

# JOUSOUR

BRIDGES FOR DIALOGUE

Issue 7 | June 2021

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LPDC expands  
COVID ring of care  
in camps



The beginning of a new  
phase in the conflict  
Osama Hamdan



Seventy-three years  
since the Nakba  
Generations of memories



The destabilization of  
the Zionist myth  
Sari Hanafi

## A SALUTE TO PALESTINE AND ITS UNSHAKABLE PEOPLE

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Muslims and Christians; the old and the  
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This magazine, issued by the LPDC represents an array of opinions and perspectives on issues pertaining Palestinian refugees affairs in Lebanon.

It aims to expand the realm of rational dialogue between the Lebanese and Palestinians beyond stereotypes and dogmas while contributing to the development of common relationships in a positive and constructive manner.

The Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) is an intergovernmental agency working since 2005 to address the Palestinian refugees affairs in Lebanon.

The Committee serves as a focal point between the refugees and the concerned public and international stakeholders and provides policy recommendations to the Lebanese government based on the national interest of the Lebanese people, namely the rejection of permanent settlement and the rights of Palestinian refugees to live in dignity and respect until their right to return is realized.

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# A SALUTE TO PALESTINE AND ITS UNSHAKABLE PEOPLE

**Hassan Mneymneh** | Chairman of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee

Whether subject to occupation, besieged, living scattered throughout the region, part of the global diaspora or, most significantly, those within the 1948 occupied territories - remarkable are the Palestinians.

From destitute refugees to the affluent; Muslims and Christians; the old and the young. To a man, woman and child, they represent the colors of Palestine's rich history.

Generation after generation, they fall, and time after time, they rise, standing on their wounds. Despite the years of Israel's occupation of their land, they work tirelessly to undermine the aggressor's delusional mantras. They say that Palestine is a land without a people; that it is possible to Israelize the Palestinians, and that the time has come to forfeit the right of return, to force Palestinians to settle in their places of residence and forget their cause.

The Jerusalem intifada and the grit of the Palestinians within, and their steadfastness in the face of the recent brutal raids on Gaza, showed with the Palestinian movement abroad, the Palestinian adherence to whatever, wherever and under any circumstances, his devotion to his land and his human rights, his right to his homeland and building his independent state, and to live with dignity.

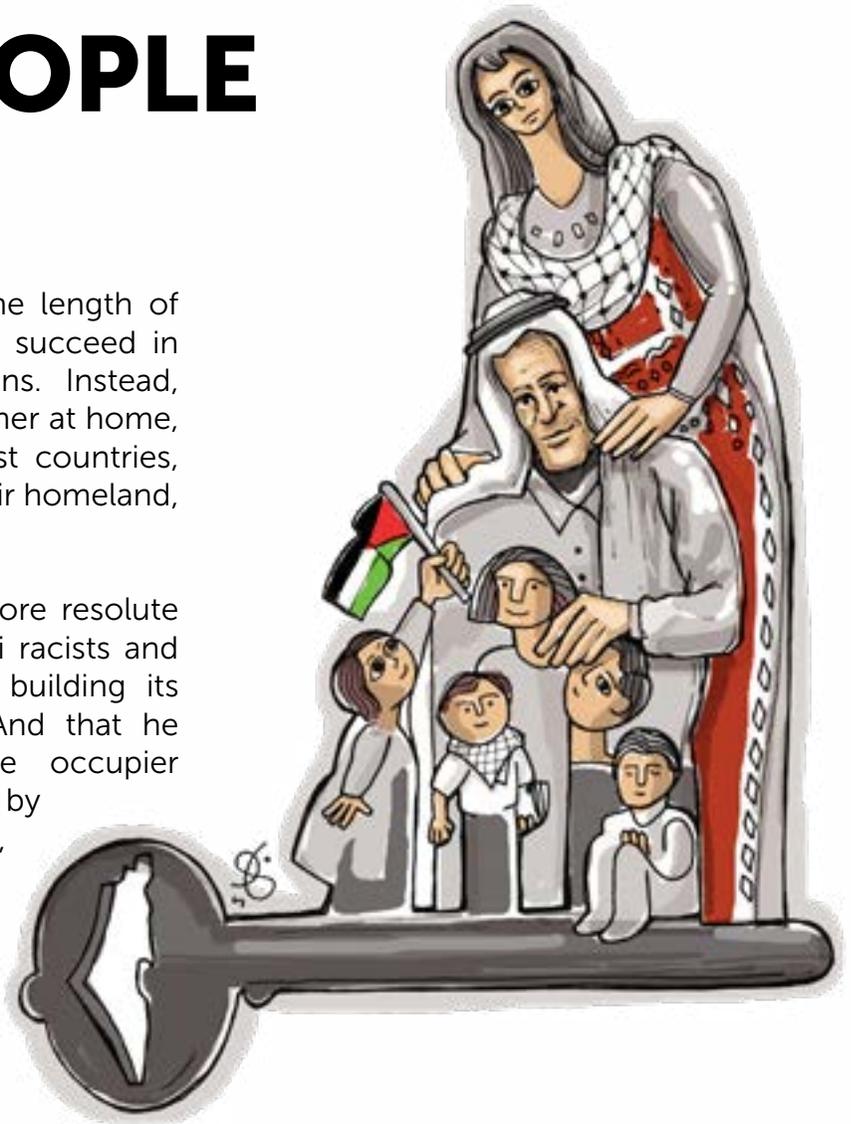
This position, especially for the Palestinian Arabs of 1948, will not soon dispel from the Israeli consciousness, which is undoubtedly shocked that all its coercion, occupation, tyranny, racism

and oppression, despite the length of time, did not and will not succeed in subjugating the Palestinians. Instead, the new generations, whether at home, in the camps and the host countries, are more committed to their homeland, land and rights.

Every generation grows more resolute in its hostility to the Israeli racists and grows more insistent on building its own independent state. And that he decides to confront the occupier by all available means, by demonstrating and striking, with fists, and with fire and missiles, in response to the occupying enemy's arsenal of weapons.

Lebanon's Palestinian refugees, like all Palestinian refugees, came out of their camps of misery to declare, along with their brothers and sisters in Palestine, that they bypass their pain, their suffering, their poverty and their daily torments in search of a livelihood and their lost rights in Lebanon, their adherence to their country, their land and their freedom and to resisting the occupier.

They march on towards the establishment of their independent state on the land of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital, and also to affirm their adherence to the right of return and their rejection of resettlement in all its forms and contents, dropping for the thousandth time all attempts by some to prevent them from obtaining their human rights as refugees in Lebanon under the pretext of resettlement.



After 73 years of their forced presence in Lebanon, the Palestinian refugees affirm to all those with bad intentions that their homeland is Palestine and that Lebanon is only a temporary place for their presence.

Therefore, one of the duties of the host countries, including Lebanon, is to secure the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian refugee, as they will not replace their homeland with any other homeland, not after 73 years of asylum. Not ever.

I salute Palestine and its people, wherever they are. Those who remain faithful to their pledge of returning to Palestine, no matter how long it takes, and more so even as sacrifices increase and challenges are multiplied.

# THE LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE COMMITTEE EXPANDS ITS RING OF CARE IN THE CAMPS AND EQUIPS FOUR NEW HOSPITALS AND SEVERAL ISOLATION CENTERS

Although a reflection of some success, the decrease in the number of COVID-19 infections and virus-related deaths among Lebanese citizens and Palestinian refugees provides no opportunity to pause. Virology experts predict that a third wave of the epidemic is approaching and advise that this is a time for the utmost caution and highest degree of preparation, especially with the highly infectious and increasingly deadly Indian variant – now named the Delta variant by the WHO - appearing in several neighboring countries.

There can be no doubt that high-profile vaccination and awareness campaigns, family isolation, and a widespread acceptance of the potentially lethal consequences of the virus have led to a reduction in the number of infections in Lebanese villages and cities and Palestinian camps and gatherings.

However, an alarming repercussion of lower infection rates is the misguided belief that Lebanon has defeated the virus – a state of mind leading to the neglect of prevention methods in public places and homes.

Daily figures illustrate the level of decline in infections after the sharp increase of earlier months. Nonetheless, the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) refuses to rely on optimism alone and instead stresses the importance of preparing for the worst. Now is the time to increase the capacity of both human and equipment infrastructure; the next wave will be more



*Now is the time to increase the capacity of both human and equipment infrastructure; the next wave will be more deadly than those which came before.*

deadly than those which came before – particularly in the light of growing lethargy regarding the virus within increasing numbers of the population.

The LPDC is stepping up efforts to complete its response to address the COVID-19 virus inside Palestinian camps. During the epidemic's first phase, the LPDC completed the preparation of the Coronavirus Department in the Hamshary Hospital in Saida and equipped it with six intensive care units, sixteen regular care units, and two ambulances.

In addition, the LPDC secured equipment for the isolation center in the new Safad Hospital in Al-Badawi, equipping the hospital laboratory with a PCR machine

through which around ten thousand PCR tests were conducted in cooperation with the Palestinian Red Crescent.

The LPDC also covered the costs of improving and operating UNRWA's Sibling Center.

Preparing for the next phase of the pandemic, the LPDC aims to:

- equip the 'Humanitarian Call' Hospital in Ain El-Hilweh camp with six intensive care units.
- equip the Jdita Center with ten rooms - an average of 20 beds. As part of its plan, the isolation centers will be transformed into primary health care centers, including an isolation center in the new Safad Hospital completed in the



## IN NUMBERS: COVID-19 AMONG PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

*(From February 2021 to 29 June 2021)*

first phase, to be used for cases that need light or medium care. This will reduce the pressure on medical and nursing staff in hospitals during peak periods.

- rehabilitate and equip three hospitals with intensive care departments, patient rooms and additional medical and support facilities, including:

- providing Safad Hospital with seven intensive care beds, in addition to fifteen regular care beds.

- equipping the Hamshary Hospital with a floor that includes nine intensive care rooms for adults with five intensive care rooms for children.

- A focus on Al-Bass Hospital in the Tyre area. At this historic hospital established by the International Red Cross in the 1950s, work is underway to equip it with around six intensive care beds, with around twenty beds for regular care, an emergency department, a radiology department, a laboratory, and the services department and others.

- provide a further four ambulances

The LPDC has now entered the planning stage to purchase the medical devices and supplies needed for this development. These steps required considerable effort, engineering, electrical and technical construction works, and the workshops' commitment to making the places suitable to meet the emerging needs.

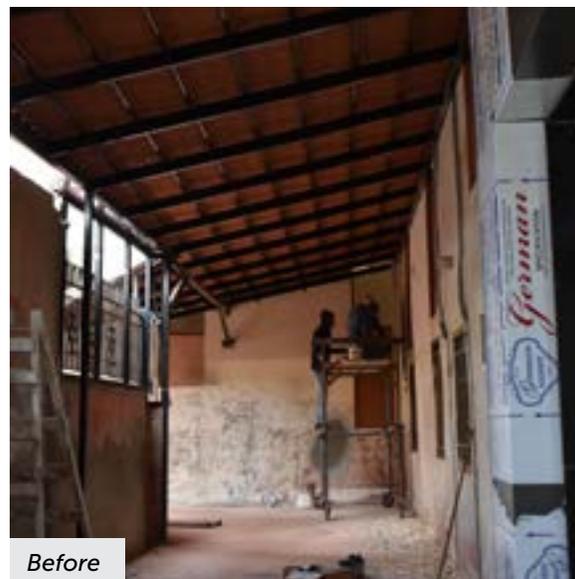
The plan supports vaccination awareness campaigns in cooperation

with UNICEF and local NGOs. The committee seeks with the Ministry of Health - and in coordination with UNRWA - to provide vaccination and registration for Palestinian refugees on the COVAX platform. The effort of the committee is appreciated by donors and beneficiaries and many international and international bodies. The positive interaction is also evident in the daily coordination with the Red Crescent in the camps and with the UNRWA Health Department, in addition, of course, to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

The Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee and many institutions concerned with the conditions of Palestinian refugees in the camps, both Palestinian and international, are working to benefit from the calmness of the epidemic spread in terms of the lack

of the flow of the sick to hospitals and isolation centers, and thus benefiting from the time and capabilities to provide the time allocated for training and rehabilitation as well to ensure that the new wave is faced with the greatest degree of preparation and equipment, as it is clear that technical and human resources were - during the last wave - in a race against time to confront the outbreak and the influx of infected people to hospitals and health centers.

In addition, epidemiological surveillance operations continue, in coordination with UNRWA and the Disaster Management Authority, to arrange the data and link the available data on the Disaster Management Authority platform. In addition, of course, to the continuation of PCR tests with the Palestinian Red Crescent.



Before



After

# PALESTINIAN YOUTH CHOICE: GRADUATE INTO UNEMPLOYMENT, OR EMIGRATE TO WORK?

Malak Zamzam | Palestinian Journalist

First-year nursing student Arwa, 20, has just turned twenty. Currently studying in Istanbul, far from her family and home in southern Lebanon's Rashidieh refugee camp, a degree in medicine was her dream choice. "But", she says, "I didn't want to risk years of hard study and high fees and then be unable to work professionally" – Arwa knows that medicine is one of many careers that a Palestinian is forbidden to practice professionally.

Arwa is optimistic about her future as a nurse back in Lebanon; the current economic crisis in the country has led to a scarcity of nurses. Stifling financial pressure on the health sector and the decline in the value of salaries – paid in Lebanese pounds (and which have dropped in US\$ terms by around 90% over the past eighteen months) – has prompted more than 1,000 nurses - university graduates with vast experience and high degrees of professionalism - to emigrate and work abroad.

Given the current environment in Lebanon, Arwa chose to study in Turkey. Partly through uncertainty regarding the dollar crisis and how this may impact university fees, and secondly because she wanted to increase the chance of finding work abroad if she doesn't find a suitable opportunity in the country in which she was born and grew up.

Despite the fundamentally difficult conditions that Palestinians live in Lebanon, and the lack of decent

livelihoods within Palestinian camps, for generations, her community has placed all their hopes on the education sector, praying for their children, no matter how high the sacrifice, to graduate with top degrees to provide greater chances for a better future.



**"I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK YEARS OF HARD STUDY AND HIGH FEES AND THEN BE UNABLE TO WORK PROFESSIONALLY"**



However, recent events and the country's alarming economic collapse appear to have delivered a fatal blow to the remaining opportunities available to many youths in Lebanon, particularly Palestinian youths.

According to the 'Population and Housing Census in the Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon' which was supported by the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee in 2017, and carried out by the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and which covered 12 camps and 156 Palestinian gatherings throughout the Lebanese territories, only 14% of the Palestinian youth in Lebanon complete secondary school, and only 8% can pursue university studies. As for the change that the Palestinian youth in Lebanon seek, it revolves around finding suitable job opportunities that will secure a decent standard of living.

Here is the crucial issue. Unemployment rates throughout Lebanon are very high, especially among Palestinian youth. According to the latest reports by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), 65% of refugees aged between 18-20 suffer from unemployment and lack of opportunities, and 70.3% of them say they will emigrate if given a chance.

Among host countries, only in Lebanon does UNRWA provide secondary level education to Palestinian students,

enabling them to later enrol in universities. However, there are only between 1,300 and 1,500 students who finish high school, and most of them move to the Lebanese University, where they are likely to complete humanities studies. As for the academically gifted, they have the opportunity to enter private universities with preferential tuition fees, with some of them obtaining grants.

According to a recent study that looked at Palestinian university students in Lebanon - conducted by the Palestinian Institute for Human Rights - Witness (Shahed) - 66% of Palestinian students need financial help and cannot find anyone to cover their university education expenses. Moreover, 75% of those who applied for grants are pessimistic and consider that their request will not be met.

As for alternatives available to those who wish to continue their studies, 55% intend to join the Sibliin College for Vocational and Technical Training, from where 15% say they will work in any profession until another opportunity becomes available, and 19% of whom wish to emigrate.

After excelling in high school, Omar Al-Sayed, a 25-year-old from Rashidieh camp, studied civil engineering at the Lebanese American University on a scholarship and graduated four years ago. Omar was unemployed for three of those years. Engineering is also one of the professions that a Palestinian is forbidden to practice outside of UNRWA or non-governmental organizations.

Omar says that he is among many unemployed engineers in Lebanon and that job opportunities grow fewer with each passing year. Omar has been practising his profession in Africa for a year now. He hoped to find a decent life alongside his family in Lebanon, but the country's conditions prevented that.



### **ENGINEERING GRADUATE SEARCHES ONLINE FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD**

Omar Tuhaibish, 21, and a civil engineering graduate from Sibliin Institute, is currently unemployed. He says that he seeks to travel to one of the Gulf countries and work as an engineer there, but he faces difficulties in carrying out his college degree equivalence, as well as financial difficulties. When he tried to apply for the Student Fund - a fund that grants study loans to Palestinian students on the condition that the amount is refunded following graduation and upon work commencing - it was refused, since engineering students have high unemployment rates upon graduation. Therefore the possibility of repaying the loan was judged to be low.

Omar now spends most of his time in a coffee shop near his house with his friends in Ein El-Helweh camp. Most of those he spends his days with also graduated from universities, but they cannot secure jobs.

Students who enrolled in the same major often sought his help in their studies and, upon their graduation, many were able to emigrate and work abroad, but not all. One unable to find work was Mahmoud. Top of his class in the Faculty of Engineering, Mahmoud, now in his mid-thirties is still unemployed, and admits that his financial situation prevents even the possibility of marriage.

Omar reveals that Mahmoud has suffered from severe depression, which prompted him to become addicted to alcohol and drugs. Omar says, "Everyone who knows Mahmoud and is aware of his degree of intelligence knows what he would have been in a different situation, feels sorrow and fears for his fate when they see his condition now".

Omar feels that the consequences of unemployment are not only represented in not finding a job but are also linked to other temptations that young people may resort to trying to solve this crisis when all other roads and opportunities are closed. He tries to put all his energy into volunteering and to occupy himself with any work, even if it is without any financial return.

## A COMPUTER SCIENCE GRADUATE WORKS IN A PHONE SHOP

Mahmoud Muhammad, 26, graduated with a degree in computer science from the Lebanese International University but is currently unemployed. He sometimes works in a phone shop owned by a friend in Ain al-Helweh, in return for meagre pay.

He could only record the minimum number of credits each semester to find time to work to pay for his tuition. Mahmoud had hoped that a university degree would open doors for him.

He is engaged to a young psychology graduate from the Lebanese University; his fiancé works for a social enterprise for which she receives just \$30 per month. They want to travel, live, and work abroad, but they do not see a future for the family they want to establish.

Mahmoud says, "Marriage is now impossible because of the outrageous prices, very low pensions, and the economic collapse in the country. Whatever challenges the Lebanese youth may face due to corruption and the poor conditions of the country, for us Palestinian refugees, they are multiplied exponentially".



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**65% OF REFUGEES AGED BETWEEN 18-20 SUFFER FROM UNEMPLOYMENT AND LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES, AND 70.3% OF THEM SAY THEY WILL EMIGRATE IF GIVEN A CHANCE.**

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## A CHEMISTRY GRADUATE SEARCHES ONLINE FOR A JOB

Esraa Tuhaibish, 22, is a chemistry graduate and holds a teaching certificate – she is unemployed. Esraa studied through a scholarship and received both degrees from the American University of Beirut.

Many months have passed since her graduation – all spent in search of work. She says that she cannot travel to work abroad before an entire year has passed since her graduation. One of the conditions for obtaining the education certificate grant is that she works for an entire year upon graduation in a school for the disadvantaged. Still, she faces many difficulties in finding a job. She says her Palestinian citizenship significantly limits the places where she is allowed to work and that the institutions she applied to did not take into account her certificates.

Esraa expresses her dismay at the extent of corruption and exploitation in educational systems on the pretext of thrift.

## A MECHANIC GRADUATE FROM SIBLIN INSTITUTE OPENED A COFFEE KIOSK

Obaidah Hebeish, 23, a mechanic and metalwork graduate from Siblin Institute, is also unemployed. Previously, he worked in a car workshop under the supervision of its owner, for which he was paid LBP25,000 per day.

With the economic inflation and the collapse of the Lebanese currency, he left his job, as it became pointless to continue to work for a salary that "does not even cover the price of a pack of cigarettes". Recently he has opened a small coffee kiosk.

Obaidah sometimes thinks of joining one of the political factions in exchange for a few dollars but hesitates due to the undesirable obligations linked to such membership. He is fully convinced that his academic degree is of no use and finds that the educated and the uneducated have the same ultimate fate in Lebanon, which is unemployment. "If there is a hope worth holding on to, it is certainly not in Lebanon".

In his fifties and a father of five children, Issam Hussein currently works in a small shawarma restaurant. His salary barely covers his family's basic expenses.

After his graduation and following a period of unemployment, he accepted a job in Africa to secure an income for his family. Finding life away from his children too hard to bear, he returned after five years and then remained unemployed for a further year.



# SEVENTY-THREE YEARS SINCE THE NAKBA: GENERATIONS OF MEMORIES, REFUGEES, DIASPORA AND HOMES DESTROYED

This year marks the seventy-third anniversary of the Zionist occupation of the land of Palestine, and the dispersion of its people across the occupied territories in 1948, within neighboring countries, and way beyond them in the diaspora countries.

As days go by, the refugees' dreams of returning to their homeland and establishing an independent Palestinian state are narrowing down, as are the crises of the host countries, which are doubly reflected in their living and legal reality. Jousour interviewed the generation of the Nakba, which became a shared memory for all of the sons and residents of Palestine in 1948, a Palestinian and a Lebanese expelled from that country, with their memories, and many dreams and imagined images. It conveys the story of a Palestinian-American young man who visited Palestine to recall his father's memories of a house that no longer exists.

## THE NAKBA THROUGH THE DIASPORA EYES:

*Thirty-four-year old Tariq longs for a home he will never know*

I have only seen my father cry twice. The first time, I was eight years old, and we were driving up to Boston, a trip we made every year at Christmas time to visit my mother's family.

My father was blasting Fairuz in our 1995



*Rawiya sits amongst the rubble of her family home destroyed by the Israeli military for the first time in 2008 and again in 2014*

Volvo station wagon, and Fairuz's balmy voice seemed out of place against the relentless miles of icy, cracked highway and gray New England frost.

My father sang along until his baritone voice cracked, and his shoulders began to quiver. My mother reached over, ruffled his hair, and turned around to wink at me and my sister in the back seat.

"Baba, why are you crying?" I asked, leaning forward to catch a glimpse of him. "It's just some old lady singing!" I don't remember what he said.

The second time was several years later, in 2008. My father sat on the edge of his bed in our old, cramped New York City apartment, gripping the TV remote and staring at the screen with his brow furrowed. Israel had just launched Operation Cast Lead, which would devastate the Gaza Strip. Images of piles of dead bodies, explosions, and mounds of rubble flashed across the screen, scenes my parents wouldn't even let me see in movies.

My father eventually stood up. He rolled up his sleeves and approached the TV

screen like it was a window that he could pry open and climb through. But all he could do was grab the house phone and try calling his sister, who lived in Gaza City, to see if she was okay. Each time he would get her on the line, she couldn't hear him.

"Hello?" I could hear her repeatedly say, her voice muffled by the distance. "Is anyone there?"  
"Rawya!" he called. "I'm here. I can hear you. Can you hear me?"

I remember what he said to me that night. Eventually, he pulled me over, pointed at the small TV screen, and, with the same shaky voice I had heard in the car years before, said, "That's our home, baba."

Until then, I had never thought much of what "home" meant, and as a 13-year-old, I rarely had to explain my background. We moved around a lot back then, and whenever anyone asked where I was from, I would shrug and name wherever we had just left. But after watching the destruction of my father's home on TV and seeing the ruins of my aunt Rawya's house, I started associating "home" with a place I had never lived in — a feeling I would later realize I share with millions of other members of the scattered Palestinian diaspora.

I was born in New York City, and although I spent several years living in countries across the Middle East, I only spent a few short months in Gaza and was far too young to remember it. I grew up listening to my father's stories of what it was like "back home" — of clementine and olive trees, boys who sold dates on the beach, and, of course, war and occupation. Despite my physical distance from Gaza, it came to occupy an almost daily presence in my life. Still, Israel's 2008 invasion made me cognizant of the forces actively trying to erase part of my heritage, albeit far removed and unfamiliar.

From then on, I began calling myself

Palestinian. I translated song lyrics to tie together my broken Arabic, read every history book on Palestine that I could get my hands on and became deeply involved in advocacy for the Palestinian cause — the decades-long struggle for fundamental human rights, self-determination, and an end to Israeli occupation. Above all, I came to yearn for a "return" to the elusive home I had heard so much about over the years, and now, I am the one who can be brought to tears after hearing a few lines of the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish or Tawfiq Ziad.



**SPONTANEOUS MASS DEMONSTRATIONS ROAMED THE ALLEYS OF THE CAMPS AND TOOK TO THE STREETS OF BEIRUT AS AN UNFAMILIAR HUMAN TORRENT, CELEBRATING THE PRIDE OF PALESTINE, ITS FLAG AND ITS KEFFIYEH**

But how could their words, so intimate in their claims to the land and lives they lost, resonate with me — someone whose only connection to Palestine was through the stories I'd been told?

Nostalgia is a yearning for the past or an embellishment of a bygone time, sometimes justified but, more often than not, tinted by positive associations and the subconscious filtering out of the darker moments. Our imaginations, eternally unsatisfied with present reality, tease us with false memories of what was; we often make the past seem larger than life, better, maybe even somehow synonymous with an ideal future.

But how can one long for a past they've never experienced?

How do we decide where to grow our roots? Today, the Palestinian diaspora has grown to over 7 million, which includes the descendants of those who were forced from their homes in 1948 during the Nakba as well as those like

me, Aya, and Diana, whose families were lucky enough in a sense to decide for themselves to leave and establish lives far away from military occupation. Although our experiences diverge, we share a common resolve to return, only strengthened by the counterforces that push us away. Many of us are prevented from visiting Palestine by Israeli authorities who call us security and demographic threats for our activism and rightful claims of displacement.

I last visited Palestine in 2016. It was my first time back in years, so I did not know what to expect when I tried crossing over to the West Bank on Jordan's King Hussein Bridge. I deleted all my social media accounts, erasing any proof of my activism, anything that could give the Israeli border guards pretext to turn me away. I dropped off my Arabic books at my cousin's apartment in Amman, shaved my beard, and wore my bright red Rutgers University T-shirt, all part of my plan to play the role of an innocuous American college student. I took a taxi to the crossing at 7:00 a.m. to beat the crowds, but everyone else seemed to have the same idea.

"Want me to wait for you?" the taxi driver asked as we pulled up to the buses shuttling people back and forth through clouds of dust.

"No, thank you," I said.

"Take my number just in case," he insisted.

The border crossing felt like a bullpen. Heavily armed guards, some in oversized green military fatigues and others in civilian clothing, stood in the shade smoking cigarettes and watched as we shuffled off the buses and rushed into what looked like a dilapidated airplane hangar.

"Shawa?" the Israeli border guard grunted at me as he looked up from my American passport in surprise. "You are Arab?"

"I'm Palestinian American," I replied.

"Then go over there," he said, pointing me to a long line leading to a heavy metal door.

I was interrogated for hours, strip-searched twice, and forced to unpack and repack my bag while a soldier, who looked no older than I, searched through every article of clothing, every pocket, every corner. By sunset, I became confident that the Israeli authorities now knew more about my family and me than I did. And it was all for nothing. "We're not letting you through today," said a uniformed officer after he asked me, for what must have been the 10th time, what my plans were in Israel and if my family or I had ever been in contact with members of Hamas.

"Why not?" I asked. "I've been here all day, and you're not going to let me in because I'm Palestinian?"

"I don't know what that is," he replied, almost as if waiting for a chance to say it. "Border is closed."

I was glad I took down the taxi driver's number; he did not sound surprised when I called. He even agreed to drive me back in the morning to try the crossing again. After another almost identical day of inane interrogations, I was lucky enough to make it through. While I hope to return to Palestine, thousands of Palestinians my age

are desperate to leave, and for good reason. In Gaza, growing poverty rates, the persistent threat of war, and the seemingly endless Israeli blockade have made life unbearable for many young Palestinians. Why would I, with all my privilege, want to go where they cannot leave, no matter how hard they try?

The "Palestine" we have grown attached to is simply not there waiting for us for many of us. Just as some Palestinian refugees still cling on to the heavy, rusty keys of homes they were expelled from in 1948, hoping to return someday and find life as they left it, we all adhere to an idea that is just as illusory today, a vision constructed not around reality but the stories passed down to us and a unified political struggle that has shaped our perspectives. The truth is, what we hope awaits us, just beyond the heavily armed soldiers who turn us back at the border or the contemptuous airport security who gleefully send us packing, may simply not exist.

Almost as if set up for disappointment, precluded from a sense of closure, we are actively barred from reaching. We are instead forced into itinerancy, disconnect. Am I Palestinian American or just American? Can I claim to be Palestinian if I have never lived there long enough to call it "home?" Can I claim it if I have never personally shared

the day-to-day struggles of life under occupation that encapsulates so much of what it means to be Palestinian? We are pressured to choose a uniform identity and stick with it. Still, we will always be unable to fully immerse ourselves in either identity, excluded from being fully Palestinian by our physical separation, yet desperately pursuing it all the same. Where do we go from here? And what is it that we want? We want to be able to see and experience the "home" we have heard so much about from so many different angles so that we can finally justify our perceptions. But more than that, our nostalgia has established a through-line that has come to shape our aspirations and, more importantly, gives us a sense of purpose. I hope that by sharing our mutual nostalgia, imagined or otherwise. We can unify our diaspora community in our efforts to end the occupation and find an answer to the Palestinian question. And someday, my father can show me his home no longer hidden behind the walls of occupation and blurred by my imagination.

*Tariq Kenney-Shawa is a Palestinian American researcher in international affairs at Columbia university – Extrait of his article in Newlines Magazine, published the 4th of May 2021: <https://newlinesmag.com/first-person/remembering-a-palestine-no-longer-there/>*



Muhammad Abdullah Ibrahim

### **THE NAKBA THROUGH PALESTINIAN EYES – with 81-year-old Muhammad (81 years old): "Three to four weeks, said my father, and we shall return"**

Seventy-three years ago, nine-year-old Muhammad rode in an overcrowded bus with passengers sitting and standing with his father, mother, and seven brothers-five girls and two boys. The crowd was alive with the cries of youngsters and weeping of women who hastily packed some luggage. They had locked the

doors of their homes and left.

"We shall return soon', the men said", recalls Muhammad Abdullah Ibrahim. Adding, "And we all believed them."

After leaving Ijzim, 28 kilometers from Haifa, on July 24, 1948, the family of Muhammad settled in southern Lebanon.

Muhammad remembers hearing his father talking to his mother about the necessity of leaving due to the state of fear among the Palestinians after the horrific

massacres committed by the Jewish Yishuv forces in many Palestinian villages, including the Deir Yassin massacre.

Muhammad's father was a dairy and grain merchant. He regularly accompanied him on visits to Lebanese villages and towns near the border and to the markets of Bint Jbeil and Juwaya to buy goods to sell in Ijzim.

"My father had good relations with Lebanese families. When the Israelis occupied the village and my father decided to leave – recalls Muhammad, who now lives in Al-Bass camp – he told my mother, 'We will go to Lebanon. When the situation in Palestine is stable, we will return'. He guessed it would be

a matter of three to four weeks at most. And we all believed that."

The next day we went to Haifa and took a bus to Juwaya, where many other Palestinian families had arrived before us. In Juwaya, my father had a friend from the Fawaz family, who hosted us for a week, after which my father went to Tyre, where he found his cousin, who had sought refuge in the Al-Bass area along with other Palestinian families, and where the International Red Cross was providing them with relief aid.

We moved to the 'Hawasa' gathering near the Al-Bass camp, where Armenian families lived. My father rented a room, a kitchen, and a bathroom from an

Armenian family, and he started selling milk and cheese - which he hawked from a donkey - before opening a shop of his own in the camp.

Then UNRWA opened schools for the education of Palestinian refugee children, Muhammad adds. "I completed my studies, got a job with UNRWA, got married and had children, and I have grandchildren now.

"I've told them about Palestine, about the Nakba, and the return.

"Yet I am still living in Al-Bass camp, and I am waiting to return to Ijzim, my hometown. The mantle of waiting was passed to me by my father, who died here and is buried in the Al-Ma'shuq gathering."

## THE NAKBA THROUGH

### **LEBANESE EYES - Abu Rashad (81 years): Tyre flourished with the arrival of the refugees**

In the Al-Bass camp, the first camp in Lebanon to receive Palestinian refugees resides Suhail Muhammad Taha Qadado. Born in Tyre in 1938, Suhail is Lebanese.

As a ten-year-old, he was in Haifa in July 1948. With his mother, he was visiting his two brothers, who owned a barbershop in the Al-Jerba area. News of Haganah gangs entering and perpetrating massacres in Deir Yassin, Kafr Qassem and other Palestinian areas spread.

When the shelling began on the city of Haifa, they fled by boat towards the city of Acre, and from there, they rented a car that took them to the city of Tyre. After that - Abu Rashad recalls - more boats began to come to the port of Tyre – all carrying Palestinian refugees – and where Tyre residents hosted them in their homes.

Suhail's father was the commander of the Internal Security Forces in the city of



*Suhail Muhammad Taha Qadado*

Tyre, where he resided with his parents, three two brothers and three sisters. Suhail was the youngest of the family.

"Every Lebanese family used to host one or two Palestinian refugee families, and they lived in the same house and shared food - says Abu Rashad. His family hosted two families - the al-Khatibs and the Ismails - for six months before moving to Beirut and northern Lebanon.

Suhail says that the Palestinian refugees initially chose to stay in the Lebanese border areas close to their villages in

Palestine because they believed they would soon return home. Many of them had social, family and economic ties with the Lebanese.

The Lebanese of the south worked in cross-border trade or the agricultural sector in the Galilee region. After the Palestinian refugees settled in Tyre and its suburbs, recalls Abu Rashad, the city and suburbs prospered. Some of the refugees had money, especially in the Arab Bank and the British Bank.

With this, some of them bought houses and shops, and some worked in trade and construction, and they had experience growing citrus and bananas, and they mixed the soil with sand because the earth here was harsh. Thus they improved the cultivation of the lands of the southern coast with citrus and bananas.

In Abu Rashad's opinion, despite all the conspiracies against the Palestinian people for seventy-three years, no one has succeeded in erasing their national identity nor their historical right to return to their homes and lands.

# DISTANCE EDUCATION: WEAK EQUIPMENT MEANS WEAK RESULTS

**Ahmed Hajj Ali** | Palestinian Journalist

Muhammad lives in Burj al-Barajneh camp in the southern suburbs of Beirut. His teachers at Al-Quds School had always known him as an energetic and diligent student. Still, his participation since the beginning of the past school year has been almost non-existent, as well as his lack of interaction with his classmates in the ninth grade.

His apparent, if virtual, absence raised his teachers' alarm. Then sympathy replaced surprise when they learned that his reluctance was due to his family's inability to secure a second smartphone in a home that includes three other children, all at different levels of study.

Although teachers cooperated to secure a device for Muhammad, the problem is not seem limited only to this student. Instead, the poverty compounded due to the widening unemployment among Palestinians in Lebanon due to many factors makes the issue far more widespread.

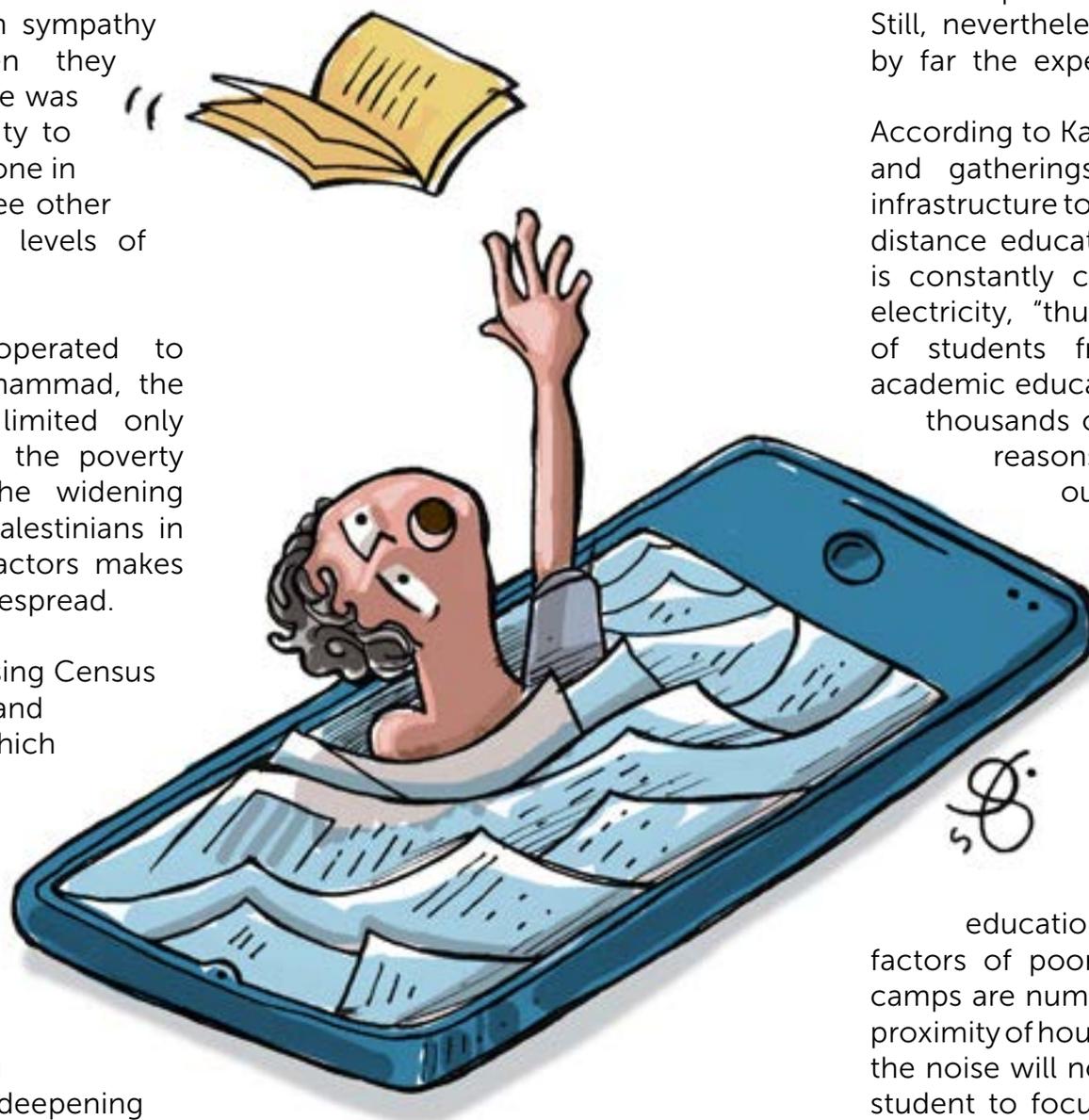
The 'Population and Housing Census in the Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon' which was supported by the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee in 2017, indicated an unemployment rate of 19.4%, although the evidence suggests that the percentage increased in the following years, especially with the deepening economic collapse in Lebanon.

Muhammad is one of the approximately 44,500 Palestinian students in Lebanon's schools, 36,000 educated in UNRWA schools. Since its introduction in March of 2020, the distance education policy has affected these students' academic achievement. The Agency was able to secure a few hundred tablets, but they were not enough to meet the needs of Palestinian students.

Ahmed Kayyal, a professor at an educational support institute in Burj al-Barajneh camp affiliated with the Women's Charitable Association, does not deny the many advantages of distance education, including pushing students and parents to learn some techniques in technology, research and others, and strengthening the partnership in the educational process between parents, school and students. Still, nevertheless, the cons outweigh by far the expected pros.

According to Kayyal, Palestinian camps and gatherings lack the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the process of distance education, since the internet is constantly cut off, as well as the electricity, "thus depriving thousands of students from continuing their academic education. This also allowed thousands of others to invoke the reasons above for dropping out from schools, without even verifying the credibility of their arguments".

He points out that in distance education, it is not possible to ascertain the mental presence of students, unlike the case of in-class education. Especially since the factors of poor concentration in the camps are numerous, "considering the proximity of houses, and their smallness, the noise will not allow the Palestinian student to focus enough mentally for the necessary achievement. Therefore,



education in real classrooms is a necessity and an indispensable need for Palestinians in Lebanon.”

An UNRWA source, who wished to remain anonymous, spoke to “Jousour” and said that there are many negative aspects to distance education, and it has had an impact on the educational process, “although UNRWA tried to avoid them through many measures, including making adjustments to the study support program in line with emerging problems. In each school, a psychological and social support team was formed, following up on parents and students and trying to find different ways to alleviate the psychological burdens left by the atmosphere of the past two years and for parents to be fully involved in the teaching process, in addition to the confinement that was imposed at different times”.



**“PALESTINIAN CAMPS AND GATHERINGS LACK THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO FACILITATE THE PROCESS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION, SINCE THE INTERNET IS CONSTANTLY CUT OFF, AS WELL AS THE ELECTRICITY”**

The source admits that with the recent resumption of hybrid education, “it turned out that distance education was not feasible for reasons that are often beyond the Agency’s control. Therefore, from now on, work must be done to identify the skills that students lost during two years of interruption from real education. As an educational administration at UNRWA, we expect to detail the study of curricula to consolidate years of study and make up for missing skills and lessons that students should have learned. This will be followed by a thorough assessment process for all students.”

He added that in 2020, “an assessment was conducted, and we came up with two curricula for two types of students Catch Up1, Catch Up2”. However, these two curricula were aimed at restoring missing basic skills. Still, now the issue is more complex and comprehensive.

A change must be made at the core of the curriculum, especially in elementary grades. It is also necessary to train 2082 employees working in the education sector in Lebanon to keep pace with these curricula, and we have practical experience in this field. It began at least after what is known as the two-year war (1975-1976) and extended to the change in some wars and battles in curricula to compensate for the educational shortage that afflicted students.

Suha Hussein, social activist and director of the Nawat Education Center, believes that there is an additional problem, represented by the almost halting of the educational support program launched by UNRWA years ago that focused on people with special needs, those who are behind in school, and those with psychological crises, through assistant professors (Shadow Teacher) “This [program] achieved important successes before the lockdown imposed by Covid-19, and we are talking about a few thousand students. This program is almost stopped, and in addition to the academic delay of many students, it has caused psychological pressure on their families. She points out that many students lost communication skills due to this disconnection from their colleagues and professors”.

Zahira Hassan student, a refugee residing in Shatila camp, expresses her grief at the loss of a play space provided by the Haifa School near the camp. Today, she spends most of her time on the phone because there is not enough space to exercise or play in the

camp. Her mother, Mona, intervenes in the conversation to say that she is now afraid that her children will become obese because of this, as happened with other students. She adds that she is enrolling them in private tutoring programs for the first time, which is causing a strain on her family’s budget.



**“MANY FEAR THAT THE GAPS CAUSED BY DISTANCE EDUCATION WILL LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN THE ILLITERACY RATE AMONG THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN LEBANON”**

Many fear that the gaps caused by distance education will lead to an increase in the illiteracy rate among the Palestinian community in Lebanon, especially since this percentage is 7.2%, according to The “Population and Housing Census in the Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon -2017, while it is 2.6% in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to the report of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics issued in September 2020, and it decreases to 0.7% in the age group (15-29 years). According to many Palestinians, these fears should prompt profound cooperation between three parties - the Lebanese state, UNRWA, and the Palestinian society in Lebanon with all its elements and groups - to avoid a more serious situation in future.



# THE ARABS OF 1948 TAKE UP THE TORCH OF PALESTINE'S HISTORICAL IDENTITY AND BRING DOWN ISRAELIZATION

Muhanad Abdel Hamid | Palestinian Journalist

Jerusalem-based Palestinian journalist Muhanad Abdel Hamid looks back at the Arabs of 1948 and their descendants, recent role in defending the city.

It is difficult to summarize the contribution of the Palestinians of 1948 in the battle to defend Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, Bab Al-Amoud and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in confronting the Israeli ethnic cleansing. Their role was crucial and decisive in protecting the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, controlling the Bab Al-Amoud square that connects the districts of Jerusalem and the Old City, and in repelling the policy of the secular and contiguous sharing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Those with knowledge of the Nakba were among the wave of angry youth that rolled out across the city. They gathered day and night in large numbers at the sites of the confrontations, benefiting from their Israeli identity - unlike the youth of the West Bank who were prevented by the occupier's barriers.

When the occupiers stopped the vast convoy of buses of citizens coming from the Triangle, the Negev and Galilee, the young men of Jerusalem rushed to accompany them on foot and ferry them within their private vehicles. It was an epic scene. A mass of humanity and their will overcame the occupiers who were forced to retreat at Bab al-Amud

and postpone the annual march in the Old City - organized by settlers for the benefit of the world's media - to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Israeli Supreme Court postponed its decision to evict homeowners in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Their presence imposed substantial Israeli setbacks, in addition to the previous Israeli concessions, especially the retreat from placing the gates at the entrances to Al-Aqsa Mosque and the abandonment of annexing the lands surrounding the shrine of the Prophet Moussa.



## THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE NAKBA WERE AMONG THE WAVE OF ANGRY YOUTH THAT ROLLED OUT ACROSS THE CITY

Moreover, the Palestinians of 1948 participated in organized, massive and continuous protests in Haifa, Nazareth, Umm al-Fahm, and many towns and villages. For the first time, Palestinian citizens of Acre, Jaffa, Lod and Ramle joined the protests, reclaiming their identity and heritage, which the Israelis believed had gone forever.

It was remarkable that Palestinian flags were raised in the cities of Acre and Lod, its symbol underlined by the holding up

of images of George Habash, much to the astonishment of Israeli authorities.

This brave show led the fascist fanatics and the occupation authorities to conduct a variety of attacks. They ranged from repression to dismissal from work through to a harsh crackdown involving a campaign of arrests of activists who were an essential part of defending Jerusalem and opposing the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

The most significant event was a comprehensive Palestinian strike - the so-called "strike of dignity and unity" held on May 18. A response to the call issued by the Higher Follow-up Committee in the forty-eight regions to strike, it was observed by all citizens of historic Palestine, as well as within the Palestinian camps in Lebanon and Jordan, and observed in support of Jerusalem and in protest against Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian youth movements called for the organization of the "Week to support the national economy" initiative. It started on June 6, and to which Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian diaspora responded in support of the continuation of the unified Palestinian struggle.

The Zionist settler colonialists had treated the Palestinian population who

remained in their homeland - estimated at the time about 150,000 - as a security threat or, as they are often described, an "internal enemy". As such, it operated in a systematic and continuous manner to suppress their political aspirations and bring about a complete rupture between them and other Palestinians and the wider Arab world.

Now that the number of Palestinians in the forty-eight areas exceeds one and a half million (20% of the total population), Israel is working to transform them into anonymous individuals and integrate them economically while erasing their national identity.

However, the development of Palestinian society inside Israel was always linked to the revival of identity

and their connection with other Palestinian entities and the wider Arab environment. According to the Israeli Al-Mashhad website, Amnon Abramovich, a political analyst at Channel 12 TV, said, "The Arabs inside Israel have destructive power, as their strike means that there will be no doctors, pharmacists, nurses, cleaners, drivers, and even goal scorers in football matches.

Many changes are taking place. In the interest of the Palestinian people inside Palestine, many Israeli plans for exclusion fail in return for a Palestinian presence that develops and grows. The Israeli authorities destroyed the village of Al-Araqib in the Negev one hundred and eighty-four times. The village was built by the Palestinians one-hundred-and-eighty-four times".

It can be said that the 'gift of May' brought the Palestinian cause back to the forefront after Netanyahu, with American support and Arab silence, succeeded in putting it on the sidelines. The intifada united the Palestinians at home. The scene was led by a young Palestinian generation who presented a new discourse and succeeded in rebuilding Palestinian national unity from below through specific demands and tasks.

It is certain that this gift bypassed the Palestinian political movement - the two authorities in the West Bank and Gaza and their political cant - and built bridges with the outside world, where global solidarity and support are growing through new movements.

## SONS OF THE EMIR SHEIKH JARRAH A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem would have been no more notable than any of the old areas in the city occupied since 1967, had it not been for the fact that it jumped to the forefront of global events at the beginning of May 2021, after its people, who number no more than 500, decided to confront the policy of expulsion sought by the occupying Israeli authority.

According to the book 'The Galilee in the History of Jerusalem and the Galilee,' Sheikh Jarrah, al-Quds neighbourhood, is named after emir and physician Hussam al-Din bin Sharaf al-Din Issa al-Jarrah, who bore the title of Sheikh Jarrah.

In the same book, the writer Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali mentions that Sheikh Jarrah died in 598 AH and is buried in the 'Surgical Corner' currently located in the Jerusalem neighborhood, which has come to bear the name of Sheikh Jarrah.

The tomb of Sheikh Jarrah was built in the thirteenth century, after which the neighborhood was established, then taking the name of the Sheikh. It became a symbol for successive Arab generations around 700 years ago.

The current neighborhood was established in 1865 and became the residence of some of the most distinguished families of Jerusalem, such as the house of the Mufti Sheikh

Amin al-Husseini, and the families of the Nashashibi, Jarallah, and Nuseibeh.

The Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood is located on the slopes of Mount Scopus to the north of the Old City of Jerusalem. Many of its residents are from Palestinian families who owned homes in Haifa, Jaffa and West Jerusalem. They were displaced during the Nakba in 1948.

But the story of the neighborhood begins decades earlier. Since 2001, the neighborhood has experienced a relentless influx of settlers, who have seized many homes and evicted their residents. The community constantly suffers from the terror and attacks of these settlers.

The importance of the neighborhood stems from its geographical location, and Israel has sought, since 1948, to occupy it, as it links East and West Jerusalem, and as an essential strategic monitoring point, where the Hebrew University is located on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem.

Israel was not able to occupy it until 1967, when it cut off the connection of the Jerusalem neighborhoods with each other and from the entire West Bank and surrounded it with settlement units, eighteen in all, in addition to intrusions into Old Jerusalem.

In 1956, Jordan settled Palestinian refugees in the neighborhood, in agreement with UNRWA, in exchange for the ownership of their homes after three years. The 1967 war prevented these homes from being registered in the Jordanian Land Registry books.

In 1997, the Palestinians of Sheikh Jarrah went to the Israeli courts, demanding the return of the waqf lands, but the petition was rejected. While the families appealed the decision, in 2010, the court granted the land to Jewish settlers coming from Georgia.

Although the people obtained from Turkey – once, as Ottomans, affiliated with Palestine - information that refutes the story of the settlers' groups regarding the ownership of the land, the Central Occupation Court issued several decisions to evict the Jerusalemite families who live in the neighborhood and gave their residents until May 2, 2021, to implement the decision to replace them with the settlers. All appeals were rejected.

Even though more than four decades have passed since the case was first

brought, the occupation courts did not discuss land ownership. Instead, they declared themselves satisfied with a document submitted by the settlement associations, even though it was proven that there was no mention of it in the Ottoman archives, through which they claimed the registration and ownership of the land in 1972.



**THE PEOPLE RAISED THEIR VOICES AGAINST THEIR DISPLACEMENT, HOPING THAT THEIR CRY WOULD RECEIVE A GLOBAL EAR**

The residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood have been waging a continuous battle for half a century to defend their existence, over which hung the constant threat of eviction.

It is a battle in the face of the settlement attack against them, while the occupation deals with the presence of Jerusalemites as an 'evil' that must be eliminated. The people raised their voices against their displacement, hoping that their cry would receive a global ear. As part of their efforts, they launched the "Save Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood" campaign on social media, which was at the core of the last intifada, to a mass of Palestinians responded in the West Bank, the 1948 lands and Gaza.

A member of the Defense Committee for the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, and one of the owners of the homes threatened with eviction, Jacob Abu Arafa, considers that the families' struggle with the settlers is an integral part of the issue of Jerusalem and Palestine in general. He says: "What the people of Sheikh Jarrah suffer from is also suffered by the people of

Silwan, the neighborhoods of Wadi Al-Rababa, Al-Bustan and Wadi Al-Joz, and what the occupation calls the Holy Basin area that surrounds the entire Old City of Jerusalem, and intends to seize it, implement special projects, settle settlers, and establish the Biblical Garden in Silwan, and the Silicon Valley project in Wadi Al-Joz".

Abu Arafa explains his opinion of Israeli courts: "During our presence in these courts, we feel that the judges are settlers. They are fighting to Judaize Jerusalem more than the settlers' lawyers. However, "we have a small glimpse of hope today – this is to go to the International Criminal Court and seriously think about this experience."

The Israeli Supreme Court was scheduled to issue a final decision regarding the evacuation of four Palestinian families from the neighborhood in favor of settlers claiming ownership of the land at the height of the confrontation provoked by the attempt to seize the area, which extended to Al-Aqsa Mosque before the launch of a barrage of missiles and destructive Israeli air raids on Gaza. Still, the government decided to postpone this for a month, considering that the issuance of a ruling by the Supreme Court would add fuel to the fire of confrontation.

So far, twelve Palestinian families in the neighborhood have received eviction orders from the Israeli Magistrate's Court and the District Court. During a visit to the community by European officials, residents of the Sheikh Jarrah demanded they take practical steps if the Israelis continued to violate the rights of the Palestinians.

# THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE IN THE CONFLICT WITH THE ZIONIST ENTITY

**Osama Hamdan** | Senior representative of Hamas in Lebanon and a member of the organization's politburo

With Trump's announcement on January 6, 2017, of the recognition of Jerusalem as the unified capital of the Zionist entity, and the transfer of the US embassy to it, he fired the coup de grace on the settlement path, and he unleashed the then Prime Minister of the Zionist entity, Benjamin Netanyahu, to launch a comprehensive Judaization process for the city of Jerusalem.

The attempts to Judaize the Holy City did not start with Netanyahu. The successive occupation governments worked on that, beginning with the announcement of its annexation to the Zionist entity in the eighties of the last century, passing through the construction of settlements in its vicinity and then expanding its borders to include the territories and whoever lived there, and the imposition of a series of laws that enable the occupation to expel the Palestinian Arab residents there, annul their identities, and build up a wall inside and isolate some Arab neighborhoods, and removing some of them from the city limits.

However, the Netanyahu government has tended to work in two ways; the first targets the Arab neighborhoods inside the Holy City, which have resisted and defied Judaization until now. This effort was focused on the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, as it represents an extension that reaches deep into the city of Jerusalem towards the Moroccan district.

As for the second, it is encouraging



*The Palestinian resistance issued a clear warning to the occupation that "Jerusalem is a red line"*

operations to seize part of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, especially after the failure of attempts at temporal and spatial division due to the steadfastness and cohesion of the people of Jerusalem in the face of all these attempts. Last Ramadan 28 (corresponding to the anniversary of the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967 according to the Hebrew calendar) was set to carry out a major assault operation of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Facing such events, and in light of the failure of the international community to respond to all Palestinian demands and calls to stop these attacks, the Palestinian

resistance issued a clear warning to the occupation that "Jerusalem is a red line" and that violating Jerusalem means "transformations whose consequences cannot be determined." As usual, the occupation did not care about that, but the enemy government assessed that the opportunity to implement these plans was favorable and that the parties to the normalization process that began years ago would be able to absorb the repercussions of this crime. This necessitated the announcement of the Qassam commander Muhammad Al-Deif, warning the occupation to stop its attacks or put up with the implications.

## A SPECIFIC OPERATION AND A NEW EQUATION

The continual assault on Jerusalem necessitated the direct intervention of the resistance, which surprised the occupation. Instead of realizing the sensitivity of Jerusalem's issue, the occupation decided to draw up a plan (South Winds), put into place by its Chief of Staff Kochavi, and simultaneously decided to suspend the largest maneuvers in the history of the occupation, launching a massive air attack on the Gaza Strip. In contrast, the resistance responded to this aggression by firing homemade missiles that targeted Ashkelon, Ashdod, Tel Aviv and Beersheba, and Jerusalem.

The enemy was surprised by the resistance's capabilities, the efficiency of its performance, and the integration of all its factions in the field, and this was one of the most important fruits of the (Joint Operation Room) of the resistance factions in Gaza, which produced an integrated resistance performance, making the operational accomplishment; unified the center of targeting for the enemy, without entering into rivalries or differences in the internal organizational environments of the factions adopted by the military wings of the resistance.

Nevertheless, the biggest surprise was the unprecedented popular zeal in the history of the Zionist entity, its intensity in the occupied territories of 1948, which the enemy thought that the identity of its people had been corrupted, and finding that the third generation born under occupation expresses Palestinian national affiliation in word and deed. The scene was concluded with a popular uprising in the West Bank. Thus the enemy found itself in front of a multi-form Palestinian resistance, in which the Palestinian people participated from the river to the sea.

On the Palestinian political level, the path of dialogue and reconciliation and

the rebuilding of Palestinian national institutions had a profound impact on the harmony of the Palestinian political position against the Zionist aggression, whether by defending Jerusalem and its holy sites or by adopting the act of resistance and the popular uprising as a right of the Palestinian people. With the integration of the unified Palestinian political action, the popular confrontation from the sea to the river, and the role of the resistance that thwarted the "South Winds" plan and made the enemy understand that violating Jerusalem means a major confrontation, the enemy realized the impossibility of achieving the goals of the aggression, or breaking the will of the Palestinian people, or the ease of passing its Judaization plan; they resorted to mediators for a ceasefire, which was achieved with an Egyptian effort and a Qatari and international role. The Palestinians and their resistance earned a significant victory in the face of the Zionist enemy.

The Palestinian achievement was represented in several headlines, the first of which is the realization of the importance of the unity of the political position in the face of the Zionist enemy, which must possess as many cards of power as it can, foremost among which is the resistance. This realization requires taking larger and deeper steps in this direction. Today, the most essential and prominent step appears to be rebuilding the Palestine Liberation Organization and restoring the basic national project of the Palestinian people (Liberation and Return).

As for the second achievement, it is the unity of the Palestinian people despite the enemy's attempts to tear it apart and fragment it geographically and politically. The gift of the Palestinian people from the sea to the river in facing the enemy, and the interaction of refugees and those in the diaspora, in an unprecedented way, with their families inside Palestine, places a great responsibility on the Palestinian leadership in consolidating the unity

of the people and formulating and organizing the integration of roles that can be played by the Palestinian people for their cause wherever they may be.

The success of the resistance in building new equations in the confrontation represents the third of these achievements, and if the resistance in such a confrontation has established the equation of bombing whenever bombed, and targeting residential zones, added a new and vital equation represented in the exit of the resistance in Gaza from the circle of defense of Gaza and working on breaking its siege towards defending Jerusalem and the holy sites and benefit from the accumulation of power over the past fifteen years to confirm that its role is effective and operative in protecting Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state and people, thus opening the doors of the liberation battle.

On the Arab and regional level, this battle surrounded normalization and put it along with its proponents in a real predicament. It also revealed the people's will in the region, which maintains its basic positions in support of the Palestinian people and their resistance, just as the positions of support appeared on the official level for the Palestinian cause and the resistance. This requires an effort from all these parties to bring down the normalization project and support the Palestinian liberation project.

In sum, the battle of the "Sword of Jerusalem", which was in order to defend Jerusalem, recorded progress in favor of the Palestinian people and their resistance in the face of the occupation and confirmed the possibility of defeating the occupation and the reality of this matter. And it remains, despite the pain and sacrifices of our people, an achievement and victory worthy of our people and their resistance, and the beginning of a new phase in the struggle with the Zionist entity, the pace and pattern of which will not be the same as before this battle.



# PERHAPS THE OXYGEN OF PALESTINIAN PATRIOTISM WILL DISSIPATE THE TOXINS OF SETTLEMENT

Marwan Abdel Aal | Palestinian novelist and a leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

The uprising of the new Palestinian generation was an urgent call for all Palestinians in their homes, settlements, gatherings and camps – the near and far diaspora. It breathed a new life force into the battle for the Palestinian identity.

Patriotism is the spirit that has revived cells of hope. Memories and dreams were renewed, and self-esteem, self-confidence and pride in belonging were restored. It dusted off their homeland's house keys hidden in the corners of camps and made them feel hunger for the long road back home. This is the fourth generation of Palestinian exile, with all its nostalgia, groaning, torment, a rebellion of pain and hope, and now, the Palestine narrative is reviving.

Ten days that shook the world. At the gates of Jerusalem, the moral, collective, and combative spirit rose, transforming it from a defensive and instinctive reaction to an open societal clash in the face of the occupation, and a rebellion against the effects of the Nakba of exile, uprooting, rupture, displacement, abolition and marginalization, to redefine the concept of the people with its social, political and cultural components.

The new generation stood on the national identity front. Resistance is the best form of survival. Even in the 'No' that is said in the face of injustice and tyranny, it is present. If you believe you are right, stick to your beliefs, and they

will help you survive, says Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o.

The new generation realized that what achieves the legitimacy of survival is to ensure stable roots in the national culture, i.e. the question of identity before well-being. The colonial formula in which it was born wants loyalty and creates its identity for it, not to be Palestinian, to become everything except a Palestinian.

To become a hybrid of identity and a hybrid of loyalties. However, the new generation presented patriotism over ideology and politics together and blew it up as a latent force in awareness, behavior and culture at the moment of compromising everything sacred, to demonstrate the stupidity of the force that brought history back to the facts of the Nakba, so it mobilized repressed patriotism for 73 years as a reference to patriotic action and national sacrifice. It culminates in the streets of the world chanting: "Palestine is free."

The Palestinian political movement with its organizational factions faced political dissolution, squandering, and annihilation projects, as in the "Deal of the Century" that intensified the moment of central challenge, and was met with automatic and collective hostile rejection based on organizing loss, or emptying the state of anger, and remained captive to a vicious circle of

hesitation. The denial of the opportunity for conflict to root and modernize the conflict vision, rejuvenating the Palestinian national movement, and raising the concept of national unity in the popular conscience, including the strong elements of the Palestinian national project over the entire space of the Palestinian people's presence, as a criterion for patriotism, was not reflected.



**SPONTANEOUS MASS DEMONSTRATIONS ROAMED THE ALLEYS OF THE CAMPS AND TOOK TO THE STREETS OF BEIRUT AS AN UNFAMILIAR HUMAN TORRENT, CELEBRATING THE PRIDE OF PALESTINE, ITS FLAG AND ITS KEFFIYEH**

The Palestinian refugee was never separated from his patriotism; since no one contributed to its evolution and development, patriotism is not papers and documents but personality, self-affirmation, existence, right, history, future, and identity. Therefore, with the Jerusalem Intifada, the Palestinian felt the pure national idea that symbolizes its historical legitimacy, as an alternative to obliteration and elimination and to the consumed and closed memory, making the national achievement of the entire Palestinian people a victory, by

confronting the negative mentality that reduces it to just a number, a camp and a situation, sensing that the besieged Gaza is relieving it from isolation, and thus break the psychological “ghetto”.

The refrains of the youth of Bab al-Amoud, Sheikh Jarrah, Lod, Acre, Haifa and Umm al-Fahm, even heard in a town in the Palestinian Galilee, was a mere triumph, as if granting a new identification card about replacing its stolen identity as a result of the abolitionist policy, which sought to transform the identity of the diaspora into a diaspora identity, and to transform the refugee from a fighter for the return home to a lost refugee looking for any homeland!



**IT CULMINATES IN THE STREETS OF  
THE WORLD CHANTING:  
“PALESTINE IS FREE.”**

There is a sign of the positive energy emitting with its great national symbolism. It is almost unbelievable that young people in Lebanon’s camps form many financial collection committees to contribute to the reconstruction of Gaza and that spontaneous mass demonstrations roam the alleys of the camps and take to the streets of the capital, Beirut, as an unfamiliar human torrent, celebrating the pride of his Palestine, its flag and its keffiyeh, and competes with a charged emotion to reach the borders to confirm adherence to the right of return.

Cultural and media platforms, visual and audio, and social media were launched to broadcast messages quickly affirming the original names of the villages and towns of occupied Palestine, under the impact of the spirit of rebellion and resistance, with pride, courage and vigor that establishes something else; a new confidence that might liberate it from marginalization and commodification

of patriotism, in the bazaars of unfair policies, and sectarian tensions that deprive them of human rights and take them out of every legal, economic or living equation under compelling circumstances, this national existence is a victim of the sectarian views, its calculations are national and above the secondary considerations and the illusory and selfish quotas that may drown the boat with what it carried and those on it, citizens and refugees.

**Establishing this new spirit assumes:**

**(1)** Investing in Palestinian patriotism by ending the discriminatory policies against Palestinians, and adopting policies that are protective and friendly to them, away from the complex of being targeted. This is a measure of the political positions that support the struggle of the Palestinian people;

**(2)** The liberation of the humanitarian demands of the Palestinians in Lebanon from the “phobia” of settlement, which lays the grounds for liberating the Palestinian struggle and youth energies from the factors of exclusion, division, factionalism and regionalism, and that the political discourse on the Palestinian cause is accompanied by political practice, embodying the unity of the everyday struggle and the first goal to achieve the right of dignity, the greater goal is the right of return to Palestine;

**(3)** Working on a unique Palestinian political formula in Lebanon that is sponsored by the national community as a supreme Palestinian policy, for a solidarity and symbiotic society to take care of the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and from it unified popular committees that bring together institutions in all the camps with specialists and people in business to follow up on developments and appreciate the daily needs of the Palestinian people.



*Spontaneous mass demonstrations roamed the alleys of the camps and took to the streets of Beirut as an unfamiliar human torrent, celebrating the pride of Palestine, its flag and its keffiyeh*

Perhaps the oxygen of Palestinian patriotism will dissipate the toxins of settlement and its attachments of hatred, racism and prejudice when the homeland becomes the camp’s title and identity, and as a duty that is not above it and is not replaced by an alternative, settlement, nationality or an alternative homeland, but rather a truth written in blood.

Therefore, it imposes the seriousness in dealing with a cause of this lofty, noble and humaneness, and adherence to the right of refugees to return and within a Palestinian, Lebanese, Arab national strategy, and before that, a solution to the political divide between affirming the justice of the cause and denying justice for its people!



## PALESTINIAN INTIFADA

# THE DESTABILIZATION OF THE ZIONIST MYTH AND THE RETURN OF THE CAUSE

**Sari Hanafi** | American University of Beirut

Palestinian protests are rife, with Israeli reactions typically violent and take the form of mass killings and the systematic destruction of the Gaza Strip.

**But what's new in the last round of events? There are five key points to be considered:**

**1.** This Palestinian intifada occurred not only in the occupied territories but also inside Israel – with the aim of ending settler colonialism and the apartheid regime. What pushed matters to this point is the unconcealed Israeli discrimination against the Palestinian people and their gatherings - especially in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood - as well as limits on religious freedom surrounding access to Al-Aqsa Mosque.

**2.** From a social point of view, tension has existed for many years in Israel. The young Palestinians of Israel clashed with Israeli Jews throughout the country. Israeli President Reuven Rivlin denounced the riots in the country, describing it as a pogrom against Jews. The consequences of recent events are so crucial that this time will not be like the others. The rift is now within the Green Line between Jews and Arabs and adds to tensions between the secular and religious Jewish orthodox communities.

**3.** Palestinians united with diaspora refugees: witness the mass

demonstrations in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan.

**4.** Demonstrations occurred in solidarity with the Palestinians throughout the Arab and Islamic world - despite the COVID-19 pandemic and, if not in the political arena, at least on all social networks - notably in Morocco, Yemen and Tunisia.

**5.** Some Arab countries are equally uncomfortable with the intifada and the broad solidarity with the Palestinian people because the escalation of violence has brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back onto the regional agenda. The uprising made it clear that the various agreements in 2020 between the UAE, Sudan and Morocco would embarrass their leaders. These agreements sought to bypass the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and, to some extent, naively achieve political rapprochement with Israel without considering the Palestinian issue's centrality.

**Why did some people lose sight of the centrality of the Palestinian cause?**

In recent decades, the Arab-Israeli conflict was considered to be of "low intensity", based on a classification that always takes into account the number of casualties. This conflict is an enigma since the small number of casualties does not necessarily mean the weakness

of the conflict; on the contrary, it reflects its intensity. Among other indicators that proved their importance here, concerning the spatial domain and the land: the uprooting, occupation and destruction of the spatial domain, which is called "spatial purification" (Spacio cide).

Since the emergence of the Zionist myth - "a land without a people for a people without a land" - the policy of successive Israeli governments has been to seize Palestinian lands and ignore their residents. This myth of a foundational character took root and appeared in a modern style, manifested in the policy of "greater land and fewer people". This institutionalized disregard for the Palestinian people has fueled the day-to-day colonial practices of the State of Israel.

**How did the Palestinians of Lebanon understand the centrality of the conflict?**

In a demonstration in the center of Beirut, a group of Palestinian girls who wrote on the sign "Stop the war on Gaza and our camps" caught my eye. Why did they write that? Because for them, the moral centrality of the Palestinian cause is manifested not only in the restoration of Jerusalem but in giving the Palestinian refugees minimal socio-economic rights.

Is obtaining the right to work for the Palestinian a step towards resettlement? Is the possibility of Palestinian ownership after living here for four generations a violation of the right of return? Of course not.

Those who use the scarecrow of settlement are the ones who always start with expressions of their love

for Palestine or their hostility towards imperialism and Zionism and their support for the liberation of all Arab soil, not forgetting Jerusalem, of course. It is as if they are telling us that the liberation of Palestine is achieved only by crushing and displacing the Palestinians of Lebanon, by preventing them from the right to work and own property.

I hope that the latest war on Gaza will be an opportunity for moral reflection on the gravity of the injustice that the Palestinians suffer, not only in Gaza but everywhere – especially in Lebanon.

It is no longer possible to separate the justice of the Palestinian cause from social justice and the yearning for democracy in all Arab countries.

# IS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY READY TO BIND ISRAEL TO UN RESOLUTIONS?

**Amina Suleiman** | General Union of Palestinian Women - Lebanon Branch

Throughout the past 73 years of Palestinian national struggle, the people of Palestine have never stopped defending their rights, the most basic of which are their right to life, their right to dignity and their right to exist on their land in a free, sovereign, independent homeland. Equally, they have never stopped sharing this message with the world.

During these long years, despite the false and desperate claims of the enemy leaders that our elders will die and our children will forget, the Israeli state has not been able to defeat the Palestinian consciousness nor dismantle its national affiliation.

For liberation, return, and state-building, our people continue to face the occupation's tyranny, racism, and brutality with violations, including murder, arrest, and settlement

expansion, targeting the city of Jerusalem and Judaizing its landmarks. This act led to the massive public uprising in Sheikh Jarrah and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Consequently, the Palestinian people rose in Jerusalem and the West Bank, Gaza and inside the Green Line to support our people in the Holy City unprecedentedly.

The result restored momentum to the Palestinian cause and created international headlines that exposed the insistence of the occupation forces to steal the homes of Jerusalemites that they inherited from their ancestors in an attempt to forcibly displace and uproot them, using the policy of racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing in an effort to liquidate the Palestinian presence and obliterate our identity.

What happened during Israel's brutal aggression against our people in

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**“WHAT HAPPENED DURING ISRAEL'S BRUTAL AGGRESSION AGAINST OUR PEOPLE IN THE GAZA STRIP INDICATES THE LUST FOR MURDER IN THIS ENTITY”**  
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the Gaza Strip indicates the lust for murder in this entity. It targeted all the elements and components of human life, including water supplies, electricity, hospitals, factories, and media institutions. It bombed and brought down buildings on unarmed civilians, women, children, and the elderly. Hundreds of female martyrs have risen, and thousands of others have been wounded. I contend that this indicates that they control their death instinct and the destruction of their life instinct.

However, despite the cruelty and brutality of this aggression, our people still possess the solid will, determination and firm belief to achieve their national and legitimate goals.

Undoubtedly, this situation significantly contributed to the formation of Palestinian public awareness and reinforced international solidarity that rejects the continuation of Israeli aggression against our people in all of Palestine. It inspired the interaction of the people of the free world with our cause – it raised it to the forefront in international events.



**“THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL POPULAR MOVEMENT IN THE CAPITALS OF THE WORLD - CONDEMNING ISRAELI CRIMES - HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON CHANGING THE CONFLICT EQUATION”**

This support came from the steadfastness of our people and their many valiant forms of resistance and national unity - prerequisites for victory.

Now, it is necessary to focus on the role of the official Palestinian diplomatic efforts, which have made use of all available human rights and legal platforms, in addition to the position of all Arab, Islamic and international organizations that support Palestinian rights, which must be strengthened, to contribute to the process of preventing war criminals from escaping.

The Israelis must be punished.

The latest step saw the decision of the Human Rights Council to form an international investigation committee into the crimes of the occupation – a decision that angered Israel’s leaders. A

significant fact about this committee is that it also included Palestinian people within the Green Line.

What distinguishes the current situation is that Israel’s lies and claims are no longer deceiving anyone. Its aggressive, colonial, racist nature has been revealed, and a clear fact has been proven that the occupation, no matter how much it reaches out through its media machine, has not and will not succeed.

There is no doubt that the international popular movement in the capitals of the world - condemning Israeli crimes - has a significant impact on changing the conflict equation.

Israel has always presented itself as a victim, and that its security is a red line. Above all else, with unlimited American support since the occupation of Palestine, this is what prompts it to challenge all humanitarian norms, conventions, and international law.

Does the United States of America undertake the movement to manage the conflict or work to end the historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people despite recognizing that Jerusalem and the West Bank are occupied territories?

Will it succeed in forcing the occupation forces to withdraw from the 1967 lands and establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital free of settlements? Is the international community ready to take a practical decision to pressure Israel and oblige it with the relevant international legitimacy resolutions?

Through the experience with US policy, it consistently affirms its full partnership with the Israeli entity, which has not stopped for one moment in its support at all levels, and this is what enabled the occupying power to establish itself as a rogue state above the law.



**“WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE CURRENT SITUATION IS THAT ISRAEL’S LIES AND CLAIMS ARE NO LONGER DECEIVING ANYONE. ITS AGGRESSIVE, COLONIAL, RACIST NATURE HAS BEEN REVEALED”**

The proposed scenarios are many, the interests of the major countries are in fierce competition, the conflict is open to all possibilities, and America and the international community remain at stake.

Therefore, the central gamble remains on the Palestinian people with all its factions, constituent components and living forces, and its leadership that possesses the will and firm belief in the power of truth, the national constants, the sacrifices of the martyrs, the steadfastness of the prisoners, its popular resistance and its national unity, which is the essential condition for victory, with the need to strengthen and activate it within the framework of **The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)**, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the title of their struggle.

On the basis of full partnership, strengthening and renewing their national institutions, and the necessity of conducting a comprehensive national dialogue among all Palestinian factions, to develop a national strategy by agreeing on the mechanisms, forms and tools of struggle, and setting priorities within the available possibilities that serve the interest of the cause in confronting the Israeli war machine, the normalization conspiracy, and all the challenges that target the Palestinian national project.

# THE SECRET OF THE VICTORY OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE IN THE LONG RUN

**Roger Deeb** | Former Lebanese Minister

I will begin by extending my sincere condolences for the martyrs of the last Gaza war and imploring God's care and providence for the wounded and injured. I salute the ability of the Palestinian people to remain steadfast and for their resoluteness to reclaim their land and obtain their rights and dignity.

The repercussions of the recent confrontations in Palestine are significant. We can say that after the May 2021 war on Gaza, the conflict in Jerusalem, the intifada of the West Bank and the people of Palestine 48 is not as it was before.

The Palestinian cause and the pursuit of its solution have returned to the international agenda and have become, at the same time, even more, important than the Iranian-American negotiations. This confrontation made America wary of completing its negotiations with Iran before significant progress is made on the Palestinian cause, which has become an important issue that has imposed itself on the Biden administration – previously turning its back on it.

The issue of the Palestinian people struck at the heart and conscience of the left of America's Democratic Party and in now, again, a controversial matter within Jewish-American lobby groups. These confrontations revealed a young Palestinian – and militant - generation committed to the cause, showing their intention to continue through sacrifice, conflict, and martyrdom.



*Supporters of an independent Palestine gather in Lebanon's capital, Beirut*

Israel has made sure that imposing a solution on the Palestinians without their consent, even with unlimited support (as during the Trump era), is nothing but a mirage, and it has been convinced that a two-state solution must be tackled through negotiation and not by force of the fait accompli.

This confrontation also showed that there is now a balance of power and progress in favor of the Palestinians, in a way that the attack on Palestine, its people and land, has a military price, disturbing Israel economically, morally and politically, and unsettling its global image.

In Lebanon, the confrontation showed that the Palestinian presence is disciplined under the Lebanese administration and that the broad support of the Lebanese people for the cause of Palestine appears in an organized, rational and effective manner, without any chaos or the use of force. In the long run, the confrontation came in favor of the Palestinians and Lebanon because it restored interest in the Palestinian cause, finding a decent solution to it and facilitating the return of the refugees after giving them the tangible hope that that return is no longer a mirage.

In the face of that vital progress for



the Palestinian people on the path to regaining their land and rights, the politically and economically crippled Lebanese situation is weighing heavily on the Palestinians in Lebanon. It makes their daily life and survival challenge greater on the refugees and us; thus, their confrontation is ours.

Working together is key to lifting the economic and political siege on Lebanon. Key, too, is isolating it from the struggle between the powers that surround us, and sparing it from the consequences of matters that are not in its hands to decide but which affect Lebanon and the refugees.

A joint effort must also be intensified in maintaining the security of the camps and following up on the firm policy by everyone not to plunge them again into Lebanon's disputes, to enable both parties to work jointly on the Arab and international levels in support of the Palestinian cause, to improve the conditions of refugees, and ensure that any upcoming solution will not forget them, nor leave them in the camps of misery. It will even return them to their motherland.

There can be no real peace without the decent and rightful return of the refugees to Palestine, and this is what they want first and foremost.

After the formation of the government and progress in reforms for Lebanon, it is crucial to also return to the inclusion of the issue of seeking an Arab solution to the Palestinian presence across Arab countries – an issue that has been sending tremors throughout the region since 2011, and which made their presence even more difficult for all.

Easing the realities of their presence will facilitate job opportunities in the stronger Arab economies. Achieving this will alleviate misery and spread the goodness of education and public health in Palestinian societies.

The same is true for wealthy countries around the world - each must work to speed up their return and secure possible job opportunities for them according to labor laws and international assistance.

Yes, there are many common interests between Lebanon and Palestine. The awareness of officials from both countries has evolved to such a level where practical cooperation is in the interest of both the Lebanese and the Palestinians.

## IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IS A LEBANESE AND INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY

***Former Lebanese Minister Melhem Riachy shares his thoughts on the current situation in Palestine and the impact it delivers on Palestinians and Lebanese in Lebanon.***

When the Palestinians and their cause return to Palestine, they will have returned to the land of their forefathers. This is a situation that should be supported by all who uphold human rights, especially the right of individuals to return to their own country.

For reasons that are perhaps too lengthy to explain in detail here, we have long shared differences with the Palestinians in Lebanon. Primarily, however, they are related to a misunderstanding between our conviction in their cause and our belief that they should be free and honored in their homeland.

Today though, after the various forms of confrontation have moved to their natural place, all must acknowledge that what the Palestinians practice on their land is an act of expression by its rightful owner.

The rights-holder remains oppressed, repressed, hungry, persecuted, and is subjected to daily abuse. The rights-

holder knows that the sound of his melancholy voice reverberates across the lands of the Middle East. It resonates within the homes of his loved ones, refugees in Lebanon and beyond, who follow daily, even hourly, events as they unfold in Palestine.

Let us not get carried away by emotions. Let us remind ourselves that their return is the goal and that force, diplomacy, and Arab and international support are the means.

Although scenes of death and oppression are the daily hymn within the neighborhoods of Jerusalem and Ramallah and the olive groves of the West Bank and through to Gaza; I conclude by asserting that improving the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, especially within the sphere of education, is a Lebanese and international priority.

It falls to our hands to help organize and legalize it to prevent its youth from falling into the grip of terrorism and to deter them from the tools of extremism.

With God's grace, we should aim to change history through human dignity for any human being in the world, at any time and any place.

# THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION IS A DISHONORED CHEQUE!

**Rosana Boumonsef** | Lebanese journalist

In the context of the repercussions of the most recent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, it is impossible not to shed light primarily on the visit paid by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken to Israel and the West Bank, and to what he announced.

It must be recognized first that this war has put the Palestinian issue back on the agenda of the US administration led by Joe Biden. A government that has a prime regional focus on returning to the nuclear agreement with Iran and, to a lesser extent, halting the war in Yemen.

American interest began from a completely different point to the policy adopted by former President Donald Trump as the Biden administration reconsiders the two-state solution and, in light of an American discourse, is sympathetic and understanding of the Palestinian cause and the tragedy of the Palestinians.

While the Palestinians lost greatly on the human level, they have gained international sympathy – an area where Israel has retreated greatly, even in the base of its American audience, as well as in Western public opinion.

Israel made mistakes – and they were not acceptable to its global audience – in practicing a policy of apartheid in Jerusalem, especially since its eastern sector is the capital of the Palestinian state and not the capital of the State of Israel.

Palestinians have achieved a breakthrough at the level of media and political sympathy, in exchange for

a complete condemnation of Israeli racism.

The United States met Israel in its misgivings about Iran, but Washington was and still is its ally and is not far from this concern.



**“THE UNITED STATES’  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE  
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PRESENT TIME IS AKIN TO GIVING  
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CHEQUE”**

What the Palestinians have achieved is an American revival of the two-state solution, which constitutes an initial loss for Israel. On its own, this gain is not sufficient, but it is important and necessary in itself for the Palestinians and for the Palestinian Authority in particular, which bears the burden of finding means to secure ways of meeting and bringing the Palestinians together in light of the international consensus to support it without Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations.

The United States’ announcement of the difficulty of delivering a political solution at the present time is akin to giving the Palestinians a bounced cheque.

The absence of a political horizon is a catalyst for further attempts to achieve victories for parties in a continuing political impasse. It is also a deterrent to any potential reconstruction

or investment at a time when the Palestinians are suffering so much.

Egypt, along with Jordan and the European support group, may succeed in giving hope for a temporary political track – with American support. However, the two-state solution in itself is touted to have become a mirage for many in light of the realities of the changes imposed by Israel through the expansion of settlements, which have become an accumulation that is difficult or impossible to reverse.

It is feared that there will not be a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, because the Israelis are not interested in a similar solution, and America lost interest in it and is now returning to it.

An alarming statistic: there are more than 650,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem, and more than a third of the population in the West Bank at present are settlers. This raises questions about who can deport them or entice them to leave the West Bank. Even if the principle of land exchange is approved, there are 250,000 settlers in East Jerusalem who pose a real problem. What can be done about them and how can an exchange of land can take place in this case?

Israel intends to expel the Palestinians from their land. While this still seems unlikely, look at what happened in Syria, where the dramatic developments there led to the expulsion of more than six million people within six months. I assert that this possibility will no longer be surprising for Israel.



# THE EFFECTS OF THE INTIFADA IN THE LEBANESE CAMPS: “THE ELDERLY WILL NOT DIE, AND THE YOUNG WILL NOT FORGET”

**Ahmed Al-Sabahi** | Palestinian Journalist, recounts the effects of the intifada within Lebanese camps.

Lebanon's Palestinian refugees followed the intensity of the daily struggles surrounding the occupation in the Al-Aqsa Mosque. They witnessed from afar the arrests and confrontations in Bab Al-Amoud Square. They shared the suffering of the residents of Sheikh Jarrah, who are haunted by the threat of forced eviction from their homes, depriving them of the freedom of every alley and stone with which they grew up familiar.

The refugees in Lebanon know precisely what it means to be distanced from your family, home, and neighborhood. They are the ones who have been living the bitterness of loss daily for 73 years.

With the acceleration of developments in the city of Jerusalem, and the Jerusalemites – the Qudsi – valiantly confronting the attacks of settlers under the protection of the Israeli police, the Palestinian resistance entered the front line by firing rockets, and the demonstrations took place in the camps of Lebanon, but with a different texture.

The so-called ‘Sword of Jerusalem’ war raged for eleven days, throughout which time the refugees followed the unity of the Palestinian situation, as all of Palestine rose in the face of Israeli arrogance and succeeded in striking its cities and settlements, paralyzing them with a barrage of missiles.

Um Ashraf, a social activist from Burj al-Barajneh camp, says, “We were no less

happy with the confrontation. We saw the Palestinian flag all over the world.”

While Hana Al-Salibi believes that “the dream of return, which never left us, has become closer than ever”. The young Muhammad Abdul Rahman says, “The aftermath of the battle will not be the same as before, since the resistance has proven its worth.”

In Chatila camp, activist Samer Anbar says, “I was surprised by this gift, as they did not take any account of the occupying Zionist. Yes, we have hope for liberation.”

Samer Arifa from Camp Al-Bared says, “We were surprised by the resistance's response. The enemy's calculations were wrong. This is the first time that the circle of confrontations has expanded to include all of Palestine, which confirms the unity of the Palestinian people and their historical identity. The resistance has given us hope.”

In the south, in Rashidieh camp – the closest camp to Palestine – in the small shop of Abu Youssef, the seventy-year-old man crosses the line by saying: “I don't know if I believe what I see, or you will believe what I say, we felt that we were strong, we were happy with every missile burst. Our people rose in the areas occupied in 1948 – after when they were called the Arabs of Israel. Jerusalem destroyed all their plans, and the saying ‘the old people die, and the young forget’ has been proven wrong by the Palestinian youth.”

The harsh conditions that the Palestinians live in did not stop them from demonstrating in the camps. Indeed, they went further, and organized marches towards the border with Palestine – Palestinian and Lebanese youth responded to the call equally.

Hassan Badawiya says, “I felt that the return is close and that our suffering in the camp will end soon. We went to the border to renew our commitment to the right of return.”

Fadia Lubani says, “We are no longer Palestinians or Lebanese on the borders, but Arabs who are resisting. We felt that we entered Palestine, and we no longer see the wall. Muhammad Tahan was martyred and leads us in our return.”

Jerusalem struck the deal of the century and destroyed the concept of considering Jerusalem as the unified capital of Israel. Instead, it highlighted the Palestinians' adherence to its symbolism until martyrdom.

The confrontations with the occupation in the 48 regions shocked the Israeli leaders and analysts because of its future repercussions on the so-called Israeli-Arab concept of coexistence.

The family projects were dropped, and Palestinians considered that the struggle in the 48 regions is limited to obtaining civil rights from Israeli institutions to show the Palestinian identity and the unity of identity interrelationship with Palestinian geography.

# THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ISRAEL & THE PALESTINIANS: DEVELOPMENTS & REPERCUSSIONS

**Majed Kayali** | Palestinian writer

From the river to the sea, the occupied Palestinian territories witnessed a massive popular uprising, unprecedented since the first and second intifadas. Significant developments characterized it:

First, the stubborn, brave and conscious resistance of the youth of East Jerusalem towards the policy of Israel, its soldiers and police, and their engagement in addressing world public opinion. This brought great sympathy to their cause by showing them as a victim, by exposing Israel for its true nature as a colonial, settler and racist state that uses excessive force in the face of peaceful protests.

Israel harnesses its security services to support attacks by extremist and religious colonists. It is evident that Palestinians all over the world contributed to this campaign on social media, which made remarkable breakthroughs in the Western countries, including the United States of America.

Second, the participation of the Palestinians of 1948 in an active and significant way in the activities of the popular uprising in East Jerusalem. They embraced it, and this culminated in a massive march on Jerusalem, from the cities and villages of the Palestinians of 1948 on May 8 (the Night of Revelation in the month of Ramadan), which had a great effect in confusing the political and military institutions in Israel, especially since this combined with the comprehensiveness of an uprising of all Palestinians - from the river to the sea.

This development (it took place before the missile confrontations) was the



*Amidst a city's destruction, every Palestinian's resolve to never lose sight of their goal means life goes on*

main reason for Israel's retreat from continuing its position in Bab al-Amud, as it dismantled the iron barriers. Regarding the evacuation in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood - the court session was postponed to decide on this matter on May 9.

Third, the entry of the Hamas movement into a military confrontation with Israel with the use of missiles. This was a critical development, especially since it was Hamas that took the initiative this time, in contrast to the three previous wars Israel launched on Gaza (2008, 2012, 2014), and that this confrontation demonstrated the missile force stored by that Hamas which blanketed the Israelis with bombardment in many

of their cities, including Tel Aviv - an unprecedented and surprising manner, especially for Israel itself, and its Western allies.



**"THE BESIEGED GAZA STRIP ACCUMULATED A MILITARY FORCE THAT COULD CONFUSE OR AFFLICT ISRAEL AND WITHSTAND ITS BRUTALITY"**

In addition to this, a shift towards militarization and the missile war increased Israel's ferocity in its attempts to destroy Gaza, its buildings and infrastructure. It also added attempts

to impose itself in various Palestinian territories - manifested in its policy of repression against the Palestinians in Jerusalem, as in Haifa, Jaffa, Lydd, and Acre.

Overall, these developments created multiple and conflicting repercussions, including:

First, the decline of the Palestinian leadership, due to the poor performance in support of the popular uprising, or under Hamas's leadership, by taking the initiative to launch strikes against Israel, especially since the rebellion came in a circumstance in which Mahmoud Abbas, the head of the organization and the Authority and Fatah, has reached the most extreme cases of his weakness, and the fading of his popular legitimacy, after postponing or canceling the elections, and overthrowing all agreements to end the division, and with the setback in his Fatah movement.



**THE DIFFICULTY OF GENERATING AN ALTERNATIVE COMES FROM THE PALESTINIANS' LACK OF A COMMON TERRITORY, WITH THEIR DISPERSION, THEIR SUBJECTION TO MULTIPLE AND DISPARATE REGIMES**

However, that war, despite the preceding, contributed to getting the position of the president afloat, albeit unintentionally from Hamas, as he became the accepted interlocutor or negotiator in the international community for the Palestinians, and concerning calm and reconstruction projects, by classifying Hamas as a terrorist movement, no one can deal with.

Second, despite the weakening of the popular legitimacy of the president and his Fatah movement, the Palestinian reality is very complex and interferes

with the wills of the external parties, as the alternative that exists in practice is Hamas, which is unacceptable, and perhaps inappropriate for the Palestinians, by its nature, given the demise of the other factions, leftist, which no longer have a strong position among the Palestinians at home and abroad. Furthermore, it no longer has a role in confronting Israel, not to mention the lack of its political or intellectual identity and reliance on its history.

In such circumstances, the difficulty of generating an alternative comes from the Palestinians' lack of a common territory, with their dispersion, their subjection to multiple and disparate regimes, and their dependence on rents from the supporting countries (and their dependency on them) more than their dependence on their people, and the reality of their lethargic political movement, which lacks democracy, internal movements, and deliberation and critical review, and the collective frameworks, and finally because of a mass of full-time employees, in the authority, the organization, and the factions, of approximately a quarter of a million.

Thus, each one of these factors constrains any attempt to bring about political change, and this is the secret of the strength of the weak Palestinian leadership towards the outside and strong towards its people. The idea is that political change is an objective need that is available. Still, the sufficient condition requires the availability of the subjective factor, and with it the Arab and international conditions that allow this.

Third, on the Israeli level, the ruling political forces in Israel, and Israeli society, this time, felt that controlling the Palestinians, or subjugating them, was not that easy. In one moment, the borders between them vanished. In the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, the regions of 48 and countries of asylum and

diaspora, they appeared as one people, as if nothing had happened in 73 years.

Instead, they returned to the same narrative, which was founded on the establishment of Israel, the displacement of the Palestinian people, and the birth of the refugee problem, overthrowing the illusions that spread with the two-state solution (1974) and the Oslo Agreement (1993), which were both established on the displacement of the historical story based on the Nakba file (1948) into a novel based on Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (1967).



**PALESTINIANS FIGHT WITH EVERYTHING, WITH THEIR STUBBORNNESS AND FAITH IN THEIR CAUSE, WITH A HIGH WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE, WHATEVER THE COST**

The second issue is that the Palestinians fight with everything, with their stubbornness and faith in their cause, with a high willingness to sacrifice, whatever the costs. As it turned out, the besieged Gaza Strip accumulated a military force that could confuse or afflict Israel and withstand its brutality, knowing that Arab countries were unable to do so, as happened in the June 1967 war. Therefore, it is too early to speculate how Israel will deal with this particular security development, the easy and the soft way or the hard and harsh way, the political way or the military way.

The question now is to see whether or whether not the Palestinians can invest their sacrifice and heroism in developing their national movement and solidifying its promise, under the principle of the oneness of the people, the land, the cause and the historical narrative, and whether or whether not the Arab and international situation will allow them to win even by points, this time, over Israel.



# PALESTINIANS AND CINEMA IN LEBANON... THE BEIDAS-BOULOS DUO CHALLENGE

**Mohamad Soueid** | Lebanese film director and critic

Palestinians had a significant impact on the film industry and film production in Lebanon. This lasted for around two decades and linked to two large displacements: the civilian displacement following the Nakba of 1948, and the military displacement as a result of the departure of the Palestinian leadership and its fighters from Jordan in 1970.

The two events resulted in profound demographic and political changes in the Lebanese society, its demographic map, its political equation, and its economic nature.

The changes were the beginning and were rapid in their effect. The residents of southern Lebanon were affected by the closing of borders, a shift in commercial activity, the import of crops and goods and their export into Lebanon.

The economic relationship moved from the phase of exchange between two countries to adaptation in a local cycle that knew patterns of coexistence and integration at times and conflict at other times. This resulted in the consequences of poverty, prosperity, and devastation at the same time - all shared by the Lebanese and the Palestinians who live in friendship or hostility under the auspices of a state worried about its sectarian structure and constantly threatening the region's wars, conflicts and fluctuating fates.

As the Palestinians were uprooted from their land and their homes and

livelihoods were robbed, they found themselves scattered in camps with no identity and no hope other than the identity of the refugee and the hope of relief, surrounded by Lebanese who were no less poor, no less marginalized and living in equally deteriorating living conditions.

The Nakba, and its first displacement, resulted in a fusion between the deprivation of the people of the Palestinian camps and the deprivation of their new neighbors in the villages of

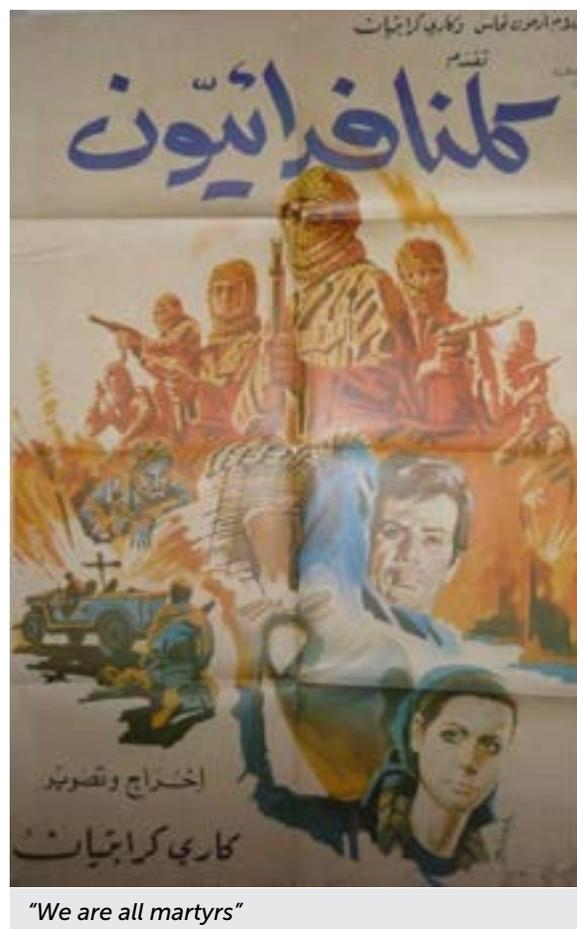
the south, and their increasing migration to the suburbs of the capital and their residence in the belts of misery and the neighborhood of the Palestinian camps, overcrowded and expanding year after year in those suburbs.

Misery wasn't the only outcome of the Nakba, nor were its victims deprived of a dignified life. The number of expatriates included wealthy people and their families who were more likely than the vast majority of their citizens to resume their lives, increase their wealth, obtain citizenship, and invest money and businesses in pushing the Lebanese economy to horizons beyond its borders.

To them are attributed the development of several facilities, for example: the banker Youssef Khalil Beidas from Jerusalem, founder of the Intra Bank, in 1951, and the star of his rise and tragic collapse, in 1966. The story of the Palestinian impact on cinema making in Lebanon originated from the biography of this man, and is linked to his establishing of the Baalbek Studio and was backed in implementing projects by his partner, another Palestinian, Badih Boulos.

There is no project that does not start from a dream.

Beidas chose Sin El Fil as the location for Baalbek Studio. From it, he overlooked the hills of Monteverde, and it seemed to him that they were the hills of



Hollywood, plucked from the west coast of the United States, fertile for planting in this land of the eastern Mediterranean.

Fascinated by Lebanon's boom in the 1950s and 1960s, equally fascinated by the frenzy of American and European producers and then by seeing their Egyptian counterparts transfer their money and expertise to Beirut to escape the nationalization of their sector under Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Beidas - Boulos duo found the opportunity to create a free cinematic capital in a region plagued by tyranny and coups.



**“MISERY WASN'T THE ONLY OUTCOME OF THE NAKBA, NOR WERE ITS VICTIMS DEPRIVED OF A DIGNIFIED LIFE”**

Studio Baalbek was inaugurated in June 1962 and was under the management of Intra Bank. The bankruptcy of the bank did not stop it. Indeed, it benefited from the bank's transformation into a joint stock company and continued burgeoning until the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. It continued to develop projects produced by Lebanese throughout the war years until it was completely emptied of its assets and was closed in 2010.

Whoever looks at the volume of cinematic work coming from abroad and the increase in co-production during the Egyptian emigration phase and the extent to which projects from

Syria, Turkey, Iran and some of the Arab Maghreb have been attracted, will find that the Beidas - Boulos bet was meant to be.

At the same time, this challenge did not bear fruit in establishing a sustainable national industry, as the recovery of Baalbek Studio was based on providing production services instead of investing in production and supporting Lebanese filmmakers in making their films and obtaining job opportunities.

Youssef Beidas died of cancer and depression two years after the collapse of Intra. He died in Switzerland and was buried in one of its cemeteries. His passing brought the curtain down on the first chapter of migration and quickly opened it up to chapter two of migration.

The first exodus was born out of despair caused by the 1948 Nakba, and the second was born out of the bitterness of the events of Black September and the exodus from Jordan in 1970.

However, it came with the hope of the Palestinian resistance armed with weapons and money from Arab countries. Lebanon is transforming a set of economic infrastructures for the Palestine Liberation Organization and all its affiliated and opposition factions.

Under these structures, the Palestinian Cinema Institution was established and played the role of a government sector responsible for producing, showing and distributing films and investing human and material resources in their industry.



**“PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS HAD SEVERAL INDEPENDENT CINEMATIC DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THEIR MEDIA STRUCTURES, AND NOT ONLY DID THE PALESTINIANS BENEFIT FROM THE SUPPORT OF THESE INSTITUTIONS”**

Palestinian organizations had several independent cinematic departments within their media structures, and not only did the Palestinians benefit from the support of these institutions but so did Lebanese filmmakers, and other Arabs supported the Palestinian cause and struggled in the ranks of its organizations.

However, unlike the integration of the first displacement into the Lebanese economy and the openness to a variety of cinemas popular in the markets, integration and openness seemed far from the concerns of the symbols of the second displacement, as money was political and those who spent it in art and culture did not care to invest it in a meaningful way.

They gave priority to the 'cause' and preferred propaganda to art, which created films that were closer to news reports than to art, and so this cinematic economy lost most of its impact and evaporated immediately after the great Palestinian exodus from Beirut, during the Israeli invasion of summer 1982.