

### A breathtaking American film

That was the thought of Mr. 'Head lifter'? as he watched the news of the American president's visit to the area. The scene turned into a ghastly nightmare of a real-life TV broadcast, a shocking show that debased our dignity and penetrated to the core of our beliefs with its cruelty. 'Head lifter' realized that this was not just a showy American film for the soul and morale, but a huge film festival targeting the remnants of our indifference, and I guess, toppling it.

At the end of the film, someone who is perhaps the mastermind behind it wrote: "We have put our hands in a lot of your pockets and some honorable remnants of your history still remain; their turn will come later. Afterwards, we will declare: that that was it, and shake the cup of bitter coffee once or twice because we actually want more."

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8 PAGES

## Imminent return to negotiations without a halt to settlements...Trump seeking bargains

### ✦ **Mohammad Yunis**

President Mahmoud Abbas realizes that the chance of reaching a peace agreement with Israel via any new political process is close to zero, but he accepted the call of the American President Donald Trump to return to negotiations in spite of the failure to halt settlements. This strategy aims primarily to minimize losses and also to achieve some political and economic benefits.

President Abbas has sought to build a partnership with President Trump ever since the latter assumed his responsibilities at the White House. According to close aides, Abbas mainly wanted to break the isolation imposed upon him by Trump during the president's first weeks in office, secondly to influence the inputs of the President's forthcoming political initiative, and finally to achieve some economic goals in the interests of the Palestinian Authority. A senior official told al-Hal: "President Mahmoud Abbas realizes that the Trump era is a new phase and he found himself at a junction with two choices: either a confrontation or to engage and minimize losses, as well as achieving certain objectives. He chose the second option."

He added: "If President Abbas insisted on a halt to settlements as a pre-condition for resuming the negotiations, President Trump would refuse and cut back on the relationship with Palestinians, while enhancing the relationship with Israel amid continued settlement. Therefore Abbas chose the second option in an attempt to put Palestinian interests on the regional agenda of the new American President."

The official added: "In any case, Israeli settlement will continue, whether there are negotiations or not. However, when there are negotiations, the Americans will not

accept the announcement of large settlement projects by Israel, or if they do, it would cause a confrontation between the two parties."

Since the early days when President Trump took office as President of the United States, President Abbas has sought to convince him that the Palestinians are a partner of the US in the war on terrorism and in regional stability. Close sources from President Abbas said: "The President sent a delegation headed by the head of Palestinian Intelligence Services, Majed Faraj, to Washington to present detailed information to the Americans on the role of the Palestinian security apparatus in the fight against terrorism and in thwarting armed activities."

According to American sources, President Trump will soon announce a political initiative based on launching non-conventional negotiations for a year or a year and a half.

These sources stated that the new proposed negotiations are based on bringing together decision makers from both sides and presenting direct American suggestions to reach 'deals' on final status issues such as settlements, Jerusalem, water, borders, security, and refugees.

A senior Palestinian official said that President Mahmoud Abbas asked the American President during their meeting at the White House for changes to the Paris Agreement to give Palestinians freedom of movement, work and investment in Area C that comprises 60% of the West Bank. President Abbas presented the American administration with three economic demands to accompany the resumption of the political process, mainly to increase international assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

The economic advisor to President Abbas, Dr Mohammad Mustapha, who accompanied Abbas to the White House,

said: "External assistance to the PA was \$1.2 billion annually, declining to \$700 million in recent years. This is a significant decrease for a small economy like ours."

He added: "Our second demand is to allow Palestinians to work in Area C which comprises 60% of the West Bank." He continued: "World Bank reports demonstrate that the Palestinian economy would make huge leaps if we had the freedom to work in Area C. For example the reports state that our income from agriculture would increase to \$700 million annually."

Mustapha said that the Palestinians reported to all parties, the Americans and Europeans, that the creation of agricultural, industrial, tourist and housing projects alongside exploitation of the natural resources of the Dead Sea would bring about significant economic progress to replace external assistance.

The third demand was development of the Paris Agreement to allow Palestinians to obtain their rights to customs transfers.

Customs transfers consist of over \$120 million a month but Palestinians lose large sums of this money because Israel does not transfer customs clearance bills for invoices that any merchant does not submit to the PA.

Moreover, Israel deducts \$6 million per month from the value of clearance invoices as fees for collecting and transferring those invoices.

The Palestinians demand that Israel provide the PA with data regarding all commodities that enter the West Bank and collect customs on all goods, not only on submitted invoices.

Palestinian economic demands also include opening the border crossing Jordan around the clock.

## Freedom for prisoners of freedom

## #Strike\_dignity

لنا نركع  
أبدًا لنا نركع  
مادام لنا  
طفلًا يرضع

توفيق زياد



Poster by

**Burhan Karkoutly**

Burhan Karkoutly is a visual artist born in Damascus in 1932. He joined the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1952. After graduating, he travelled to Spain, Morocco, Mexico and Venezuela, settling in Germany where he died in 2003.

Many of his works represent the Palestinian struggle and global freedom movements.

## Law of Nationalism...

# consolidating the Jewish State and racism against Palestinians

**Hiba Aslan**

The Israeli Knesset endorsed the first reading of the so-called 'Law of Nationalism' which emphasizes the Jewish nature of the state. The Law received a majority of votes by 48 members versus objections by 41 members of the Israeli occupation coalition. What are the implications of this Law if it comes into effect?

Nationalist objectives and political aggravation Political science professor Dr. Amal Jamal points out that the objectives of the Law of Nationalism vary according to proponents of the Law and the head of the government, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Jamal added: "For proponents of the Law, their objectives include political aggravation and an attempt to score points in internal Knesset battles as representatives of ideological parties that seek to emphasize the Jewish character of Israel and enhance state legitimacy, which has been diminished locally and internationally."

According to the political science professor, the right-wing coalition realizes the need to emphasize Jewish identity and to stress the UN partition resolution that recognized the Jewish State of Israel.

The objectives of the head of the government revolve around controlling the political agenda, especially against Yair Lapid and his party Jewish Home, despite Netanyahu's success in dragging Lapid to support the Law.

"Regardless of the objectives of the two parties, ultimately they all join in the swamp of racism against Palestinians. Adoption of the Law will create a new demarcation of the borders. Thus, any future political agreement with the Palestinians will force them to

recognize Israel as a state for Jews only," according to Dr. Jamal.

He added: "In terms of citizenship, the adoption of the Law will annul the rights of Palestinians inside the Green Line as the indigenous population, mainly concerning language, which according to the new Law will lose its official status. On the ground, this is reflected in Arabic translations, which is now mandatory in government departments. With the adoption of the Law, this would be revoked. The same applies to support for Arab cultural projects."

Arab parties in the Knesset will be prohibited from raising allegations against the policies practiced. Any objection would terminate their right to engage in the political process, which is one of the main objectives of the Law.

Dr. Jamal believes that the significant consensus among parties in the Knesset, plus internal competition to endorse its articles and sub-articles, makes its adoption a matter of fact, although the date is not known.

The most dangerous racist law

Arab Knesset Member Jamal Zahalqa believes that the Law of Nationalism is the most dangerous law enacted for more than thirty years. It takes precedence over all other laws and is the basis for the rationale of any law.

As for the future status of Arab Knesset members, Zahalqa points out that this Law will endanger the entry of Arab members to the Knesset "where we will be forced to recognize the Jewish state to be allowed entry."

He added: "Our political activity will be interpreted as opposition to the Law, which is

the King of laws, putting us in a more difficult situation than at present."

According to Zahalqa, the tasks of Arab Knesset members now look extremely difficult. The only outlet is to convince other parties in the Knesset to oppose the adoption of the Law, in particular religious parties who have reservations about the Law due to their liberal definition of the Jewish state.

Arab Knesset members are seeking to communicate with international organizations in an attempt to explain the dangers of this Law and its implications for Palestinians and their rights.

Fifteen articles

The Law was proposed by two Knesset members from the right-wing government coalition: Zeev Elkin from Likud and Elit Shkid from the right-wing extremist party Yisrael Beiteinu [Israel our Home], led by Avigdor Liberman.

The proposed Law comprises 15 articles reported by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in one of its publications. The first article confirms the national home of the Jewish people and that they alone have the right to national self-determination, which excludes Palestinian Arabs living in Israel and deprives them of their national rights.

The first objective of the Law is presented in Article 2 that declares Israel to be a national state for the Jewish people, and that Israel as a Jewish democratic state according to the state declaration articulated in the Israeli Basic Law.

Article 3 emphasizes Jewish symbols such as the national anthem the 'Hatikva', the Israeli flag and emblem. Article 4 stipulates that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that Hebrew is the language of the state, removing existing recognition of the Arabic

language as an official language.

Article 5 offers every Jew the right to immigrate to Israel and obtain citizenship. This deprives Palestinian refugees of their right of return. Article 6 and 7 focus on uniting the Jewish Diaspora, strengthening Israel's relationship with Jews, and the preservation of Jewish culture and history internationally.

Article 9 allows for the complete separation of populations, thereby preventing Arabs from residing in the Jewish towns and villages inside the Green Line that are basically established on Palestinian land.

Articles 10, 11 and 12 clarify the official calendar in Israel, holidays and special occasions. Article 13 gives preference to the Jewish religion as a binding legal reference in the absence of a clear legal text.

This means that in the event of a case reaching court and the lack of a clear legal text in Jewish Law to rely on for a verdict, the court must rule according to the heritage of Israel, which basically includes the Talmud, the provisions of which are not free of racism and hostility to human values.

Article 14 covers holy places and the area on the top of al-Aqsa Mosque that they refer to as the Temple Mount. This is the Article on which extreme political parties and settlers association rely to facilitate their access to the site.

If this Article were to be passed, it would enjoy a superior status to the other articles since it provides official endorsement for storming holy places and facilitating the Judaization of al-Aqsa Mosque.

Finally, Article 15 safeguards the Law of Nationalism from annulment or modification by stipulating that this requires a basic law endorsed by more than half the members of the Knesset.

Pastures without shepherds.



## How did shepherds disappear from rural areas?

**Ameed Shehada**

If you stand today on a hill overlooking wide areas of grazing land located between the villages of Ajja, Fahma, Kufir Rai and Rama in Jenin governorate, you will not see even one shepherd, except by chance.

Some years ago, these public pasture lands were full of shepherds and silos (pyramids of stone built by the shepherds to divide grazing land). Those silos have now disappeared from this land, as well as most of the shepherds.

"Breeds have changed," according to Raed Besharat, head of extension at Jenin Agriculture Directorate, who explained: "In the old days, farmers used to breed the Awassi sheep, a robust breed that can climb mountains, graze in cold and hot weather, and withstand extreme conditions." Awassi sheep are a local or Bedouin breed known for their large fat tails that peasants call 'Abu liyeh' (fat-tailed). The only problem with the Awassi breed is related to their low yield of milk, meat, and births. The price of feed and the need of farmers for greater production to cover expenses have led to the Assaf sheep flooding the market.

"In contrast to the Awassi, the Assaf breed is domesticated and cannot be grazed in the heat, but the

yield is higher than for local sheep," Besharat said.

According to Wikipedia, Assaf sheep are the product of cross-breeding the Awassi and the German East Friesian.

Farmer Rifaat Maali from Ajja village south of Jenin raises a small flock of sheep in a barn close to his house. He rarely goes out with his flock to pastures because the sheep are of the Assaf and hybrid Mukhlaa breed.

Maali says: "The pastures are empty, not only because of the breed of sheep but also because people in rural areas have changed, especially the peasant women."

Since the early eighties, people have gradually given up sheep breeding and turned to work inside the Green Line. Previously, people were considered wealthy according to the size of the flock of sheep they owned and a shepherd who grazed his flock was considered a king.

It is true that breeds of sheep have changed, but Maali believes that other things have also changed: "What woman accepts to sweep the ground under the sheep or milk them nowadays? Who would carry sheep manure on her head and spread it in the sun to dry for use in her Taboun [primitive oven], if she even had one in the first place?"

Women's role in agriculture in rural areas has almost disappeared, especially with regard to livestock, and

this is also a reason for the disappearance of shepherds from the mountains.

Maali is one of a very small number of shepherds who can be counted on one hand in his village. All the shepherds are old and raise herds purely as a hobby, with the exception of one young man who started taking his flock to graze this spring.

"This job needs men; it is no joke to be a shepherd and breed sheep," said Mohammad Awwad, a young man who recently tried this profession while waiting to obtain a work permit inside the Green Line. He added: "I spent this spring in the pastures. It is definitely a good experience but I cannot rely on this for a livelihood because a flock of less than fifty in number will not build a future or establish a house for a young man like me." Awwad also said: "Fifty sheep needs four rams for mating. This requires special care and planning to have births in batches and maintain a continuous yield of milk. The psychological state of the ram does not help in the organization of births and it is no joke."

Although Palestinian cities under occupation are only large villages, villages have also become small cities where a shepherd can no longer be seen leading his herd of sheep to graze.

## Popular support: Symbolism or true engagement?

# These factors limited interaction with the prisoners' hunger strike

**Madeline Shaaban**

At a time when Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails are conducting an open hunger strike to demand their rights and freedom, and their opposition to administrative detention, the Palestinian public has conducted various activities and events in support. While prisoners raised the weapon of hunger strike in front of their prison wardens, the Palestinian public raised its voice in support of the prisoners and their confrontation of the occupier and the entire world.

### Salt and water

On the first days of the strike, the 'salt and water' challenge was the primary means of solidarity to empathize with prisoners drinking salt and water during their hunger strike.

Palestinian artist Noora Abu Madi participated in the 'salt and water' challenge via social network sites. She told al-Hal that she participated in this challenge, which was widespread on local and international social networks, as a symbolic expression of the prisoners' cause. She added that this challenge prompted people from all over the world to learn about this campaign.

Abu Madi added: "This is a good way of reminding other communities about the Palestinian cause, which has been forgotten by the Arab world for many reasons. It is very important to utilize the space provided by social networking sites to promote our cause, particularly in the difficult conditions our prisoners face in Israeli jails. Social networking has become one of the most important means of transferring news around the world." Abu Madi confirmed that #salt&water is a symbolic expression in support of prisoners. By sharing and spreading

this hashtag, prisoners are supported in conveying their news and making their voices heard from behind the bars of Israeli prisons.

### Confrontations and clashes

Visual artist and ex-detainee Alam Masad said: "The Palestinian prisoners' movement flies with two wings: support is necessary such as protests in front of Red Cross offices and marches to put pressure on a political level to initiate legal action. There must also be pressure in the form of clashes with occupation forces at checkpoints and other points of confrontation. Measures of support on one hand and pressure on the other contribute to reducing the length of the hunger strike."

Masad added: "Interaction with the prisoners' hunger strike was not as hoped due to the weak role of political and social institutions as organizing frameworks for mobilizing the public. These institutions have been struck by stage fright and have failed in their responsibilities to respond to challenges."

He confirmed that he supports interaction with the prisoners' cause and sought to intensify it. "The issue of prisoners is a matter of conscience rooted in the consciousness of our people. It is therefore important to maintain this interaction - even at a low level - to maintain the prisoners' cause and their suffering in the collective conscience of the people."

### Weak popular mobility

Ex-prisoner Ismat Mansour said that interaction by Palestinian society with the prisoners' hunger strike "does not, unfortunately, meet the challenge posed by the strike conducted in a context of an extremist Israeli government, a



Noura Abu Madi



Alam Masad



Ismat Mansour



Mohammad Daragmeh

deteriorating Palestinian situation, and difficult internal conditions endured by the prisoners' movement. The strike could have been a point of reconciliation and internal and political transformation in the Palestinian cause that faces marginalization and pressure for the imposition of a new fait accompli that undermines the possibility of a just solution. We realize that interaction by the public was unable to bring about this transformation due to the weakness of the people and parties, lack of support from the Palestinian Authority, and the neutralization of large sectors of the public."

Mansour added that public interaction and support for the strikers is no less important than the strike itself. The prisoners' steadfastness and public solidarity are decisive factors that the prisoners rely on to achieve their demands, deliver their message, and put pressure on the Israel government to surrender to their demands. He added that interaction was confined to inadequate forms of non-pressure that did not lead to a direct confrontation with the occupation, except on a few occasions after 20

days of hunger strike.

Mansour believes that limited interaction with the prisoners' issue can be attributed to political reasons and Israeli attempts to politicize the strike. The internal situation in the Fatah movement also weakened external support for the strike and affected the participation of large numbers of Fatah members in prison. Such factors were not present in previous strikes.

Mansour added: "Supportive actions have become periodic to interact with prisoners and publicize their cause. This is also an opportunity to help prisoners in improving their conditions, to revitalize their case and place it on the list of priorities. To disregard the prisoners in such times is a dangerous signal that will give Israel a pretext to refuse the release of prisoners when they have the impression that the prisoners' cause is marginal and of no interest to Palestinian society."

### Fatah hesitation

Journalist Mohammad Daragmeh said: "The interaction of the community with the prisoners'

hunger strike is limited, mainly in the form of emotional solidarity via social media. There are several reasons, primarily that there are no organized authorities such as Fatah to lead solidarity activities. Fatah's hesitation to lead key solidarity events was detrimental because Fatah did not give the prisoners the highest priority in the everyday agenda. Thus, Fatah lost a precious opportunity to enhance its role and lead the Palestinian people in their solidarity with the strikers. On the other hand, the Hamas movement did not add its weight in view of its dispute with Fatah."

Daragmeh added that there is a collective sense that solidarity in the form of sit-ins and protests does not have a significant effect because participants talk to each other rather than to the public. Palestinian society suffers from other severe and complicated problems alongside the prisoners' issue. These include settlements, the siege on the Gaza Strip, the political divide, unemployment, and the problem of electricity and water in the Gaza Strip.

## Financial associations: A lifeline for Gazans' financial problems

**Omar al-Louh**

Ahmad Ashour found peace of mind when he was lucky enough to participate with a group of colleagues in a financial association that enabled him to solve all the financial problems he had faced for six consecutive years. Living in a rented apartment consumed his monthly salary and left him unable to meet the needs of his family. His debts accumulated. Many people in the Gaza Strip have resorted to a financial association to assist them with their financial needs rather than take out bank loans with additional interest. Payments to these associations are in monthly installments that do not affect the needs of the family.

Financial associations are usually set up by a group of friends who pay a set sum of money monthly for a defined period of time. Each participant can withdraw the whole amount in turn until all of them have received the full sum.

### It saved me from deep water

Ashour related his story to al-Hal: "I suffered for six years to pay the \$250 rent of my residence; it was draining my salary. I was unable to meet the needs of my family as these increased daily with the high prices and low salaries. I work in

the Gaza government and have received half a salary for the last three years."

Ashour stopped talking for a bit and resumed: "I was in debt for \$1200 and did not know what to do until one of my colleagues at work suggested that I participate in a financial association set up by a group of friends. My turn came first and the money I obtained was \$4000. This enabled me to pay off my debts. I decided to leave the rented apartment and move to a small residence on the roof of my family's house. Thank God, my problems are resolved."

### A wonderful way

Jamal Shami reported that his participation in a financial association saved his son from daily pain from his gall bladder. He needed surgery but had to wait for eight months because of the backlog of operations at Shifa Hospital in Gaza.

He started to look for a solution and found a group of friends who participated in a financial association. He decided to join one of these groups and his turn was the second, enabling him to pay for the surgery his son needed and his son's recovery. He reported that this is a wonderful way to help people meet their needs. He pays a

monthly installment of \$50 and he does not feel that it affects his daily expenses.

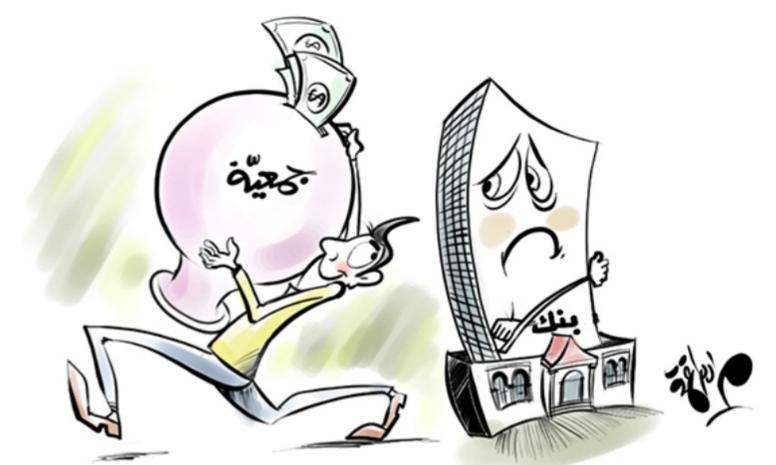
### Development of business projects

Haitham Helu had to participate with a group of businessmen in a big financial association to enhance his retail clothing business and to open new branches in different areas of the Gaza Strip. He told al-Hal: "The aggressive competition between clothing retailers prompted me to enhance my position in the market to maintain my current clients and win others."

He added: "This requires a lot of money, so I turned to a financial association set up by a number of businessmen where we each pay \$1000 a month for twenty months. I was the second in turn and this helped me to open a new branch and promote myself as a clothing retailer." Helu also said that he advised many merchants to join these associations "because it is better than bank loans and interest."

### Helping people

Olfat Abu Nahel has supervised several financial associations for many years and told al-Hal: "The main objective of financial associations is to help people to meet their basic needs



in the dire economic conditions in the Gaza Strip."

She added: "Although this makes me a lot of work, serving people gives me comfort. I feel good that I am preventing people from turning to bank loans. This serves people in a halal [permissible] way rather than haram [the forbidden]."

Relief for people

Economic expert Hamed Jadallah explained that successive economic crises in the Gaza Strip have led many people to resort to setting up financial associations to meet their basic needs.

Jadallah said: "This system has existed for a long time and can

be set up with a small amount of money, but associations have increased significantly due to the difficult conditions." He added: "The association collects large sums of money but the monthly payment does not affect the participant because it is not at the expense of the daily needs of his family."

Associations have contributed considerably to alleviating the suffering of people and enabling them to meet their basic needs for housing, marriage expenses or starting a small business. It is a much better system than bank loans because no interest or long time commitment to the bank is incurred.

## “The Adornment of Canaanite Women”...A new book by Osama Silwadi documenting Palestinian heritage and jewelry



Silwadi and the cover of his new book.

### ■ Mohammad Thawabteh

After a series of writing projects in which photographer Osama Silwadi has highlighted Palestinian heritage, traditional food, wild flowers, handicrafts, birds, and popular games, he has launched a new documentary book: *The Adornment of Canaanite Women*. Silwadi told al-Hal: “This is my tenth book and the fourth in a project documenting heritage. I was encouraged to work on this project because Palestinian heritage faces a real danger of being lost or forged. To preserve our heritage, it is our duty to document it, introduce it to the world, and educate new generations about the components of national identity, most importantly heritage.”

In his new book, Silwadi documented and collected jewelry and dresses. He was assisted by 26 female models whose names are listed in the first pages. His reference book was the *Atlas of Palestine Heritage* by Isaac Huroub. The new book includes a poem by Sultan Qaisi written especially for this book and entitled *The Chant of Chants for Canaanite Women*. He stated: “Very little assistance was received to publish this book, insufficient for such a large project, and there was very little support from local companies for the printing of the book.” He also said: “Looking for pieces of jewelry to take pictures of was very difficult and took about six years of searching in villages and at collectors.”

Silwadi added that he is currently working on a large research project on the history of food in Palestine since the start of the new stone age, when agriculture and civilization started, up to the present day. This research represents the story of civilization and will be a journey through ancient Palestinian history, including mythology, rituals, customs and traditions, agriculture, festivals and seasons, popular idioms, and methods of preparing food for thousands of years up to today. This book follows his previous books: *The Stones Talk* that reviews Palestinian architectural heritage; *The Land of Roses* documenting Palestinian flowers; *Al-Quds* which displays photographs from occupied Jerusalem; and *Al-Khityar* with

photographs of the late President Yasser Arafat. Silwadi also published two books entitled *Here We Are* and *Palestine... How are you?* on daily life in Palestine. He has also published *Queens of Silk* on Palestinian traditional dresses and *Ongoing Creativity and Benevolence* depicting images of the lives of Palestinian women. Silwadi is a professional photographer who worked with the Agence France Presse (AFP), Reuters, and local newspapers. He founded the Apollo Agency, the first Palestinian photography agency. Silwadi was wounded by a stray bullet that caused him disability, but this has not prevented him from proceeding with his journey of research to document Palestine.

## The Red Carpet Festival in Gaza...Human Rights' Cinema

### ■ Shirin Akkah

The launch of the 3rd Red Carpet Festival for human rights films coincided with day 26th of the dignity strike. The Festival events were launched from the Gaza Strip on the 12th of May. The 200 meter red carpet was rolled out at the Gaza sea port. The text of the Balfour Declaration was printed on the carpet for people to walk over, preceded by a drink of salt and water in solidarity with 1700 detainees on hunger strike. The festival's slogan of ‘We want to return’ is a clear message of the Palestinian right of return and continued rejection of the Balfour Declaration, which was issued 100 years ago. Prior to the films, the audience had fun listening to the Bani Adam band playing music and singing from the tops of huge, colored cement blocks close to a display screen. Following the singing, the film *Hunting Ghosts* by director Raed Andoni was projected on the big screen. It presented the stories and experiences of ex-prisoners faced with the meanness and oppression of Israeli jailers. Among the spectators was Um Mohammad al-Kahlout, a woman in her sixties who held a five-year-old boy and had a young girl by her side, both her grandchildren as she explained later. She said: “My nephew told me there is a film festival for the dignity strike and I came in solidarity with the striking prisoners.” This woman had a lot to tell about the prisoners’ strike: “I am the mother of ex-

detainee Mohammad Abu Sharkh. My brother is a prisoner as well.” She pointed to the boy who slept on her lap as darkness fell: “This is my grandchild and the son of a prisoner.” Suad and Razan Hamad were watching the film intently when we interrupted them. Suad said: “The film is interesting and strange. It is a combination of comedy and sadness.” She added, with one eye on the screen: “I will do my best to watch all the films shown in al-Mishal tomorrow.” Razan said: “The idea of having a cinema in Gaza is in itself a unique and wonderful thing.” She added: “I am 20 years old and never had such an opportunity before. Therefore I will accompany my sister during the coming days.” The film shows continued for five days in Gaza, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Nazareth, with 45 local and international films shown during the five days, the majority addressing human rights issues and the right of the Palestinian people to live in dignity. The first Red Carpet Festival was launched in 2015 from the rubble of thousands of destroyed houses in the Shujaiyah neighborhood, east of Gaza, immediately after the Israeli aggression. An official spokesman for the Festival, Saed Suweirki, said: “This is an incredible event that resulted from the aggression and destruction ranked 42nd internationally and 2nd after Jordan in the Arab world.” “We were able to represent and reflect the



The red carpet on the beach of Gaza.

siege by rolling out a red carpet without luggage or travel.” Suweirki referred to Israeli control over border crossings in the Gaza Strip and the port that prevents people from travel. He believes that addressing the prisoner issue through local and international films serves the Palestinian cause and addresses the world in a way that helps us understand each other regardless of race and ethnicity.” This Festival received international recognition although it was not attended by dignitaries, cinema stars or even the film directors or actors whose films were screened. The Israeli occupation prevented them from attending, as in previous years, but this was an opportunity to show films by young directors trapped in

the Gaza Strip. By linking the Festival to the Balfour Declaration, the organizers of this art event wanted to convey the message that “Israel, which claims that this is a land with no people for a people with no land, wanted to appropriate Palestinian cultural heritage to itself but the largest screen in the world refutes this narrative and shocked the world,” said Suweirki, the Festival spokesman. International praise for the Red Carpet Human Rights Festival appeared in leading newspapers. Ordinary Gazans strode on the carpet, which also had a symbolic image of a cart drawn by a donkey. Everyone was invited to enjoy the event.

## Hamas is preparing to oppose PA measures

□ **Mohammad Yunis**

The unprecedented measures adopted by the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip surprised and shocked Hamas, which found itself with no other option but confrontation.

A senior official in the Hamas movement said: "There was no room left for dialogue or negotiations because Mahmoud Abbas chose pressure and arm-twisting to achieve his goals. We had no choice but to reject and oppose [them] in every possible way because it is a matter of survival." He added: "Abbas asked that Hamas hand over governance of the Gaza Strip to the PA. If we did that, he would come here and demand that we hand over our weapons."

Hamas reacted rapidly by formulating a crisis committee that included political, economic, security and advocacy branches, and prepared a series of A, B and C plans to oppose the measures.

A senior official in Hamas said that this committee meets daily to examine official, popular, political, security and military options to face these unexpected and shocking measures.

Plan A is one of popular confrontation with the PA. The official said: "People are affected by these measures and they know that any decline in electricity services or in medicines is caused by the PA. Therefore we will tell them that Abbas is the one to be addressed, not us, so your protests must be directed towards him."

The Hamas governing body that rules the Gaza Strip and the Hamas supreme economic authority prepared a number of short and medium term plans in response to these measures. These plans included looking for alternative sources of local income.

A senior official in Hamas revealed that the plans include obligating operating companies and banks in the Gaza Strip to pay taxes. Those local companies and banks had refrained from paying taxes to Hamas for fear of international sanctions on charges of 'financing terrorism'. He added: "We understand that this is sensitive for companies and banks so we ask them to purchase services such as electricity and medicines instead of paying in cash."

Among the largest companies targeted in the Gaza Strip are telecommunications: Jawal and al-Watanya Mobile, and Bank of Palestine.

On a political level, Hamas embarked on dialogue with other political factions, especially the Islamic Jihad Movement, to establish a political front to oppose these measures.

The Palestinian Authority asked Israel to stop deductions for electricity consumed by the Gaza Strip from the clearing bill at a cost of NIS 40 thousand monthly.

An official in Hamas said that the governing body would be obliged to pay the price of electricity directly to the Israelis if they had to do so.

The PA-commissioned Minister of Health, Dr. Jawad Awwad, is preparing a plan to reduce health sector expenditures allocated to the Gaza Strip. PA sources said that the plan is based on rationing external medical transfers to the bare minimum possible and a substantial decrease in medicines. He said the Ministry will only send government hospitals medicines for surgical operations.

Officials said that the PA is considering other unprecedented steps such as reducing spending on the educational sector, starting in the new school year. Hamas is counting on intervention by regional parties to force President Abbas to retract his measures. For example, Israel and Egypt expressed satisfaction with the measures undertaken by Hamas to prevent operations and activities by Salafist groups across the borders.

Three months ago, Hamas arrested 100 members of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) who launched missiles against Israel and threatened Egyptian security.

In recent months, Hamas has taken a number of security measures on the borders with Egypt to prevent the infiltration of Salafists through tunnels. These measures came after a series of meetings held between Egyptian officials and Hamas officials.

## Longing for the world

A friend of mine is in jail. A friend of mine also has her father and brother there. My husband languishes in solitary confinement and has never smiled in years. Next to him, also in solitary, sits my sister, of whom I was always jealous. In the crypt of the jail my people are enduring, singing five times a day without Athan [call for prayer]: songs about victory, about patriotism and love for family, songs about happiness, greenery, and beautiful faces.

The warden thought they would cry and break upon their initial longing for the world. But although they longed for us, they expressed their longing for life in their own way that only they know, with much determination and patience, and by clinging to the hands of their absent loved ones.

They are absent from us but still present within us, closer than hunger and more vital than the pulse.

## Freedom for prisoners of freedom on hunger strike since 17/4/2017

#Strike\_dignity



Poster by Burhan Karkoutly

Burhan Karkoutly is a visual artist born in Damascus in 1932. He joined the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1952. After graduating, he travelled to Spain, Morocco, Mexico and Venezuela, settling in Germany where he died in 2003. Many of his works represent the Palestinian struggle and global freedom movements.

## Eruption or separation: Where is the Gaza Strip headed?

### Nader Safadi

With suspense and anxiety, the eyes of Palestinians, especially those in the Gaza Strip, are directed to the vehicle of political conflict between Fatah and Hamas as it travels to the unknown, seeking its fate and ultimate destination amid heightened rivalry on each side.

When the Hamas movement announced the formation of a 'governing body' to rule the Gaza Strip, it did not expect the reaction of President Mahmoud Abbas, who declared that he would take 'decisive steps against Gaza'. Hamas saw this merely as a political dispute, but it shortly turned into procedures on the ground, starting with deductions in salaries.

At the same time, the corpse of reconciliation was revived in an attempt to reach an agreement with the Hamas movement to retract its move to rule the Gaza Strip.

The last lifeline

On the 18th of April last year, a delegation from the Fatah movement sent a letter that included the President's vision for ending the political division and resolving the crisis in the Gaza Strip. The letter was delivered during a meeting in Gaza city after unsuccessful attempts by a five-member delegation to access the Gaza Strip for that purpose.

Hamas promised to respond rapidly but an exchange of accusations rapidly developed between the two movements.

The vision of President Abbas included addressing political and economic conditions in the Gaza Strip, dissolving the 'governing body' formed by Hamas to rule over the Gaza Strip, the return of Palestinian Authority employees to work, and handing over border crossings and ministries to enable the unity government to carry out its tasks in the Gaza Strip. A member of the Fatah Central Committee, Azzam al-Ahmad, confirmed that "his movement and the PA will not allow the status quo to remain under Hamas control like a hostage in their hands".



Azzam al-Ahmad



Jamal Mheisen



Mahmoud al-Zahar



Talal Abu Tharifeh



Ibrahim al-Madhoun

In an interview with al-Hal, al-Ahmed stated: "Throughout past years Fatah demonstrated flexibility to achieve internal reconciliation and national unity, but Hamas always rejected all positive moves and set unreasonable conditions."

Al-Ahmad clarified: "Reconciliation remains impossible due to Hamas orders and intransigence in refusing to implement the terms agreed upon during meetings held locally and abroad, and despite all mediation, so a decisive decision is now necessary."

A member of the Fatah Central Committee also pointed out that President Abbas' latest speech about the Gaza Strip and the decisive steps he took are a result of the failure of all attempts to persuade Hamas to return the Gaza Strip to Palestinian legitimacy, therefore Hamas must determine its fate.

He called upon Hamas to interact positively with reconciliation efforts and implement steps to return the Gaza Strip to Palestinian legitimacy, and to retract its decision to form 'a governing body'.

Al-Ahmad's statements were endorsed by Fatah Central Committee member Jamal Mheisen who confirmed to al-Hal that the Fatah delegation that met with the Hamas leadership in Gaza had officially informed Hamas of the need to hand over the Gaza Strip entirely or assume responsibility for it. Fatah Central Committee member Hussein al-Sheikh said: "We have a resolution to end the division in accordance with signed

agreements with Hamas, or Hamas should assume its responsibilities as a rebel force against legitimate Palestinian rule in the Gaza Strip." He added: "We will end the division this year no matter what the cost." He stressed that Hamas has the opportunity to respond in a week and explained that the Fatah delegation had addressed Hamas by letter with the desire to reach an agreement under clear conditions. Will Hamas seize the opportunity?

Al-Hal interviewed the Hamas leader and political bureau member Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahar who confirmed that his movement is fully ready to revive and reactivate the reconciliation process with Fatah, but on the basis of practical solutions to the current crisis.

Al-Zahar accused Fatah of 'evasiveness', saying that it does not want reconciliation and is only seeking to inflame the situation in the Gaza Strip and exacerbate the blockade on the population. He added: "We are absolutely ready for reconciliation with Fatah and will exert every effort, but we need Fatah to act in good faith in taking steps that will determine the fate of the Gaza Strip in the coming period."

However, al-Zahar's statements were not echoed by Hamas official Hammad al-Raqab, who stated that the movement will not sit with the Fatah delegation or hold any bilateral meetings in Gaza. He added that Hamas will not retreat with regard to 'the formation of a governing body'. This

adds to the ambiguity of the situation and poses threats that may lead to the failure of the visit by the delegation, putting the Gaza Strip on the verge of eruption.

A member of the political bureau of the Democratic Front, Talal Abu Tharifeh, warned of the consequences of stopping the visit of the Fatah delegation to Gaza. He emphasized in an exclusive statement to al-Hal that the Gaza Strip will be pushed towards separation or eruption in the event of no agreement being reached between the Fatah and Hamas movements. He called upon Fatah to desist in its decision to deduct the salaries of PA employees in the Gaza Strip, and called upon Hamas to dissolve the governing body formed to rule the Gaza Strip to prevent greater peril and the splitting of the homeland.

Political analyst and writer Ibrahim al-Madhoun believes that Hamas will not move to dismantle the governing body that it formed for many reasons, including that Hamas would find such a step risky as it could encourage the implementation of further unjust measures by the PA in Ramallah against the Gaza Strip.

Al-Madhoun believes that the governing body will continue to administer government institutions in the Gaza Strip. In his description: "The unity government in Gaza is evading assuming responsibilities and duties and will not make other moves unless the unity government is committed to all issues concerning the Gaza Strip."

## Three sons did not return home

### Jumana Deesy\*

"My sons did not like living in Jordan and always wanted to return to Palestine, although I tried repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, to persuade them to stay there. They actually returned and lived here, but three of them were martyred." This is how Fatima al-Kasbah, or 'Um Thaer al-Khansa' [a 7th century Arabic poet whose brothers were killed in battles] as she is called by people in Qalandia refugee camp, talks about her sons as she cries and repeats to everyone how she urged her sons Thaer, Tamer, Yasser, Samer and Mohammad to stay in Jordan, but fate was stronger.

On the 22 of Ramadan 2001, while Um Thaer was preparing breakfast as normal, the sounds of bullets broke the silence as Israeli occupation forces broke into the camp and confrontations started. Her fears for her children, who were not at home, overcame her. She picked up the phone to call them and allay her anxious heart but the unexpected response was "cannot be reached".

Um Thaer dashed into the alleys of the camp; for a whole hour she went in circles looking for news to reassure her about her children. Then some relatives came with tears in their eyes, with drawn faces and trembling lips, to tell her that "Yasser was shot in the head".

A few days later, he was pronounced dead

of his wounds, leaving his mother with the agony of the loss of a son whose dreams had filled the world.

Revenge for Yasser

In a disastrous event just 40 days after the martyrdom of Yasser, the family received the news of the martyrdom of a second son. That was on the 25th of January 2002, about a year after the second Intifada had started. At that time, events were intensifying and Israel had imposed a blockade on all cities in the West Bank, besieging the headquarters of the late President Yasser Arafat and demolishing al-Muqataa (the President's building).

It was a cold January morning and Samer went out at noon on the pretext of helping a friend who wanted to move to a new house; he did not come back. At four, his uncle came to ask about him and said that the media had circulated news about Samer al-Kasbeh injured by a bullet to the head during confrontations around al-Muqataa in Ramallah.

Um Thaer said that she initially refused to accept the news, adding in an agonized voice: "They deprived me of my sons. If I were a mountain, it would collapse".

Thirteen years after parting with her two martyred sons Yasser and Samer, she was raising her three other sons, Thaer, Tamer and Mohammad, the youngest who was born

on 71998-6- and was then seventeen. "He was a talkative boy but so close to my heart," al-Kahnsa' said of her youngest son.

The mother realized that her youngest was eager to face the Israeli occupation forces and tried to keep him away from these confrontations saying "We have had enough". On the 5th of May, 2015, she decided to go to Saudi Arabia for Umrah (minor pilgrimage). Mohammad liked the place and was impressed with the trip, telling his mother: "I hope the person responsible for the group will forget about me and leave me here".

The last Suhour [pre-dawn meal in Ramadan] One month later during Ramadan, Mohammad spent his days fasting and praying in the mosque. On the third week of Ramadan he joined his family for the Suhour meal before he went to pray in the mosque with his father. Abu Thaer returned home, but not Mohammad.

Um Thaer heard the bullets that day and checked the surroundings of the house from her windows, seeing only darkness. At six, some women dressed in black, and with despair and sadness on their faces, visited her with the news. Instinctively, she called out "Where is Hamoudeh? Where is Hamoudeh?" Her screams resonated in the alleys of the camp.



A poster of the mother and her three martyred sons.

Her son Tamer came and, looking at the ground, said: "Yamma, Hamoudeh is slightly injured in the leg". A few minutes later, her sister came with the news "Hamoudeh has been martyred". Um Thaer blacked out, facing a life of agony and relentless sorrow. The three brothers were killed on different occasions but were united in the grave as martyrs. The warm earth of the homeland that they sacrificed their lives for embraces them together.

\* Jumana Deesy is a student at the Media Department of Birzeit University.

## Professional spokespersons face the media on behalf of security institutions



Loay Irzeikat



Nael al-Azza



Luay Bani Odeh



Mohammad Rujoub



Ehab Jariri



Anan Naser



Emad Asfar

### Bayan Baydoun

Official media spokespersons for security institutions are popular with local journalists as they are easily reached to comment on events or current affairs and are competent in the use of modern social media networking.

Al-Hal met with the spokespersons of security institutions to talk about their work and also asked journalists for their opinion of these professional voices.

### An eloquent speaker

Police spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Loay Irzeikat said that communications had been problematic in the past due to reluctance to publicize news and policies. There was also a lack of awareness of the important role of the media, although this was now recognized by the new heads of security agencies and they were seeking to change stereotypical images of these agencies. Irzeikat said: "We have succeeded in making changes and marketing but cannot deny that there are occasional failures or errors by individuals and we always acknowledge errors committed."

Civil defense official spokesman Captain Nael al-Azza said that the key requirements for an official agency spokesperson are to be fully aware of all issues, activities, and the legal framework related to civil defense;

to be well informed of all departments and the nature and details of their work; to be eloquent and diplomatic in speaking and handling issues; and to have the ability to articulate and convey concepts in a simple way to the public.

### Professional logic

Customs police official spokesman Major Luay Bani Odeh believes that an agency does not have the right to exclude any media outlet or to withhold information. He believes that no information should be withheld from journalists and emphasized the right of the journalist to investigate any information supplied through research or asking questions, versus the right of the spokesperson to provide the correct answer and to respond to enquiries as a matter of 'professional principle'.

Lieutenant Colonel Loay Irzeikat pointed out that all information is made available, with the exception of some information that may affect ongoing criminal investigations, the prosecution of offenders, or that may impact on the safety of families and the social fabric. He noted that 90% of journalists understand these reasons. He added: "Even opposition media or media outlets that condemn the police apparatus are dealt with professionally. We never abstain from meetings because there is

no conflict of objectives between us and journalists: they seek the truth and we seek to provide security and safety. However, a journalist is always looking for a scoop."

### In the push of a button!

Program presenter at Ajjal Radio Network (ARN), Mohammad Rujoub, commented about his experience with official spokespersons: "We as journalists are exposed to a paradox that deserves to be aired in order to rectify matters. This is reflected in the fact that security agencies are more open to the media than civil authorities. From my experience as a journalist, I can obtain information from the police or security apparatus at the push of a button, while there is a real crisis in reaching several civil government institutions that are supposed to be more open."

Director General and program presenter at 24 FM Radio, Ehab Jariri, confirmed that cooperation takes place between spokespersons from security institutions and the media, and he believes they are capable of responding to questions from journalists and participating in talk shows. Program director and chief editor at al-Najah Radio in Nablus, Anan Naser, believes there has been noticeable progress in the performance of security institution spokespersons, especially after

the training of competent teams in this regard. Naser said: "If we speak about the police, there has been significant progress in communicating with the media and the same applies to the civil defense; the preventive security agency and customs police have taken similar steps in the right direction recently."

Monitoring & evaluation coordinator at the Media Development Center of Birzeit University, Emad Asfar, confirmed that the Center had provided training courses to members of the security apparatus on how to deal with the media. He said there is no alternative to training for any person who works in this field, regardless of his professionalism, because the media is constantly evolving. He pointed out that professional spokespeople have become scarce because it is a post that does not require knowledge alone but also skill, talent, charisma, language abilities, and a good reputation. Asfar did not deny that there have been some failures attributed to the difficult and controversial nature of the issues they sometimes deal with and the high hopes of the public with regard to security institutions. Most prominent of these failures is the concealment or delay in publishing information and using an emotional, lecturing tone.

## The Hamas political document: A strategic shift or tactical step?

### Sayed Ismail

Hamas issued a political document recently in an attempt to respond to global political changes that have occurred since the foundation of Hamas.

This document created much controversy when some of its items were leaked. Al-Hal wrote this report based on these leaks, which reflect many shifts, including overt approval by Hamas for the establishment of a state on the territories occupied in 1967. The movement had previously opposed this stance until events prompted its leaders to change their policy. Upon its release, the political document prompted many questions about whether its contents reflect fundamental changes in the strategies and objectives of the movement or are only a tactical step.

### Stable objectives

Writer and political analyst Mustapha Sawaf told al-Hal that the document has nothing new in it for the Hamas movement. He pointed out that this was not a new idea because Hamas had started drafting the document two years ago to clarify ongoing changes in policy, whereas strategies and objectives had remained stable.

Some observers have pointed out contradictions between the Hamas Charter and the new document but Sawaf believes that "there are no such contradictions". He stated that being a Palestinian national movement does not negate the fact that Hamas has an Islamic dimension. According to Sawaf,

Hamas always stressed that "Palestine as a whole is for the Palestinian people". Over the years, Hamas saw all the conferences, meetings and resulting understandings that took place as intended to "dissolve the Palestinian cause". The movement's position now is "to establish a Palestinian state on any inch of the Palestinian territories" without compromising the remainder.

### Directed to western public opinion

According to a specialist in local political affairs, Mustapha Ibrahim: "The contents of the new political document are not directed to Palestinian public opinion but to western and regional public opinion; the movement has sought to open communications with various international parties for years to gain legitimacy and recognition". He added: "Significant changes undergone by the Hamas movement are leading to its engagement in the political process. Taking control of the Gaza Strip following the 2007 political divide and winning a large base there encouraged the movement to adopt positions that may be called 'tactical' in light of the current stage of the movement's evolution."

One of the main goals of Hamas currently, according to Ibrahim, is to win international recognition and achieve greater 'internationally recognized penetration' in the Palestinian political scene through increased involvement in the political process and joining the PLO. This is not possible without a change of discourse and without presenting



Naji Sharab



Mustapha Ibrahim



Mustapha Sawaf

Hamas to the international community in a more acceptable manner. Thus, the provisions of the new document emphasize points of no relevance to the Palestinian public opinion such as explaining confusion between Judaism and Zionism or clarifying that the Hamas movement is basically 'a Palestinian national movement'.

### They will demand more concessions!

Political science professor at al-Azhar University in the Gaza Strip, Dr. Naji Sharab, believes that the new document is simply "a level of response to challenges that the movement faces currently, while seeking to gain more regional and international legitimacy, and passing different political messages to more than one party" in its quest to open channels of communication and dialogue with western countries in

particular.

On a different note, Sharab believes that this document "will not achieve any rapprochement with other Palestinian views" such as the Fatah movement. Political programs still diverge totally since the Fatah movement as represented by President Mahmoud Abbas remains committed to peaceful resistance alone and recognition of the Israeli occupation. This means that the gap between the two sides is still large.

Sharab concluded: "This document will not extract Hamas from its political crisis and will not open the door to western recognition as western countries will not be satisfied with mere tactical positions simply declared in the Hamas document. They will demand Hamas acceptance of the Quartet conditions, primarily recognition of the State of Israel and renouncing armed struggle."

# Photojournalism: From ethics to transgressions

## Enas Baker

The fact that it is easy to own a camera and equipment today, and Palestine is an arena for events, means that blunders committed by photojournalists have become more prevalent and violate the ethics of the profession. Al-Hal interviewed a number of reporters to identify these errors and how to address them.

### Badarneh: Intervention is not allowed

Alaa Badarneh, a photographer with the European Press Photo Agency EPA, said that the primary error that a photojournalist commits must be distinguished from errors in content or in the elements of a photo. He explained that 'staging' in photojournalism is a forbidden red line recognized worldwide; it means excessive intervention by the photographer in formulating the scene from A to Z.

Badarneh added that the 'set up', which means intervention in the manufacturing of a photograph as in asking the person being photographed to perform a non-spontaneous action such as throwing stones when there is no need, is a violation that may cost the journalist his job and career. There are exceptions in cases involving picture stories where some limited intervention relevant to aesthetic or technical matters is required in the scene. The danger lies in intervention that attempts to influence or direct peoples' feelings.

Badarneh clarified that every journalist should observe the laws and rules of the

media agency he works for as laid down in the institution's style guide. The journalist must read these instructions and follow the agency's policy regarding the ethics of photography and what is allowed or forbidden.

### Nobani: Photoshop is forbidden

A photographer at the Nablus office of the WAFA agency, Ayman Nobani, believes that the job of a photojournalist in Palestine is based on conveying the truth through pictures fully and without bias. The trust of viewers is the most important link between the reporter and the public because they can differentiate between real or fake pictures.

Nobani said: "Exaggerated Photoshopping or alterations after taking a photo is a violation because it is contrary to the ethics of the profession and the reporter must be held accountable." He added that the use of Photoshop must be limited to minor amendments to colors. There are even agencies that reject any changes other than trimming the pictures.

Al-Rimawi: A crisis in the popular press  
Journalist Isam al-Rimawi of al-Hayat al-Jadidah newspaper stressed that photographers must be considerate and not show the faces of those who participate in confrontations against the Israeli occupation to avoid these people being persecuted and arrested due to the journalist. He added that the parents of martyrs sometimes ask for photography to be halted during funerals; a journalist must



Iyad Jadallah



Isam al-Rimawi



Isam al-Rimawi



Alaa Badarneh

respect the sensitivity and privacy of the moment and step back. In public places, the journalist must also respect the wish of those who do not want to be photographed. Al-Rimawi added that social networking had had a considerable impact on the press in the emergence of a people's press that does not distinguish between what should or should not be published. This has created chaos in the posting of photos when a member of the public is unaware of the ethics of publishing pictures that show victims soaked in blood with dismembered limbs. Such pictures are posted to collect more likes, but this is disastrous for the press. Al-Rimawi stressed that the Journalists' Syndicate must play an active role in eradicating these violations. The judiciary also has oversight over social media sites and publishers themselves must practice self-regulation.

Jadallah: Taking the right photo angle  
Photography and visual director at the Public Relations Department of Birzeit University, Iyad Jadallah, said that one

of the errors committed by a journalist during photography is shooting from an angle which may alter the implication of the picture, reversing what it actually depicted. For example, portraying young Palestinians in a bad light that does not reflect the reality of the event in confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli occupation forces due to the angle of the photograph or a picture that reflects an absence of objectivity on the part of the photographer.

### Copyright theft

Jadallah stated that a photographer taking a picture captured by another photographer and attributing it to themselves is a violation of the ethics of the profession and the reporter should be punished by losing their job in the media agency they work for. He added that Reuters had installed a program in the camera card capable of showing all the pictures captured by the photographer and could ask about any missing pictures in order to avoid potential misconduct.

## What a Taralali Taralali Taralali love!

### Qamar al-Sharif

It was a surprise in every way: The song 'What a Taralali (crazy) love' achieved half a million hits on YouTube and similar numbers listened, liked, and shared. The song was released by the seven-member al-Ins wal-Jam (people and jam) music band. Each member has a different style of music but together they play a beautiful rainbow of Eastern music, jazz, and blues. The singer of 'What a Taralali love', Mohammad Mustapha, said: "At first glance, al-Ins wal-Jam may suggest al-Ins wal-jan (humans and the supernatural) or may suggest harmony in music. In fact, the intrinsic meaning of the word 'jam' is musical brainstorming; by al-Ins we meant to say that we are one in our great consonance and harmony. Our aim of integration and fusion resulted in the song 'What a Taralali love' whose melody and words are appreciated by people, planting joy, love and happiness in their souls. These are aspects we seek to disseminate."

### Not a 'project'

Music composer Ibrahim Najm described the song as a free, creative production rather than the commercial, financed and complicated project that people believe it to be. He said: "Our real passion is to play music. We always talk with musician friends about the need to get together and play music that is not part of a musical project. We call them for dialogue and sustained and prolonged music playing.

Our combined work on a common musical idea rather than on a soloist resulted in the Taralali song and the sweet success that we have appreciated; we loved the public's spontaneous joy about the song."

He added: "We were enthusiastic about the idea of the song. I started with my friend Joseph Duqmaq, then Hussein Abu Rub and artist Mira Abu Hilal joined. Then Mahmoud Karazon, Amir Malhis and singer Mohammad Mustapha followed to form the al-Ins wal-Jam family and achieve our aspirations in producing the Taralali song." Najm continued: "In my constant browsing of poetry, I came upon the words of the song written by poet Samer al-Salihi and posted on his Facebook page. I contacted him immediately and we started experimenting with our music, after adding another section to the song. During our work, we realized that the song brings a flavor of joy and pleasure with its simple but incomparable character. With our passion and in an initial challenge to ourselves, we released the song to the public on YouTube. All who heard it loved it from the first time, especially as it goes beyond the traditional model of national songs that deal with struggle and martyrdom."

### Written in five minutes

Poet Samer al-Salihi told al-Hal how the poem was written: "I have a sarcastic attitude to everything. It is a mixture of joy and sorrow at the same time. With such an



Samer al-Salihi



Ibrahim Najm



Mohammad Mustapha

odd satirical outlook, I have no idea how the words of the Taralali song came to me and expressed the beauty of the song in slang. We have heard this vocabulary in Egyptian and Lebanese dialects, but the problem is that Palestine lacks songs that rely on the vernacular."

Al-Salihi stated: "It took me five minutes to write the song while I was sitting in a car. Like any other publication, I posted it on Facebook and asked: 'Who would like to compose the melody?' Ibrahim Najm contacted me to ask for an additional section, which took another two weeks to write. I did not write the words for a specific band or composer but Ibrahim Najm knows what people want. In fact, they are eager for this type of song, especially in Palestinian dialect and different from the patriotic song model. Thus, I do not find it strange that people are interested in it."

Al-Salihi concluded: "Palestinian pride is

that of one who bears losses, recovers, and does not break down; a Palestinian is not by nature someone who cries and grieves deeply for the departure of a loved one. This is the opposite of other emotional songs where the lover cries in agony if he is abandoned by his lover. In this song, the most the lover demands is that his loved one should miss him but he does not exhibit any sign of breakdown or loss: this makes the song both sentimental and non-sentimental at the same time. In a nutshell, the writer of the song sees this love as almost crazy; a Palestinian gives his pride priority, regardless whether a beloved returns or not. He only demands to be missed and wishes that he had been left alone without getting into this situation, yet views his loss as an amusing game in a overall crazy world."

\* Qamar al-Sharif is a student at the Media Department of Birzeit University.



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