

Difficult solutions

The maths teacher used to simplify the maths problems for her students to demonstrate that addition does not always lead to an increase, nor does subtraction end with a loss.

"This is bit difficult," said he who was known as a smart student. This was interpreted as witty, mischievous, somewhat manipulative.

The teacher, known for her canniness, replied: "If we added your brain to the brain of the cleverest student in the school, what is the result?"

He answered: "Two brains".

The teacher said: "Yes true, but if one brain was empty and one was clever, we would still have two brains, although we would make use of one and the other could cause us harm, yes?"

The smart student said: "If we added enthusiasm to history and the future, would the result be three?"

The teacher answered: "No, the result is a homeland."

AL HAL - Monday 17/4/2017

4 PAGES

Hamas adopts a new political program that opens the way for a negotiated solution

Muhammad Yunis

The Hamas movement recently approved a political program, the first of its kind since the founding of the movement in 1987. The program reflects all the developments undergone by the movement over the past three decades and an end to the articles of its founding Charter which were seen as violations of international law. These considered Jews as 'enemies' of the Palestinian people and pledged to 'remove the State of Israel'. Other articles restricted international and regional political activities such as using arms as the sole method for the liberation of Palestine, and the view that the Hamas movement is an extension of the International Muslim Brotherhood.

Officials in the movement said that the political program, entitled the 'political document', stipulates that the movement's objective is to establish an independent Palestinian state on the borders of 1967. It also stipulates that liberation of the land may be carried out by any available means, not only by weapons, that the occupation, not the Jews, is the enemy of the Palestinian people, and that Hamas is a Palestinian national liberation movement that has no regional or international affiliations.

A senior official in the movement said: "The Hamas Charter contains some articles that violate international law such as describing Jews as the enemies of the Palestinian people, which we are not ashamed to say is incorrect." He added: "There are Jews who support the Palestinian people. Do we consider them our enemies?"

He said that the old Charter stipulated the liberation of the entire land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River and the removal of the State of Israel, which is not a realistic goal. The world recognizes the State of Palestine on the 1967 borders, and therefore this is considered to be a feasible political objective. He continued: "This does not mean that we give up on the rest of the land of Palestine or recognize Israel. No, we will not recognize Israel, but we adopt a goal that is unanimously accepted by the majority of the Palestinian people and recognized by the world, that is to say the establishment of a Palestinian state on the borders of 1967."

He said that the old Charter of the movement stipulated that the liberation of Palestine should be achieved by arms, but if a stage was reached where Israel accepted to withdraw from all of the occupied territories, would we refuse that? That would be irrational; the way must be kept open for other methods of struggle, including popular resistance and negotiations in the event of a balance of power conducive to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, rather than the current negotiations that are used as a cover for the expansion of settlements. He pointed out that the old Charter is loaded with verses from the Quran and commented:



"He who wants to read the Quran may go directly to the Holy book and need not refer to the Hamas political program. A political program usually features ideas, plans and political principles, therefore we refrained from flooding it with verses from the Holy Quran."

The idea of a political program for the movement was initiated by Khaled Meshaal, Chairman of the Hamas political bureau, about two years ago.

Close aids of Meshaal say that the initiative combines developments in the movement's political policy over the past three decades based on the legacy of its founder, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin.

The new political document is seen as a replacement for the old Charter drafted in 1987, but officials in the movement confirm that they will not annul the Charter because of the external messages that such a step would entail. A senior official

said: "We conduct changes necessary to suit the movement and not in response to any external pressures." He added: "For a long time, there have been many external pressures to annul or modify the Charter. There is also an internal debate on the need for change regardless of any external pressures. We believe that the formula adopted as a political program represents the position and policy of the movement and is appropriate regardless of the positions of external powers who demanded a change to the Charter."

Hamas is anticipated to complete its general elections within days. Last month, the movement completed elections in the Gaza Strip and is still conducting elections in the Diaspora and the West Bank. Official sources in Hamas said that the Diaspora elections take a long time due to the complexity and number of Hamas branches around the

world. The elections also take time in the West Bank due to difficult security conditions.

These sources said that all Hamas members participated in the elections in the Gaza Strip, whereas West Bank elections were conducted on a limited scale because of the security conditions.

The three areas (the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Diaspora) make up a third each of the 50 seats on the Central Consultative Council and the political bureau (18 members plus the chairman).

Competition for the post of Chairman of the Political Bureau is confined to Dr. Musa Abu Marzouk and Ismail Haniyeh.

Some close observers of Hamas expect Khaled Meshaal, the current Bureau Chairman, to support Ismail Haniyeh as this is more likely to facilitate Meshaal's return to the leadership in four years than if Abu Marzouk were to be the Chairman.

Crime among Arabs is seven times higher than among Jews

Azhar Oweida

Reports and data reveal a steady increase in violence among Palestinians in the territories occupied in 1948. The results of the report show that crime in the Arab community is seven times higher than in the Jewish community. This is taking place in the absence of effective intervention by the occupation police to reduce the escalating rates.

Al Hal met with concerned specialists to examine the extent of this phenomenon. Somebody must investigate this issue and halt the crimes occurring among this occupied people who have sought to build their own character despite all the measures imposed by Israel against them. A halt must be brought to the explosion of all types of crime in this community.

Zubi: The police are slow to respond

A report submitted by Knesset Member Haneen Zubi, of the United Arab List, to the State Comptroller on police handling of crimes in Arab communities, states that crime among Arabs is 7.4 times higher than among Jews. The report also revealed that 70% of killings are by shooting. Eighty percentage of weapons in Arab areas are illegal, equivalent to 320 thousand guns.

In an interview on this issue, Zubi said: "Society should assume some personal responsibility because the law alone does not put a red line for an individual or society; the individual puts that line for themselves and society puts it for its members through a system of deterrents."

"The police are slow in their work against crime in Arab areas. Despite the recruitment of police for Arab areas, increasing the

number of police stations, and greater recruitment of Arab officers, crime rates have not fallen. On the contrary, they are increasing and getting worse." Zubi stressed. "The police deal with Arabs as resources to be controlled and therefore they try to convert criminals into working with the intelligence services, allowing young people to fall into crime so they will cooperate with the police. Thus, they work for only two purposes: 1) suppression and political persecution; and 2) the recruitment of young people to the security apparatuses of the occupation.

"Palestinian organizations must adopt a contingency plan to fight crime and collect weapons, combat gangs and the culture of protection money to build a society free of violence," she concluded.

Police kill 69 Arabs

In an interview with political activist Dr. Amar Abu Qnadil, he said, "Crime is growing day after day and is now an essential item of daily news. Violence has become a major part of the culture of individuals and is sometimes justified as there are no social deterrents, community initiatives or police doing their job."

Abu Qandil holds Israel accountable for this situation. "Israel bears the main responsibility for the outbreak of violence and the spread of licensed and unlicensed weapons. Israel continuously expands the circle of impoverishment and illiteracy through its schemes of marginalization, forcing youth to resort to crime. This is in addition to the failure to assume their responsibilities of collecting weapons, prosecuting criminals, and holding them accountable."

"We as a society must be responsible



Haneen Zubi



Amar Abu Qandeel



Reem Abu Raed

for exporting violence by poor education and the consolidation of a culture of violence in all aspects of our lives, from our inability to accept others to encouraging the use of violence at the first point of difference or conflict," he said. "Despite repeated visits by parties and organizations, the police have not and will not do their work effectively. The policy of the police is essentially aggressive and racist towards Arabs. The police alone have killed 69 Arab youths since the second intifada," he continued.

"Our society must confront violence; we must rely on ourselves more, reject and denounce violence, and denounce and condemn those who practice it without any fear or hesitation. We must start to raise our children at home, at school, in the family, and the nearby surroundings." Abu Qandil stressed.

He concluded: "This subject must be adopted very seriously by professional and competent teams, then adopted by committees and other parties working with careful plans and clear goals that can reach homes, schools, and neighborhoods to tackle and eradicate violence."

Unemployment and social repression

In another interview, activist and teacher Reem Abu Raed from Um Al-Fahem said: "There is no doubt that violence in Arab society has become widespread. In my opinion, one of the reasons for this phenomenon is the lack of open spaces for young people in Arab towns."

Abu Raed added: "Repression takes society to unwanted places and unemployment. It hampers advancement in life and individuals find themselves in a weak and fragile situation that does not build individuals in an appropriate way. These are the causes of the increase in violence. Repression and unemployment lead to domestic violence and violence towards others, extending to killing, weapons and anarchy."

Abu Raed concluded: "The occupation authorities and society are equally responsible for the killing and anarchy: the authorities by continuously underestimating and neglecting repeated cases of killing, and society by its lack of awareness and preparedness to confront and end this phenomenon."

Palestine Women Experts ... a Dream Come to Fruition

Sujoud Naji

After a long period in which women were absent from analysis and commentary on the news, the website of Palestine Women Experts was launched to revive the role of women. The site was launched on 9 March 2017 to mark International Women's Day in cooperation with the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, Palestinian Radio and Television, the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), Wafa—the Palestinian News Agency, and the European Union.

The website is a database of Palestinian women experts in the fields of literature, culture, politics and arts. It aims to integrate women experts in these fields into media productions and highlights the presence of a large number of female experts who are not invited to comment on issues raised in the media.

Printing a Booklet in Near Future

Of this project to integrate women into the news and media operations, the Coordinator of the Gender Unit at the Media Development Center, Nahed Abu Tuaima, said: "The launch of the Palestine Expert Women website was intended to negate the argument that there is no database for women in the different fields of media and their consequent absence from the screen."

Abu Tuaima believes that this website is a significant step in advancing the role of women and to maintain a balance in media visibility between the sexes, especially as the appearance of men is very apparent while women are absent from the screens. This move will increase balance in media agendas.

Journalists Appreciate the Step

To examine the importance of this step by journalists, Al-Hal met with the morning broadcaster on Palestine



Amal Jumaa



Karim Asakreh



Khamis Makhou



Nahed Abu Tuaima

TV, Khamis Makhou. He said: "This is a good website that ensures a database of Palestinian women. This was not available before, and the majority of those who appear on TV and radio are men. There were attempts to involve women but the lack of a database prevented it."

Makhou recommended that data on women experts from outside Palestine should also be included in this website, asserting: "We often need to involve intellectuals and experts from abroad to comment on specific issues and find men at the forefront. For this reason, it is important to involve women from outside Palestine in this website."

In a phone call with Karim Asakreh, Maan Agency news director, he said: "The website will meet the need that emerged through many programs to improve the status of women in the media. The search for new platforms gives women's issues more momentum, and it is becoming important now women with different experience exist, but did not have an appropriate opportunity to express themselves previously."

58 Women Experts Initially

In an interview with the Women's Affairs Technical Committee, the writer and radio broadcaster Amal Jumaa said that the website had been established in cooperation with the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, and its launch in Palestine coincided with a launch in Tunisia and Morocco.

She pointed out that any person can communicate directly with the women experts because the website provides the CV, photo and contact information of the expert. The site includes all the fields in which women can appear if needed by the media, apart from the political sphere and media as women in the media and female politicians are known automatically and are visible. Jumaa said that there are currently 85 women experts and the site is open for others to join. Jumaa stated: "The website has a positive impact on society and perceptions of women. Society is improved by the emergence of women alongside men in community participation and commenting on issues. We hope that every qualified woman will send her information to us to register her name on the website."

The Al-Nukhbah (Elite) School in Sour Baher: A new victim of steps against Jerusalem schools

Anwar Khatib

Violations and restrictions imposed by the occupation, combined with the Judaization of Jerusalem schools, are accelerating within a context of constraint on the Palestinian people as a whole. The occupation government imposed the Israeli curriculum on some Palestinian schools in Jerusalem, refused to recognize courses run in some Palestinian universities, ordered the closure of schools, and arrested administrative bodies for investigation in a frenzied plan. One of these violations was the closure of Al-Nukhbah (Elite) School for Boys in Sour Baher, south-east of Jerusalem. This decision was made by the Israeli Ministry of Education, the police and Shabak on the pretext that the school had been founded by Hamas and that its educational content, which adheres to the Palestinian curriculum, incites against Israel. Al-Hal met the school principal, Luay Bkirat, who was summoned by Israeli intelligence to receive the surprise decision of the school closure and his investigation. Bkirat said that this arbitrary decision deprived 230 students of continuing their school year in a normal manner and negatively affected 25 educational and administrative staff. He added that the occupation would not prevent students from continuing their studies and students took their classes on the sidewalk

every morning to challenge the occupier and its unjust decisions.

Bkirat clarified that the school has successfully passed all the inspections by the Israeli Ministry of Education and all the reports on the school had been positive prior to this decision being issued.

The head of the Parents' Committee, Jaber Amirah, stressed that the Committee would not stand silent and was making every effort to find another building to accommodate students to continue their education, especially as it is still the middle of the school year. The problem is that there are no empty buildings in Jerusalem that can accommodate this number of students and teachers, and there are high costs involved in finding a new building.

Amirah said that the Parents' Committee had started a series of steps in Arab schools in Jerusalem, including a one-day strike in all schools (governmental, municipal and private, civil, Awqaf and UNRWA schools) from Kafr Aqab up to Um Toba in the 1948 territories to reject the policies and restrictions imposed by the occupation on Jerusalem schools.

Jerusalem activist Fuad Abu Hamed warned of further deterioration in educational conditions in Jerusalem schools due to overcrowding, the shortage of classrooms, the decline in the quality of education, high drop-out rates of students leaving for the labor market, and



The school: students participate in a sit-in demanding their right to education.

the high cost of education for families on limited incomes. The arbitrary and oppressive measures imposed by the occupation destroy the future of entire generations.

He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the performance of institutions, organizations and parties responsible for advocating for students' rights on this issue; this is a key weakness exploited by the occupation. The issue of this one school is not limited to the

consequences for its teachers and students but touches all of society in Jerusalem, and any weakness will be detrimental to the entire educational, cultural and social process.

Abu Hamed also pointed out that they are taking several steps, most importantly legal petitions submitted to the judiciary. The school administration, Parents' Committee and relevant social bodies are working on legal aspects, in the media and socially.

The Tin Neighborhood:

Theater that exposes fake heroism and many masks in Palestine

Nada Manasrah

The Tin Neighborhood is a play by Palestinian director Fathi Abdel-Rahman about impoverished neighborhoods all over the world. He describes this poor neighborhood as the 'tin neighborhood' inhabited by people in dire straits, and where looting and robber gangs are prevalent.

The Tin Neighborhood is a satirical comedy that both delights and disturbs. It sends a message that calls for social justice, security and protection in these neighborhoods.

Director Fathi Abdel-Rahman says that the locations chosen for his play are poor neighborhoods, represented by the 'tin neighborhood' or slums that exist all over the world, and which reflect the gap between impoverished and marginalized communities and those that are socially and economically advanced. Slums vary from one country to another: countries with a high population tend to suffer acute poverty and violence, as in Egypt, Tunisia and India. In Palestine, tin neighborhoods exist but on a very limited scale. Abdel-Rahman added: "We tried to adopt an approach that portrays reality for Arabs and Palestinians because people residing outside poor areas always view these locations as crammed with violence, drugs and gangs. In fact, these neighborhoods are the victims of a political system and of marginalization, occupation, and displacement."

Roles and heroism in the margins

The Tin Neighborhood is performed by the Mawasem group at Birzeit University and comprises actor Odi al-Ju'beh as Abu Hadid, Marah Yasin as Rehab, Lara Nassar as Sharifa, Obaida Salah as Mona, Amal Saleh in the role of Um Nyab, Musa Nazzal in the role of al-Sunbul, Omar Amer as Raja, Mohammad Masharqa as Sergeant al-Danis, Musa Naser in the role of Dahshan, the sergeant's assistant,



A shot of the play performance.

and Mahmoud Abu Shamsieh playing the role of al-Fattan. The writer and director is Fathi Abdel-Rahman, Maher Shawamrah is the choreographer, and the music and songs are composed and executed by Rami Washaha.

Each character in the play portrays an aspect of ordinary people in any community. Thus Rihab, Mona, Sharifa, Um Nyab, Raja and al-Fattan are people with simple occupations in the neighborhood. Their role symbolizes the real lives of many in poor communities who are deprived of their rights, who seek to be free of the injustices imposed by the ruling authorities, who dream of security, equality and a better life. They dream of escaping the oppression and tyranny of influential individuals who serve their personal interests at the expense of the poor.

Sergeant Danis, who comes from the tin neighborhood but works for the government and does jobs he is unhappy about, is the character in charge of the security of the neighborhood. He symbolizes the interests of

those who are influential politically and who try to exploit poor communities for their own personal interests.

Abu Hadid represents the leader of the tin neighborhood who is unjustly imprisoned for the murder of someone who tries to control the neighborhood, an arrogant and powerful person called Abu Ras. Abu Hadid's imprisonment earns him the support of the tin neighborhood residents as a hero for killing Abu Ras who caused them problems and injustice.

Although Abu Hadid was imprisoned unjustly because he did not kill Abu Ras, this event makes him the focus of residents and a hero in their eyes because he has saved them from the harm they were subjected to.

Following his release from jail, Abu Hadid meets Rihab and confesses that he was not the one who killed Abu Ras. She does not believe him and asks him to announce this to the neighborhood if it is true. Abu Hadid refuses on the grounds that it would undermine the trust and hopes of the people. He claims

that he cannot abandon his responsibility towards the people by destroying the image of him as a hero that they have drawn in their imagination.

At the end of the play, it becomes clear to all those in the tin neighborhood that it was Raja who murdered Abu Ras, having been employed by key figures who wanted to get rid of Abu Ras and fabricate a charge against Abu Hadid to stop him from becoming the leader of the neighborhood.

Raja is a university student who graduated and sought a job, but fell prey to those with power and became forced to obey their orders, being unable to escape their dominance over him.

The concept of the play is national unity and civil peace, strengthening the social fabric, and avoiding bloody conflicts. This is the message conveyed by the director of the play, the actors and all who worked on it. The objective is to reveal that heroism has been exploited in Palestine and may be based on fake bravery.

Al-Kamandjati Festival of Spiritual and Traditional Music...A journey from the world to Jerusalem



Yahia Hussein



Diwan Ensemble

Madelin Shaaban

The Al-Kamandjati Association is organizing a musical journey of world culture and traditions drawn from the land of Palestine and culminating at its heart, Jerusalem. The journey will tour cities, villages and refugee camps to revive the spirit of historic and archeological sites. The 'Spiritual Journey', as it is titled, is launched as part of the Al-Kamandjati Festival from 5 to 23 April 2017.

The musical journey will overcome every obstacle to reach all Palestinians and bring world music to Palestine, and from Palestine to the entire world, through diverse music from other civilizations and cultures.

The founder of the Al-Kamandjati Association, Ramzi Aburedwan, stated that the festival will last for 18 days, starting from Sebastia in Nablus, then on to Jenin, Burqeen, Arrabeh, Hebron, Thahrieh, Yatta, Rashaydeh, Gaza, Bethlehem, Ramallah, and ending in Jerusalem.

A series of exploratory tours will take place in the desert east of Jerusalem next to the Jordan Valley to reinforce the links between this area and Palestinian history, and to reveal its secrets and splendors. The Festival will take place in key archeological sites in the selected cities and villages, particularly in Jerusalem, to highlight cultural diversity and counter attempts to obliterate it.

Aburedwan continued: "The main rationale of the Festival is to create new synergies among the Palestinian people in an attempt to attract attention to our neglected heritage and raise awareness of the value of this basic historical heritage for the future.

100 Arab and international artists

To give the Festival an international and Arab flavor, over 100 musicians and intellectuals from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Mali, Tanzania, Turkey, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, India, Belgium, Sweden and Palestine will participate in musical performances and improvisations, debates, public seminars, film presentations, and photo exhibitions. These events are taking place under the technical supervision of Allan Weber,

an expert in traditional musical heritage and the technical director of a number of traditional music festivals around the world.

From an economic aspect, stakeholders want the Festival to rely on local resources to highlight traditional crafts and promote the local economy. For example, in 2016 Hebron earned the title of 'City of Handicrafts' from the World Crafts Council. Nida Issa, Director of Tourist Services at the Ministry of Tourism, said that the Ministry wants to support this Festival and expand it to all Palestinian cities, She described the Festival as a window to the world and a gateway for introducing Palestinian tourist, economic, and cultural heritage along with its political reality.

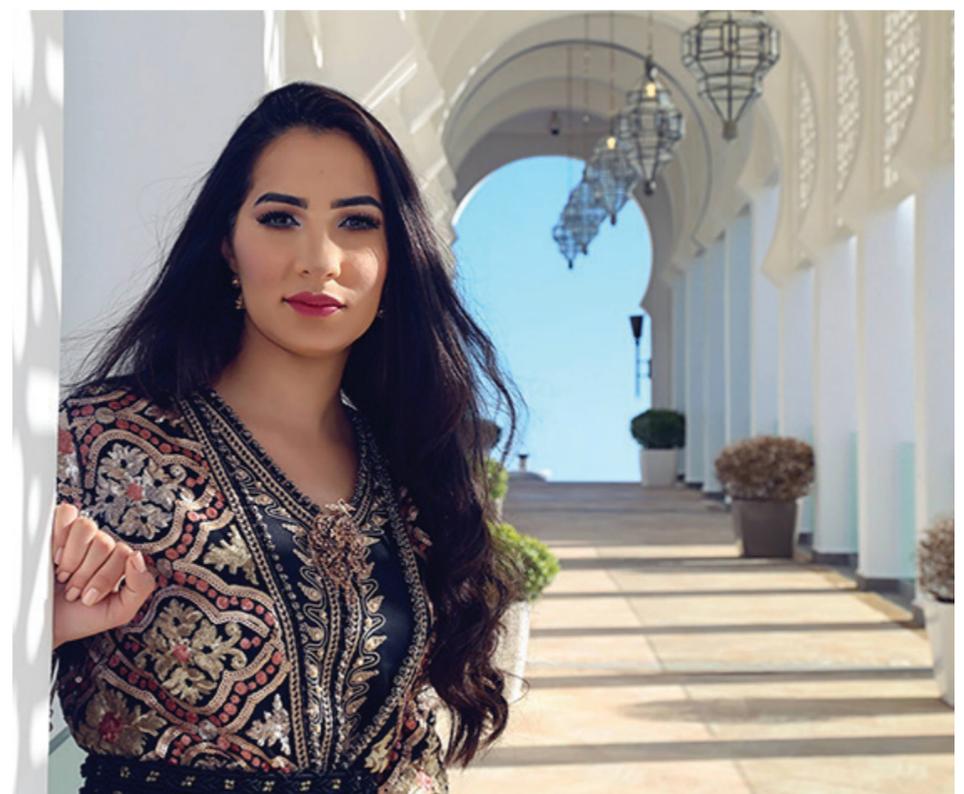
She added: "The idea of a moving Festival will help the Palestinian public and visitors to identify the most important historic and archeological sites, and open the way to presenting these locations at their best." Issa confirmed that this combination of traditional music with global culture is a beautiful addition to these historic sites that will allow visitors to see them from a fresh perspective that will encourage tourism.

Issa described the significant role played by the Festival in supporting tourism and the economy. "Festivals in general, especially this one, promote the core strategies of the Ministry of Tourism of encouraging internal tourism and resolving the problem of seasonal tourism by ensuring ongoing tourism activities throughout the year instead of being confined to religious holidays."

Issa pointed out the importance of promoting local products, highlighting and reviving traditional handicrafts, and protecting against theft of the Palestinian identity by the occupation. She added that the Festival is an opportunity for recreation and relaxation for the Palestinian people and a morale-booster.

Art participation from Palestine and the world

Tanzanian artist Yahia Hussein will participate in the 'spiritual journey' with his songs. Hussein told al-Hal that his



Zainab Afilal

participation in a global festival taking place in Palestine is very important to him and gives him a sense of global belonging by singing alongside other international groups. It also provides him with the opportunity to learn about Palestinian culture and traditions.

From Palestine, the Diwan Ensemble will participate. This is a band established to reflect new trends in spiritual music as a Palestinian and Eastern Sufi improvisational band. According to one of its members, Iyad Estiti: "The band attempts to expand the perspective on mixing Eastern and Sufi music with various cultural effects and full harmonization between musical instruments and spiritual singing.

Andalusian art will be represented by Moroccan singer Zainab Afilal, one of few young singers to practise this art.

She told al-Hal: "The origin of Andalusian music dates back to the Abbasid music composer and singer Ziryab who created a new musical concept composed of a musical system of 24 related notes, each corresponding to the time of the day or night. These were naturally inspired by a passion for time and the four seasons in which each set of notes expresses the emotions of a certain time of day, night or season. Thus, Andalusian music was founded.

The Al-Kamandjati Association is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 by violinist and conductor Ramzi Aburedwan. Al-Kamandjati aims to enhance cultural and educational links and develop educational and training programs, music production in Palestine and abroad, and the conservation of the cultural heritage in Palestine and the Arab world.

alhal

Editor In Chief:
Nibal Thawabteh

Editorial Board:

Aref Hijawi
Lubna Abdel Hadi
Khalid Saleem
Jumane Qunnaisse

Resident Editor:

Saleh Masharqa

Directed by:

Asem Naser

Distributed by:

Husam Barghouthi

Founded by:

Aref Hijawi
Issa Bshara
Nabeel Khateeb
Waleed Omari

Funded By:



SWEDEN

Issued by: Media Development Center



Tel: 2982979 Email: alhal@birzeit.edu