Message from the Editor

The recent hostage exchange freed close to 2,000 Palestinians from Israeli prisons, 1,700 of whom had been held without charge – yet not been deemed "hostages" by the international community. There remain in Israeli prisons more than 400 child prisoners among around 9,100 prisoners, with 3,380 being detained without charge or trial. The freed Palestinians report widespread torture that ranges from sleep deprivation to brutal beatings that have broken bones and led to unconsciousness, as well as the deprivation of food, water, and essential medications. The returned bodies of more than 50 Palestinians, who had been abducted during the Gaza war and perished in Israeli prisons, show signs of torture and summary execution, mutilated to unrecognition. Israel is not even trying to hide these crimes. In the first week following the ceasefire, at least 23 Gazans trying to return to their homes, or what remains of them, have been killed, with soldiers claiming to have felt threatened because these people had crossed the rubble into unmarked zones deemed off-limits by the Israeli army, as Israel confines the starving population to only 42 percent of the Strip. Moreover, Israel is again restricting the entry of humanitarian aid amid accusations that Hamas violates the ceasefire by not having delivered the bodies of all Israeli hostages – as they are buried under the rubble. We can only hope that the feeble ceasefire will hold and that Western governments will finally follow up on the recognition of a Palestinian state with the demand for true peace that respects the rights of Palestinians to peace, security, and self-determination. The sad truth is that this is unlikely unless public pressure continues, as Israel's routine violations of international law have been widely exposed.

This issue of *TWiP* covers the difficulties Palestinians have faced in obtaining their rights, as their land is brokered between global power players, and the United Nations is not capable of delivering aid or bringing about a positive change, which either reflects the overpowering influence of Israel's lobby abroad or exposes the colonial mindset that prevails among Western governments as they remain complicit in the genocide.

While *TWiP* goes to publication yet again without a sponsor, we thank both those who use these pages to advertise their services as well as this issue's authors, including Omar Da'na, an independent policy advocacy and human rights expert; Rami G. Khouri, a Palestinian American journalist, author, and analyst; Diana Alzeer, a human rights defender and communications professional; Alexis Deswaef, a lawyer in Brussels and at the International Criminal Court who joined the recent Sumud Flotilla; Dr. Dalal Iriqat, an associate professor at the Arab American University Palestine; Dr. Terry Rempel, an independent scholar whose current research interests include the study of Palestinian refugees; Gaza's Al Mezan Center for Human Rights; Dr. Oroub El-Abed, a nonresident fellow at the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies in Doha; Pax Christi International; UNFPA; the European Legal Support Center, the first and only independent organization defending and empowering the Palestine solidarity movement across Europe; and Marie-Louise Winbladh, an archaeologist, writer, and researcher. This issue features the poem "Ceasefire" by Ahmed Masoud; our books of the month are *Archaeology as a Weapon* and *We Are Not Numbers*; and our Artist of the Month is Reem Al-Natsheh.

The late publication of this issue is due to an illness, and our entire team wishes our designer a continued speedy recovery! We depend on your support, not only for our sustainability but also for the implementation of the rights of Palestinians to true statehood, and we are grateful to all who are speaking out,

Tina Basem

