MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

You may be surprised to learn that Caliph Omar, after the first Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 637, invited the Jews to return to Jerusalem and refrained from praying at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in order to avoid providing a reason to turn it into a mosque. Better known is the magnanimity of Caliph Salah Eddin, who, following his victory over the Crusaders who had ruled the city between 1099 and 1187, spared the lives of defeated Christian soldiers, took ransom only from those who could afford it, left shrines and monuments untouched, and likewise allowed Jews to resettle in Jerusalem. This contradicts the claims made by a certain world leader and is in stark contrast to how the latest occupiers of the city are treating its Indigenous population – in violation of international human rights laws and the treaties and agreements made when the Zionist forces were enabled by Western governments to claim the so-called Holy Land for themselves and their colonially minded backers, whether in the early, mid-, or late twentieth century. This month's issue sheds light on the tremendous resilience of Palestinian Christian and Muslim inhabitants in the face of great efforts to make their lives in Jerusalem impossible.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Wasef Jabsheh, the executive chairman of International General Insurance (Jordan), who graciously adopted the gold sponsorship of the current January issue of *This Week in Palestine*.

Between the articles you will find short features that we call Faces from Jerusalem: personalities who have shaped the city's social and cultural atmosphere and community. They include Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Abu Fahmi (Ahmad Taqash), Lamis Alami, Canaan Ghoul, Claudette Habesch, Faisal Al-Husseini, Hind Taher Al-Husseini, Huda Farid Imam, Zahira Kamal, Suhail Khoury, Betty Daher Majaj, Shihab Al-Qawasmi, Raed Saadeh, Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, Mazen Akram Sbitaby, Imran Al-Shawish, and Ghaleb Izzat al-Wa'ri.

We also thank the authors who have contributed content to this issue. They include Dr. Ali Qleibo, an artist, author, and anthropologist born in Jerusalem and educated in the United States; Dr. Walid Salem, a lecturer in the Jerusalem Studies Master's Program at the Jerusalem Studies Center of Al-Quds University; Maha Abdallah, a graduate teaching and research assistant at the Faculty of Law, University of Antwerp; Omar Da'na, a Jerusalem-born independent policy advocacy and human rights expert and the author of the policy study "Jerusalem Under Apartheid"; Daoud Kuttab, an award-winning journalist from Jerusalem; Rajai M. Nuseibeh, a technology and economic development strategist building inclusive innovation ecosystems across East Jerusalem and beyond; Burj Al Luqluq Social Center Society; the National Conservatory of Music in the heart of Jerusalem; Dimitri Diliani, who currently serves as chairman of the board of directors at Anastasia Software Development Co; Kate Rouhana, the founding director of Jerusalem Story; and Elise Aghazarian, a sociologist, writer, and translator from the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem.

Our two books of the month are *Khaled and Jamila*, a novel by Anan Ameri, and *At the Turning of the Wall: A Story of a Quest and Redemption* by Arthur Hagopian.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish you a peaceful new year and hope that respect for human rights and the appreciation of enlightened coexistence may replace the madness that seems to engulf the world!

Sincerely,

Tina Basem

