeh, media professional, communications consultant, and political analyst; Maha Abdallah, senior legal researcher and advocacy officer at Al-Haq independent human rights organization; Sam Bahour, managing partner of Applied Information Management; Randi Siniora, general director of the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling; Ismail Abu Arafeh, Economic Justice Programme Coordinator at Oxfam; MIFTAH civil society organization; Budour Hassan, advocacy officer at Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center; The Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association–Asala; and Aref Husseini, the founder and CEO of Al Nayzak for Scientific Innovation. Our personality of the month is Abdullah Yacoub, and Dina Matar our artist of the month. Visit our exhibition of the month that features Ihsan Al Bandak, find the flowers introduced by Morgan Cooper in What’s in Bloom, or cook the stuffed cauliflower leaves according to Fadi Qattan’s recipe in TWiP Kitchen. Enjoy the listed events.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish a blessed Ramadan to all.

Sincerely,

Tina Basem
The views presented in the articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.
Maps herein have been prepared solely for the convenience of the reader; the designations and presentation of material do not imply any expression of opinion of This Week in Palestine, its publisher, editor, or its advisory board as to the legal status of any country, territory, city, or area, or the authorities thereof, or as to the delimitation of boundaries or national affiliation.
he Palestinian people, their fundamental rights, and their aspirations for sovereignty are facing a historic moment of vulnerability. Whilst the root cause of this predicament is the Israeli apartheid regime — which many scholars and experts identify as having emerged from a Zionist settler colonial project that gained traction in the early twentieth century — this vulnerability has been exacerbated by recent global political trends. Right-wing populism is on the rise and is taking hold in powerful states, including the United States, Brazil, and Hungary. Similarly, Israel has just elected its most right-wing government to date, with an election campaign that featured new levels of racism and bigotry. Moreover, in an effort to drum up support days before the election, Benjamin Netanyahu promised to annex the West Bank.

It has never been more important to advocate for Palestine in the international policy world. But Palestinians are at a severe disadvantage. Israel has long been able to violate international law without consequences, largely due to global political interests but also because it has been successful in advocating its main policy narrative, namely, that Israeli “security” trumps fundamental Palestinian rights. This narrative relies heavily on dehumanizing Palestinians, a tactic easily accomplished in a global climate of Islamophobia, one replete with “War on Terror” discourse that puts the safety of the West over the lives of people in the Global South. This has forced Palestinians in their advocacy efforts to focus on the basics, promoting the idea that the Palestinian cause is a just and moral one, arguing that Palestinians are entitled to fundamental rights, and maintaining that those rights must be guaranteed by the international community.

Further, the discourse of the advocacy and policy world has changed over the last twenty years, in part due to the Oslo “peace process” and its transformation of Palestinian civil society and governmental institutions. Oslo imposed a new framework for “peace” and “state-building,” which flooded Palestine with donor funding. Palestinian civil society and its political establishment became heavily dependent on this external patronage and thus became largely committed to following a donor agenda. This in turn affected the lexicon used by advocates for Palestine who work in civil society and political spheres, and the deeply politicized and revolutionary language of the 1970s and 1980s was watered down. To attract funders, many advocates turned to using buzzwords such as “empowerment” and “capacity building,” terms that UN agencies and other international organizations define and on which they place their own meanings and conditions. Indeed, such “empowerment” and “capacity building” is often limited to socioeconomic empowerment, rather than on the type of empowerment that would support Palestinians in their efforts to resist military occupation and ongoing settler colonialism.

Another development that stems from Oslo has been the marginalization of the anti-colonial liberation narrative in favor of a rights-based approach rooted in the international legal regime. This marginalization and the simultaneous pressures from the donor community have had a de-politicizing effect on Palestine, encouraging Palestinian civil society and government institutions to struggle for their minimum human rights within the international system rather than push for their political aspirations of sovereignty.
Despite these challenges, advocacy remains an essential part of the Palestinian struggle and provides Palestinians with an opportunity to redefine their narrative. Indeed, for a very long time, Palestinians have been told not only what Palestine is but also who qualifies as Palestinian. The Oslo process caged Palestine into the “Occupied Palestinian Territory” (OPT), that is, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and sidelined huge swathes of the Palestinian people, namely the refugees and the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Various Palestinian organizations, from educational NGOs to human rights groups and think tanks, are attempting to redefine the Palestinian narrative, particularly in the policy world. One such think tank is Al-Shabaka – The Palestinian Policy Network, an independent and nonpartisan organization that educates and fosters public debate on Palestinian human rights and self-determination. It draws upon the vast knowledge, experience, and expertise of the Palestinian people, whether under occupation, in exile, or in Israel, so as to engage the broadest spectrum of perspectives in debate on policy and strategy – and in doing so it transcends the geographic and political barriers enforced upon Palestinians, making their fragmentation into a strength and creating a space to build a clearer and more unified advocacy strategy.

Such a strategy needs to focus not just on what Palestinians do not want but also on what they do want. In other words, Palestinians cannot take away the old narrative of the Oslo peace process without putting forward a new one. Such a narrative has to incorporate the reality on the ground, a reality of an apartheid regime governing from the river to the sea. It also must incorporate a vision for the future based on anti-colonial principles and a demand for political sovereignty. Furthermore, those who work in advocacy should start saying in public what they say in private. This takes courage, particularly when donor funding is at stake, yet if Palestinians from all geographies work together, they can build and present a confident and assertive front that replaces the old narrative and creates a vision for the future which includes all Palestinians.

The current global climate is not on the Palestinians’ side. We are living a reality in which Israel can gun down unarmed civilian protesters in Gaza in front of the world’s media and not face any repercussions. It is a reality in which Israeli politicians can boast about killing Palestinians and still be welcomed in diplomatic circles. The policy world is one where fundamental values are only values if there is a political will to defend them. In light of this, Palestinians must understand that justice will not come to them. Rather, they will have to fight for it.

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Change in the Age of Data

By Anan Abu Rmieleh

The inability to find data and evidence on Palestine is one major reason for writing this article. I could not even find supporting evidence before commenting on the large number of advocacy initiatives we participate in and hear about every day.

The size of the advocacy endeavor itself could be huge, but not necessarily its impact. We are characterized by knee-jerk reactions in making quick decisions without carefully considering evidence. Rarely are our development projects or our regulations and policies driven by data, purpose, or long-term vision. While the global approach of evidence-based decision-making and the analytics industries is growing, we choose to stay on a data-free diet while we plan for sustainable growth. We love to inflate numbers and chat about development, but we forget actual change and its impact on future generations that seek a safe and secure future in Palestine. Despite the political context, which narrows every path towards real development, the generation and dissemination of knowledge will help lower the gap between outcomes and reality.

Advocacy, in its simplest terms, refers to taking action and making change. If you advocate for no purpose you will reach absolutely nowhere. If you do not expose truth and bring facts to the table, you are not engaging in advocacy work. In order to find facts, you need to collect data and turn it into knowledge; and then you must turn knowledge into policy, law, and regulations, which eventually will bring about real change. There are several types of advocacy: product advocacy that is mainly driven by brand ambassadors and market influencers; legal advocacy to monitor laws and regulations and protect legal rights and operations; and most importantly, systems advocacy, the kind of advocacy that focuses on influencing and changing our political, social, cultural, and economic ecosystem.

A change in the system needs a well-informed advocacy plan. Organizations that own data can advocate on three different levels: on a policy level, through lobbying and direct communications with decision makers; on a community level, through awareness and campaigning to gather support for a specific issue or cause; and on a stakeholder level, by engaging stakeholders and building their capacity to help in the mission to change the system.

Data can be collected through various types of primary research and experiments, or through computerized information systems. Any data-generating information system, whether it is made for customers, trade, health, human rights, or real estate, is considered a wealthy and instant source of evidence, as long as the data is analyzed and utilized to build indicators and real knowledge. While research can help investigate an issue, information systems can provide real-time data immediately for rapid response on alarming issues. They can deliver accurate and timely information when it comes to studying the prevalence of a disease, the growth of an industry, the increase in women’s rights violations, or the geography of road traffic accidents. Development projects should computerize their own procedures, forms, and operations, and build their capacity in the field to reap the benefits of evidence. However, raw data is useless and cannot be used as evidence; that is why firms, organizations, and governments worldwide look for data scientists and analysts to exploit the huge chunks of data they collect on a daily basis.

When you have the superpower of knowledge, you can report the obstacles of your industry to policy makers who will have to cooperate, especially when you pass on this knowledge to the public. Nevertheless, advocacy should be

Advocacy should come with concrete evidence to be transparent, credible, and strong. However, only simple communications and visual storytelling will make your evidence more appealing to the average person.
They argue about whether data is the new oil of the 21st century. I believe that it is more valuable. Data is infinite, reusable, easily replicable, vital, and insightful. It is not the kind of commodity you store until it is needed, but the resource you immediately utilize to extract evidence and knowledge.

carefully directed so that it does not drive the negative advocacy of sabotage or chaos. Communicating with decision-makers comes in different forms, including direct face-to-face communications, reports, policy briefs, or appeal letters. On the other hand, information given to the public and media should be subtly crafted and disseminated. Translate complicated sets of data into simple information that makes sense to the public. These tools may include infographics, videos, fact sheets, whitepapers, and brief reports. If you work in technology, health, water, or agriculture, do not expect the average citizen to understand your jargon and technical terms, rather curate messages in the simplest form possible. Be concise and build an emotional-messaging frame to break through the rigidity of your numbers and charts. Offer people a catchy story rather than a huge load of boring technical information.

You will also need the support of advocates, who could be your fans, community, partners, peers, or any stakeholder group. You need to engage your community from grassroots to grasstops. Partner with other organizations that give you access to more active and interested people in your community. In some cases, you will also need to build the capacity of your stakeholders and educate them on your evidence and its implications. If you are advocating for a human-rights issue, you will need to train experts who understand the problem and who want to work on it as much as you do. If you are advocating for a health issue, you will need to engage health syndicates and educate them on the importance of such evidence. If you are advocating against a new labour legislation, you need to educate employees on the consequences of such legislation. To plan your stakeholders’ engagement, you may run a power-mapping exercise to identify your stakeholders, determine how powerful and influential they are, and evaluate to what extent each of them supports or opposes your advocacy plans.

The next most important part of any advocacy activity is monitoring and evaluation. If your advocacy is data driven, but your performance is not, then you are trapped in a vicious circle. Collecting data and insights throughout the process is imperative and helps you measure the impact of your campaign. Before starting your campaign, plan well and set measurable performance indicators to monitor and track across the advocacy journey. Overlooking the measurement of your communication and advocacy campaigns will deplete your budget and result in no change on the ground.

Data-driven advocacy will bolster our development initiatives in Palestine, especially when it is tailored to meet national needs. Health evidence can be utilized to promote healthy lifestyles; statistics on the number of failing investments can inform regulatory bodies to soften their regulations; reporting of human rights violations can be publicized and taken to court; data on the increasing number of imported products should convince the government to restrict imported products and protect local ones. Evidence is also needed to identify national priorities. Which is more important? A Palestinian IT sector that provides technical support to the Israeli market, or an IT sector that innovates and sells software to regional markets? Is it better to build startups with a regional expansion potential or startups with solutions to our own problems in Palestine? What is the leading cause of pollution in Palestine? And what do we do to prevent it?

Answers to many of these questions could be available at governmental institutions, think tanks, universities, and research institutes. I am quite optimistic and glad that several organizations are progressing in data generation and advocacy, yet they still need the government’s support and willingness to share data and disseminate knowledge. Data is a valuable asset only if its true value is unlocked and utilized by those who can influence change.

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Health advocacy comprises a range of actions to raise health issues on the political agenda in order to promote change in policy and practice to benefit the health of populations. The right to health provides a cohesive vision for effective health advocacy that recognizes the political, legal, and practical avenues for realizing that vision. Figure 1 shows the core components of the right to health, which include accessible, available, acceptable, and high-quality health services, along with underlying determinants of health, such as access to safe drinking water and sanitation, food and nutrition, and shelter and education. The right to health relates closely to other human rights, such as the right to life and the right to a life with dignity.

In addition to providing a cohesive vision, effective advocacy requires thorough analysis of barriers to achieving that vision. The ongoing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has presented significant obstacles to realizing the right to health for Palestinians. Lack of territorial sovereignty has consequences for the income of the Palestinian Authority and hence for the sustainability of the Palestinian health sector, which is highly donor dependent. The Paris Protocol on Economic Relations formalizes an effective customs union with Israel and has implications for the affordability of medicines and overall health care. The Palestinian Ministry of Health overpays substantially for many medicines, compared to international benchmark prices, with import restrictions being a major contributing factor to increased prices. Long-term depletion and shortages of essential medicines and supplies particularly affect Gaza, where 46 percent of essential medicines had on average less than a month’s supply remaining over the course of 2018.

In the Gaza Strip, 12 years of blockade have detrimentally affected the health sector. There has been a per capita reduction in health staff, especially with respect to medical specialists. The limited and unpredictable electricity supply to Gaza means that hospitals and clinics depend on the provision of fuel to supply emergency generators. Fuel shortages and electricity outages have the potential to put patient lives at risk. For example, when backup generators failed at the Pediatric Specialized Hospital in Gaza City, medical teams had to manually ventilate four children until maintenance engineers were able to repair the machinery. Fluctuations in energy supply and power failures also reduce the lifespan of sensitive hospital equipment.

The legislative and physical division of the West Bank presents obstacles to effective health care provision for vulnerable communities – such as those in Area C, which comprises more than 60 percent of the West Bank. Discriminatory planning policies restrict the development of permanent health facilities in this area, many of which rely on mobile clinics for primary health care. Over a third of Palestinians living in Area C have limited access to primary health care.

Attacks against health care also impact the delivery of effective care to patients. From March 30, 2018 to March 31, 2019, WHO recorded an unprecedented 521 attacks against health care in the West Bank and Gaza.
In the West Bank, access to health care is further hampered by the extensive and shifting system of Israeli checkpoints, and the settlement infrastructure and separation wall that divide the land and communities. From April 2018 to March 2019, WHO recorded 56 incidents of delaying or preventing the delivery of health care, including to 14 Palestinians whose wounds proved fatal.

Finally, barriers to the right to health are not restricted to obstacles to the provision of health services, they also affect the underlying factors that influence our health and well-being, and our chances of developing illnesses. The blockade on Gaza has had a damaging impact on its economy. The Gaza Strip was largely dependent on access to the labor market in Israel between 1967 and the late 1990s, with the percentage of the employed population working in Israel peaking at 45 percent between 1980 and 1987. In the second quarter of 2018, unemployment in Gaza was 54 percent; and the rates were higher among young people (over 70 percent) and among women (78 percent). Poverty reached 53 percent in the same year, while more than two-thirds of the population were food insecure. Unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity are often associated with poor health.

Documentation and evidence collection are necessary for the effective engagement of legal avenues for advocacy, but legal advocacy alone is not enough to ensure the respect, protection, and fulfillment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Civic space to organize and engage in constructing and realizing a positive
Advocacy is everyone’s business. It’s up to all of us to make the right to health a reality for all.

Vision for our collective existence and all the aspects of our lives that impact our health is necessary for attaining the right to health. This links the right to health closely to those other human rights: the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of association, and the right to freedom of speech. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Constitution of the World Health Organization provide us with a radical vision for a politics of equality and health for all. It’s up to all of us to realize that vision.

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Many Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, particularly in Area C, East Jerusalem, and the settlement area of Hebron city (H2), are at risk of forcible transfer. Certain Israeli policies and practices applied in these areas create a coercive environment, which generates pressure on Palestinians to leave their communities. These include the demolition and threat of demolition of homes, schools and livelihoods; evictions; denial of service infrastructure; access restrictions on farming and grazing land; poor law enforcement on violent settlers; the promotion of ‘relocation’ plans; and revocation of residency rights, among others.

For more information: www.ochaopt.org/atlas2019/
round one in five women worldwide is a woman with disability. For women with disability, gender-based violence and disability discrimination intersect to create brutal barriers to well-being.

Violence against women and girls with disabilities in Palestine includes sexual violence, verbal violence, psychological violence, economic violence, and violence within institutions. In addition, violence against women and girls with disabilities includes forced isolation or detention, sterilization, forced psychological interventions, medical exploitation, drug withholding or forced use, privacy violation, deprivation of liberty and freedom, denial of their right to care, denial of basic-need materials, and humiliation. Moreover, women and girls with disabilities are often forced to stay in boarding houses, being denied their right to make decisions regarding their own lives — including matters relating to their bodies — and depriving them of the resources they may have, whether financial or otherwise. Eventually, they face social, economic, and political exclusion and dependence which inevitably leads to limited participation in society, limited employment opportunities, and limited communication with others.

It crucial to emphasize that violence based on gender and disability is an intersection between gender and disability. Women with disabilities therefore are exposed to multiple vulnerabilities, namely, to males on the one hand and to women without disabilities on the other. They are at higher risk due to several factors, including social isolation, stigma, unequal power relations, and inaccessibility of services. Many authors in the relevant literature suggest that violence against women and girls with disabilities is more acute and widespread and occurs over longer periods of time and with worse physical and mental outcomes than violence against women and girls without disabilities. They are exposed to all forms of violence that are directly related to their low social status, to cultural determinants that characterize them as being less valuable, and to their increased dependence on others.

In Palestine, unfortunately, too many existing programs meant to prevent gender-based violence do not take into account the unique dangers and challenges faced by women with disabilities. Without specific attention and solutions, these women have been left behind and at risk.

Palestinian civil society organizations consider the reduction of gender-based violence to be a mutual responsibility among all stakeholders and believe in the continuous partnership between accountable power holders — such as civil society organizations, official institutions, development agencies, and service providers — who must build into their programs successful models of protection for women and girls with disabilities. Potential interventions need to be mindful of the complex intersection between gender and disability bias. There is evidence that there are different strands of violence — some of which are clearly based on gender, others on disability, and others on a complex interplay between the two. This intersection needs to be explored in more depth through various research methods; it

QADER enhanced a new methodology to work with children with severe disabilities (Jericho municipality center for children with disabilities).
will require sustained national focus, momentum, and action. Society’s belief in “leave no one behind” must be serious and expressed in its theory of change and in the models, strategies, and programs it adopts.

There are four pillars that can guide Palestine’s continuation on the track of protecting the rights of women and girls with disabilities and its efforts to challenge and remove existing barriers. First, we need to apply research best practices to document and give evidence of the scale of the problem and how disability and gender intersect — involving women with disabilities in conducting research as they have insight into issues that affect their own lives. Second, we must support the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities; they must be involved in decision-making processes and enabled to become leaders themselves. Awareness must be created to reduce negative attitudes and stigma towards them, so as to reduce risks of violence, which includes the need for adequate measures of protection. Third, responding to multiple actors, our theory of change should include attempts to consider potential interventions of multiple groups of people who abuse women and girls with disabilities. We must understand the relation between them, the role of female family members, men, and boys and find ways to influence the power imbalances between them towards enhancing protection of girls and women with disabilities. Finally, due to the complexity of the various groups of people who are exposed to abuse — among the family, community, and institutions — we need to mobilize allies and shift the responsibility of protection and well-being of girls and women with disabilities to make it a collective concern and cause for action.

QADER for Community Development is a Palestinian nongovernmental, nonprofit, independent organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of persons with disabilities in Palestine. Since its founding in 2008, QADER has assumed its functional responsibility by addressing the disability issue from a human rights perspective and has adopted a rights-based approach in tackling the various issues that affect persons with disabilities. Relevant publications regarding this theme include *The Comprehensive Policies and Procedures Manual for the Protection of Women and Girls with Disabilities from Violence in Palestine*, published in 2019 and authored by Shatha Abu Srour, a woman with visual disability.

QADER has worked in various fields and aims to develop the rights of and services provided for persons with disabilities in general. The organization focuses on promoting the establishment of basic standards and methods that are closer to the holistic, legal, and developmental perspective of disability; it aims to ensure that these perspectives are institutionalized at the policy and operational levels in all service sectors.

One of the most important methods adopted by QADER’s work is to monitor the reality related to a particular service sector and to identify its strengths and weaknesses and then to provide theoretical or practical alternatives that can be adopted to improve policies, procedures, and interventions. The alternatives can be implemented in

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Discrimination on the basis of disability is defined as any exclusion, marginalization, or restriction on the basis of functional, sensory, motor, mental, or psychological differences. The combatting of discrimination that aims to negate, nullify, or limit the recognition, enjoyment, and full and effective exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms in all civil, social, economic, political, cultural, and other fields requires that reasonable accommodating arrangements and additional measures and adjustments be provided for individuals with disabilities.
or lacks the regulatory framework for organizing and regulating the roles of the various organizations that protect women in general and women with disabilities in particular. This situation, in effect, forces these organizations to discontinue their delivery of protection services at certain stages, including legal protection. Consequently, these women and the service-delivery organizations face obstacles that hamper their access to both accurate information and protection services.

Furthermore, there are socio-cultural challenges that women in general and women with disabilities in particular are facing. These are highlighted by the patriarchal nature of Palestinian society. Women tend to be returned to the place where they had been subjected to violence in coordination with the head of the household who must ensure that these women will not be subjected to violence. In most cases, no legal guarantees are made and no actions are taken against those who subjected the women to violence. Hence, women and girls with disabilities who are victims of violence normally go back to their families without the minimum requirements and guarantees for protection or follow up, which leads to more and augmented violence against them than before they sought protection.

Another challenge and barrier is the prevailing lack of rehabilitation services at the organizations that provide protection services for these women. The scarcity of financial and human resources for protection interventions at these organizations further increases the gaps in service delivery. Nonetheless, despite the absence of monitoring and follow-up mechanisms for victims of violence, the study showed that all women and girls with disabilities who had previously been subjected to sexual violence had been provided with some form of protection services by the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development, and safe homes had been identified by mere chance and not via set channels and mechanisms that follow up on the living conditions of these women. Finally, these women, irrespective of their disabilities, lack access to protection organizations because little to no information about these organizations and the services they provide is available. This constitutes a major challenge and barrier for these women to exercise their right to protection.

Girls and women with intellectual disabilities are subjected to hysterectomies as they are more exposed to sexual violence (rape) and thus more at risk of becoming pregnant. QADER advocates stopping this action because the institution believes that this practice implicitly legalizes the violence against these women.

Thanks go to researcher Shatha Abu Srour for her assistance in preparing the material for this article.
n late October, a group of 30 local young women launched the “Artas Deserves to Be Beautiful” advocacy campaign in Artas, a village to the south of Bethlehem. They wanted to solve the waste problem in the village. One participant relates, “I used to read slogans such as ‘After failure comes success!’ or ‘When there is determination, we can reach our goals.’ I did not understand the meaning of those words until I saw some powerful models of women showing determination, passion, and strength.”

“When I was a university student, my only ambition was to graduate and get a job. However, after participating in the project, I started to see things from a new perspective. A sense of responsibility started to grow in me. I felt that I was responsible for my village. I wanted it to be a beautiful place, and I increasingly felt a sense of belonging.”

The women in the village entered the field of tax collection. As volunteers, some went from house to house to encourage inhabitants to pay waste-collection taxes and to raise awareness about the problem of waste; others went to schools to give training sessions to students. They explained the tools of advocacy and campaigning, how to involve stakeholders and address those in authority. The cleaning campaign featured additional activities such as removing garbage from the street, putting flowers in tires along the road, asking the police to take care of parking issues, and celebrating the campaign with a photo exhibit and hanging slogan posters on walls in public areas. As a result, the participants won over students and teachers as supporters and volunteers. The mayor and village council as well as a local heritage NGO supported the actions. The women made an arrangement with the solid-waste department in the Bethlehem district. Authorities agreed to make Artas a “model waste-collecting village.”

The campaign did not proceed unhindered, though, as our participant mentions: “We faced many difficulties and challenges from cultural traditions as well as from society in general, which sometimes seemed determined to punish us for implementing the campaign. In spite of these challenges, there were some beautiful moments when people, especially the young in our society – some of whom used to be our opponents or neutral bystanders – came to help us and join the campaign as their attitudes began to change.” And: “This campaign changed the outlook of the villagers towards waste management. Above all, it changed me. I have become an ambitious young woman who seeks a better future.”

The Artas campaign has been part of an ongoing broader effort of sumud advocacy among young women’s groups and high school groups in the Bethlehem and Hebron districts of the occupied West Bank. Sumud is Arabic for steadfastness or resilience.

Sumud advocacy confronts the slow uprooting of Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank, such as in Israeli-controlled Area C. The many reasons for this process include people’s lack of control over resources as a result of the Israeli occupation and a concomitant sense of powerlessness; the pervasive violence and destruction due to measures imposed by the occupation; the fragmentation and isolation as a result of movement restrictions; and, finally, migration.

In a manner similar to the grassroots community mobilization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1980s, sumud advocacy challenges the idea that uprooting is inevitable. It promotes awareness that efforts to keep people on the land and preserve communities are possible, against the odds, and that the local population can actually contribute significantly to these changes. In the long run, sumud advocacy is indispensable for a just peace.
Sumud advocacy is the effort of a Palestinian community to preserve its roots, foster a sense of belonging, and work on development by volunteering, raising awareness, making connections among different groups in the community, and demanding the right of security and protection. Any just peace is built on sumud advocacy.

Context-sensitive sumud advocacy fosters the experience of local belonging and rootedness. A sense of belonging to a valued community, as in Artas, is needed to be able to face any challenges and obstacles that might emerge in advocacy work. Cherishing values is essential to peace advocacy. Community peace-related values include a sense of citizenship despite the ongoing curtailment of rights as a result of the occupation and sometimes as a result of cultural traditions; the human value of caring; respect for each other’s opinions and beliefs; the implementation of basic tenets of international law, including the right to safety and security; and last but not least, respect for the land and the soil of Palestine.

Belonging is not just an emotional state nor is sumud just staying on the land. Both are about actively working to make the required changes possible. (Sumud is sometimes translated as a verb: standing fast). Fortunately, there is a long tradition of community volunteer work in Palestinian society that is essential for this type of advocacy.

A typical task during the sumud advocacy training sessions has been the search for “energy sites” within a community, places where there is a match between what should be done, what can be done, and the people who are willing and able to help do it. Our experience working in schools and clubs shows that there is actually a lot of unspent energy. As is the case everywhere in the world, teachers in Palestine are key persons in getting people energized and activated for peaceful community-based changes. In its efforts to diminish rote learning at schools, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education has identified schools that are willing to begin new extracurricular advocacy activities.

We have learned that the most important aspect of advocacy training sessions is an attitude of deep listening to individual and community stories. During a session in downtown Hebron, a young woman narrated what happened to her family at checkpoints. In no time at all, participants were in tears, and the trainer was moved to hug the speaker. In fact, the most difficult part of the training is, according to one trainer, listening to the women’s stories. Telling and listening to such stories is needed to establish rapport and to channel grief, frustration, and anger into energetic, joint work.

Topics chosen for advocacy by the school students and young women were typically related to solving practical issues of access and participation while improving the community’s appearance and strengthening its identity. In addition to the garbage collection in Artas, the young people chose to create a peaceful garden for young children, protected by school authorities, in downtown Hebron (in order to keep the children safe during times of tension caused by settlers); promote Palestinian products at a school in Beit Sahour to help create and sustain local employment in an attempt to discourage emigration; safeguard frequent and regular school transport along a possibly dangerous settlement road near the village of Walajeh; ensure access to health clinics, given the many checkpoints and other movement restrictions in Hebron; and call for measures to prevent school dropouts, selected as a topic by yet another school in Beit Sahour.
When mapping the problem – understanding causes, seeing linkages, asking questions – the youths almost always confront the broader question: but what about the occupation? Oftentimes local community conflicts are directly or indirectly related to the broader political situation, such as when frustration because of occupation is channeled toward one another inside a group or community.

A school community and a young women’s group chose the social environment of the Separation Wall as an advocacy topic. They engage in advocacy in north Bethlehem by requesting that local authorities lower taxes for local shops so as to keep them viable. They plant flowers in a neighborhood that has become desolate as a result of the Wall, remove garbage, and create parking arrangements for visitors, in cooperation with the police. One NGO in Aida Refugee Camp along the Wall around Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem took up the issue of awareness raising about drugs, a problem which is an increasing source of worry for local parents and teachers. Drug-dealing often takes place in the streets along the Wall — in Area C, under direct Israeli control.

Keeping communities near the Wall alive is clearly a task of sumud advocacy. However, does such advocacy not risk normalizing the Wall, treating it as if it were a natural given? Obviously, any advocacy efforts near the Wall must inform international communities and visitors about the requirements of a real peace. The participating youth therefore also opted to support human rights through a Wall information center, informing international visitors about the impact of the Wall on Palestinian life. They are asking themselves: Can the Wall around Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem become a second “center” in Bethlehem for visitors who not only visit the Church of Nativity but also want to witness the impact of the occupation and the Wall on Palestinian communities?

The groups of youth constantly face the same question: How can the work be sustainable? In Artas, the women have been invited to present themselves as candidates in local elections. They have the opportunity to make use of a hall in the municipality and use facilities of the heritage center. Their campaign is still going on. In various communities, the issue of income-generation comes up, such as selling products to local visitors and creating services for international tourists. A village such as Artas is known for its religious and cultural heritage.

Inevitably, there will be more campaigns to follow!

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Advocacy for Palestine on Social Media
An Instrument of Change

By Nour Odeh

The average person, the word advocacy signals an attempt by a group of people to lobby for a good cause. To most, if not all Palestinians, advocacy has been a way of life for decades. Long before the availability of internet and social media, Palestinians understood that succeeding in their struggle for freedom required the widest possible coalition of international solidarity.

Since the 1920s, Palestinians have organized, convened lectures, and used art and many other tools to advocate for their just cause around the world. But these efforts were limited in scope and effect for many reasons, including lack of financial resources as well as presuppositions and biases of a cultural or political nature.

Despite the setbacks and disappointment, Palestinian advocacy persisted following the Nakba. By the 1970s, the Palestinian people had become an integral part of an international movement against colonialism and oppression, boasting a wide network of international solidarity that spanned the globe. From Addis Ababa to Madrid, Dublin to San Francisco, Managua, and beyond, human rights advocates adopted the Palestinian cause as their own. This solidarity succeeded in propelling the Palestinian cause from the margins of international politics and conscience to its center, reestablishing the Palestinians as a nation with a just cause for freedom and self-determination in their stolen homeland. While these achievements were politically and legally instrumental in advancing the Palestinian cause, they stood in stark contrast to the marginalization and dehumanization of the Palestinian in mainstream corporate media, particularly in the West. Much work was still needed to change international public opinion.

Fast-forward to the turn of the twenty-first century: the mainstreaming of internet on a global scale revolutionized advocacy for activists throughout the world, particularly the Palestinian people. Instead of laboring to break the iron gates of corporate Western media, Palestinians now had an alternative avenue that was affordable, accessible, and theoretically not subject to censorship. Individual Palestinians, civil society organizations, human rights advocates, and some official institutions took to this new and boundless medium to tell their story. The introduction of social media provided Palestinians and pro-Palestine groups with the tool they needed to penetrate the censorship filters of corporate media and become part of the conversation. This was no easy task. There were hurdles.

English remains the single most effective language on social media, and activists quickly understood that advocacy in English was not just about language; it was also about cultural nuance. It was not enough to state your point in English. On social media, you have to be ready...
to defend your narrative and back up your claims. You have to have the patience and skill to respond to counterarguments and distinguish between genuine opinions and automated or fake accounts that are designed to drown your timeline with negative responses and outright lies at times. This requires skill, calm nerves, and strategy.

There are two types of advocacy in social media. One is rather personal, where persons engage in discussions with others whose views are on the opposite end of the spectrum. Regrettably, social media has proven to have the capacity to bring out the worst in people, with exchanges between people of opposing camps often sliding into nasty recriminations. This has become more difficult as social media’s sorting algorithms increasingly shield users from opposing views, showing them accounts and groups that are similar to those they already follow. In effect, this creates bubbles of the like-minded on social media, only penetrated by highly organized networks of accounts with the aim to disrupt rather than engage.

The growing trend of utilizing “bots” or paid accounts to engage in large-scale attacks on high-profile figures for the purpose of intimidation or character assassination is worrying. It is a potent and expensive tactic often used to silence pro-Palestine voices, including by the Israeli army and government who have publicized hiring hundreds of university students to serve as their “electronic army.”

In addition, since 2016, Israel has signed agreements with Facebook and Twitter to monitor “harmful” content, which is a euphemism for Palestinian activism. By 2017, the Israeli attorney general boasted that 85 percent of Israeli requests to remove such content were approved. In an additional attempt to silence dissent, Israel developed an algorithm to monitor Palestinian social media accounts that has resulted in a dramatic increase, over the past three years, in the number of Palestinians who were detained because of their social media activity.

The second, more effective form of social media advocacy, in my opinion, is focused campaigning. In order to ensure successful social media advocacy for Palestine, advocates must be able to find the right balance between their passion for the cause and their professional strategy for outreach. In addition to the globally successful BDS campaign, a bright example of this balance is the campaign No Way to Treat a Child, launched by DCI Palestine, an organization dedicated to the defense of Palestinian children. This campaign required years of dedicated work and cool-headed campaigning and is now one of the leading voices on Palestinian children’s rights, specifically those of Palestinian children imprisoned by Israeli occupation. In fact, the campaign has introduced a draft legislation that is gaining ground and co-sponsors in the US Congress, with Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez voicing her support for the legislation introduced in 2017 by Congresswoman Betty McCollum. In addition to clarity of message, consistency, and focus, the No Way to Treat a Child campaign formed a network of partners in the United States and around the world.

Individual advocacy on social media is critically important and must not...
be overlooked. Palestinians from all walks of life who are active on social media can use their timeline as a platform to advocate for Palestine among their friends and colleagues. This kind of advocacy is important because it contributes to the indispensable task of informing and engaging people with various interests. However, in the age of alternative facts and fake news, users must take extra precautions to maintain their credibility, using only verifiable information and avoiding the trap of spreading fake news or rumors.

It is difficult to form a decisive conclusion about the success of Palestinian social media advocacy, due in part to the lack of comprehensive data on the issue. However, there are encouraging indicators. Palestine is part of the international conversation and increasingly, it is a litmus test for progressives, especially in the United States. This is new and refreshing. Worldwide, international support for Palestine is on the rise, surpassing the official positions of governments in Europe, Australia, the United States, and elsewhere. Social media has allowed for the formation of global alliances based on common principles and neutralizes efforts to isolate the Palestinian cause from others. Despite the rise of nasty populist, right-wing, and racist politics, the conversation today about human rights does not and cannot exclude Palestinians; defending one requires standing up for the other.

I believe that the future is for progressives. The darkness of fundamentalist, populist, racist, fear-mongering politics will be defeated by the openness and free exchange of ideas that social-media networking provides. This conviction provides me and many others with enough hope and energy to push ahead, spread the word, and forge alliances based on convictions, not political expediency or interest. In great part, we have social media to thank for that.

Nour Odeh is a communications consultant who had a successful career in journalism before becoming the first woman to serve as government spokesperson in Palestine.

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2 https://nwttac.dci-palestine.org/about.
3 https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1118597784054243328.
International Advocacy for Palestine
The Experience of a Palestinian Human Rights Organisation

By Maha Abdallah

or the past four decades, Al-Haq, the first Palestinian nongovernmental independent human rights organization, has been at the forefront of monitoring and documenting human rights violations across the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). In doing so, Al-Haq seeks to promote and protect the rule of law, and advocate for the protection and realization of human rights for the Palestinian people, including the genuine realization of the right to self-determination, human dignity, and freedom from occupation. Accordingly, Al-Haq’s mandate evolved over the decades to include a critical and central pillar of seeking accountability for perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and access to remedy and justice for those affected, both as a result of laws, policies, and practices of Israel, as occupying power, and the Palestinian Authority where it exercises jurisdiction. The fight for the realization of Palestinian rights has been exceptionally challenging, especially due to the lack of political will on the part of the international community and its selective approach, bias, and continued attempts to dehumanize Palestinians for political and economic gains. This has been coupled with a global shrinking space for human rights organizations, defenders, and activists that resonates strongly in Palestine.

Despite the relentless work and efforts carried out by Palestinian civil society, including Al-Haq, in advocating for Palestinian human rights, the situation on the ground has continued to worsen. This is primarily due to Israel’s prolonged belligerent occupation and broader settler-colonial project, which seeks to control and eliminate the Palestinian presence, including by denying it basic rights such as the right to life, dignity, and freedom of movement, among numerous others. Accordingly, central to Al-Haq and other organizations’ advocacy efforts at local, regional, and international levels is providing legal analysis on the situation in the OPT and the status and obligations of Israel, as occupying power, and other pertinent duty bearers. Al-Haq attempts to influence policies and bring political decisions in line with international law, to safeguard and realize Palestinian rights and the aspiration for self-determination and liberation.

On an international level, Al-Haq has utilized several mechanisms in order to accurately relay the human rights situation in the OPT and call for immediate action and intervention to halt the violations and grave breaches of international law against the occupied population. Al-Haq has targeted several institutions and stakeholders, including the United Nations (UN) bodies and mechanisms, through regular participation in the Human Rights Council sessions, frequent communications to relevant Special Rapporteurs of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, as well as participating in the Universal Periodic Review process, and UN treaty-based bodies; the International Criminal Court (ICC); the European Union (EU) and its member states; and other individual third-party states.

International advocacy for the respect, protection, and fulfillment of Palestinian human rights in international forums remains crucial even though the global environment is characterized by a shift towards ultra-conservatism, extremism, and the disregard for the rule of law.

One issue that Al-Haq has conducted advocacy on at several fronts is the Great Return March which commenced on March 30, 2018. The Great Return March has been met with deliberate, excessive, and lethal force by the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF), killing more than 200 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and injuring thousands of others. For over a year, Al-Haq’s field researchers in Gaza have closely monitored and documented the weekly protests. Critically, the rate at which Palestinians have been killed and injured during the Great Return March, along with the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the IOF, combined with the lack of accountability, has again illustrated the continued systemic Israeli shoot-to-kill policy against Palestinians.

Al-Haq has robustly advocated for the Great Return March before various international platforms, including the UN, the ICC, the EU, and international diplomatic representatives and capitals of third-party states. Importantly, Al-Haq called for the protection of Palestinian protesters’ lives, genuine and effective accountability, and an end to Israel’s 12-year closure of the Gaza Strip. While doing so, it was imperative to place the Great Return March within the context of Israel’s prolonged occupation; the closure, which amounts to unlawful collective punishment and has created a human-made humanitarian crisis in Gaza; and the continued displacement of Palestinian refugees, who constitute more than 60 percent of the population in Gaza, and their right of return.

Several states issued statements of condemnation on Israel’s use of force, while the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC publicly stated that the excessive use of force by the Israeli forces against Palestinian protesters could constitute crimes. While certainly some actors in the international community, policy makers, and other relevant influencers engaged with the advocacy efforts on the Great Return March, for the most part, these were insufficient. Israel has not changed its policy of indiscriminately shooting peaceful protesters and disproportionately using excessive force, including against protected groups such as children, journalists, health workers, and persons with disabilities, and causing an alarming number of fatalities and countless injuries.

In May 2018, the Human Rights Council held a special session and adopted a resolution to establish a UN Commission of Inquiry (Col) to investigate all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law since March 30, 2018 in the OPT. Prior to this, Palestinian, regional, and international organizations, including Al-Haq, had called for the establishment of an independent investigation mechanism into the serious violations committed against Palestinians within the context of the Great Return March.

In February and March 2019, the CoI conducted a field study and investigation in the OPT/Qata Al-Burj camp along the Israel-Gaza border. This study was focused on the Great Return March and examined the violations committed against Palestinian protesters during the Great Return March, including in April 2018.

In its final report, the CoI concluded that the excessive use of force by the IOF and other Israeli forces against the Great Return March protesters violated the right to life, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, and the right to freedom of expression. The report also found that the IOF’s use of lethal force against Palestinian protesters may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity and must be immediately investigated and referred to the ICC.

The findings and recommendations of the CoI were adopted in March 2019 at the Human Rights Council session. Regardless, Israel and its forces have continued to meet Palestinian protesters in the Great Return March with excessive force, while impunity for perpetrators continued to prevail.

Alongside advocating for the rights to life, peaceful assembly, and association over the past few years, Al-Haq has also brought Palestine to the forefront of the business and human rights discourse internationally, pushing for corporate accountability in the OPT and the reaffirmation of the Palestinian right to self-determination and permanent sovereignty over natural resources. Israeli policies and practices of confiscating and appropriating Palestinian land, and the rapid settlement expansion and annexation of occupied territory, have resulted in the unlawful exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, including agricultural land, water, stone, gas, oil, and minerals, and allowed Israel to sustain and profit from its occupation. While the occupying power and its officials and institutions have played a primary role in pillaging Palestinian...
natural resources, non-state actors, including Israeli and multinational corporations, have also contributed to and profited from the occupation and settlement enterprise.

At the United Nations, Al-Haq has led the efforts in advocating for the creation and publication of a UN database that lists businesses operating in, or having activities and relationships linked to Israeli settlements. Once published, the UN database could be used as a preventive measure through which states and businesses could make informed decisions to avoid involvement in violations of international law. Even with increased attention on the database and the responsibility of businesses to respect international law and human rights in the OPT, the UN database has been met with immense political pressure, hindering its publication. Al-Haq seeks to ensure that states uphold their obligations under international law. To this end, Al-Haq has urged that states, specifically EU member states, prohibit the import and sales of settlement produce, which serve to support settlements and the exploitation of Palestinian water resources and agricultural lands. One positive measure that Al-Haq has worked to support and also provides inspiration for change is the Control of Economic Activities (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018 in Ireland, which seeks to prohibit the import of settlement products and services to Ireland, including those from Israeli settlements in the OPT. Among others, Al-Haq has presented to and accompanied leading Irish parliamentarians to the field in order to show the reality of Israel’s settlement enterprise and its detrimental impacts on Palestinian rights, lives, and livelihoods. The Occupied Territories Bill demonstrates how states can take meaningful action to end Israel’s settlement enterprise, in accordance with their obligations under international law.

The focus on international advocacy to ensure the respect, protection, and fulfillment of the human rights of Palestinians remains crucial. While there have been obstacles in reaching these aims, international forums remain the only avenue to seek change, as Israel’s colonization of Palestine continues to flourish unabated in an environment daunted by impunity. At the same time, Palestinian civil society has to adapt its efforts in light of a global shift towards ultra-conservatism, extremism, and disregard for the rule of law. In light of this, it is reasonable for Palestinians to question their faith in international law and the effectiveness of the international legal framework in positively changing the reality on the ground, more than 70 years since their systemic dispossession, displacement, and fragmentation, and their continued Nakba.

Nonetheless, as Palestinian human rights defenders, we recognize that our advocacy efforts are indispensable in guaranteeing that the Palestinian voice is heard and that our demands are attained. We therefore remain hopeful that the international system will respond positively by taking concrete action to halt the serious violations, grave breaches, and crimes committed by Israel. We eagerly anticipate that human rights standards, premised on the principles of international law, become truly indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated, and Palestinians and the question of Palestine are no longer the exception to this rule.

Maha Abdallah is a senior legal researcher and advocacy officer at Al-Haq, and holds an LLM in international human rights law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights.

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Are We Serious about Doing Business Internationally?

By Sam Bahour

Palestine’s businesses are at a tremendous disadvantage when it comes to doing business globally. It goes without saying that the Israeli military occupation and all the instability and negative public relations that come with it are at the forefront of our troubles. However, too many business owners are adding to their firm’s economic misery by not doing what they can to operate their businesses in a fashion that could advance their standing, not to mention generate more jobs.

Having been active in the business community in Palestine since 1994 and experiencing many types of businesses in varying capacities, from the largest private-sector employer to family-driven micro-businesses, I have much to say about Palestinian business practices. In this article, however, I choose to focus on one segment only: the export market, more precisely, exports from Palestine to America.

Why this particular angle? Because I co-founded, along with my American colleague, Dr. Edward Thompson, the US nonprofit organization Americans for a Vibrant Palestinian Economy (AVPE) to build bridges between Palestinian and American businesspeople on the simple premise that engagement between American and Palestinian businesspeople breeds hope (as in jobs) for a better future for Palestinians and creates more informed and constructive American perceptions and opinions about Palestine.

We are a small, independent organization that works on a shoestring budget. The efforts that Edward and I expend are totally on a volunteer basis, as are those of the rest of our board. In five years of operation, not to mention my own prior two decades of engagement in the Palestinian market, our efforts have been multi-sectoral, cross-geographical, and rather revealing. The day will come when we document our findings comprehensively. For now, I want to share the feedback of a live buyer in the United States, an American woman engaged in Palestinian solidarity, and someone kind enough to send detailed feedback of her experience in working with Palestinian firms. Since her feedback reflects much of what we have noted, I use it to make the point that Palestinian firms can — no, we must — do better, acknowledging that making a blanket statement would be incorrect. There are several firms we have come across in Hebron, Beit Jala, Ramallah, and elsewhere which are well managed; they are the minority.

A case in point

Katie Miranda is an American entrepreneur, cartoonist, and activist on Palestine-Israel. She owns and operates an e-commerce site called www.katiemiranda.com where she sells her art and jewelry, and she has a nonprofit, www.palbox.org, where she partners with Palestinian businesses to sell their products to international customers. She worked with AVPE to identify products to sell on www.palbox.org.

Her constructive feedback (see text box), while not exhaustive, provides basic guidelines for success in doing business internationally. Firms that ignore these fundamentals risk damaging their business, be their market New York or the Palestinian city next door.

Key points from Katie:

- **Be prompt**: respond to business inquiries within 24–48 hours on business days
- **Be attentive**: don’t ignore customer emails
- **Communicate**: set clear expectations regarding product-delivery dates, and promptly communicate with your customer if a delay is foreseen
- **Utilize information**: provide tracking information for every shipment
- **Respect privacy**: don’t ask for credit card information through email (use secure messaging or call the customer instead)
- **Build customer relationships**: aim to maintain relationships with customers over time; initiating a customer relationship is hard, but once it’s created and maintained, it will be much easier to make repeat sales
- **Respect deadlines**: missing deadlines causes the customer’s business to fall into chaos, thus jeopardizing their future orders from your firm
- **Use technology**: make sure that website and social media platforms are functional and updated, particularly the contact information section; have an interesting Our Story or About Us section on the website where customers can learn about how the business got started. A good example is the website of the fair-trade company Women in Hebron (https://www.womeninhebron.com/).
Katie’s points pare only a few of the business ABCs we chose to highlight. There are many more serious ones, for example, wanting to export but not having an export manager, not having anyone in the firm who speaks English, running a trade association that, instead of facilitating business, takes months on end to reply to a simple request, etc.

I’m not giving up, not by any stretch of the imagination, but I will not turn a blind eye to poor business practices by our firms. If we were in a normal market in a sovereign state, I would not worry about firms failing; competition is part of market dynamics. However, we are not in a normal market and have yet to realize our sovereign state, thus it’s important that every firm be as successful as possible under the cruel conditions in which we find ourselves. The Palestinian government and trade associations must recognize this reality as well and do their utmost to streamline business activities rather than add more bureaucracy to an already complicated market.

Even under military occupation, without a private sector able to generate sustainable job opportunities for our youth, we would be serving the Israeli strategy of pushing our community onto one of three paths: violence, emigration, or turning into a cheap-labor-pool community (more than is already the case today) to serve the Israeli market, including illegal settlements. Palestine’s private sector has a national responsibility to craft a fourth path for our youth — dignified and sustainable employment. For these jobs to be sustainable we have no choice but to expand our closed and damaged market by entering the realm of international business. This international business world has rules, norms, and expectations. It is our duty to know them and manage accordingly.

All this has very little to do with economic growth, per se, and everything to do with economic survival. Every job created in Palestine today is the ultimate act of nonviolent resistance against military occupation, keeping a Palestinian in Palestine, on the land.

Sam Bahour is the managing partner of Applied Information Management in Ramallah and board chair of Americans for a Vibrant Palestinian Economy. He blogs at epalestine.com. @SamBahour
By Randa Siniora

Why has the Palestinian women’s movement after two decades of diligent work to combat sexual discrimination, violence against women, and patriarchy not yet been able to make a serious breakthrough in the adoption of policies and legislation based on equality, nondiscrimination, and the respect for women’s human rights? The dedication to our cause and the commitment to gender equality and nondiscrimination has not materialized; there has been no real, meaningful change in the lives of Palestinian women. Women have been able to make some progress, but patriarchal structures, discrimination, male domination, violence against women, sexism, militarization, and occupation remain serious obstacles to women’s full enjoyment of their rights within our society.

Even though the State of Palestine has adopted without reservations several international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW), compliance with the norms and values enshrined in these treaties has not been translated into legal or policy reform that would reflect serious commitment to human rights principles. With Palestine’s accession to international treaties and conventions, Palestinian politicians and official duty bearers merely focused on political considerations, hoping to enhance “state sovereignty.” Hence, they paid little regard to their legal obligations under international law.

The political will to make serious efforts towards harmonizing national policies and legislations with CEDAW remains lacking. Negative patriarchal cultures and religious norms and practices still dominate the scene when it comes to women’s rights issues. The women’s movement was hopeful after the successful review of the CEDAW initial report before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in July 2018. Constructive dialogue and the legal commitment of the State of Palestine to the concluding remarks and recommendations of the committee seemed to assure that we had reached a breakthrough and would make a meaningful change towards reaching gender equality within the region.

Before the review of the Palestinian CEDAW report, the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC), in cooperation with Human Rights Watch, delivered an oral statement to the CEDAW committee that focused primarily on violence against women within the family and on Article 16 of CEDAW, highlighting questions related to personal status, gender-based violence, child marriage, sexual violence, and safe abortions. In accordance with Article 16, WCLAC also emphasized the issue of the Personal Status Law — applied in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Muslims and Christians — and the discrimination against women it entails, especially when it comes to marriage, divorce, child custody, guardianship, child marriage, women’s marital financial rights, and inheritance. Subsequently, the committee recommended, in line with articles 1 and 2 of the convention, that the Palestinian state should adopt without delay national legislation that

A national workshop, organized by WCLAC, to demand the abolishment of Article 308 of the Penal Code.
At the 39th session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva in September 2018, WCLAC delivered an oral statement in which it highlighted the gendered impact of the Israeli occupation and focused on Israeli violations committed against Palestinian women who did not pose an imminent threat to the life of others during the Great March of Return.

includes a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, covering all prohibited grounds of discrimination and encompassing direct and indirect discrimination in both the public and private spheres.

The official Palestinian delegation made the commitment before the committee to follow up on the recommendations and to submit, after two years, a special follow-up report on any progress made in the implementation of the recommendations, especially the ones related to policies and legislation harmonized with CEDAW. Shockingly, however, some conservative elements among Palestinian officials advised the president to consider imposing reservations on “international treaties” (namely CEDAW) four years after our accession to those treaties without reservations. Thus, the Palestinian women’s movement, instead of focusing its attention on the progressive implementation of CEDAW recommendations, had to return to square one. Through lobbying and advocacy efforts, it had to advocate again for the adoption without reservation of the conventions and treaties.

At all levels of Palestinian society, there is a clear headwind when issues related to gender equality are addressed. Nevertheless, WCLAC continues its efforts to ensure that women and girls can live their lives in accordance with the human rights to which they are entitled. Our advocacy always strives to challenge the core elements and obstacles that prevent women from achieving equality because women’s right are and should be an integral part of the various elements of state building. Without such equality, the principles of human rights and democracy cannot be guaranteed.

Due to the dysfunctional status of the Palestinian Legislative Council, considerable efforts have been put in place to influence the process of abolishing discriminatory articles from existing outdated laws, especially from the Penal Code, a remnant from the time when the West Bank was under Jordanian rule. Women’s and human rights organizations have successfully managed to launch a national advocacy campaign to urge the Palestinian government and the president to abolish Article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code No. 16 of 1960. This article constitutes a flagrant violation of the rights of Palestinian women, as it exempts the perpetrator of 13 types of sexual crimes from prosecution in case of a valid marriage between the aggressor and the victim. The arbitrary article, which allowed for alleged rapists to marry their victims, was repealed on March 14, 2018, through an official decree by Mahmoud Abbas. In a cabinet decision, furthermore, modifications to the Penal Code were made through adding a fifth paragraph to Article 99, excluding honor crimes against women from their customary consideration of extenuating circumstances. Grassroots awareness-building campaigns, such as the white dress “Marry-Your-Rapist” initiative, aimed to influence state actors to actualize serious change towards women’s rights in Palestine.

Another major success was achieved this year in decisions taken by the cabinet to grant women the rights to issue passports for their children, open bank accounts for them, and transfer them between schools without the need for permission from a male guardian. Women’s rights organizations have been working on this topic for more than 18 years. WCLAC was one of the leading organizations in publishing supportive articles, studies, and analytical reports and holding awareness-raising sessions.

Furthermore, in 2018, a joint activity of women’s rights organizations and activists engaged in 16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women and Girls in Palestine. This activity was organized by the Palestinian Forum to Combat Violence against Women (Al-Muntada) to demand amendments to laws that discriminate against women, such as the Penal Code, the Personal Status Law, and the Family Protection Law. Thus, in December 2018, a number of women’s organizations staged a peaceful protest in Ramallah, demanding the protection of women’s rights and the imposition of the harshest sanctions on those who violate them.

Also as part of the 16 Days of Activism, WCLAC implemented a workshop on “Legal Criminal Protection of Women: Between Public and Private Laws” on December 6, 2018. Around 20 people from WCLAC’s campaign to influence policy makers to abolish Article 308 (which refers to sexual crimes) of the Penal Code.
WCLAC met with the UN Commission of Inquiry and stressed the direct and indirect impact of Israeli violations against Palestinian women, submitting the study titled “Gaza’s Return Marches: The Gendered Impact of the Excessive Use of Force by Israeli Occupation Forces on Civilians,” which includes 15 testimonies from women in Gaza. It focuses on the targeting of civilians who did not pose any imminent threat to the life of others (including children and persons with disabilities); the targeting of human defenders, including journalists, paramedics, and civil-servant volunteers; and the excessive use of internationally prohibited weapons. In its concluding remarks, WCLAC asked that Israel be held accountable for violations of international humanitarian law and requested that the international criminal court open an investigation into these allegations.

The report of the detailed findings of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, published in March 2019, referred to WCLAC’s testimonies and the information provided in its submission, providing the center with positive feedback and referring to its importance in helping the commission to understand the situation of Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

Randa Siniora, a human rights and women’s rights defender with over 30 years of experience, is currently the general director of the Women’s Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC) in Jerusalem. Randa’s work has focused on advocacy and networking for progressive change in civil society organizations, UN agencies, and governments at national, regional, and international levels. She has served as the director of the women’s rights program at Al-Haq and as the senior executive director of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine.


various organizations attended this workshop that aimed to strengthen partnerships between women’s and human rights organizations. The legal framework of the criminal protection of women victims of domestic and social violence was discussed by highlighting the Draft Penal Code as a general law, and the draft of the Family Protection Law as a special law. The workshop also highlighted the social and legal urgency of issuing laws that protect women from violence and provide them with full access to justice.

During 2018, WCLAC also followed up on the developments of the Family Protection Law that intends to prevent violence against women and girls. This involvement was especially relevant because the draft law passed by the general prosecutor’s office was different from the draft that had been discussed with civil society organizations and the national committee drafting the law. A resulting campaign led by the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) engaged CSOs and human and women’s rights organizations in the policy-making process and produced a reviewed draft that was submitted to the Palestinian cabinet for the preparation of a final draft. The final draft was approved by the Palestinian cabinet in December 2018 and sent to the president for final endorsement, to be published in the official gazette. To accelerate this process, Al-Muntada for Combating Violence against Women, an umbrella structure that comprises 17 women’s organizations, is leading a national campaign that calls for the enactment of the Family Protection Law.

Despite recent progress, it is striking to notice that the daily suffering of girls and women from legal, social, and domestic violence is a low priority on the political and social agenda of the state and its institutions. Social protection mechanisms for victims of gender-based violence remain insufficient even though a national strategy to combat gender-based violence has been developed. The lack of a gender-sensitive budget to implement this and other strategies reflects the actual status of these questions. Palestine’s accession to international conventions and treaties has not produced the credible political will to enact modern, nondiscriminatory laws that comply with these conventions.

The various human rights violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation further exacerbate women’s suffering and discrimination against them as Palestinians and as women. Conflict escalation has both direct and indirect impacts on the lives of women because Palestinian women regularly face violence, threats, intimidation, restriction on movement, and discrimination as a result of Israeli policies that violate international humanitarian and human rights law. These policies include property destruction, demolition, and the lack of adequate housing; aggression against and targeting of civilians; restrictions on movement, night raids, the expansion of settlements, and settler violence; the forcible eviction of Palestinians from occupied Jerusalem; collective punishment as a tool in forcible transfer; and the targeting of women human rights defenders, women journalists, and female activists.

WCLAC documents testimonies by Palestinian women survivors of occupational violence and attacks. Women field workers are employed to collect these testimonies through interviews from women who live in the affected areas and who can give firsthand accounts of the effects of night raids and arrests on Palestinian women.

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Palestinian Youth Local Councils
Grassroots Advocates for Positive Change

By Ismail Abu Arafah

Palestinian society is overwhelmingly composed of youth, Palestinian policymakers must consider this critical segment of the population as key in designing national plans, setting out relevant policies, formulating budgets, and engaging the tremendous potential of youth in enhancing community resilience and development. Promoting such an approach was the aim of initiating the Youth Local Councils (YLCs) venture in 2008. The venture was set as a structured grassroots youth engagement mechanism that facilitates and supports youth empowerment, leadership, and advocacy, starting with the closest form of governance to the people – the local governments. The YLCs are voluntary bodies composed of youth aged 15 to 22 years who are elected by their peers, mirroring the positions of their local (community/municipal) councils to prepare them to actively engage in local governance based on democratic and good-governance principles. What started out as a pilot project in four Palestinian local communities has become the widest youth grassroots movement in Palestine, with councils set up in more than 50 Palestinian communities over the past ten years.

The driving idea behind the YLCs is that a democratically elected youth voluntary body would be instrumental in voicing the needs of youth and facilitating their participation at the local and national levels, thus bridging the gap between local and national government institutions and youth. Engaging in YLCs helped prepare youth to be ethically and values-based good governing leaders. The YLCs do not represent political parties but rather serve as elected representatives with a direct democratic mandate to give young people a voice, serve youth interests, and ensure positive engagement as good citizens.

The model itself is not unique, but it has proved extremely successful in steering youth energies and unleashing potential to achieve positive change on multiple levels, which Palestinian youth were proud to be the first to mark regionally and globally. Youth have become advocates for positive change. A YLC in Qalqilya contributed to the development of the Municipality Strategy and Action Plan. A 16-year-old girl from the town of Illar in the Tulkarem district headed the YLC and acted as the mayor for three months, running most municipal affairs. Three alumni from the council ran for formal municipal elections and won at the young age of 24 years. Youth-led campaigns have focused on advocating for gender equality, the rights of people with disability, schools and public safety, environmental protection, the importance of public officials’ accountability, and the importance of free media, voluntarism, and good citizenry.

At a time when the Palestinian cause is at a complex crossroads, there is a crucial need to solidify the base and continue to equip Palestinian youth leadership to be able to cope with the current and future political, social, and economic challenges that face our nation.
Youth ought to be empowered, and their voices must be heard in a population that is distinguished by its youth. As a society, we all have to work in our various capacities to empower a grassroots youth movement that is able to tap into our most important strength: our youth.

Palestinian YLCs have made their positive mark. In 2017, the initiative competed in the international and widely competitive McNulty Prize – a prestigious global award that recognizes personal leadership efforts to address the world’s toughest challenges. Competing with transformative initiatives across the globe, the Youth Local Councils venture of Palestine and its founder Ms. Lana Abu Hijleh triumphantly earned the award for social impact.

Consequently, several YLC alumni established Shiam—Youth Make the Future (شيم-شباب يصنع المستقبل) in 2018 with the mission to scale up the YLC presence, support existing councils, and further drive grassroots Palestinian youth activism and advocacy. The young Shiam organization has already built on its localized model of youth engagement and empowerment. It presently promotes youth inclusion in social, economic, and governance arenas. It advocates for the rights of people with disabilities and for the use of youth creativity, agency, and entrepreneurship to tackle complex challenges such as the sustainable development goals, water issues, and social protection needs, utilizing creative-thinking platforms such as Hackathons to harness and advocate for responsive solutions. To enhance its advocacy impact, Shiam is building partnerships with the private sector, public organizations, the media, and international organizations.

This widespread youth movement demands collective efforts, and everyone can be part of its impactful work. Please reach out and tell us how you can support.

Ismail Abu Arafeh is a board member of Shiam and one of the early supporters of the Youth Local Councils initiative. He has managed a broad range of programs in various sectors that include local government, civic engagement, and economic development, and is currently Economic Justice Programme Coordinator at Oxfam, working with civil society partners to improve market functioning for small-scale farmers. Ismail holds an MA in history and cultural studies from Freie Universität Berlin and a BA in international studies from the University of Denver, Colorado.
An Imperative of Social Justice

Reform of Fiscal and Taxation Policy in Palestine

Courtesy of MIFTAH

Palestinian civil society plays a crucial role in improving the livelihoods of Palestinian citizens, whether through the provision of services or assuming the role of a watchdog over the government. Within this framework, civil-society lobbies, relevant duty bearers, and advocates for the improvement of policies and legislation engage in a wide array of issues such as gender equality, youth empowerment, labor rights, and public financing.

While civil society organizations focus extensively on service provision, gender equality, and youth empowerment, work on public financing remains limited in terms of the number of organizations that focus on it and the scope that is covered. The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH) works on issues that pertain to public financing in line with its strategic priority to advance policy advocacy and lobbying to ensure social justice and equality, as well as transparency and accountability.

MIFTAH's work in this area comes within the context of several indicators that reflect that there is significant room for improvement in governmental policy that aims to contribute to the realization of social justice. For example, while budget allocations in 2018 for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) stood at 20.2 percent of the public budget, allocations for the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) remained below par and stood at 11.33 percent and 8.87 percent, respectively. Furthermore, actual expenditure rarely, if ever, equals the budget allocation, such that in 2018, actual expenditure by the MoEHE, MoH, and MoSD stood at only 80 percent, 94 percent, and 86 percent, respectively, of the allocated budget. This shortage in expenditure may be attributed to the complicated and bureaucratic financial procedures and requirements identified by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) that do not take into consideration the needs and circumstances of marginalized and vulnerable communities and groups, among other factors.

In addition, the persistence of the Israeli occupation has not only hindered and prevented the development of a viable Palestinian economy, it has also rendered the Palestinian Authority unable to exercise sovereignty over public revenues and the wider framework of public finances. For example, the Paris Protocol gives full control to Israel over the collection and transfer of clearance revenues, which, according to the expenditure data released by the MoF, amounted to 72.9 percent of the tax revenues in 2018. Tax evasion, too, is prevalent and widespread in Palestine, particularly among free professions, and its estimated rate stands at at least 35 percent; this in turn increases the tax burden on committed taxpayers and individuals.

The inability to build a viable Palestinian economy, as well as the issue of tax evasion, has led to insufficient revenues to finance the public budget, which manifested in a public budget deficit that stood at ILS 2,714,600,000 in 2017. This deficit is predominantly shouldered by the social and infrastructure sectors, directly impacting the livelihoods of Palestinians.

Surprisingly, the taxation system in Palestine does not include concrete policies and measures to address tax evasion nor does it contribute to shifting public revenues to more reliable and stable sources, such as income tax. This shift would certainly require due consideration of adopting pro-poor fiscal policies that ensure...
The Ministry’s Vision
A robust, mutually supportive, productive and creative Palestinian society which provides a dignified life to all of its members; and releases their energies and guarantees their rights, equality, justice, partnership, inclusion and integration.

The Ministry’s Mission
The Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) aims to provide and coordinate the provision of integrated protection and social development services to protect the poor and marginalized persons; as well as providing care to them and integrating and empowering them in partnership and cooperation with governmental organizations and the private sector. This is done through the Case Management methodology and the enhancement of local community alternatives.

Targeted Segments
- Women and gender
- People with disabilities
- Youth
- Children
- The elderly

High Priority Marginalized Areas
Jerusalem, Gaza, border areas, Palestinian refugee camps, Area C, and the Old City of Hebron.

Strategic Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1</td>
<td>Jerusalem, Gaza, border areas, Palestinian refugee camps, Area C, and the Old City of Hebron.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective 2</td>
<td>The reduction of poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective 3</td>
<td>Eliminating all forms of marginalization, violence and social exclusion within the Palestinian society</td>
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<td>Objective 4</td>
<td>Social Development Programme</td>
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<td>Objective 5</td>
<td>Human Rights Protection Programme</td>
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<td>Objective 6</td>
<td>Management and Planning Programme</td>
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Despite the Palestinian government’s declared priority of “Citizen First” in the 2017-2022 National Policy Agenda, poverty rates stood at 29.2 percent in 2017. Furthermore, it can be clearly observed that the current fiscal policy in terms of taxation and spending requires significant improvement to fulfill the governmental responsibility of equitable distribution of services as well as to contribute to the realization of social justice.

MIFTAH’s work on fiscal justice and advocacy is evidence-based and comes in two main directions: reform of taxation policy and promotion of transparency of public spending, with a specific focus on social spending. MIFTAH’s work on taxation policy commenced with a focus on income tax. This expanded when MIFTAH undertook the research project of the Fair Tax Monitor to include several aspects of taxation; including 1) tax burden and progressivity, 2) revenue sufficiency and tax leakages, 3) corporate tax exemption, 4) effectiveness of tax administration, 5) government spending, and 6) transparency and accountability. Furthermore, with the view to promote specialization and concrete advocacy and intervention efforts, MIFTAH zoomed into the areas that are most relevant to its strategic priorities of promoting social justice: tax burden and progressivity and government spending.

On the other hand, MIFTAH’s work on fiscal transparency commenced in 2015 with the MoSD and led to the release of the first Palestinian Citizen Budget by the ministry in 2016. The Citizen Budget is a simplified document of the general budget. Expressed in numbers, figures, and graphs, the Citizen Budget summarizes the key expenditure policies, approaches, and priorities of the ministry for the upcoming year. Following a conciliatory approach that

<table>
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<th>Annual Salary (LS)</th>
<th>Personal Income Tax Rate (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 36,000</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36,001–75,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75,001–150,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 150,000</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tax (PIT), taking into consideration that the contribution of income tax exceeds 40 percent in progressive systems of taxation. In contrast, currently, the CIT rate is fixed at 15 percent and rises to 20 percent for a few monopolistic companies, whereas PIT brackets and rates are distributed as follows:
is characterized by complementarity, this work expanded to include MoEHE and MoH in 2017 and 2018, respectively. With the aim of institutionalizing fiscal transparency and a participatory approach in planning and budgeting, MIFTAH has continued to support these ministries as well as developed a Citizen Budget Preparation Manual to serve as a future reference document for all three ministries.\textsuperscript{ix}

Alongside the release of the Citizen Budget, MIFTAH has worked on the development of fact sheets on specific and relevant issues within the framework of the work of the aforementioned ministries, including budget allocations for the poor, social sector budgets from 2016–2018, and MoH budgets from 2016–2018. MIFTAH’s efforts in this regard seek to familiarize various stakeholders, and primarily civil society organizations, with budget allocations and priorities. Furthermore, in line with its mission of “…adopting mechanisms of active and in-depth dialogue, the free flow of information and ideas, as well as local and international networking,” MIFTAH seeks to foster dialogue on these issues with the view to influencing fiscal policy towards increased social spending and social justice.

Another tool employed by MIFTAH in its advocacy work to influence policies is public mobilization. Naturally the type of tool employed relies predominantly on the issue to be addressed and the optimal method to generate pressure on Palestinian duty bearers. Through research and an evidence-based approach, MIFTAH and partners identify goal(s), demands, and messages and thereafter develop tools and interventions. For example, the “Money4Medicine” campaign demanded the allocation of sufficient budgets to allow the MoH to address medication shortages. As such, the campaign sought to mobilize the maximum number of signatories towards this end, including in festivals, in the city centers, and through cultural activities. The campaign reached over 40,000 signatories, with the pressure generated leading the MoF to transfer ILS 65 million to the MoH to cover medication debts, as well as the allocation of ILS 280 million in 2018 for medication.

Ultimately, the philosophy behind MIFTAH’s advocacy work is to empower and enable duty-bearers with the knowledge, skills, and tools that will enable them to fulfill their responsibilities, and thereafter hold them to account. The effectiveness of this philosophy is contingent on the adoption of a conciliatory and participatory approach, alongside ensuring that all advocacy interventions are evidence-based and substantiated.

MIFTAH is a Palestinian civil society organization that was established in 1998 in Jerusalem. It seeks to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various segments of Palestinian society through enhancing the participation of women and youth, and leading in-depth dialogue and the free flow of information and ideas.
A People’s Struggle
to Bury Loved Ones

By Budour Hassan

Azhar Abu Surour wanted to hug him one more time; I wanted to visit his grave,” Azhar Abu Surour, mother of Palestinian teen Abdel-Hamid Abu Surour, told me. “Can you imagine that a mother’s biggest dream is to bury her son?”

Azhar Abu Surour’s son Abdel-Hamid was killed by Israeli occupation forces in April 2016 after allegedly carrying out an attack on an Israeli bus. Since then, his body has been withheld by Israeli occupation forces, initially at a morgue in Tel Aviv before being transferred to the “cemeteries of enemy combatants,” known by Palestinians as cemeteries of numbers.

Since 1967, Israel has applied an inconsistent, at times ad hoc, policy of refusing to return the corpses and remains of hundreds of Palestinian and Arab combatants to their families. The dead were buried in what Israel refers to as “cemeteries for enemy combatants,” mass graves located in areas designated by Israel as closed military zones. Over the years, the Israeli army has used at least five different locations for the purpose of burying “enemy combatants,” denying families any access to information about the place of burial. Palestinians call them “cemeteries of numbers” since the deceased are buried there anonymously with numbers usually etched onto metal placards attached to their corpses or remains. Corpses of the fallen were simply dumped, at times collectively, absent the proper registration of the names of the dead and their place of burial.

The systematically demeaning and negligent manner in which the bodies are buried or dumped, coupled with the lack of proper registration and documentation by Israel’s military rabbinate, makes the process of identifying the victims for potential exhumation an uphill battle for their families.

In 2004, Israeli Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz issued a directive in which he stated that the corpses of deceased Palestinian attackers shall not be withheld based on a need to use them as bargaining chips in future negotiations. He did, however, contend that there may be “exceptional justifications” for withholding corpses, including “a concrete prisoner exchange deal with enemy groups.”

In August 2008, the families whose loved ones were thought to have been buried in mass graves or “cemeteries of numbers,” launched a national campaign to retrieve the bodies of the deceased and disclose the fate of those missing. Legally and logistically supported by the Jerusalem Legal Aid Center (JLAC), the national campaign initially sought to demand the release of the bodies and remains languishing in those “cemeteries of numbers,” highlight the struggle of their families, and turn it from a private issue into a national rallying cry.

The national campaign has documented the names of 350 Palestinians whose corpses or remains have been withheld by Israeli occupation authorities, noting that prior to 2015, this practice had rarely been used following the publication of Mazuz’s directive. Dozens of these corpses were released either in prisoner exchange deals or as part of the “goodwill” gestures for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. On May 31, 2012, for instance, Israel transferred the remains of 91 Palestinians to the Palestinian Authority.

Yet, a clearer, more systematic Israeli policy started to take shape in 2015 with the aim of regulating the practice of withholding corpses. This development meant that the struggle to retrieve the bodies is no longer confined to the borders of historical memory but rather an everyday issue. Following a wave of individual attacks by Palestinians that began in October 2015, the Israeli cabinet announced a package of punitive measures to quell and repress the uprising. They included punitive home demolitions, closures, and the withholding of corpses. Thus, since October 2015, Israeli occupation
Authorities have withheld the corpses of over 215 Palestinians who were killed or extra-judicially executed after alleged fatal attacks. The policy was further institutionalized toward the end of 2016 as the Israeli government scrambled to formulate a specific policy before any court decision was taken on the issue. On January 1, 2017, the Israeli cabinet’s Ministerial Committee on National Security Affairs formally adopted the “unified policy” on handling the corpses of Palestinian attackers.

Israeli occupation authorities had by then released the majority of the bodies withheld since 2015 but only after receiving assurances by family members that their funerals would be extremely limited in size and would take place at certain hours during the night or after ordering the families to change the place of burial. These restrictions are supposedly designed to prevent disturbances during the funeral, to keep the funerals as low-profile as possible, and to “protect public security and safety.”

This policy stipulated that the government should, in principle, hand over the bodies of Palestinian attackers, after ensuring the preservation of public order at their funerals, unless one of the following two exceptions applies: the attackers are affiliated with Hamas and can thus be used as bargaining chips in potential prisoner exchange deals; or the attacks they carried out are deemed to be exceptionally severe. Should the military deem that one of these two exceptions had been satisfied, it would be authorized to continue to withhold the corpse.

The Israeli military and police have repeatedly argued that the funerals of Palestinian martyrs frequently result in disturbances to public safety and security and lead to incitement. This line of reasoning is used to justify the temporary withholding of the corpses. This was the main argument behind withholding the vast majority of the corpses during the period between 2015 and 2017: Palestinians were accused of turning funerals into riots and of using them to incite against Israel. It was argued, therefore, that they should be punished by withholding the corpse and only releasing it when guarantees are provided that no such riots or incitement would occur.

When the corpses are withheld for alleged security reasons, the Israeli army usually hands them over after weeks or months. According to religious customs and beliefs, the dead should be buried as soon as possible. Thus, for Palestinians, this withholding of the bodies violates their religious rites and is also a form of psychological torture. Parents of victims whose corpses were temporarily withheld describe that their lives were put on hold until the release of their loved ones’ corpses, and that they could not come to terms with the loss of their children until they could finally bury them.

By imposing such severe restrictions on the funerals and by conditioning the release of corpses upon limiting the number of mourners, the Israeli occupation furthermore deprives Palestinians of one of the...
The legal effort has been crucial in securing the release of some of the bodies,” Salwa Hammad, a coordinator for JLAC, told me. “But we cannot count on the Israeli court to deliver justice. Only through local popular mobilization and massive international pressure on Israel will this issue be resolved. Only then will the families be able to bid their loved ones a proper farewell.”

rare spaces of public solidarity. Funerals of Palestinians who were killed by the Israeli authorities — considered martyrs who gave their lives for the Palestinian cause — provide Palestinians with space where they are able to express collective grief through chanting and marching together. Here, they are able to articulate their rage and to transform individual pain and loss into a source of mobilization and resilience.

To further cement the practice of delaying the release on security grounds, the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, passed an amendment to the counterterrorism law of 2016, which grants the police the power to temporarily withhold the body of an alleged Palestinian attacker as long as there is reasonable suspicion that handing over the body would violate public safety and security. Yet, public safety is not the only argument brought up to justify the withholding of corpses. An additional pretext is the use of the corpse of a Palestinian attacker as a bargaining chip in a prisoner swap deal. As noted above, this pretext has not been enacted into law but rather was reiterated by the cabinet’s decision in January 2017. Israel bases its continued withholding of Palestinian corpses as bargaining chips on Regulation 133(3) of the Emergency (Defense) Regulations, promulgated by the British Mandate government in 1945.

The regulation states that “it shall be lawful for a Military Commander to order that the dead body of any person shall be buried in such place as the Military Commander may direct. The Military Commander may by such order direct to whom and at what hour the said body shall be buried.”

In a petition submitted by JLAC against the legality of the practice, the organization argued that it denies deceased Palestinians their right to dignified and proper burial in accordance with their religious and cultural customs. It also deprives their next of kin of the right to know their fate, to locate and access their gravesites, to determine the cause of their death, and to regain their personal belongings. The practice may amount to enforced disappearance in cases where Israel refuses to acknowledge or disclose the whereabouts of a detained person’s corpse.

The requirement of treating the dead with dignity and humanity is a universally recognized value and a norm of customary international law. Codified in Article 16 of the 1907 Hague Convention, this norm is also protected by Article 15 of the First Geneva Convention, Article 18 of the Second Geneva Convention, and Article 16 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

It also amounts to collective punishment, which is prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, the practice violates fundamental human rights such as the right to dignity, the right to freedom of religion, the right to family life, the right to property, and the prohibition of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

In July 2018, the Israeli Supreme Court held a Further Hearing before an expanded panel of seven justices to look into the constitutionality of the policy. As Palestinians await the court’s issuance of a final decision, the corpses of 42 Palestinians — from among those who have been killed since 2015 — remain withheld as a result of Israeli policies.

Budour Hassan is a Palestinian writer and advocacy officer at Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC).

Palestinian women entrepreneurs do not benefit as men do from the market economy and economic opportunities. The lack of economic opportunities for women remains a key challenge to achieving women’s social and economic empowerment. According to a report produced by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2018, “The gap in the labor-force participation rate among males and females remains very large where it reached 70.3% for males compared with 19.9% for females.” Therefore, more women are now pursuing the path of entrepreneurship and establishing their own enterprises; women own close to 65,000 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) – approximately a quarter of all enterprises in the West Bank and Gaza. Women entrepreneurs, however, still suffer from a scarcity of networks supporting them in economic activities and from society’s traditional attitude towards women’s stereotypical role as a primary caregiver. They also face numerous difficulties in such areas as obtaining funding, tax reduction, marketing, and accessing markets and information.

According to a report published by the International Journal of Economics, Commerce, and Management in 2015, “Approximately 5.4 percent of registered businesses are women-owned, and of those, 24 percent operate in the services sector.” Significantly, large numbers of women engage in commercial activities; however, their capitalization typically falls far below the amount required to register. As a result, they have limited access to the finance, market information, and business opportunities available to registered businesses, thus restricting their growth potential.

In addition, a large number of women entrepreneurs operate from their homes and are not legally registered, leaving them with no legal protection and limiting their businesses’ ability to grow. For example, this status does not allow them to access finance, legal protection, or market and export opportunities. The vast majority of these businesses are “informal,” and therefore unable to access credit through banks. Unregistered enterprises must rely on micro-credit loans, which have low capital requirements but high interest rates, neither of which is conducive to rational business growth.

In addition, women do not register their businesses because they fear that tax regulations would be too great a burden. Tax regulations on micro-businesses do not allow them to be competitive and deter many women business owners from registering since they would have a tax burden that is very close to that of small and medium enterprises. It’s worth mentioning that Palestinian women run and own the vast majority of small and medium-sized enterprises in the informal sector. According to a 2016 study published by Al-Marsad, 60 percent of women SMEs operate in the informal sector.

Membership in the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture is mandatory for all registered enterprises. However, during the current chambers elections, female candidates have been virtually absent in West Bank provincial elections for chamber boards. Very few hold positions as business managers, directors, or chairwomen. The chambers represent 65,000 registered enterprises, and there are 13 chambers in the West Bank, each with a board of 9 to 13 members. Only 3,650 women-led enterprises are registered in the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce. Furthermore, the total membership of the General Assembly in the
chambers is 81,054, with only 3,166 female members. Of the 198 members in the chambers’ boards of directors, only 2 are women.

In late 2018 and early 2019, the chambers elections were held – 8 years after the previous elections in 2011. Eligible women voters in the 2018 elections comprised 5 percent of the total number of eligible voters, and only 3 percent of those eligible to run for elections were women. The participation of women in the chambers’ boards was less than 2 percent.

These alarming numbers and statistics reveal the urgent need for immediate intervention to change the current situation for women in the chambers. To this end, The Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association—Asala has begun not only to raise awareness among women, community members, and other stakeholders about the low representation of women in the chambers’ membership and leadership positions but also to promote women’s active participation in the chambers’ elections to ensure that women have a voice and are well represented in the chambers. In cooperation with CowaterSogema and through the project “Generating Revenue Opportunities for Women and Youth in the West Bank” (GROW), funded by the Government of Canada, Asala has implemented a media and advocacy campaign to shed the light on the key barriers that constrain women’s active participation in the chambers, including the nonrefundable nomination fees (1,000 JD), the eligibility requirements for nomination (paying the registration fees for at least three consecutive years to be eligible for nomination to the chamber board elections) and the short period for nomination (one week). For instance, Ms. Majida Salsa’ (who was the first female member of the board of directors in Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce) is one among too many women who were unable to run for elections due to the constraints of the laws and regulations of the chambers. She explains, “The chambers’ law of 2013 stipulates that the candidate must be registered and active in the chamber for at least three consecutive years before his/her nomination to the board election. For some reason, I did not pay the registration fees for 2015, but in 2016 I paid the registration fees for both 2015 and 2016. For this reason only, I could not run in the elections and represent the voice of women in the chambers.”

Although more needs to be done to improve the enabling environment and lay the groundwork for women to be more equally represented and as actively engaged in the social, economic, and political spheres as their male counterparts, this campaign has contributed to laying the first stepping stone towards reducing the barriers to the greater representation and engagement of women in the Chamber of Commerce, one of the oldest and largest private-sector representative bodies in the Palestinian territories.

The Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association—Asala, a leading women’s empowerment NGO that was established in 1997, provides comprehensive and needs-based business services and advocacy for marginalized women micro-entrepreneurs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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Advocating Science and Technology
Building the Future

By Aref Husseini

Ahmad, Mona, and Ibrahim, three young people from Palestine, were not convinced that they should follow the traditional path of life that is customary in our community and culture. Mona and Ahmad finished their education but did not marry early, did not suffer from unemployment, did not accept a regular job, and did not start their adult life by taking loans from banks to buy a car or apartment — to be paid back in installments over the next twenty years. Ibrahim did not enroll in a university but instead chose an innovative vocational education; yet, to provide for his children, he did not become a worker who must pass through the humiliating checkpoints that have been erected by the occupation. These three youths believed in science and technology and were creative in this field, which led to their success and enabled them to make their way to the top. They built their own projects, and through them, they are helping to shape the future of Palestine.

All statistics indicate that Palestinian society is young and able to rise from the rubble of recent years through the efforts of its youth — if they perform well. Palestine has succeeded in reshaping its young people; we are moving from underperforming in the scientific field to excellence and innovation in science, technology, and engineering. Let us consider some figures to remind us of the Palestinian reality. Forty-seven percent of the population in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem are under the age of 17; 24 percent are in the age group of 18-to-29-year-olds; and in 71 percent of families, there is at least one young man or woman who can support his/her family. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 35 percent (28 percent in the West Bank and 46 percent in the Gaza Strip) of youth are willing to earn advanced scientific degrees (e.g., an MA or PhD), which indicates a high degree of ambition among our youth to acquire scientific capital and improve their employment opportunities and income. Unfortunately, however, interviews with various youth groups indicate that the aim of continuing their education is to obtain an immigration visa that would allow them to live somewhere else; they do not wish to stay in Palestine.

It was also noted that, based on the same data, most of the youth (75.5 percent) do not read newspapers or magazines. A similar percentage (76 percent) said that they use the computer daily and communicate with the world through social media to search for opportunities abroad. They are looking for groups to join or groups that wish to forge relations with foreigners, all in the hope that these connections may take them elsewhere. Some use social media simply as a platform for discharge and as a way of spending their time. Participation in political life, on the other hand, has become rare and limited among Palestinian youth; 135 talented young men and women around the age of 18 hardly recognized three Palestinian politicians or party leaders out of the 12 presented to them during an educational workshop I led recently! This dangerous phenomenon takes our youth into the category of the superficial and will not lead to a broad scientific, social, economic, or even political renaissance.

The natural path for most of our youth, whether they are in school or not, is the path that Ahmad, Ibrahim, and Mona did not take. They were not useless social-media addicts; they invested in their scientific and technological capabilities, relied on creativity and leadership, and succeeded in changing reality through science and knowledge.

Ahmad invented an interactive board that transforms every white surface into a smart board. He developed the idea and established a small company. He ran this enterprise until he achieved his first exit (i.e., he sold the company for a profit) and worked for several large technology companies to gain experience before he established a new entrepreneurial company that he expects will have prominent status in the Arab world.
Mona invented a robot to spray insecticides on greenhouse plants and registered and marketed it inside and outside Palestine. She headed forward towards innovation and entrepreneurship. Today, Mona is running a company and leads entrepreneurship initiatives around the world.

Ibrahim started with a small potato-harvesting machine that does not cause damage to the products and gradually developed the idea into creative manufacturing of agricultural machines. Currently, he owns a factory that manufactures machines that he sells everywhere.

The three of them started with an idea, and the three of them came from different regions and backgrounds. None of them had either capital or a rich family to support them. They invested in science and entrepreneurship to change their reality and build their future, not for luxury or entertainment. They worked hard and patiently, and they failed in the beginning. But they learned and persevered until they managed to get on the right track. They progressed slowly but steadily and responsibly.

We must change the community culture and understand that education is not only for welfare; natural science and technology are tools that build our future and enhance our economy through production instead of consumption, attention to small details, and knowledge-based, real development. In science-teaching, we must seriously and practically invest first in the teachers because they can have a positive influence. A teacher’s passion and production will be conveyed to the students. We have a school textbook that stimulates production and encourages work and activity; the main task of teachers now is to change the image of science in our schools and universities. This is the great responsibility of the person who transmits scientific knowledge that tends to have great psychological and pedagogical impact on the learner. Teachers must offer their students an opportunity to discover things and motivate them to do research with currently available technology.

Can our youth become science professionals and turn such science into promising economic opportunities? The answer is yes, and the means to achieve this end lies in investing in, promoting, and advocating for three significant sectors: community culture, science-teaching, and entrepreneurship investment.

Advocacy in supporting leadership is a mission that falls within the responsibility of the Palestinian government and the Palestinian national private sector, which must engage so that we can succeed as a nation. Taking the initial risk in every scientific entrepreneurship is usually the responsibility of the state. Four years ago, we saw the establishment of the Higher Council for Creativity and Excellence that set up a fund for investment into innovation; and it has already invested in six new start-up companies this year. Now, the private sector is looking for promising opportunities. Take the initiative, participate in the risk, and invest in our youth and their projects — not out of pity or as charity but from an investment viewpoint and to assist youth in accessing local and global markets.

In our society, we have become used to the patriarchal approach, telling our children and youth what to do and leading them towards their destination. In this rapidly evolving world, the development of technology and knowledge is moving fast, and intergenerational gaps are increasing, preventing many of the older generations from accompanying today’s youth in their march forward. Our mission is to advocate for the acquisition and production of scientific knowledge, and we must prepare the appropriate environment for our children and youth to grow...
up as they want, based on rules we do not necessarily manage. We must believe in the strong capabilities of our children and invest in them as much as we can.

We need to tell our youth what they must not do, but other than that we must let them follow their desires and develop their talents. We should not claim that they possess what they do not have and must teach them not to exaggerate what they have or can do themselves — just because someone happened to celebrate them on stage and give them a prize even though their performance was only satisfactory. They must continue to learn and recognize that science is not always stable and that there are no static facts. Suspicion is the master of certainty. We should not accept that our youth become cheap laborers, inspecting the products of others who are creative producers; we should not encourage them to work for technology companies that are facades for unknown companies that take advantage of our people’s expertise while underpaying them. Our children should know that they do not know everything, but they must learn to recognize from the start what is silly.

The opportunity for us, as Palestinians, is great. Not only because almost three-quarters of the Palestinian population are of an age at which they can learn and engage in future business opportunities, but because even though our state is small and our number is comparatively small, the mental potential of our youth is overwhelming. Our children must turn the present and future into a global success story, and we must advocate for science, knowledge, technology, and production. Ahmad, Mona, and Ibrahim should be considered models to be followed.

Aref F. Husseini is an electronics engineer and physicist from Jerusalem who specializes in artificial intelligence (AI) and in integrating its applications in future business enterprises. He is the founder and CEO of Al Nayzak for Scientific Innovation, a member of the board of directors of the Higher Council for Creativity and Excellence (HCIE), and a member of the Council of Higher Education.
Going Back to the Roots
Intersectionality and Veganism in Palestine

By Ahlam Tarayra

The concepts of intersectionality and veganism — seeing the interconnection between all forms of oppression and how the cycle of violence eventually reaches animals — are not widely recognized in Palestine or in many other places in the world, including Europe. Hierarchical violence, however, either amongst humans or against animals, can be witnessed in Palestine. In fact, the colonial legacy and the prolonged Israeli occupation have played a significant role in hindering the evolution of a progressive intersectional society in occupied Palestine, as it has remarkably been taking backward steps on women’s rights, LGBT rights, and animal rights. Therefore, going back to the roots is a step forward in spotting when and where things went wrong and how to get back on track to create a better atmosphere for humans and animals alike.

In Palestine, vegan food is most widely known as *siyami*, the Arabic term for food that falls within the regulations of the Christian fast, and it is the term I often use when inquiring about the ingredients in dishes at an open buffet or at a sweets store in such cities as Ramallah and Bethlehem. However, traditional Palestinian cuisine has been mainly vegetarian, even vegan to a large extent, but it has not been labeled as such. In the past, meat consumption was low in Palestine, as in many other places around the world. It is believed that the remarkable increase in meat consumption can be linked to a number of factors, including the dominant global capitalistic economy. Under the impact of Ottoman rule over Arabic culture, meat was introduced as an elite food — it was assumed that whoever had more money should automatically consume more meat. And finally, the Palestinian people have become increasingly disconnected from their land due to the ongoing forcible displacement and the high cost of investing in land cultivation, given that the natural resources in Area C — the more than 60 percent of the West Bank where most agricultural areas are located, including water resources — are in the hands of the Israeli occupation. It is worth highlighting that in the wake of the *Nakba*, The Catastrophe of 1948, Palestinians started to rely on purchased rather than homegrown or homemade food. The forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who became refugees scattered throughout Palestine and its neighboring countries prompted many to rely on aid, including food, provided by the United Nations (UN). It is also believed that canned meat and sardines were introduced as aid food after the *Nakba*.

Considering that Palestine is a relatively poor country, meat and dairy consumption nowadays is necessarily connected to purchasing...
and of how consumption of animal products increases and deepens global poverty, as well as contributes to poor health that can result in heart disease and early death. Considering that the aforementioned arguments may be less important to many people in Palestine than in other countries, introducing veganism from the perspective of the oppressed might provide a different angle. As an oppressed people, we Palestinians may come to a greater understanding of this through going back to our roots and examining our Arabic cultural heritage. At various times throughout history, our society has certainly been more progressive than other countries in terms of human rights and animal rights.

Keeping the Palestinian angle of the story in mind, it is also important for veganism advocacy in Palestine not to present this issue as yet another “Western idea” imposed on us. Firstly, simply because it is not. Secondly, because this level of awareness has been experienced by people throughout history. Although there may have been many who lived a vegan lifestyle, we only know about the well-known historical figures such as Epicurus, Socrates, and Buddha.

More interestingly, an historical Arabic figure who was vegan would have more impact on the society. And yes, we have Al-Ma’arri, an Arab philosopher who was born in 973 and who wrote a remarkable, 1000-year-old poem titled I No Longer Steal from Nature, in which he expressed outstanding compassion towards animals and where he strongly refused to exploit the mother-child relationship:

Do not unjustly eat fish the water has given up,
And do not desire as food the flesh of slaughtered animals,
Or the white milk of mothers who intended its pure draught for their young, not noble ladies.
And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking eggs;
for injustice is the worst of crimes.
And spare the honey which the bees get industriously
from the flowers of fragrant plants;
For they did not store it that it might belong to others,
Nor did they gather it for bounty and gifts.
I washed my hands of all this; and wish that I Perceived my way before my hair went gray!

To advocate for an intersectional Palestinian society is to reach a point where one would not consider veganism to be merely a diet restricted solely to plant consumption but rather a lifestyle that helps the vegan Palestinian person to fight against all acts of cruelty and exploitation and against all forms of oppression (since we have experienced it ourselves as oppressed people), where Palestinian feminists would see that consuming animal products is an expression of power that serves the hierarchal system that they want to end.
I also remember a story I was told during my school-age years. Once, blind Al-Ma’arri was seriously ill and the people who looked after him brought a cooked chicken to feed him, even though they knew he was vegan. They justified their action by saying that the doctor had prescribed chicken for a speedy recovery. Heartbroken, he touched the cooked chicken and uttered his famous statement (talking to the dead bird): “They only prescribed you because you are weak. Would they ever prescribe a lion cub?”

In fact, we do not have to start from scratch as long as we have the beautiful wall of artwork outside Battir Landscape Ecomuseum in Bethlehem’s Battir village, which was created in honor of a lizard killed by a person who was visiting the village.

In order to utilize the intersectionality of veganism and the political situation for advocacy work in Palestine, we need, on one hand, to clearly state that going vegan is in line with the humane morals that can be found in our Arabic literature, including the Qur’an, which states that all animals and birds are nations of their own, communities of their own, just like humans (6:38). Hence, it is important to assert that veganism and intersectionality are actually a significant element in the fight against the system that seeks to suppress these values. We also need to illustrate how colonialism has promoted women’s subordination to men and homophobia and how this has been manifested in the cultural norms and the religious beliefs until now. There is a simple example in the fact that Arab women historically did not change their surnames after marriage, and it is clearly documented that women started to acquire their husbands’ surnames during the colonial era and continued the practice afterwards. In addition, there is significant literature on homosexuality as a normal human sexual orientation in Arabic societies during the Islamic era. However, it could be argued that even in those days, homosexual men were still considered to be “un-men” (depending on their role in the physical relationship), but there is also evidence that they were at least recognized for their sexual identity (as can be seen in a drawing by Yahya Ibn Mahmud al-Wasiti, shown in the book Al-Maqamat [The Meetings], published by Al-Hariri in Syria or Iraq, c. 1240, in which he illustrated two main male figures kissing in a farewell scene). This recognition is indeed progressive compared to the situation today, where coming out as a homosexual is almost impossible in Palestine and other Arab and Islamic countries. On the other hand, it is important to underline how the Ottoman rule and the prolonged Israeli occupation have hugely contributed to remarkably emphasizing various forms of oppression that permeate a cycle of violence, which is a fundamental obstacle in Palestine’s efforts to develop into a broad-minded society that acknowledges that all oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, and speciesism) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately.

Ahlam Tarayra is a pro-intersectional vegan activist who, through her leading roles at MUSAWA-The Palestinian Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession, ADWAR-Roles for Social Change Association, and The Palestinian Animal League, advocates for justice for all and for improving the Palestinian environment for animals and people alike as a path towards genuine development.

*Orlando Shootings: It’s different now, but Muslims have a long history of accepting homosexuality,* Scroll.in, April 2019, available at https://scroll.in/article/810093/orlando-shooting-its-different-now-but-muslims-have-a-long-history-of-accepting-homosexuality.
“In order to develop yourself and reach the highest positions and jobs, you can’t simply depend on a university education, even though that’s important,” admits Palestinian expatriate businessman Abdullah Yacoub. These words became a reality for a driver at one of Abdullah’s companies in Dubai, UAE. After encouraging the driver to develop his skills through a number of intensive training courses, Abdullah witnessed the driver’s rise to become a department head.

Lead International is one of Abdullah’s most important projects. Based on humanitarian concerns, it offers training in leadership and management skills. Lead International has helped many Palestinian youths who were unable to complete their university education due to the conditions of the first and second intifadas and the ensuing economic hardships under which many people were suffering.

Born in 1946 in Budrus, a village northwest of Ramallah, and currently residing in the United Arab Emirates, Abdullah is not only interested in promoting youth who have not completed their university education. In fact, he has continued the journey of his father – Yacoub Abdullah – who established schools in the villages west of Ramallah before the Nakba. Unlike his father, Abdullah did not become a teacher, but he completed his father’s mission in his own way. Aware of the conditions at government schools, Abdullah provided heating equipment for schools in Ramallah and donated fully equipped school bags and two computer labs to two schools in Budrus. And when he discovered that many students suffered from poor vision, he provided funding for eye examinations, prescription glasses, and vision-correction procedures for about three thousand students and staff at several government schools in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh district. This led to the establishment of Madad, a nonprofit foundation that provides educational services in Palestine.

To motivate excellence and creativity among outstanding high school students, Abdullah established the Ostaz Yacoub Award (named after his late father), a monetary donation towards their university education. He also created a football league for villages affected by the annexation wall in order to lift the children’s spirits.

Abdullah graduated from Ramallah High School in 1964 and holds a university degree in social services from Jordan. He served as director of the Ramtha Youth Center until 1968, and joined the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the same year to work in its Foundation for the Welfare of the Families of the Martyrs of the Palestinian Revolution. In 1975, he moved to Kuwait and began to work at a low-level job in a shipping company. His career took him to Dubai where he established his own logistics company in 2001. Since then, his business has been flourishing and growing abroad. The geographical distance has not prevented him, however, from giving back to his country or serving the people of his homeland.

Abdullah is married to Mariam Ajami. They have four children.
Nabil Anani
Palestine, Land and People
Edited by Sulieman Mleahat and Martin Mulloy

Foreword by Mourid Barghouti
By Sulieman Mleahat

*Nabil Anani: Palestine, Land and People* is the first comprehensive book that charts Nabil Anani’s outstanding artistic journey which has spanned nearly five decades. When I introduced Martin Mulloy (co-editor) to Anani at his 2007 London exhibition, *Journey into Script*, he was mesmerized by the intricate and beautiful artworks on display at Foyles Gallery. At the same time, he was astounded that Anani had not yet had an internationally acclaimed publication to his name.

The reality is that, aside from a handful of general publications on Palestinian art, very few Palestinian artists have had the attention they deserve, with few publications documenting their work. This has led to limited international exposure and recognition within the wider art world: Palestinian art and artists have remained, until recently, relatively unknown.

In 2015, Martin and I developed a proposal for publishers in the United Kingdom. Saqi Books publishing house in London accepted our proposal with a positive desire to bring Anani’s work to a wider public. Publisher Lynn Gaspard was moved by the breadth and volume of Anani’s work. We immediately set about doing three things in parallel: raising the necessary funds for the project; commissioning writers who would do justice to Nabil’s life and work; and finally, collating high-quality images of his art. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the project was securing high-quality images of works that were in private collections. Sadly, much of Anani’s early works were not documented at the time of their creation: this necessitated tracking them down, photographing them, and digitizing them. Individuals such as George Al Ama, Mazen Qubti, and Shukri Farwajeh, as well as the Dalloul Art Foundation — to name but a few — were very generous with their time and permitted us to photograph their collections and secure, and indeed preserve, stunning images of rare works.

Martin and I describe the project as a “labor of love,” as Anani trusted us to put together a book that would do justice to his art and to five decades of his work dedicated to promoting the Palestinian narrative. It was no easy task as funding is very limited, both in Palestine and the wider region, and writers were busy with their own projects and daily work. However, by early 2018, we had secured both the funding and contributions from notable Palestinian writers including Mourid Barghouti, Bashir Makhoul, Rana Anani, Tina Sherwell, Lara Khaldi, Housni Shehada, and Nada Shabout. Each of these writers took one aspect of Anani’s life and work and provided comprehensive descriptions and excellent analysis of his remarkable artistic journey. Together with 150 images of paintings and reliefs, the book is an outstanding document on one of Palestine’s most distinguished artists.

The book is wonderfully written and designed, and much like Anani’s work, it is beautifully produced. It is also a great testament to Palestine, its people, heritage, and recent history. As Mourid Barghouti puts it in his foreword: “In his paintings Anani is a novelist because he tells the story of a group of human beings too weak to tell their own powerful story. He is a poet when he seizes on a detail here and there: a glancing eye, the tilt of a neck, or miles of threatened trees; the frailty in a body in one instance, or amazing power in the same body in another. He is a historian when he chronicles through art the events of Palestinian life, its joys and sorrows, the various ways it disappears despite joy, and manifests itself despite death.”
I celebrate life through my art. I desire to convey hope and optimism, which reflects my belief that life is worth investing every effort to be the best we can be.

As an artist who lives and works in the city of Gaza — a city known for its grief, pain, wars, siege, and instability — I am determined to present my work as a message that comes from this small geographic region but reaches far beyond its boundaries. Through my artwork, I wish to represent my people and communicate their message: we strive to live in safety and peace.

The nature that surrounds me and the reality in which I live are my inspiration. I offer images that others can enjoy and hope to create works that challenge the prevailing view about life in Gaza. Elements of nature form the basis of the decorative designs that permeate and enliven my paintings. The flowers, plants, trees, birds, etc. that typically appear in Islamic art turn into simple, abstract forms. These elements have become part of Palestinian embroidery and are drawn with silk threads; abstract geometric symbols narrate the various Palestinian tales represented by each dress. For every dress, there is a narrative, revealed by delicate, harmonious threads.

Tiny details make up the wonderful and perfect landscapes created by the hands of creative Palestinian women. The Palestinian woman is my role model and forms the foundation of most of my artworks; she is the muse that provides me with the power to create. Every time I start a new art project, I feel her strong presence. I identify with her both as a woman and an artist because I am an integral part of this society. I belong to every part of it.

I relish discovering the many aspects that can be developed through my artwork. In each painting, I discover my love for and kinship with the woman who connects me to new places and different times and invites me into a space that I love and that I would like to share with others.

Women constitute half the society, but they embrace the whole society. A woman is mother, wife, sister, friend, and companion in the struggle. I salute her since she is also the martyr, the prisoner, and the fighter.

My new project, entitled *Long Live Women*, is dedicated to all women. I focus on the role and the struggle of the Palestinian woman who never leaves the battlefield and who is always present to support her partner in every arena. A woman who has proved herself in this life and who continues to courageously confront every challenge.

This is my life, and this is what I portray through my paintings, hoping to have a positive impact on the hearts of the viewers.

Dina Matar was born in 1985 in Gaza, where she lives and works. She graduated in 2007 from Al-Aqsa University with a BA in art education. In 2012, she was selected for an artist residency in Paris at the Cité internationale des arts. Her work has been exhibited in several exhibitions in Palestine as well as in Britain, Ireland, France, Switzerland, the United States, Argentina, Jordan, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar. Dina works as an art teacher in public schools in the Gaza Strip. She is a founding member of Eltiqa Group for Contemporary Art in the Gaza Strip.
Old Stones
By Ihsan Al Bandak
April 25 to May 30, 2019
Bab idDeir Art Gallery, Bethlehem

Old Stones is an exhibition that includes a series of artworks that depict everyday city life in nineteenth-century Palestine: the old quarters, gardens, narrow streets, markets, and alleys. The artist’s lush paint strokes, sensuous treatment of surfaces of stones, sheep, or skin, and pleasure in the details of everyday life make his paintings an invitation to re-enter a past now lost but not forgotten.

The artist began this project by studying archival material and historical photos of Palestine, and more specifically, Jerusalem. He started with 200 pencil and ink sketches that he then developed into grisaille paintings – a technique of painting in greys and whites – which show buildings and humans merged together to form an unbreakable bond. Minimal color was added to represent life and emotions.

In his work, Ihsan attempts to restore the physical existence of long-gone generations, trees, animals, and historical monuments through embedding his own emotions as a refugee from Bethlehem. In addition, his works aim to convey the issue of Palestinian and Arab Jerusalem to younger generations, particularly to Palestinians who live in the diaspora, so that they do not forget their land, history, or heritage. Some of the ancient city quarters remain intact, while others are affected by both recent urban development as well as the Israeli policy of house demolition and ethnic cleansing of the Arab communities, especially in Jerusalem. During the past two years, the exhibition has been displayed in Jordan and the United States.

Ihsan Al-Bandak (1957)
Ihsan is a Palestinian artist from a Bethlehem family that migrated to Amman. In 1990, he obtained a PhD in fine art from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has participated in more than 35 local, regional, and international exhibitions as well as in various art projects (graphics, paintings, drawings, ceramics, and sculpture) in Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, and the United States.
Spring in Palestine is an amazing time. The hillsides are lush after the heavy rains, blanketed in wildflowers that crawl with busily pollinating insects. I’ve heard many complaints about the amount of rainfall we’ve had. I remind people that our land needs it. They always reply that we have more than 100 percent of our needs met. And I remind them that our land, not my summer supply for dishwashing, should be the indicator. There can never be too much rain for Palestine’s trees and plants!

This month’s theme is advocacy. Commonly we associate advocacy with human rights and fail to connect the environment to the larger fight for justice in Palestine. Environmental justice is not typically understood as a human right. This is a grave mistake, and we must insist on the connection. We must advocate for the environment; without a clean and healthy environment, we truly have no immediate future. Water rights, food sovereignty, and land sovereignty are all human rights issues. As I often argue, if we do not advocate for the bees, we will kill them all and suffer dire consequences. As the planet’s insects, mammals, and plants increasingly become extinct, endangering our biodiversity, our future is in grave danger. For now, we still have most of Palestine’s wildflowers, but their future is tied to ours, and we must advocate for both.
Celebrating Sustainability

By Najla Abdellatif Vallander

The holiday season is just around the corner. Ramadan and Eid are times when we celebrate and gather as relatives. Needless to say, material commodities such as delicious food, generous gifts, and new clothes are central aspects of this celebration. We love to share our abundance with our relatives. It makes us feel a certain sweetness of life that counterbalances the hardship of fasting. However, there is a dark side to this sharing of abundance that we often overlook or downright choose to ignore: our excessive consumption.

Festive seasons and overconsumption have become inseparable. Not only is there an increased spending on food, but there is also a generalized consumption behavior. A study conducted on consumer trends found that overall consumption and spending increase by 53 percent in Arab countries during the holy month.\(^1\)

The lifespan of clothing is becoming shorter, especially for clothes bought for special occasions that are typically worn only once or twice. A lot of resources are used in the manufacturing of new clothes – raw material, water, energy, and chemicals – making the fashion industry one of the most polluting industries in the world.

Shops in Palestine are filled with mass imported clothes from countries such as Turkey, China, and Bangladesh. Working conditions for garment workers in these countries are rarely favorable. This makes fashion consumption not only an environmental issue but an ethical one too. Take the textile industry in Turkey as an example. Many of the clothes found on the Palestinian market are imported from Turkish manufacturers who have been reported to exploit Syrian refugees in garment factories.\(^2\) Textile workers are also exposed to hazardous conditions, which leads to serious health issues.\(^3\)

The domination of cheap imported clothes has resulted in small local clothing brands being outcompeted on the market, not to mention the tailor shops that have almost become extinct. Fashion shouldn’t be a hazard to the environment, and there is a range of sustainable options for consuming it. Supporting local responsible producers that value transparency is one such option. BabyFist, for example, is a clothing line based out of Palestine that creates fashion for a social cause and the empowerment of women. At the same time, it supports local Palestinian producers by manufacturing their apparel across the West Bank and Gaza.

Taita Leila is another local brand that counters the values of fast fashion. The company values traditions and handwork by incorporating Palestinian embroidery (tatreez) into its clothes and employing local women as embroiderers.

Buying second-hand goods is another sustainable alternative to consuming. Located in downtown Ramallah, Dukkan is a second-hand shop that sells everything from clothing to children’s toys at budget prices. It aims to tackle the challenges related to fast fashion, especially fashion waste that ends up in landfills and contributes to pollution.\(^4\)

There are several ways to prevent our clothing from ending up in landfills. Outgrown clothes, for both adults and children, can be donated to various charity organizations and orphanages across the country. Or why not bring back the lost Palestinian tradition of handwork by having your clothes tailor-made at one of the few remaining tailors in town?

Through her blog Zero Waste Palestine, Najla sheds light on climate change-related issues and promotes sustainable and waste-free practices for Palestinian households.

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\(^4\) Dukkan was initiated by Dalia Association. All the income generated is put into supporting community development in Palestine. For more information, visit www.dalia.ps.
Where to Go

Dar Mansur
A step back in time...
By Donn Hutchison and Bassam Almohor

If you wish to step back in time, visit Dar Mansur, a house full of memories and history.

The house is kept much like it was in 1936. The Persian carpets are taken up in the spring, beaten, washed, rolled up, and put away until the cold weather begins again. The floors are mopped once a week, except for the kitchen and bathroom which are mopped every day. Once a month, hot soapy water is thrown on the floors that are then scrubbed with a short-handled broom; the water is simply swished out the doors.

In many ways, the house is like it was in the past, yet it is brighter and perhaps more like a mini museum. It certainly retains the Eastern flavor of olden times but now features a Western, almost Country Living style of décor with a collection of old objects that now serve a different purpose than that for which they were originally intended. Some items, however, continue to be used as they were over seventy years ago.

When you enter the Mansur House, you really are taking a step back in time.

Built in 1936, it features the thick walls, red tiled roof, and iron-barred windows that are representative of the style of Palestinian houses built during the British Mandate in Ramallah. Another typical feature is its veranda — frequently it is filled with potted plants in earthen pots that may sit in iron planters — that designated the entrance to the house.

Entering through the double-iron doors, opened with a huge iron key, one steps into the main hall where eight doors lead into the other rooms of the house. This main hall was the center of family life. At one end there was a sitting area, at the other, a table and chairs, sideboard and china cupboard.

The house has three bedrooms; two of them relatively large rooms on either side of the bathroom: a master bedroom and a bedroom for the children. In addition, there is a formal sitting room (in this case with a fireplace) from which a wall of glass-paned doors leads into a formal dining room.

Wooden stairs that have been added to this house now have been turned into bookcases that extend into two rooms. The stairs were twelve feet tall and used to lead to an old attic/storage room. Also added were the two wooden doors that are in the sitting room. They are probably close to 200 years old.

One bedroom has been transformed into a study. Bookshelves were added to fill one wall. The old day bed, keeping to traditions of the 1930s and reflecting Turkish influence of the time, is covered with pieces of old carpet. It also wears a lace skirt and has a fitted lace cover on the bolster at the back.

Donn Hutchison, an American-Palestinian, taught at the Ramallah Friends Schools between 1965 and 2012. He was married to Sina Mansur, the late daughter of Dr. Jirius Mansur who built the house, and currently lives in the Mansur family home. He welcomes visitors who need to make prior arrangements through email: ya_badonn@yahoo.com.

Dar Mansur is located in the center of Ramallah, squeezed between the Canadian Representative Office and UNESCO. Location: 31.906573, 35.201785.
Schmidt’s Girls College
A Gem in the History of Jerusalem

By Najla Shahwan

Jerusalem, with its magnificent panorama, has made a tremendous impression upon many foreign architects, firing their imaginations and inspiring them to build a spacious new city outside the Old City walls. Thus, Jerusalem can boast an amazing variety of public buildings, institutions, and private dwellings. Their various styles reflect the culture of specific groups of residents and particular periods in the city’s history. Built between the years 1868 and 1917, the building that is associated with Schmidt’s Girls College and today houses Saint Paul Guesthouse tells a particular story of the people who played a role in its creation.

Paulus Haus has been preserved with its original layout, and to this day, it contains the furniture that was donated at the time of Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1990, the German Association of the Holy Land opened a museum in the basement of the building. It displays architect Conrad Schick’s models of Jerusalem in various time periods, covering the city’s history from the Iron Age to the nineteenth century, which includes models of Al-Haram al-Sharif and Solomon’s Temple as well as items connected to the history of the association. The museum is open to the public every day except Sunday.

The rooftop terrace offers a magnificent view over the Old City of Jerusalem that reaches from the Mount of Olives to Al-Aqsa Compound and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Najla M. Shahwah is a Palestinian author and journalist from Jerusalem.

Since its inception in 1899, the historical building of Saint Paul Guesthouse has served as a focal point for the dissemination of culture and education in the very heart of Jerusalem – an area of continual and dynamic urban, economic, and cultural development.
Stuffed vegetables are a daily delicacy in Palestine, ubiquitous yet varied. There are as many different ways of doing them as there are seasons, tastes, and customs. It is one of those dishes so entrenched in centuries-long family tradition that everybody agrees that mahshi is great, but no one seems to be able to agree on a common recipe. We stuff everything in Palestine, from carrots to aubergines, cabbage leaves to courgettes, cucumbers to cauliflower leaves. We stuff them with rice or freekeh, with or without meat, with meat or chicken under them in the pot. We cook them in a dressing of lemon juice, olive oil, and water, in a thick yogurt sauce – laban jamid, or in a tomato sauce. Today’s recipe is not only tasty but a perfect healthy vegan dish that helps you stay ethical in your kitchen. Don’t throw away those beautiful cauliflower leaves. Fill them with the best super-grain, freekeh, and enjoy!

Ingredients

2500 gm whole cauliflower leaves
300 gm freekeh
300 gm chopped tomatoes
1 bunch of parsley
1 bunch of mint
200 gm green onions
200 gm chickpeas (boiled and peeled)
100 gm pine nuts

150 gm lemon juice
500 gm hot water
2 potatoes (medium size)
2 tomatoes (medium size)
25 gm salt
200 gm olive oil

Spice mix (24 gm)
10 gm allspice
3 gm pepper
2 gm cinnamon
1 gm cloves
2 gm chili flakes
2 gm sumac
2 gm nutmeg
1 gm turmeric
1 gm cardamom

Method

1. Wash the cauliflower leaves, cut out the stalks (keep them to line the bottom of the pot).
2. Cut the leaves into pieces 10 cm wide.
3. Blanch the leaves in boiling water and immediately cool them in a bowl of ice water. Leave to drain over a colander.
4. Finely chop the tomatoes, parsley, mint, and green onions.
5. Soak the freekeh in warm water for fifteen minutes.
6. Cook the freekeh in slightly salted water until al dente. Cool with cold water through a colander.
7. Grind and mix all the spices together.
8. Slice the tomatoes and potatoes into 1-cm-thick slices to line the bottom of the pot.
9. Mix the chopped vegetables, pine nuts, and herbs with the freekeh, the spices, the salt, and half the olive oil.
10. Line the bottom of the pot with some oil, the stalks, and the potatoes and tomatoes.
11. Stuff and roll the leaves with the freekeh and herb mix.
12. Arrange the stuffed leaves in the pot and add the hot water, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt.
13. Cook on a high flame until the water starts to boil, then reduce to a low flame until cooked. Check that there is always a bit of water at the bottom of the pot. Cooking should take 1h 30 min to 1h 45 min.
14. Let the cooked leaves rest in the pot for a few minutes before flipping the pot over onto a serving plate.

Fadi Kattan is chef at Fawda Restaurant in Bethlehem and a food writer. @ www.fadikattan.com
EVENTS

JERUSALEM

**CONCERTS**
- **Wednesday 1**
  - 11:00–19:00 In Jerusalem Our Feasts Are Unique is a family and children’s celebration to welcome spring, Easter, and Ramadan, organized by the Palestinian Heritage Museum and Art Market Jerusalem. The celebration encompasses a market of 30 pioneer projects by Jerusalemite youth that include activities and art workshops. The Palestinian Heritage Museum.

**EXHIBITIONS**
- **Wednesday 1 – Thursday 30**
  - 10:00–16:00 Old Stones exhibition by the Palestinian artist Ihsan Bandak, organized by Al-Bad Museum in cooperation with Bab idDeir Art Gallery on the occasion of the new partnership between the museum and the Alliance Française. Al-Bad Museum.

**SYMPOSIA**
- **Saturday 4**
  - 10:00–19:00 TEDx youth event is a local event organized by TEDx. An-Najah National University.

RAMALLAH

**CONCERTS**
- **Thursday 2**
  - 20:00–21:00 Tales of the Gypsy Jazz Album Launch, featuring a number of diverse and unique tracks in jazz and swing composed by the musician Samer Rashed and accompanied by musicians from the Golan Heights, Ramallah, and Jerusalem. Ramallah Municipal Theater.

**EXHIBITIONS**
- **Saturday 4**
  - 19:00 Solo exhibition by Khaled Hourani. The exhibition runs till June 20, 2019, every day except Fridays, from 11:00-19:00. Zawyeh Gallery.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**
- **Thursday 4**
  - 11:00–15:00 Palestine National Debate Championship, organized by Afkar Foundation, brings together four directorates of education to debate three main themes. Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque.

BETHELLEH

**EXHIBITIONS**
- **Wednesday 1**
  - 10:00–16:00 Over the Top is an exhibition and performance on three different rooftops in Bethlehem’s old town, including photographic, topographic, textual, and performance works. It is a result of a research and arts project initiated by the German-Palestinian Dana Souh and conceptualized and realized with the Austrian artist Daniel Kovalenko. Starting from Al-Bad Museum (Fawaghreh St.).

NABLUS

**SPECIAL EVENTS**
- **Thursday 2**
  - 13:00–16:00 EU Village is organized by the European Union on the occasion of the celebration of Europe Day, demonstrating products and information about the European countries Spain, France, Germany, Cyprus, Malta, Holland, Romania, Italy, and the European Union. Gamal Abel-Nasser Park.

**SYMPOSIA**
- **Saturday 4**
  - 10:00–19:00 TEDx youth event is a local event organized by TEDx. An-Najah National University.

**FILM SCREENINGS**
- **Wednesday 8**
  - 17:00 Crows-Wrony, produced in 1994 and directed by Dorota Kędzierzawska, is a 55-minute film in Polish with English subtitles. A.M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre.

**CONCERTS**
- **Friday 3**
  - 13:00–18:00 Young Artisans Market presents young designers and artists showcasing their products and innovations. It shows the transformation of their individual initiatives into established projects and economic models. Organized by the Palestinian Museum in collaboration with Disarming Design from Palestine, the market continues till Saturday, May 4, 2019, from 10:00–18:00. The Palestinian Museum.

**FILM SCREENINGS**
- **Wednesday 22**
  - 18:00 I Am Not a Witch, produced in 2018 and directed by Rungano Nyoni, is a 93-minute film in English, Chewa, Bemba, and Tonga, with English subtitles. A.M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre.

**CONCERTS**
- **Monday 27**
  - 18:00 Artistic Talk presents Marija Nemcenke who will speak about her project “The Migratory Nature of White Storks,” stemming from her interest in contemporary myths and their dissemination through popular media, in addition to her interest in stereotypes that have become instruments for reasoning with the world. A.M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre.

**CONCERTS**
- **Saturday 4**
  - 18:00 Artistic Talk presents the Palestinian artist and playwright Raeda Taha who will speak about her life journey as a Palestinian and her experience as the press secretary for Chairman Yasser Arafat in Tunisia. A.M. Qattan Foundation Cultural Centre.
## Cultural Centers

### Al Ma’mal Foundation for Contemporary Art

Al-Jawalida St.#8, New Gate, P.O.Box 14644, Jerusalem 91146
Tel: 02-6283457, Fax: 02-6272312
Email: info@almamalfoundation.org, www.almamalfoundation.org

### Palestinian Heritage Museum

Abu Obaida St., P.O.Box 19377, Jerusalem.
Tel: +972 2 6272531, Fax: +972 2 6272341
Email: info@dta-museum.org, website: www.dta-museum.org

### The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM)

Jerusalem 11 Azzahra St, Shihabi Building
Tel:+972(0)2-626-3230, Fax: +972 (0)2-627-1711
PO Box 66678, Jerusalem, 91666
Email: info@ncm.birzeit.edu, http://ncm.birzeit.edu

Birzeit University,
Old Girl’s Hostel, Birzeit, Tel 02-281-9155/6
Ramallah Tel: 02-2959070-1, Fax: 02-2959071
Beit Sahour Tel & Fax: 02-2748704
Tchaikovsky Musical School Tel & Fax: 02278806
Nablus Tel & Fax: 09-2387773
Gaza Tel & Fax: 08-2628903

### Yabous Cultural Centre

10 Al Zahra St, P.O.Box 54874
Jerusalem, Palestine
Tel: 009722 6261045, Fax: 009722 6261372
Email: officemanager@yabous.org, Website: Yabous.org

### Dar Al-Sabagh Centre for Diaspora Studies and Research

Star Street, Bethlehem, Tel and Fax: +970-2-2742225,
Email: daralsabagh@ccph.ps, daralsabagh

### A.M. Qattan Foundation

27 An-Nahda Women Association Street, Al-Tira, Ramallah – Palestine, P.O. Box 2276, Postal Code 90606
Telephone: +970 2 296 0544/+970 2 296 3280, Fax: +970 2 296 0544
Email: info@qattanfoundation.org, www.qattanfoundation.org

### The Palestinian Museum

Museum Street, PO Box 48, Birzeit, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 294 1948, Fax: +970 2 294 1936, Email: info@palmuseum.org

### The Palestinian Circus School

Al Manzel Street, Birzeit
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Email: Info@pal circus.ps, www.pal circus.ps
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reservation@jerusalemambassador.com, www.jerusalemambassador.com
/amb.jerusalem

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Email: office@austrianhospice.com, Website:www.austriancospice.com

Christmas Boutique Hotel
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Tel: 02-6282588, Fax: 02-6264417
christmashotel@bezeqint.net

(104 rooms; mr; res)

Gloria Hotel
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gloriah@netvision.net.

Holy Land Hotel
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Email: info@holylandhotel.com, www.holylandhotel.com

(104 rooms; mr; res)

Jerusalem Hotel
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(104 rooms; mr; res)

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Email: reservations@jerusalemitz.com, www.jerusalemitz.com,
www.facebook.com/RitzHotelJerusalem

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svarch@bezeqint.net, www.7arches.com

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reservations@tanturhills.com, www.tanturhills.com

Caesar Hotel
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Carmel Hotel ★★★★★
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reservations.mhra@millenniumhotels.com, www.millenniumhotels.com

Taybeh Golden Hotel
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ACCOMMODATIONS

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reservation@jerichoresorts.com, www.jerichoresorts.com

Al Yasmeen Hotel
Nablus
Tel: 09 233 3555 Fax: 09 233 3666
Info@alyasmeen.com, www.alyasmeen.com

Nativity Bells Hotel
City Center - Manger Street
Tel: 00 972 2 2748880, 2748808, Fax: 00 972 2 2748870
Email: nativitybells@palnet.com, www.nativitybells@palnet.ps
https://www.facebook.com/NativityBellsHotel/

Jericho Resort Village

Ibda’a Cultural Center Guesthouse
Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bab al-Mohayem, Bethlehem
Tel: +970 02 277 6444, info@ibdaa48.org www.ibdaa48.org

Photo courtesy of MOTA

Rawabi Hotel Rental Apartments
Rawabi 666, Palestine
Mobile: 059 420 4378
rent@rawabi.ps

ACCOMMODATIONS

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reservation@jerusalambassador.com, www.jerusalambassador.com

Borderline Restaurant Café
Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem 97200
Tel 532 8342, contact@shahwan.org

Cheese & Wine Rooftop Restaurant
(Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center)
Tel: 627 9177, rooftop@notredamecenter.org, www.notredamecenter.org

Jerusalem Hotel Restaurant (Kan Zaman)
15 Antara Ben Shadad St., Jerusalem
Tel: 628 3282, Fax: 6283282, raed@jrshotel.com, www.jrshotel.com

La Collina Bistro and Restaurant
Tantur Hills Hotel, Hebron Road 303
Tel: +972 2 5658800 Fax: +972 2 5658801
Email: reservations@tanturhills.com, www.tanturhills.com

Meejana Lounge (at St. George Hotel)
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Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem 97200  
Tel 582 5162, 532 8342, contact@shahwan.org |
| **The View Café Bar**  
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Tel: 02-6284-841, Fax: 02-6280-265, Email: TheView@holylandhotel.com  
https://www.facebook.com/TheViewJerusalem/ |
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The Art of Gelato  
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https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/ |
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Photo courtesy of Ramallah Municipality

Photo courtesy of MOTA
This time, I would like to use the little space I have to talk about *This Week in Palestine* in general and about this month’s issue in particular, themed “Advocacy in Palestine.”

We generally do not suffer from a lack of publishable material; in fact, we have never had this problem. But the number of articles we received this time was simply overwhelming. So in order to accommodate all the articles, we had no choice but to add an extra 24 pages to the current May 2019 issue. I would like to remind our readers that we do not pay our authors for their submissions because we distribute free of charge all eight thousand printed copies. This formula has worked very well: we provide our authors with a credible platform through which their articles are edited and published, and they, in return, provide us with valuable content. The formula also applies to the photos we receive from Palestinian photographers.

The fact that we continue to receive a large number of contributions can only be seen as an indication of success, for which we are very grateful. HOWEVER, as rich in content and as “full” as this issue is, the income it generated did not cover production costs. To compensate for the relatively few pages of direct advertising, the plan was to subsidize the issue through the fees that institutions normally pay in order to publish articles that give visibility to their institutions or projects. But no institutions had a budget for that. The paradox of success in achieving credibility and popularity versus the inability to guarantee sustainability is mind-boggling, to put it mildly. It is obvious that the Palestinian economy is currently depressed for reasons we all know, and businesses worldwide that rely on printed publications suffer mainly because of social media. However, this is Palestine, and most of its people have not gone totally cyber. I would like to believe that our readers still like to hold in their hands and read a publication that has been an integral part of our society for such a long time. A publication that has indeed sought to promote and document Palestine for over twenty years. The disparity between our success in one aspect and our hardship in another is not only unjustified, it’s confusing as well. I would like to believe that TWIP is still a reliable and powerful communication tool that is able to reach people. I would also like to believe that we have not become a cold and cut-throat society that has no empathy and that allows only the strongest to survive. Woe to us if we ever reach that point.

I am not sure whether it is wise to publish this column, but I suppose it’s a character thing, and I believe in telling it as it is. We’re all going through tough times, but I am certain that we will overcome this difficult period. In the meantime, we just need to remind ourselves of some of the core Palestinian values such as social responsibility, volunteerism, and taking care of one other.

*Sani Meo*
Publisher