



**JAI**

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# Palestine Where to ?



When nations experience tumultuous periods in their history, deception proliferates, confusion arises between what is apparent to what is hidden and from what is official to what is viable. Palestine possesses various centers of power; both external and internal that threatens to undermine the Palestinian national project. The Palestinian identity is threatened from such forces and without urgent action may result in the dismantling of the project paving the way for alienation and chaos within Palestinian society.

In the last few years, the Palestinian people have experienced a number of considerable internal changes. These include political, socio-economic and legal changes that to various degrees adversely affect her societal institutions, her values and her cultural understandings. Such rapid changes, in a politically uncertain climate are inefficient for a people unable to adjust to the new rigors enforced upon them.

Furthermore, the local Palestinian concerns are uniquely intertwined with regional and international forces. Dealing with these forces requires a grander involvement that exceeds her capability. International cooperation is required but not to the point where it exceeds its role to support the Palestinian cause.

This support should function to provide a just end to the conflict that continues to restrict the Palestinian people.

Today, the Palestinian political position acts a microcosm for all the international conflicts and contradictions that exist globally. These include ethno religious divisions, environmental issues, extremism, militarism, democratization and 'the War on Terror.' The 'West' and her multilayered presence in the Israel-Palestine conflict attempts to resolve the geopolitical concerns of both parties whilst selectively addressing (or ignoring) international law and the region's historical context. Such double standards only act to compound an already complicated conflict that continues to threaten Palestinian identity.

For reconciliation work to be effective, 'facts' should be balanced, based on wide-ranging and reputable sources that also address the concerns of the marginalized sectors of Palestinian society.

We believe that by involving our international friends and including them in our struggle, together we can overcome the obstacles of living under occupation and build for a peaceful future for the Palestinian people.

**JAI team**

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# The Arab Peace Initiative

## backgrounds, positions, and horizons



**By: Dr. Jabra Shomali**  
Palestinian writer and critic

2007's Arab Peace Initiative copied the one in Beirut Arab Summit 2002. Not confining itself to its introduction, terms, text and words, this copying extended even to the political context, as if history had in 2002, with no reference or response to the any of the regional and global changes that took place between the two Marches.

The political changes that have taken place since Beirut are important ones, radical even, and cannot simply be dismissed: the Israeli defeat in Lebanon; the inevitable US defeat in Iraq; the Iranian nuclear project; the surprising endurance of resistance in both Palestine and Iraq. Together these suggest a new dynamic in the region which the Arab Peace Initiative, however, has failed to take into account. They were barely mentioned in Riyadh; had they been, it might have been a chance for the summit to raise its game.

This highlights an Arab political mentality in a state of paralysis and isolation from ever-changing reality; hence its inability to put anything into action and even to acknowledge facts taken for granted by the rest of the world. This is a clear indicator of how we can expect the Peace Initiative to

end up: stripped of its original significance and heading for a dead end. The enthusiastic Arab efforts to advocate the Initiative are in fact nothing more than a sort of diplomatic chaos which lacks the vision and support it needs to truly accomplish its aims.

The state of the peace initiative represents an overall crisis of Arab politics, reflecting each country's own corresponding individual political crisis, which we can call the condition of political blindness. The same political script is endlessly repeated and the same ideas chewed over without reference to new movements, developments and crises; policies are trapped in a routine of flattery and imitation.

The failure to take into consideration the results of the Beirut summit is a clear example of this political blindness: Sharon's response was fire and brimstone, invading the Palestinian territories, destroying its institutions, laying siege to Arafat in Ramallah and committing massacres of a violence and magnitude not seen since 1967. To ignore this is to ignore valuable lessons that the five intervening years have to teach us.

The Riyadh Summit and the Arab Peace Initiative totally disregarded the new elements of power in the modern political era, where in fact new balances have emerged favourable to the Palestinian case and to Arab matters in general.

To secure and take advantage of these balances would be to apply serious pressure on Israeli and US positions, whereas to disregard them is to gamble on the chance of an unbiased US role or a new US-Israeli attitude to the Palestinian case.

In the same context, the willingness of the Arab League to negotiate with Israel, through their delegates Egypt and Jordan, constitutes a policy of recognition which Israel has done nothing to deserve, a policy which even ignores Israel's rejection of the core of this initiative. It throws a line to the Israeli government, weak and defeated after the war in Lebanon and the succession of scandals that have plagued it recently.

The Palestinian position with regards to the Arab initiative was determined in Mecca before the Riyadh summit, with the agreement by Hamas and Fatah to form a coalition government in line with international and Arab requests. In other words, the Palestinian position stems from Hamas's decision, a decision also taken by Fatah, to normalize relations with the Arab regimes and take its place among them. It is a clear message to the international community that Hamas has entered a new phase of its existence.

If we contrast the Palestinian position in Mecca with the initiative as a whole can see that it falls significantly short of the latter's more demanding stance, committing to the Oslo accords and the related economic, political and security annexes, which in fact destroy the basis for a viable Palestinian state, and handing Israel an easy opportunity to

reduce Arab political demands to a negotiable plan..

Thus the Palestinian position has been weakened on the subject of the right of return, say, instead of calling for the full implementation of UN resolution 194 the Arab initiative demurely calls only for a 'solution' to the 'refugee issue'.

The Israeli reception of the initiative, meanwhile, is not unrelated to the US interests. The US government is suffering serious internal crisis, harsh criticism of its foreign policy and struggle with the Democrats over Iraq, not to mention the challenge presented by Iran's nuclear ambitions, and requires flexibility, or rather compliance, on Israel's part. The US is appeasing the Arabs with false promises of an Israeli surrender to appear supportive of the Arab position and garner approval, or mute acceptance at least, in the case of a military strike against Iran.

In terms of results, the Israeli vision is to turn the peace initiative into a negotiation on its own terms, in line with the US's Middle East policy of manipulating conflicts rather than solving them and based on the assumption of a timid Arab adversary ready to back from its demands.

In light of these facts Israel is set to be the sole beneficiary of the Arab peace initiative, with Arab recognition of the Israeli state, through the process of negotiating the initiative, coming before the conditions on which it was supposed to be predicted; before, as it were, Israel has earned it. Not that the Arab states should be surprised: the Oslo accords began this process, opening the door to the normalization of relations with Israel before any kind of peace had been achieved.



# On Recognizing Israel

By: **Baha Hilo**  
 JAI Olive Tree Campaign officer  
 May 2007



Since their victory in the 2006 elections, an international campaign has taken place against the Hamas-led Palestinian government which includes economic sanctions and the withholding of aid from public services including health and education. Against the backdrop of the mess in the West Bank and Gaza the importance of a unity government to face these crises became progressively clearer; after long discussions the unity government was formed on March 17<sup>th</sup> in what was considered no little achievement within the Palestinian community.

Still, the formation of the unity government did not change the demands of the international community, represented by the UN, EU, USA and Russia (The International Quartet), which must be fulfilled before the ongoing sanctions are lifted: renunciation of violence, acceptance of past peace accords and recognition of Israel.

These demands have precipitated debate both domestically and internationally concerning the recognition of Israel; views, unsurprisingly, differ on how useful or relevant the previous peace accords are in the current situation. Meanwhile, debate about the renunciation of violence falls prey to often wildly conflicting definitions of what actually constitutes violence.

Despite its continuous rejection of several UN resolutions, Israel is a full member of the UN, and maintains warm relations with both the EU and USA. Yet the Palestinian political leadership are now called upon by the international community to recognise Israel, with seeming disregard for the continued occupation of The West Bank and Gaza.

Clearly countries can earn recognition in a number of ways. Respect for and compliance with international law and convention is usually the favoured method, but they may also choose to dig their heels in and enforce themselves as a reality whether those around them like it or not. There's a big moral difference between the two.

For those of us who do not take reality as an enough of a justification for existence, there are a few questions worth asking regarding this case: how does Israel define itself? In what terms does the international community recognise it? And how are the Palestinians requested to do so? Bearing in mind that the recognising of something does not necessarily mean acknowledging its legitimacy; only in political language does it acquire this dimension. For instance, it is clear that the US and British military presence in Iraq is recognised, as was the previous presence of Syrian authorities in Lebanon, but to what extent is it legitimate or has it



the right to exist there? The Quartet's demand to recognise Israel was interpreted by most of the English-speaking media as recognising Israel's "right to exist" which leaves little room for discussing Israel's right to exist in terms of how, where, as what or even why.

The English official version of The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (May 14, 1948) begins: "Eretz Israel - the Land of Israel, [Palestine]". The term Palestine is used only in the English official version and only once, the use of the term Palestine was to refer to the land between the west of the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea which at the time was under the British Mandate. The document declares the establishment of a Jewish state to be known as the State of Israel.

The inhabitants of what up until that point had been called Palestine were not recognised as Palestinians, or even Native Population but "Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel". It was and still is important for Israel in this matter to put forward its own definitions for who exactly those that live in Palestine are and of course to define what Palestine is – Eretz Israel. Thus the way Israel recognises itself is clear: a Jewish state superimposed upon Palestine, including the West Bank and Gaza, the inhabitants of which are "Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel". The Israeli denial of a Palestinian identity in favour of a simpler and perhaps less controversial 'Arab' one makes the same kind of sense as calling all Spanish-speakers in Latin America 'Spanish' or English-speakers in the USA 'English'.

On May 14<sup>th</sup> 1948, President Harry Truman received a request to recognise the State of Israel. In his response Truman stated "This Government has been informed that a Jewish State has been proclaimed in Palestine... The United States recognises the provisional government as

the de facto authority of the new State of Israel." Several countries followed and a year later (May 11, 1948) the UN "Decides that Israel is a peace-loving State which accepts the obligations contained in the Charter and is able and willing to carry out those obligations meets the requirements to become a full member of the organization." By which point Israel had already flouted Resolution 194 regarding the Palestinian refugee crisis, issued on December 11<sup>th</sup> 1948.

It is obvious that the international community recognises the State of Israel in the same terms as Israel recognises itself, which is based on realities created after the termination of the British Mandate and the 1948 war; disregarding the obvious yet unseen and unrecognised crisis for the Palestinians since then.

The international community (including the USA) was, however, clear that the extra territories Israel took control of after the 1967 war (The West Bank including East Jerusalem, Sinai and Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights) were Occupied Territories and in UN resolution 242 Israel was called upon to withdraw immediately. The Israeli response was unequivocal, as expressed by Israel Prime Minister "Golda Meir" on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1969: "How can we return the Occupied Territories? There is nobody to return them to" and 3 months later (June 15<sup>th</sup> 1969), "There was no such thing as Palestinians, they never existed". Almost 40 years later Israel still does not have a partner in the peace process.

In conclusion, the current demand to the Palestinians to recognise Israel has not been an Israeli demand, but an international one. The call to recognise Israel here is not only to recognise its existence but a demand that the Palestinians must recognise the legitimacy and right of Israel to exist as a Jewish Zionist State on Palestine, otherwise the financial sanctions and humanitarian aid will continue.



# Palestinian Economy Tumbles Under Sanctions

By: IPS, Washington  
26<sup>th</sup> March, 2007

Under an economic embargo spearheaded by Israel, the European Union and the United States, the Palestinian economy shrank by five to 10% in 2006, after having experienced a modest recovery for the previous two years, an international report found Monday.

"It is obvious that 2006 has been a difficult year for the Palestinian economy and the population," said the joint study by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Still, it says that stronger-than-expected official and private inflows of aid, which went mostly to the Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, helped prevent a much sharper decline in incomes and consumption in 2006.

While moderating the overall decline, the average real per capita Gross Domestic Product was still almost 40% below its 1999 level.

The report said that the economy saw a large regression in investment, from an already low level, leading to what the study described as a "further

hollowing out of the Palestinian economy" and an increase in its dependency on foreign assistance.

Palestinians have been living under international sanctions imposed by Israel, the United States and the European Union for voting for the Islamic Resistance Movement, known by its Arabic acronym Hamas, in January 2006.

International donors whose funds sustained the Palestinian Authority for much of its life cut off their aid,



effectively bankrupting the Hamas-led authority.

The World Bank estimates that \$1.1 billion of the PA's budget in 2005 - about half of the total before the

Hamas win - came from foreign donors.

Hamas says that it will continue to fight Israel as long as it occupies Arab land. However, following their win, Hamas officials offered Israel a one-year extension of a current truce with the Jewish state. Both the United States and Israel classify Hamas as a terrorist organization and have insisted that the group renounce violence to lift the sanctions.

The Hamas win further aggravated tensions with Israel, leading in June to the re-occupation by the Israeli military of Gaza after the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier.

Israel intensified its restrictions on movement and access during 2006, particularly in Gaza, which severely limited the flow of goods and people. Israel also detained several Hamas ministers and members of parliament, nearly crippling the government's ability to function.

The report notes that since March 2006, Israel has withheld most of the indirect taxes - so-called clearance revenues - that it collects on behalf of the PA, thus contributing to the severe fiscal crisis.

The report said that the Israeli military hits on Palestinian infrastructure brought local production to its knees.

"Production has been lost due to outright destruction of physical infrastructure and assets, or dampened by the numerous (Israeli) closures and checkpoints, the shortage of funds to finance government spending, as well as by the increased uncertainty about the Palestinian territories' prospects," says the report.

In another report also released Monday, the IMF said that the Palestinian government was





confronted with a harsh fiscal crisis in 2006 as resources to fund the government's recurrent expenditures fell by more than one-third compared to the previous year.

Government employees received on average only about 50-55% of their regular incomes.

This happened despite a strong increase in external support, forcing a major contraction of expenditures. Most donors refrained from providing direct financial assistance to the PA government and chose to use channels that bypassed the Hamas-led authority.

Foreign financing to support budget operations reached almost \$750 million in 2006, more than double the amount received in 2005.

But most of the funds were channeled through President Abbas, who Washington and Israel favour to lead the government, and to Hamas rivals.

Israel says that it gave Abbas \$100

million, keeping \$475 million belonging to the Palestinians. Yet the report says that internal political difficulties and infighting between Abbas and Hamas only compounded the situation for ordinary Palestinians over the last year.

The Fatah faction, led by Abbas, fought with Hamas over power, which often resulted in violence and added to the hardships of the Palestinian people, among the poorest in the world, as has been extensively reported by various UN agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The two factions formed a coalition government last month with Saudi patronage.

The Palestinian poor were hit the hardest, since low-income households typically depend more on government assistance.

Low-income households will have fewer, if any, assets left to sell, and have little or no access to bank or other financing, predicted the report.

The World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organisation recently warned that rising unemployment and poverty were threatening food security, leaving many households totally reliant on outside assistance.

The United Nations recently reported that it was only through increased humanitarian aid and strong solidarity among Palestinians that the poor managed to avoid starvation in 2006.

The report concludes that a robust international effort is needed if the economy is ever to regain its balance.

"Strong adjustment will be needed to put government finances on a sustainable path, but sizable external support will remain needed in the adjustment period. A strong economic recovery would greatly assist the adjustment process," said the IMF.

# Employees STRIKE Perspectives on Hamas Ruling



**Ahmad Shakarna - Student**

I was with the Hamas government before the elections but not now, especially because of the economic effects of their ruling. I think that the teachers' strike was their right but they misused it. The Unity Government is better than any since some big countries prefer to deal with Fateh rather than Hamas.



**Priest: Fr. Jamal Khader - Priest**

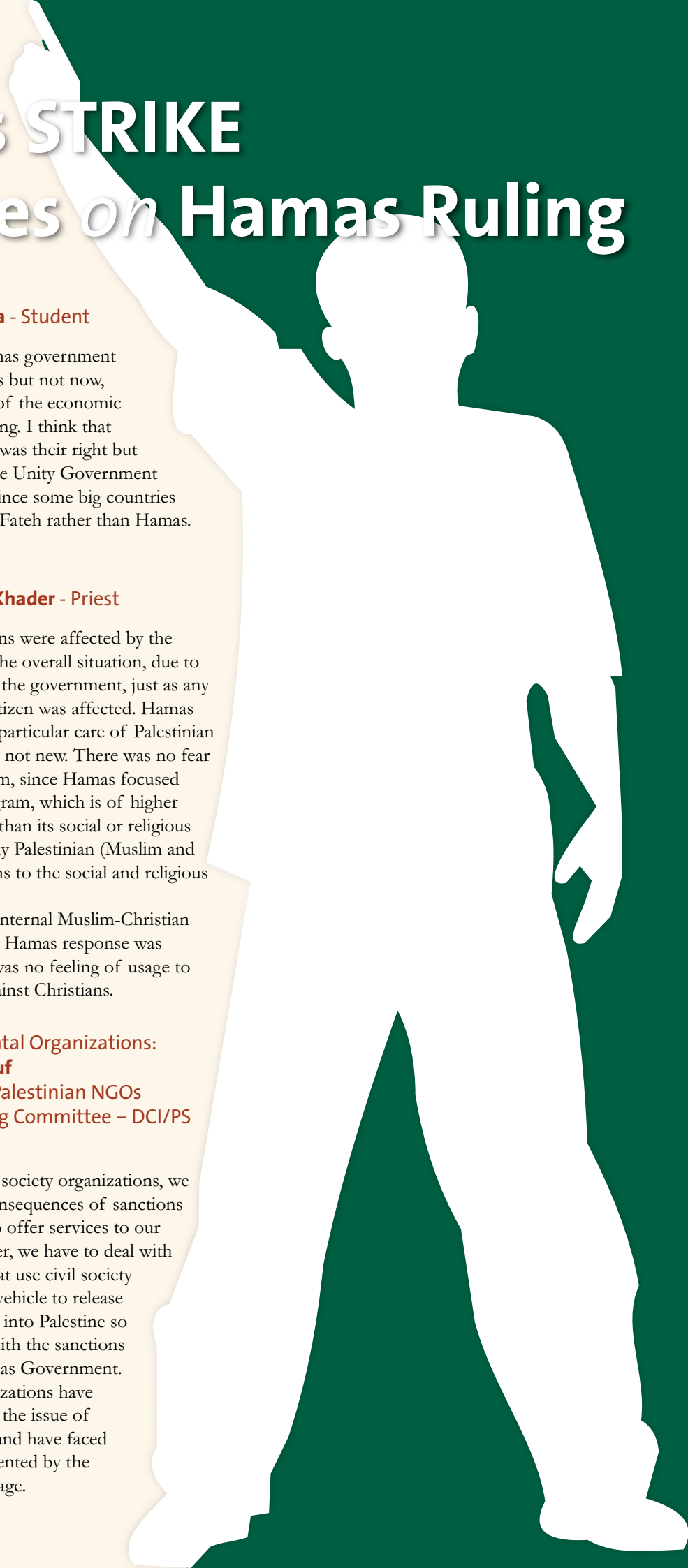
Palestinian Christians were affected by the Hamas ruling and the overall situation, due to the boycott against the government, just as any other Palestinian citizen was affected. Hamas leadership showed particular care of Palestinian Christians, which is not new. There was no fear of an Islamic system, since Hamas focused on its political program, which is of higher importance, rather than its social or religious one. There are many Palestinian (Muslim and Christian) objections to the social and religious one.

In the case of any internal Muslim-Christian conflict, the formal Hamas response was rational and there was no feeling of usage to excite emotions against Christians.



**Non-Governmental Organizations:  
George Abu-Zuluf  
Member of the Palestinian NGOs  
Network Steering Committee – DCI/PS  
Director**

As Palestinian civil society organizations, we have to face the consequences of sanctions while continuing to offer services to our people; on the other, we have to deal with donor countries that use civil society organizations as a vehicle to release international funds into Palestine so as to keep in line with the sanctions placed on the Hamas Government. Civil society organizations have managed to handle the issue of political blackmail and have faced the challenges presented by the elections with courage.





**Teachers (with strike):**

**Osama Lahham** – counselor and member of the Palestinian Teachers Union

The teachers' strike was very effective. It resulted in a response by the Palestinian Minister of Finance as well as the Palestinian Government, which agreed to provide three successive salaries until August 2007, with previous salaries becoming a government debt and funding for salaries serving as repayment of this debt. We would go back to the strike – this time, with more heat – in the case that these measures are not fulfilled.

As Palestinian teachers and members of the teachers' union, most of us were committed to the union's decisions and statements.

When we returned to our schools after the strike, we provided substitution classes for students during afternoons and weekends.

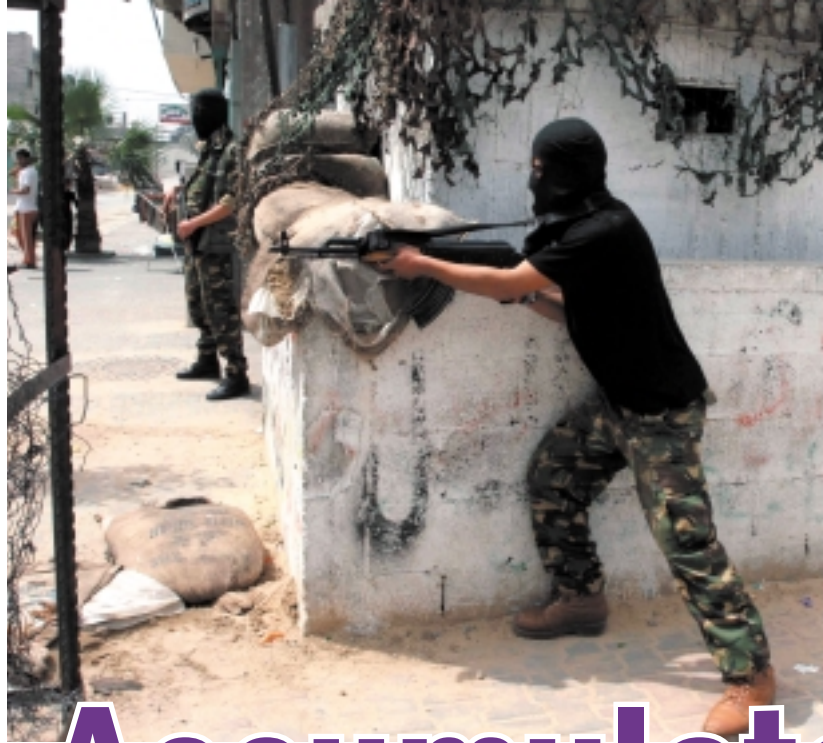
**Teacher (against strike):**

**Elham Hamad** – head of Bethlehem Governmental High School

I fully support the teachers' right to have their problems solved, but in these cases strikes are never successful. Students should be excluded from any internal political crisis. There are other means of lobbying against the Ministry of Education, e.g. not submitting the final grades or withholding graduation certificates, which can be undone after the protest. The strike was very clearly politicized, regardless of weak denials. In our school, for instance, teachers were split into two groups: one on strike, said to be pro-Fateh; the other not on strike, said to be pro-Hamas. I cannot imagine how a head of a school could close the school's doors, blocking students' entry, while he/she is sitting at home!



● Gaza



# Causes & Accumulation The Gaza Crisis

The violent escalation in the Gaza crisis caught most Palestinians by surprise. A closer examination of the situation over the past decade, however, reveals that the crisis was a rather natural progression to developments in Palestine and the region. In fact, several voices foretold the crisis throughout its development but were ignored.

The first indicators of an imminent crisis came after the Oslo Agreement. To begin with, the Palestinian Authority (PA) together with other dominant actors of the Palestinian community neglected to support the development of a cohesive Palestinian civil society. Instead, they institutionalized corruption and promoted a culture that endorsed self-promoting rather than community-centered values. Even worse, they invested in different security systems (e.g. A'm Ariasa, Mukhabarat, Saba't Ashar, Istikhbarat Askary, etc.), which have conflicting interests and aim at protecting personal wealth and political clout. These security systems, moreover, function at the expense of the police and the National Security Guard. Their policies, moreover, tended to marginalize the direct service work of NGOs by attributing to them so-called 'Western agendas'. These conditions created an atmosphere of confusion in which people had no clear vision, rendering

their representative body (PLO) useless.

Under the harsh pressure of Israel's oppressive policies in Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinians favored immediate protection against an armed occupier rather than focusing on building a viable civil-society as a long-term solution. This weakened the appeal of groups that promoted a culture of democracy amongst the Palestinian people. In addition, Israel adopted softer policies towards religious fundamentalist as opposed to secular groups. This became clear when, in 1988, Israeli security groups arrested most of the PLO – and not religious – grassroots cadre.

The beginning of the Second Intifada further stunted the development of a coherent public movement. It promoted a model of resistance that was dependent on the efforts of a few groups and individuals, whose sole objective was fighting an armed occupier. In the absence of rule of law, religious and extended family groups gained power and came to control the Palestinian community, as illustrated by the 'Rafah tunnels' case (the Rafah tunnels connect southern Gaza and Egypt and are controlled by several families).

Also during this period, Israel systematically destroyed the economic

and institutional infrastructure of Palestinian communities. To name just two examples, during the 2002 invasion the Israeli armed forces destroyed soap factories in Nablus and imposed a curfew in the old city of Hebron that lasted more than 280 consecutive days. Israeli also replaced Palestinian with internationally-contracted labor; worse, it prevented transit of people and goods between Palestinian cities through roadblocks and more recently, the 'jidār', the apartheid's Wall. As a result, unemployment and poverty rose significantly, as did the Palestinians' sense of frustration and hopelessness. Understandably, the priority of the average Palestinian was survival, not his contribution to the strengthening of Palestinian civil society and 'democracy'.

The Palestinian youth constitutes more than 60% of the Palestinian population, deprived of their basic needs and tired of fruitless negotiations with chaos and frustration, access to small weapons' began joining militant groups that adopted violence as a solution to the conflict and offered their members a sense of fraternité. Worse, some of these groups were used and directed clandestinely toward negative directions that distort the image of Palestinian struggle. The group-oriented mentality is in sync with the general self-promoting



# ed Catalysts of

By: **Adnan Ateyah**  
JAI acting project manager

culture already discussed; as such, it hindered the rise of a coherent public movement against occupation.

The Israeli unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which some received as a victory, came to lay Gaza under siege from all sides, with the Israeli forces evacuation from large areas of land causing struggle and competition among militias and big families over resources, land and weapons obtainment and movements of goods. All this was in light of a sharp political polarization between Fateh and Hamas that exceeded Palestine, resulting in the exaggeration of old social problems, that were missing solutions, by hidden manipulation of local, regional and international regime forces, with various agendas and mechanisms.

The Palestinian elections came with a political revolution that reflected a big social and economic deep change within the Palestinian society, in which the religious powers seemed to have managed to gain the involvement of the public with its various sectors, including women, students and workers, giving each its identity respective role. This success was based on the practices and long-term experience of the democratic left powers that voluntarily quit this role.

Following the elections results, sanctions were imposed on Palestinians, with the drag of some parties, from one side, to external forces and agendas, mainly Israeli and American, and the increase of a religious expiatory extremism from the other side, which were accompanied by the presence of violence in solving small problems, even among friends. This is in addition to global sense of divisions based on religion and the reflection of the globalization policies into an already miserable situation. All those lead to what we have witnessed today in a military resolution and division that threatens the Palestinian national project and identity.

Internal reconciliation should be based on clear analysis, which requires, with the public involvement, revising and reconstructing the Palestinian national project, identity and struggle,

reconstructing the national Palestinian organizations inside Palestine and in Diaspora, based on democracy, rights, effectiveness, the culture and identity of a struggling nation under occupation. This solution' outcomes are to appear in the long-run, but it requires agreement, recognition, and public effective participation, where re-organization of the Palestinian home requires the organization of its sub-units from parties, organizations, group, unions, to alliances. This means a whole revision as a way out of the current internal crisis. The Cairo agreement, negotiations, and attitude to draw back from mistakes and crimes, and their consequences, are a first step, but not enough.





# Towards A Real Effective Public Participation

By: **Adnan Ateyah**  
JAI acting project manager

In the midst of the current Palestinian crisis, it is necessary to find the voice of the Palestinian public, hitherto absent, or marginalized. In order to break this silence, it is necessary to understand what caused it in the first place.

Thus far, the public has been manipulated by the political visions and the shifting moods of various community leaders. There appears to have been a systematic marginalization of effective public participation, as evident through the minimal space allotted to it within PLO parties, dating back to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA). As a consequence, there was a significant decrease in social and political mobilization, which was limited to a few political activists acting on a specific political agenda. Formal policies also worked towards controlling non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and limiting them to direct service delivery.

The Second Intifada (uprising) delivered a severe blow to the already-weak public movement. Armed struggle carried out by militiamen replaced mass action, and the faulty belief that violence alone could solve the crisis gained force. Most calls to arm came from individual fighters and small clusters of militant groups. Few political parties and social movements promoted this vision as well, but their efforts still overstepped the public by limiting its participation in communal activities (e.g. funerals) or party meetings, the latter of which were already in steep decline.

Two conditions are crucial for the Palestinian public to develop an effective role in the crisis. First, extensive civil society capacity-building is required prior to any change; this involves improving the level of public education, awareness and participation in civil society, among other things. Moreover, the capacity-building process should be well-organized, extensive and should become an organic part of the community. While the first Intifada could serve as an example of a social network that promoted public participation, it is important to recognize that this process takes time.

Second, democracy should be understood as a process in which all citizens have the ability to express themselves and have their rights protected, but also the responsibility to reform the system. Palestinians need to develop an effective citizenship, which would promote social movements, public participation, and a culture of social responsibility.

Public unions, political factions, NGOs and grassroots organizations should work to mobilize the public. They should include Palestinians in their advocacy efforts, as well as in the preparation and implementation of various initiatives, in order to develop a social network that is required for the national democratic process and identity development. These bodies should reform their objectives – and join efforts with the public at large – to achieve this end.

# Public Movements Bethlehem area

Prepared by: **Ibrahim Hannouneh** - JAI

Recent developments in Gaza have created the need for public mobilization and action focused on a clear national, public, and practical agenda. The public should not remain fixated on the struggle between groups that exercise violence on the premise of conflicting ideologies and agendas.

More than 40 representatives from various organizations, public committees, and local councils – representing a large sector of the civil society in the Bethlehem area – met in mid June to discuss possible courses of actions.

The meeting resulted in a written statement that touched on the following issues: general reverence for basic law, security system reform, law enforcement, international protection of Palestinian territories under the UN umbrella, and yellow

journalism that provokes violence.

It was followed by a larger gathering in late June 2007, which met under the slogan “For Palestine the homeland and identity.” All in attendance condemned the internal fighting, its causes and its destructive consequences. To end the fragmentation of Palestine, they called for an initiative that includes intense dialogue between the feuding parties arbitrated by Palestinian and international legal conventions.

The June meeting also emphasized the importance of developing and enhancing the various social powers in Palestine, so that they could become practical regulators and supporters of higher national interests.



# After the Gaza crisis

Prepared by: **Samer Jaber** - JAI

Source: Aljazeera.net

In light of continuous Israeli invasions of the Gaza Strip, as well as the ongoing West Bank occupation, the internal crisis and malfunction of the Palestinian Legislation Council (PLC) persists. Its polarization has given rise to different national, regional and international positions, initiatives, calls and perspectives:

## Internal:

Hamas control of Gaza deepened its conflict with Fateh, causing a turning point in the history of the Palestinian struggle. Either side continues holding its respective position.

The most outspoken members of Fateh and the presidency re calling for the draw back of Hamas as a precondition for internal negotiation. They claim that in order to organize the Palestinian home, "Hamas should apologize to the Palestinian people for what it has done in Gaza". Other Fateh members have begun pushing for the revision of the structure and performance of the Fateh movement and Palestinian Authority (PA). Among them is Hani Al-Hasan, a PLO and Fateh leader and Abbas' ex-consultant, who stated that PA practices are not reflective of either Fateh or of a national agenda; another is Marwan Barghouti, Fateh first-field leader, who supports the democratic mechanism in solving the crisis and argues that Hamas should draw back its control from Gaza PA centers and allow "the elections box" to make the decision.

Hamas presents what happened in Gaza in security rather than political terms.

It is calling for negotiations based on the concept of "no winner or loser," as stated by Ismail Haniyyah, the Palestinian ex-PM. Head of Hamas Khaled Masha'al admitted minor, non policy-based mistakes. He emphasized Hamas' willingness to apologize, and added that negotiations "should be based on the Mecca Agreement," which he says "is still going"; he considers "any legitimacy against this agreement as illegal" and does not doubt the legitimacy of President Abbas.



The role of the democratic powers is increasing in Palestinian streets, thus opening the door for new initiatives. For instance, a joint initiative between the Public Front and the National Initiative has "rejected the military control and its consequences." It has also called for "negotiations after Hamas draw back"; for "dissolving the Hamas government in Gaza and the emergency government in the West Bank"; and for the "reformation of a national transition government, based on the Prisoners National Agreement Accord and agreed upon by all parties and powers... which would establish the basis for the construction of a professional legal independent entity, as well as reform and rehabilitate the security forces and system..."



The Democratic Front initiative is in line with the latter initiative and confirms the need for a strong public movement that would force all parties involved to agree on a "peaceful resolution" of the crisis.

Representatives of what constitutes the Palestinian civil society formally condemned "the use of military force in dealing with internal Palestinian quarrels and disagreements" in the national reconciliation accord initiated by the representatives in Gaza. They urge Hamas to take "a step backwards in order to set the conditions for negotiations" as a precondition to "early presidential and parliament elections, based fully of the partial system." They also call for "the presentation of all those in charge of killings and security chaos to judgment."

In other statements by civil society representatives and public entities in the West Bank, they called for "unrecognizing all consequences of the Hamas military resolution in Gaza and returning to internal negotiations based on the Cairo Agreement and the prisoners National Agreement Accord." They beseeched the international community "to provide international protection for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, under the UN umbrella, according to its accords and the 4th Geneva convention"; most of all, they are worried about "the transformation of 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip into hostages."

Members of the intellectual community, including George Habbash, Basam Ilshiq'a, and Adil Samara, have discussed this issue at length and are inviting the Palestinian people as well as members of Fateh and Hamas to stop fighting and breaking the law. Instead, they urge



the Palestinian people to focus on their common struggle against occupation and human rights violations by acting within the framework of the PLO coalition.

### Regional:

The Gaza crisis has also complicated regional issues, especially with respect to relations with Egypt, which formally rejects Hamas' forceful takeover of Gaza. Egypt is waiting for the Israeli government and Hamas forces to come to an agreement regarding which border crossing – Abu Salem or Rafah (or both) – to open. Israel insists on the former; Hamas, on the latter. In the meantime both border crossings are closed. This poses a serious threat to human rights because goods cannot enter the Strip through Egypt, Gaza's only link to the rest of the world. Moreover, there are more than 5000 Palestinians waiting in Egypt, without basic commodities and in deplorable conditions, to cross over to Gaza. A number of Palestinians have already died. This puts Egypt under incredible pressure to see the situation resolved, rendering them ready to find common ground with Hamas.

Notwithstanding, Egypt maintains its role as a major regional mediator, especially after the short-lived Mecca Agreement. It is working towards the reactivation of the Cairo Agreement among the various Palestinian parties (including Hamas), which all of the Palestine political parties recognize as the base for any lasting resolution. In addition, the original leadership of Hamas is the (Egyptian-based) Muslim Brotherhood, which plays an active role in the political and economic life in Egypt and is interested in reaching a peaceful agreement with the new Gaza authority.

To many Palestinians living in the West Bank, Jordan serves as the main gate to the rest of the world. As a result, the Gaza crisis, which increased the separation between the West Bank and Gaza, revitalized the idea of Jordan-West Bank federation. The Jordanian government strongly rejects Hamas' forced control over Gaza, considering it a rebellion on the legitimacy represented by Abbas.

As a consequence of the Gaza crisis, the Saudi position has become supportive of Abbas. The Saudi government



exerts significant political and logistic influence on both Fateh and Hamas, and as such might hold the key to a viable resolution. Amr Mousa, head of the Arab League, clarified that body's position by condemning the actions of Hamas in Gaza and stating, "We support Abbas as well as the elected PLC." In his statement, he also expressed his support of an emergency government formed by figures independent of Fateh and Hamas. Meanwhile the Organization of the Islamic Conference expressed its inability to act in the Hamas-Fateh conflict.



### Internationally:

The position of the forces influencing the international community is supportive of Abbas. The European Union has announced full support for the Palestinian President, emphasizing the need to provide "strong and fast" support for the emergency government. In the meantime, the United States and Japan consider the new government, which Abbas called to form, as governing all Palestinians (including those of the Gaza Strip).

In the context of wider movements, the Quartet is working to revive the peace process, which would eliminate one of the main causes of internal conflict, namely, the failure of the previous series of negotiations. At the end of its meetings in Lisbon it had pledged to provide assistance to all Palestinians, including those who live in Gaza.



The position of the United Nations and its sub-organizations is also supportive of Abbas' legitimacy, and it has taken into account the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people in Gaza. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Mun supported the movement of Quartet representative Tony Blair to revive the peace process.

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish delivered a few sarcastic words after witnessing the fighting amongst his people: "We won and Gaza became independent from the West Bank, we became two states for one people, two cells that do not exchange greetings. Oh, we look like victims in the executioner's mask ... We triumph while we know that the occupation is the victor." Darwish emphasized that the occupation has contributed to the fragmentation of families along political lines. He added: "The winner between us is the loser without realizing this. And the loser does not learn the lesson of defeat. However, we believe that the living spirit of this heroic people, who challenge the process of political annihilation carried out by its enemies, know how to put an end to the madness of its sons and to prevent the death of meaning."

It seems that nearly everyone has agreed with Abbas' call for early legislative and presidential elections. Moreover, while political parties might disagree on procedural issues, Hamas drastically refuses to accept the call.

# HAMAS & the PLO

By: Congressional Research Service (CRS) - Federation of American Scientists

Part of the reason for Hamas success in gaining popular support may have been frustration among Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza stemming from the PLO's inability to make headway toward a solution of the 'Palestinian problem.' Muslims in particular were attracted to Hamas because of its identification with the Islamic fundamentalist movement which set it apart in many ways from the PLO.

Hamas is reputed to be a more efficiently run organization than the widely dispersed and heavily structured PLO with its organizational overhead and diverse activities. The Hamas share of religious donations is rising in relation to the PLO. According to some sources, a large amount of money is coming from devout Muslims in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States who used to contribute to the PLO before it sided with Iraq during the Gulf war. Hamas wisely avoided open confrontation with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

Hamas has significant differences with the PLO. The ideology of Hamas is a synthesis of pan-Arab Islamic religious ideals and Palestinian nationalism. Hamas states its intent to establish an Islamic state in Palestine and its covenant draws heavily upon Islamic ideology and Quranic verses. The PLO charter, on the other hand, is a secular document with a call to Palestinian nationalism. Senior PLO officials have said that they will install a western style democratic form of government in an independent Palestine.

Both charters say that Israel must be forced from all of what was known as 'Palestine' prior to 1947 (the 1922 League of

Nations mandate included what is now Israel, Jordan, and the occupied territories; the British later changed this to exclude the Kingdom of Jordan east of the Jordan River), and that armed force is the only way to bring that about- Hamas uses the term 'jihad' or religious war. However, in late 1989, the PLO changed its position in regard to a Palestinian state and expressed willingness to accept a state comprising the West Bank and Gaza in confederation with Jordan and the continued existence of Israel. It has since been negotiating indirectly with Israel on the basis of land for peace and UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Willingness to negotiate with Israel over territory is probably the most significant difference between the PLO and Hamas. It is possible, though no by no means clear, that differences over the form of government could be negotiated.

Soon after the intifada started, Arafat attempted to include Hamas in a United National Command (UNC) formed by the PLO to exercise overall control of the uprising. Sheikh Yassin made a counter demand that Hamas be allotted a large share (reportedly 40 percent) of the seats on the Palestinian National Council and other governing bodies of the PLO. Hamas also insisted that the PLO change its platform to conform to the Hamas charter.

There have been periodic reports of agreement and cooperation between Hamas and the PLO, but it appears that their differences may be too wide to bridge. Arab newspapers have reported that Hamas is already considering changes to its charter that would moderate its position regarding the talks and other issues between it and the PLO.





# United Struggle

## Occupied Palestine - Syrian Golan heights Advocacy Initiative

### “OPGAI”

## About OPGAI

The Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative is a coalition of 12 civil society organizations, formed in 2004 after several in-depth discussions of issues related to advocacy and civil society development. In 2005 a delegation was sent to the World Social Forum in Brazil.

Throughout the last two years the initiative has worked on networking with various Palestinian and international bodies, resulting in the initiation of the Boycott – Divestment – Sanctions (BDS) Campaign in 2005.

The spirit of cooperation and coordination engendered by the coalition is having a positive influence on the policies and programs of Palestinian social work, as well as responding to the various political and social changes in the region and especially in Palestine.

The coalition has organized several meetings and workshops to identify and discuss the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the coalition and the issues it is working on.

### Target groups:

Locally: Unions and public groups, civil society organizations, youth centers and public committees, democratic parties and powers, media and educational institutes.

Regionally and Internationally: Arab and international social and solidarity movements as well as human rights organizations.

### Vision:

The One-State solution based on peace, justice, equality that brings freedom and democracy under the rule of law for all

people who are living or ever lived on the land of historical Palestine, including refugees.

### Aim:

Working towards deepening and raising the self-awareness of the social movement, its expressions, structuring, and programming.

### Considered Work Strategies:

- Education
- Training
- Networking
- Coalition-building
- Local and international advocacy
- Campaigns
- Dialogues
- Media
- Research and analysis.

### OPGAI current members:

- Alternative Information Center (AIC)
- Alternative Tourism Group (ATG)
- BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
- Bisan center
- Defense for Children-Palestine Section (DCI)
- Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- Golan for Development (GvD)
- Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI) – YWCA/ YMCA
- Jerusalem Center for Women (JCW)
- Land Research Center-Jerusalem (LRC)
- Union of Health Committees





The Olive Tree Campaign



# Statement and Appeal for 40 years of Occupation

In October 2007 Israel will celebrate the fortieth year of its continuous military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. After all these years, oppression and injustice are still a daily reality for Palestinians, whilst a normal life is a distant dream.

The current situation is not promising. No closer to peace and justice, the Palestinians are instead surrounded on all sides by concrete walls and electric fences. This latest Israeli invention, “the Security Fence”, is in its last stages of construction on the land of thousands of Palestinian farmers and landowners.

The 40<sup>th</sup> year of occupation is the 40<sup>th</sup> year of all kinds of measures taken by successive Israeli Governments to make the life of Palestinian farmers unbearable, starting with countless confiscation orders, be they for the construction of the Wall, for expansion of settlements or for so-called buffer zones; meanwhile farmers are barred from having water supplies and building shelters on the land... The list goes on.

In the past 6 years alone Israel has uprooted over than half a million olive trees in the West Bank and Gaza; 40 years of continued destruction of olive trees shows an utter disregard for the livelihood of the farmer himself, for the

right of the Palestinian people to their land and most tragically for the moral value of the tree itself as a symbol of hope, peace, happiness and prosperity. This year, the JAI through its Olive Tree Campaign has decided to increase the target number of olive trees to be sponsored and planted to 14609, one tree for every day of the inhuman, immoral, aggressive and illegal Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian land and population.

Today, you have the opportunity to say enough is enough, and to do something both symbolic and effective. Sponsor the planting of an olive tree this year and you will:

- Express your solidarity with the Palestinians in their struggle for peace and justice and their basic right to be free
- Help a Palestinian farmer resist the attempts of the Israeli occupying forces to take his land from him.
- Give Palestinian families a sustainable income for the future
- Reduce the environmental crisis by planting a young replacement of an uprooted olive tree
- Become part of the Olive Tree Campaign's efforts to mark each and every day of the past 40 years of occupation in a practical and constructive way

- Encourage Palestinians to KEEP HOPE ALIVE and reaffirm their commitment to work constructively towards peace and justice.
- Get an olive tree planted on your behalf in a Palestinian field close to an Israeli Settlement, on a land threatened to be confiscated or on the path of the Wall or next to it, and help protecting the field and the trees. You will also get your name printed on the sponsors' plaque which is located in the same field as well as a certificate of appreciation from the campaign.

## You could also ...

- Arrange an event, dinner, film screening, about the situation in Palestine, and encourage other people to sponsor olive trees.
- Write reminders to newspapers about the military occupation.
- Learn about the JAI and the Olive Tree Campaign and help spread our message by going to [www.jai-pal.org](http://www.jai-pal.org)
- Write to the Israeli ambassador in your country or your country's representative in Israel reminding them that the ongoing military occupation and the construction of the Wall are illegal and immoral.
- For more suggestions, information about what can be done please contact [olivetree@jai-pal.org](mailto:olivetree@jai-pal.org)



By: **Amani Rishmawi**  
YMCA Youth for Peace and Development advocacy group

# Youth Perspective

A year and a half ago, I believed that Palestine was finally going to become a democracy. Almost everyone I knew felt the same. I was excited about the parliamentary elections that were about to take place. It seemed as though Palestinian political, economic and security problems had finally reached their end, and that as a result life would move normally again. Despite the harassment some Palestinians faced at the hands of Israeli soldiers on their way to election boxes, election rooms quickly filled up all over Palestine. The people were finally voting.

The results came, Hamas won, and there was much uncertainty regarding what was going to happen next. I am not a member in any political party, and I do not favor one or the other, but I thought it would be good to have Hamas in authority. I thought it was worth a shot to give them a fair, democratic, honest chance to bring about positive changes. As soon as they came to power things got worse: a global boycott was imposed on Hamas, all funding was withdrawn, and any chance to cooperate with the new parliament was shattered.

Like any other Palestinian, I was naturally angry and enraged. We were given the opportunity to elect our own government, and when we did we were punished for following the democratic process. To make things worse, Israel refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of Hamas, blocking any plausible solution. Fateh did not accept Hamas either, calling for early elections instead.

For several months, life in Palestine stopped again.

Strikes were held in all sectors of society to force Hamas to pay the employees their salaries; of course, they did not have the funds to do this. Hamas and Fateh negotiated time and time again, and I waited and hoped that 'tomorrow' might be a better day. The economical situation was worsening, and no money coming in or going out. Many areas were closed for what the Israeli government coined "security reasons," and the number of the checkpoints doubled. I felt as though I was living in a prison that was

simultaneously very large and very small. As the year 2007 approached, new hopes and expectations emerged. I thought this year would sow seeds of the reconciliation within the Palestinian community as well as with the Israelis. But my hopes proved fruitless!

The Mecca Agreement came and went, and with it our last string of hope.

I was standing still, anxiously waiting to see what was going to happen. For once, I felt that all that waiting would have resulted in some positive outcome; a new structure was set for a unity government between Fateh and Hamas, together with other political parties. However, my hopes were once again upset: the international community did not accept the unity government; the problem between Hamas and Fateh continued; and Israel continued to insist on recognition of the State of Israel as a precondition to negotiation. Under such intense internal and external pressure, the unity government was doomed to fail.

Throughout these trials and tribulations, no one had stopped to think about us, the Palestinian youth. How did we feel about what was going on? No one bothered to ask us for our opinion about the long strikes, the school closures, and the pressure building up in universities. I felt I was tucked away on a shelf, forgotten and forced to wait again. I do not deny that I thought about leaving, to save what is left of my youth—hood and my life. But is not that what Israel wants us to do, to leave and lose our right to claim our land?! I reconsidered: if I were to leave, whose responsibility would it be to protect our land? Who is most effected, most aware and most capable of building a better future if not us, the youth?!

And now, after a year and a half, I am still waiting on the corner shelf. Sometimes I am excited; other times I feel depressed. But I am still at my place, waiting for life pick up where it has stopped.

# The East Jerusalem YMCA Updates ...

## Summer Camps with the YMCA Youth Sport Center - Beit Sahour:

four summer camps during June and July for 330 kids between the ages 6 and 9, lead by young people, in three different locations in the Bethlehem area. These Camps held a variety of field trips and activities for children including arts, music, sports, especially swimming and soccer.

## Summer activities for children in Jerusalem:

various activities, programs and courses for children and youth were organized this summer by the YMCA Social/Cultural Department in Jerusalem. Those included summer camps, ballet, dancing and sport courses.

## Palestinian International Bike Cycle:

on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2007 the East Jerusalem YMCA Youth-to-Youth Initiative organized a Palestine International Bike Race, in which 365 participants from 20 countries took part under the slogans: No to Checkpoints, No to the Segregation wall, No to Occupation.



# JAI Updates ...

## Publications:

JAI annual report 2006: in 24 pages that includes activities, actions, publications, networking and partnerships of the JAI during 2006.

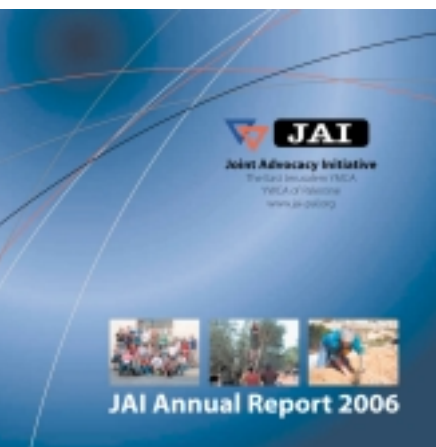
## Youth participation abroad:

Education for Peace – Spain: two participants joined the program between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2007, with its workshops, lectures, discussions, networking and commitment to peace building.

Global Week and TT Festival – Norway: two participants joined the program, between the 21<sup>st</sup> of June and 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2007, with its theme ‘The JAI Olive Tree Campaign’.

Winchester program: a program was organized for 8 participants to Winchester, between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June and the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, where they presented their stories and shared their experiences in churches, schools, religious leaders and with local youth groups.

Youth camp – Denmark: two participants joined the camp between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 2007, with its workshops and activities.



# The YWCA of Palestine Updates ...

## The YWCA of Palestine at the YWCA World Council Meeting Nairobi – Kenya - July 2007

Six delegates and one youth observer, including Ms. Hanadi Younan as President and Ms. Mira Rizek as General Secretary, represented the YWCA of Palestine in the World YWCA Council Meeting held in Nairobi/Kenya from 1 – 12 July, entitled "Changing Lives - Changing Communities", which was attended by over a hundred YWCA associations from all over the world, in addition to representatives from UN, PVO's, NGOs, development experts and renowned speakers.

The meeting, as well, included three major events; the pre-council, highlighting the Young Women's Leadership Forum, the extraordinary World Council Meeting, which witnessed the affiliation of seven new association to the World Movement, and the International Women's Summit on Women's Leadership and HIV/AIDS.

Ms. Susan Margaret Brennan from Australia, was elected as the new World President, and the World YWCA associations also welcomed on board the new General Secretary Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda From Zimbabwe.

Ms. Arda Aghazarian from Palestine has been elected as the Youth Representative of the Middle East region to serve on the new World Board for the period 2007-2011.

The major achievements of this meeting for the Palestinian delegation was the celebration of the endorsement of a joint Resolution between the YWCA of Palestine and the YWCA of the USA, titled: "Dignity, Human Security and Economic Stability of People in the Middle East", which reactivated the World YWCA commitment to the achievement of a just Peace solution for the region.

**For the full text of the resolution go to:  
[www.ywca-palestine.org](http://www.ywca-palestine.org)**



## You are invited to:

***You may forward this invitation to your friends, networks, partners and colleagues***

For the following events, you can join local and national events, organize your own activities and invite people to join them and plan a set of actions to carry out for the event, as well as responding to international calls for actions:

- The International Day of Prayer for Peace on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September.
- The International day against the Wall on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November.
- The International day in Solidarity with the Palestinian people on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November.

## Participate in the:

- The Journey for Justice 2007 program between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2007, for young YMCA/ YWCA leaders, between 17 – 25 years old, all over the world. More details are available on our website.
- The Olive Picking Program 2007, between the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2007 for people all over the world, regardless of age. Details of the program, with draft schedule are available on our website.
- Christmas in the Holy Land: spend your Christmas week and vacation in Bethlehem, celebrating with the Christian families of the Holy Land, joining their prayers for peace, freedom and justice.

# Statistics

Published By: **Luay Shabanah**  
President of the Palestinian Central  
Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

## Palestinian refugees:

- 42.6 % of citizens of Gaza and West Bank, including Jerusalem, are refugees.
- The Palestinians in the Diaspora are estimated currently to be about 5.0 million. They are mainly in Jordan where about 2.8 million live; 1.6 million are distributed in other Arab countries and the rest are in Western countries including Europe, USA and Latin America. Based on UNRWA records for the end of 2006, the number of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, West Bank and Gaza total 4.5 million, many of whom live in 59 camps, distributed as follows: 10 camps in Jordan, 10 camps in Syria, 12 camps in Lebanon, 19 camps in the West Bank and 8 camps in the Gaza Strip.
- The immediate results of the catastrophe were the occupation of more than three quarters of Palestine land, destruction of 531 localities and displacement and expulsion of about 85% of the Palestinian population.
- The data reveal that about 25.0% of the Palestinians in Israel were recently exposed to at least one kind of property confiscation.

## Statistics:

- The population of the Palestinian Territory is estimated to be 4.02 million at the mid 2007, with 2.52 million in the West Bank and 1.50 million in Gaza Strip.
- In mid 2007, the crude birth rate is 36.0 births and the crude death rate is 3.9 per 1000 population, in the Palestinian Territory.

## Health:

- The number of hospitals in the Palestinian Territory was 75 hospitals.
- Ten out of every 100 children under five are stunted.

## Labor force:

- The labor force participation rate in the Palestinian Territory in 2006 reached 41.3%, unemployment rate was 23.6%, and the median daily wage for Palestinian wage employees was NIS 69.2 in the West Bank and NIS 65.4 in Gaza Strip.



## Education status:

- The number of schools in the Palestinian Territory was 2,277 schools, the number of pupils in these schools was 1.067 million, of which 535,000 were males and 532,000 were females.
- In the Palestinian Territory, there are 11 universities and 13 university colleges offering programs leading to the bachelor degree.

## Agriculture:

- The total area of the horticulture trees in the Palestinian Territory was 1,289.2 thousand dunums, 92.3% of which are bearing trees, and 7.7% unbearing.
- 23.2% of the tree horticulture holdings were subjected to damage during the period 28/09/2000 – 23/08/2006 due to Israeli measures in the Palestinian Territory.

## Israeli Settlements and Annexation Wall:

- The number of formal settlements in the West Bank totaled 144 at the end of 2005. Data indicate that the number of settlers in the West Bank in 2005 reached 451,441 settlers.
- The number of localities which are affected by the wall in the West Bank has increased, during 2003-2006, from 76 to 159 localities. 13 localities are inside the wall and 146 localities are outside the wall. 22.2% of the individuals in the affected localities left their education due to the bad economic conditions.