



The disappearance of gossip and other matters

The neighborhood gossip, as she was called some years ago, is bored today in August 2015. Living in Jabalia, Gaza, she complained: "What is going on these days? In the past we used to gather at Um Hasan's porch or in Maysoon's kitchen to have fun – meaning gossip – but today the only entertainment is WhatsApp. What are we supposed to do?" Our leaders, whether rulers, chiefs or managers, ask themselves the same question. In the past, we lived in the real world. Now we are tried, sentenced and executed virtually. Gossip, going to assist others, revolution, and many other vital activities have disappeared in the gap between reality and the virtual world.

Editor-in-Chief

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4 PAGES

INSIDE

02 The Golan Exposes and Challenges Israeli Manipulation of the Patriotic Druze

03 Mua'ath Amer... A Palestinian Youth Invents a Safety Bracelet for People with Disabilities

04 Decorating with Wooden Boards and the Stones of Demolished Houses A Neighborhood in Gaza Creates Beauty Using Simple Materials

How Does the Netanyahu Government Benefit from the Terrorism of the Settlers?

Natheer Mjalli

It will not come as a surprise to hear an announcement shortly that the Israeli intelligence services have "solved the mystery" of the appalling terror attack on the al-Dawabsha family in which four members of the family were intentionally and deliberately burned. Then they can present those suspects wearing the "kippa" religious hats and black and blonde beards to the courts. This is a significant concern for the Netanyahu government, not because hearts are broken for the burned family, and not because Netanyahu cannot sleep at night for worrying about justice and the law, but because this crime puts Israel in an uncomfortable corner internationally. This government has attempted to bury the Palestinian cause under the sands of the desert and divert the world to the subject of the danger posed by Iran. The government has engaged in confrontation with the US government and with President Barack Obama to evade its responsibilities towards the Palestinians, but the massacre in Duma has forced it to return to the Palestinian trap once again.

The Israeli government will try to hide the details of this terrorist crime. For example: Where did the terrorists come from? Who sent them? What is their aim? Is it simply terrorism resulting from hatred and a grudge, as they are trying to portray now, or is it a long-term strategic political aim? Is it an attempt to create chaos in the region so that radical religious Jews in the settlements can control and rule Israel and impose Jewish law just like ISIS, as the propaganda promoted today in Israel claims? Or is there a different political and ISIS-like goal to create chaos and spread fear in order to displace more Palestinians across the borders? Today the colonial project in the West Bank is, more than ever, becoming a demographic project. Israeli society is engaged in a deep discussion about the destiny of the Jewish state. The left wing and center parties, and some of the right wing, support a two-state solution because the status quo could turn Palestine into one state with a Jewish majority. Therefore they are calling for a compromise that includes the foundation of a Palestinian state alongside an Israel with a demographic Jewish majority. They believe that by dividing Syria and Iraq into sectarian areas, there is an opportunity to have another sectarian state in the region:

the Jewish state.

Yet the settlers refuse to take part in the discussion on the demographic problem. The number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is about half a million, and they are planning to double this number within 10 years. They also intend to eliminate the Gaza Strip as part of the Palestinian state as they imagine that they can reach a deal with Hamas based on a long-term truce. This truce would take the Strip off the map and remove its population from the statistics. That leaves them with a 1.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank. They are trying to present their colonial project as a major tactic to overcome the demographic danger. The greater the number of Jews, the fewer the number of Palestinians; and the greater the power of the settlers, the bigger their projects; and as the Palestinians become more desperate, they will ultimately turn to other solutions such as giving in to the Jewish majority, or leaving and escaping. They say that in Syria there are three million refugees outside the country and four million displaced inside it. In Iraq, there are bigger displacements that have led eight million Iraqis to leave their homeland to date. So why should Israel be concerned about a "relatively small deportation process" of 300,000-400,000- Palestinians? The parties behind Israeli colonial activity in Jerusalem and the West Bank do not act merely within the confines of religious ideology to seek sites referred to in the Torah to build on them. These parties seek to build settlements in every possible location available. They want to expand existing settlements and legalize all the settlements built without a permit, and they want to return to the four settlements evacuated in the northern West Bank as per the withdrawal plan from Gaza. They believe that this is the right moment because the current government in Israel is the most right wing government in its history, and its prime minister is weak, vulnerable to public pressure and committed to the settlers. His main allies are the Jewish House party led by Neftali Bennett, but 35% of the settlers gave their votes to the Likud party of Netanyahu. They declare publicly: "If we do not expand and extend settlement building now, then when? This is the right time." They speak resolutely with unusual confidence. They care nothing for international law or the International

Settlers Crimes

جرائم الاسيطان!!



Criminal Court. They do not care about any government, law or court; it is even easy for them to attack the Israeli High Court of Justice and encourage people to attack it with bulldozers, although this same court legalized the first colonial projects, and without its stamp, there would not be one Jewish house in the occupied Palestinian territories. They do not even hesitate to attack the Israeli army which protects them and without which no one would ever dare to live behind the Green Line. Since 2004 they have committed more than 11 thousand assaults on Palestinians and their properties in the West Bank: In 90%

of cases the aggressors were never held accountable. Files were opened in other cases and most of them were closed. These cases include 15 attempts to burn Palestinian families alive while asleep in their homes. (The first arson attack was in Hebron in 2008, when one hundred settlers stood watching the fire, some of them throwing stones at the Palestinians running for their lives from the burning house.) Therefore, Jewish terrorism does not consist of just ugly war crimes like ISIS; it has strategic political targets aimed at destroying the Palestinian cause.

The Golan Exposes and Challenges Israeli Manipulation of the Patriotic Druze

Azhar Hana'

Ever since the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan in June 1967, we have witnessed attempts and schemes by the Zionists to separate the Golan from its motherland, Syria. Despite these attempts, the Golan has remained resistant and impervious to all colonialist plans. The strike of 1982 in opposition to Israeli nationality represented a historic benchmark. Today, amidst the current crises in Syria, the Golan continues to resist and struggle against the sectarian strife Israel is trying to introduce into the Syrian Druze community as a means to manipulate the position adopted by the Druze towards their home country of Syria. The pretext is protection from ISIS, although the relationship between Israel and "Jabhet Al-Nusra", whose wounded men are treated in Israeli hospitals, is well known.

The artist Sulaiman Tarabeyyah told Al-Hal: "The aim of Israeli manipulation is to establish a Druze state and a security zone similar to that of the southern Lebanese army, but this idea is totally unacceptable to the occupied people of the Golan. We should understand the danger facing the region at this time, and we should unite and put our political differences aside to oppose this plan. We should prevent Israel and its allies from implementing their scheme because what brings us together is greater than what separates us; we should all be united for Syria."

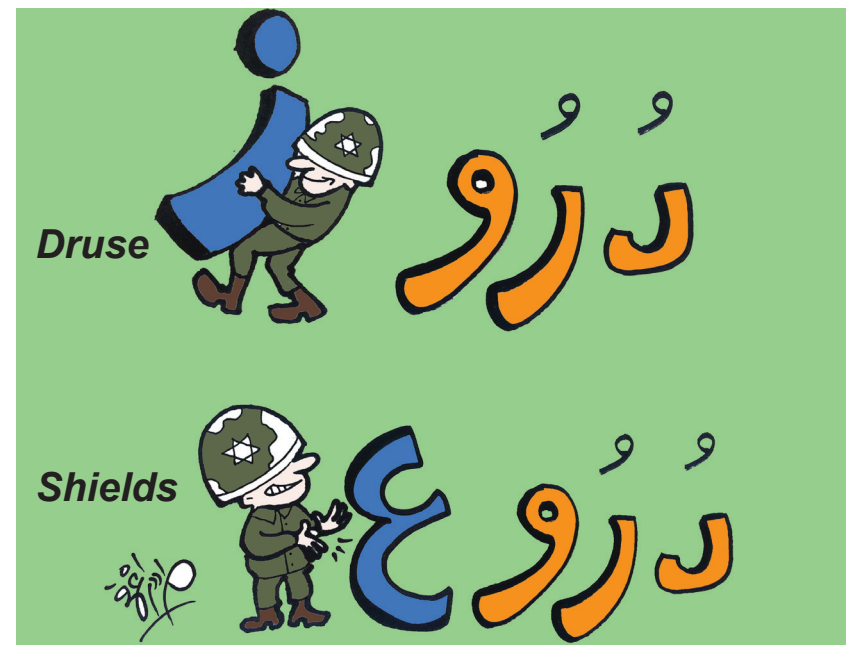
In conversation with artist Majida Al-Halabi, she said: "From the very beginning of the occupation, Israel attempted to establish a Druze political entity to act as a security zone for its northern borders. This scheme failed because of the patriotic leaders and fighters

of the Golan, who paid for this struggle with long years of their life in prison. The religious leaders in the Golan are well aware of this colonial scheme, but are caught between the hammer of their fear about the fate of our people in the occupied Syrian territories and the anvil of seeking protection from the occupier, which is totally opposed by large sectors of the Golan community and is rejected outright by our people in the occupied areas."

Al-Halabi added: "In the entire history of this ethnic minority (Druze), there has never been any desire or even the slightest tendency to create an independent political entity. On the contrary, their religion is so spiritual that it supersedes any material or secular ambitions. Even to talk about an independent political entity for the Druze is completely incompatible with the essence of their religion."

Al-Halabi emphasized: "We always introduce ourselves as Arabs and we will remain Arabs as we are considered part of Arabic Islamic culture. Even among the Druze of the Galilee and Carmel who suffer from imposed conscription, Israel has never succeeded in changing or eradicating their Palestinian culture and traditions in the details of their lives such as food and clothes."

Al-Halabi concluded: "Since Israel is a state based on religion, its whole mentality is based on sectarian and religious dimensions. From personal experience, I found that the Israelis cannot understand why I feel the pain of Syrian residents of Aleppo suffering from this war in exactly the same way that I feel for the Syrian citizens of Suwayda, because it is difficult for them to understand the national sense of the Druze since they neither know it nor live with it."



A former prisoner in Israeli prisons, Mahmoud Amashah, said in an interview: "The Zionist dream of a Druze entity was aborted by the true patriots: Kamal Junblatt, Kamal Abu Lateef and Kamal Kanaj in the seventies."

"Israel has never forgotten this strategic project and kept it on standby until the right chance came along to apply it. The right time has just arrived with this hellish situation that prevails in my motherland, Syria. I have hope and faith that the entire scheme of Israel will ultimately fail at the hands of the many loyal patriots."

Amashah concluded: "We don't have strong material or political power, but we do have many educated, intellectuals and patriotic journalists who are well aware of what is

happening and are striving to spread this awareness among the people around them so we can repel the Zionist schemes to create a rift between us and our home country of Syria."

In the 1970s Kamal Junblatt, Kamal Kanaj and Kamal Abu Lateef rejected the strategy proposed by Israel of a Druze political entity that would separate them from their own Arab people. Today, and after five decades, Israel is trying to propose this scheme all over again under the pretext of protecting the Druze from ISIS and the Islamic Brotherhood movement in the context of the Syrian crisis. However, this scheme is still being refused and rejected by the loyal, patriotic Arab Druze in the region.

Susia... A Tale of Tents Facing a Tsunami of Displacement

Anas Abu Areesh

The people of Susia village, located to the southeast of Yatta, live in a never-ending state of anxiety and tension as a result of the decision of the Israeli court to demolish the village and displace its residents for the purpose of expanding the settlement established on its land. Israeli bulldozers are poised to pounce on the village once the occupation courts authorize the demolitions "legally".

The tented residents of the village expect the occupation forces to move into their village at any moment as a prelude to the displacement of the population of 340 people. This would allow the settlement to annex the land on the basis of an Israeli order that the area is an archaeological site that should not be inhabited.

Three waves of displacement

Jihad an-Nawajah, head of the Susia local council, said that in 1986, three years after the Israeli settlement of "Susia" was established, the occupation authorities issued an order for the inhabitants of the village to leave their agricultural land on the pretext that the village had been declared an archaeological site. Residents were forced to leave and those who could not find another shelter rebuilt homes nearby, some moving into tents and caves. In 2001 the occupation forces destroyed what had been established and closed the wells providing drinking water. Today, the occupation forces are targeting those living in tents in Susia by ordering them to leave and preventing

access to water and electricity, claiming that the absence of infrastructure in the village requires Palestinians to leave Susia.

Extremist settlers from "Susia" settlement, supported by a right-wing settler organization, have previously approached the Israeli Supreme Court requesting to expand their settlement over village land, claiming that the Palestinian village is an informal settlement established on land of "Susia" settlement. Thus, the Israeli settlers are trying to expand the borders of their settlement and to establish parks for their children.

No water, no electricity

Haj Mohammad Ahmad an-Nawajah, a resident of the village since the 1950s, stated that the village had had no sources of water or electricity, but the inhabitants of Susia had drilled their own wells for drinking water using their own resources. A foreign institution engaged in solidarity with Palestinians installed a solar system to serve some electricity needs. The main power line supplying the settlement of "Susia" and the closed archaeological site - which is visited by Jews and foreign tourists - passes over Susia village, but it is forbidden for Palestinian residents to access it.

Susia is not alone

Mustafa Barghouthi, secretary-general of the Palestinian national initiative movement al-Mubadara, says that Susia has become renowned all over the world as a symbol of resistance against the injustice and



tyranny of occupation, and it embodies Palestinian suffering and the struggle against displacement.

Barghouthi believes that Palestinians in Susia and popular resistance movements will not allow the occupation to overcome the resistance of the villagers and public support is a message to villagers that they are not alone. If the occupation tries to demolish Susia, Palestinians will rebuild it. Barghouthi pointed out that the role of popular resistance movements and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS) against Israel is to unite and support the steadfastness of those living in areas under threat of displacement. This is possible only when divisions between Palestinians are resolved and there is unity against Israel.

Natasha, an Australian activist who supports Palestinians, came to Susia with her family to find solutions that would secure water

supplies for the village after learning about water shortages in the village caused by the activities of the occupier.

Perpetrator unknown!

Despite the pending demolition orders for the tents and other facilities established by village residents, Palestinians are determined to remain on their own land and resist their displacement until their last breath. They are also committed to pursuing legal measures against the occupation authorities and settlers. Of 200 complaints (including the uprooting of trees, threatening behavior, stone-throwing, and damage to property) made by villagers about settler attacks over past years, only three cases are still being investigated by Kiryat Arba police station. The other cases were closed under the pretext of lack of evidence or because the perpetrator was unknown. No charges have been brought against any settler.

Mua'ath Amer... A Palestinian Youth Invents a Safety Bracelet for People with Disabilities

Rola Hasanein

The first invention of its type worldwide, a hand bracelet that warns of the needs of children, people with disabilities and the elderly, was invented by a brilliant Palestinian boy who is only 15 years old. He has been granted a patent for his invention and innovation, proving that he is talented beyond his years.

Mua'ath Amer, the young inventor from the city of Ramallah, has won fame by having his invention registered on the Global List of Inventions. Talking to Al-Hal, Mua'ath said that his invention is to be worn by children, the elderly and people with disabilities to protect them in a scientific and accurate manner. The safety bracelet sends signals with detailed information about the physiological and psychological state of the person. It measures temperature, heartbeat, breathing, and whether the beneficiary is under stress or experiencing an epileptic seizure, via a special application in a smart device. The bracelet alerts the person in charge of an emergency if the wearer pushes the button on the bracelet.

The safety bracelet also monitors the distance between the wearer of the bracelet and the person in charge (the signal receiver) to ensure what Amer terms a safe distance. There is also a "safe area" and special signals to notify the person in charge when the targeted wearer leaves the home. The location of the patient can be ascertained through the use of a spatial framework that maps locations. The invention is equipped with a camera that monitors the patient audio-visually.

The concept behind this invention came from the tragic incident of the young martyr, Mohammad Abu Khdeir, who was kidnapped near his home in occupied Jerusalem and burned to death without his family knowing where he was. There was also the tragic deaths of three young children in Ras Karkar village, who locked themselves inside an

old refrigerator and their relatives did not discover them until it was too late.

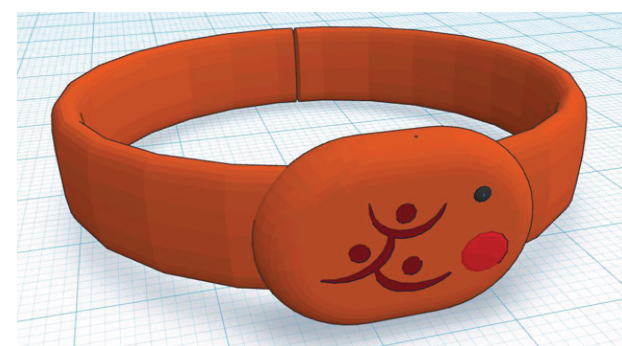
Despite the many challenges faced by Amer (absence of resources or support from technological institutions in Palestine), his persistence and determination won him the silver medal as well as the first place for his invention in the second Forum for Arab Entrepreneurs and Innovative Ideas that took place in Egypt. He also won the titles of Leader and Example of Success in the Fast Company Innovation Festival in the USA.

In an interview with general medical specialist Dr. Sami Saleem, the doctor described the safety bracelet invented by Mua'ath as an excellent and very useful invention that serves many purposes. He stressed that Palestine needs such creative people whose inventions will facilitate people's daily lives. All information transmitted to those in charge (of children, people with disabilities and the elderly) is undoubtedly useful in ascertaining the status of their dependents.

Dr. Saleem added that the safety bracelet could facilitate work in the medical field as the physician could obtain information about the patient's temperature, heartbeat, and stress levels audio-visually from the bracelet in a short period of time without the use of medical tools.

Dr. Adnan Judeh, Executive Director of the Higher Council for Innovation and Excellence (HCIE), said that the responsibility of the HCIE is to support innovation by young people. HCIE is keeping informed about Mua'ath's invention and the young inventor will participate in the first National Forum for Inventors organized by HCIE on 12 September 2015.

Dr. Judeh also stated that they are evaluating the requirements of Mua'ath's invention and will definitely support the safety bracelet if it proves to be an example of innovation and development, adding it to the long list of inventions sponsored by HCIE.



The young inventor, Mua'ath Amer, and an illustrative diagram of the safety bracelet.

Osama Khleif, the Top Student in the General Secondary School Exam in Palestine, Joins Birzeit University

Reem Zaben

In a society ruled by traditions and controlled by custom, from time to time a hero appears who storms the walls of life with an act that may shock some people, but can act as a ray of hope for others as a sign of change in the established mentality. Our hero in this report is an ordinary guy, known to some people but not to others, but people may get to meet him very soon as he is one of the new students enrolled at Birzeit University.

The person we are talking about is student Osama Khleif from Qalqilya, a young man who will soon turn 17. Just like any of his friends and peers who completed this crucial year, Osama was anxious on the day of the exam results; the numbers in the pink, headed and stamped paper from the ministry would determine whether he could continue pursuing his dream or would be stopped at that point and forced to use plan B. Fortunately, Osama did not have to use plan B as his results were excellent and his name was not just among the top ten, but at the top of the list as the first. His primary dream came true and his hard work had paid off with astonishing results. A whole year of study gave Osama the results he wanted. As all his family had anticipated, his result was 99.7% in the scientific stream. Now Birzeit University made Osama's childhood dream come true. For enrolment in the 2015/2016 academic year, he chose a program he had always favored, a specialization that he was ready to fight the whole world for. As God had given him an open-minded family, he did not have to engage in a difficult discussion with his parents about which specialization he should choose: the one his family wants or the one where he sees his future.

Osama confirmed that Birzeit University was his first choice before he started his last year at school, and

it remained his choice on the day of the results that the whole nation celebrated. His choice of physics as a major with a minor in mathematics was not a coincidence. On the contrary, it was a personal decision based on a total commitment, thereby breaking the customary rule in our society that all talented students must undertake one of three majors: medicine, engineering or law. Our academic hero had an unshakeable commitment that he refused to change, and all of society could not deny or alter it in any way. "There is no relationship between the results of the General Secondary Exam and the major selected at the university because you should choose the major you love. That is what I did when I chose physics as a major at Birzeit," he told Al-Hal.

Osama's ambitions do not end with the bachelor degree. He hopes to continue his studies in one of the fields he has chosen and loved: either physics or math. These two majors led him away from medicine and engineering, which were not his interests. Some people may believe that the choice of a major should comply with what society wants or expects. To do the opposite is considered strange and abnormal. While it cannot be described as heroism because it is not seen as heroism by society, Osama's choice really was brave and is a truth that no one can deny. Osama was a hero faced with this choice, a hero who followed his dreams and what he likes, a hero who went beyond the social beliefs that have led us to rock bottom, a hero in a society whose heroes and heroic actions are locked in the history textbooks for elementary school grades, a hero who challenged normality by making his own way, with his family's support, without caring about other people's wishes and opinions. His heroism lies in the realization that his choice is the first step toward a secure and successful future, hoping that it will be just as successful as this year's result.



Decorating with Wooden Boards and the Stones of Demolished Houses A Neighborhood in Gaza Creates Beauty Using Simple Materials

Hanan Ahmad

In the alleys of Gaza, away from the walls "stained" with partisan slogans, the names of martyrs, and words of consolation, welcome and joy, there is an entirely different vista near the Latin Church in Gaza city that you would never expect to see in the sad ruins of Gaza, where the occupation has ripped out all joy. The alley of Abu Laban proclaims to the world that Gaza loves life as it loves the land and sacrifice. Al-Hal visited this alley decorated with hope to capture its story. Painter Abu Abdallah al-Saidi, whose career gave him the background to visualize and execute the concept, said: "I love the beauty in everything: the beauty of nature, beauty of rocks, trees and rain, the beauty of agriculture and colors, beauty in all its forms and meanings. I love it and cannot imagine what life would mean without it."

Sharing Ideas

For years al-Saidi has decorated the walls of his house by displaying all the concepts of beauty on them. He came up with the idea of planting flower seedlings in pots and hanging them from the ceiling. His neighbors saw his house and liked the idea, so

al-Saidi suggested that this beauty be shared with the entire neighborhood. He started by painting the walls of the neighborhood with different, distinct and harmonious colors that give the neighbors hope, covering up all the random graffiti on the walls, and decorated the neighborhood with whatever decorations were available. Women had a role equivalent to that of men in planning and designing. They suggested colors with a feminine touch, presented ideas such as drawing the Palestinian flag and framing the key of return in a wooden frame. Some of them joined in the painting. All the colors used united Palestinian groups because on that day there were no names on the walls, simply one beautiful color for everyone.

Construction after Destruction

Challenge and determination are the main trait of Gazans. They have never given up on turning ruins into structures and buildings. They brought wooden boards and turned them into beautiful frames to decorate roses and other items of beauty. They also used many different stones from the houses destroyed in last year's aggression on Gaza to make big

stone basins planted with varieties of flower seedlings. In another unique gesture, they painted dish washing containers with colors of hope and joy and hung them on the neighborhood walls. They did not leave a corner of the neighborhood without filling it with colors of hope and love.

Mais Nayef (19 years) took advantage of this opportunity to implement a project to decorate the neighborhood, with the help of a youth group, through a competition held by the Tamer organization in Gaza. She led this group to win first place in the competition as a contribution by youth, a concept that received much support. Mohammad Nayef (27 years) worked hard to buy special rocks with his own money to put them in a corner of the neighborhood planted with flower seedlings. He presented them in a creative design that calls for hope and optimism.

Children of the Neighborhood

Children compete with each other to clean the streets after making a promise to themselves not to play soccer in the streets for fear of breaking a frame or ruining the new decorations. Zeen Al-Hadad (3



years) used to carry a plastic gun and aim it at his friends, but now he holds it in new way as if it is a camera, flipping it and pretending he is taking pictures of the new neighborhood. This made al-Saidi comment: "We are a nation that loves peace, life and happiness, and our children are just like us." The

neighborhood is now the new talk of the town. Refugee camps are copying the neighborhood; young women are even decorating the walls of al-Shati camp west of Gaza, and the concept can extend to people living in caravans in the city of Khaza'a following the Israeli aggression in 2014.

Al-Badawi... The Oldest Tree in Palestine

Muhannad Shaer

Al-Badawi, the oldest tree in the world, is located in the northwestern part of al-Walaja village to the west of Bethlehem. The inhabitants of the village were displaced in 1948, and the village buildings were destroyed in 1956 by the occupation. A series of settlements was established in stead as part of occupied Jerusalem. This is a charming natural area with plenty of water and greenery. Local people love the land and agriculture, the endless green horizons, and the springs of water, some of them run dry due to the activities of the occupation. This tree is considered to be oldest in historical Palestine and, according to scientists, is aged in the range of between 3000-6000-years, representing the embodiment of Palestinian memories and a long history.

Origin of the Name

Abdul-Rahman Abu Et-Teen, head of al-Walaja Council, said that despite all the elements of nature that had touched the tree over the past years, it still remains and continues to produce the finest types of olives and olive oil. There are many tales about the origin of its name: The main story is that a man of faith called Ahmad

al-Badawi sat under the shade of the tree for a period of time and, from then on, the inhabitants called the tree al-Badawi after this Sufi sheikh, who was born in Morocco and died in Egypt in 267 Hijri. Many tales of dignity have been attributed to him. Abu Et-Teen disclosed that residents fear that the occupation authorities intend to take over the tree, especially after the order to confiscate areas of land around al-Walaja to expand the annexation wall. "Once the olive harvest starts, attacks by the occupation forces and settlers increase. People are afraid that the tree will be damaged or harmed by the occupation authorities breaking one of the branches or using the olives."

Sa'ad Dras, a resident of al-Walaja, said that protection of the tree is seen as strengthening the Palestinian identity and the history of al-Walaja village, which suffers from Judaization and the confiscation activities conducted by the occupation to expand settlements. The annexation wall is only 20 meters away from the tree. Dras said that people used to pick seven leaves from the tree as a type of medication to be placed under the head of a patient.

Abu Ali, the Guardian of the Tree

Salah Abu Ali, appointed as the Guardian of the tree by the Ministry of Agriculture, confirmed that the tree is considered as sacred by villagers and is considered one of the unique landmarks of the village that should be retained by improving its surroundings.

He described the tree as 1012-meters high with a diameter of about 25 meters, a size comparable to ten olive trees. Its covers an area of about 250 m2 and its shadow in the afternoon is much larger.

Abu Ali spoke of the legends that had sprung up about the tree, one of them being that the tree, in some years, had produced about one ton and a quarter of olives. Today it produces only about 350 kilograms. He explained that the tree gained its fame in recent years and has become a popular destination for visitors. However, threats remain because the occupation authorities built a road to separate the residents of al-Walaja from their land, most of which was confiscated by the occupation. The digging of an artesian well by the occupation caused the al-Jufeirah spring, the main source of water for al-Badawi tree, to dry up.



Abu Ali said that his life is deeply linked to the al-Badawi olive tree. He likes it very much and greets and visits it every morning. He hopes that the tree will manage to overcome the challenges posed by humans and nature as it has done in the past. Mohammad Ghayyathah, Director of the Archeology and History Department in Bethlehem, said that

there is no official interest or care plan for the al-Badawi tree. The only marketing, if any, would be related to eco-tourism, which is of interest to the Ministry of Agriculture. Ghayyathah added that the al-Badawi tree was to be included in tourism trails in Bethlehem covering the countryside to the west (al-Walaja, Battir and Beit Jala).