

# Political lessons from Lion's Gate

## ■ Mohammad Younis

Jerusalemites do not remember any cleric being carried on someone's shoulders since the times of Haj Amin al-Husseini in the 1930s until Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, head of the Supreme Islamic Council, was carried on the shoulders of the people in Jerusalem during the current popular uprising.

During this popular uprising, religious figures turned into political and national leaders. According to many people in Jerusalem, this is a result of lack of confidence in the political leadership.

Political leadership was absent during the first week of events in Jerusalem, opening the door for the emergence of new national leaders from the field. They were led by the religious authorities that people entrusted with their demands for the removal of all equipment, devices and obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation on the gates into the al-Aqsa Mosque after an operation that took place at one of the gates in July.

The political leadership hurried to keep up with the events in Jerusalem. President Abbas returned home and took a series of decisions to support Jerusalemites and their uprising. Some of these were unprecedented such as the freezing of communications with the Israelis.

The Jerusalem popular uprising was termed 'the prayer Intifada' and 'the second Intifada of Jerusalem'. It was characterized by unprecedented popular support rarely seen in Palestinian history in which people of all ages, classes and beliefs participated. Fakhri Abu Diab, one of the people defending al-Aqsa, said: "This uprising is one of the rare times that you find all family members in one national event. In previous events, if your son was not at home you would rush out to look for him, but in this uprising you don't need to search for anyone as they are all here, your wife and sons all by your side".

The "prayer Intifada" in Jerusalem may have a long term impact on Palestinian politics and Israeli policies towards Palestinians.

On the one hand, this uprising demonstrated that what cannot

be achieved by force and violence can be achieved by peaceful and widespread popular resistance that neutralizes the deadly Israeli weapons and creates a popular local, regional and international momentum that the Israeli occupation has no power to overcome.

"We came here to demand our right to pray. No force in the world can deter a person from praying at his shrine", said a thirty-year-old cardiologist from Shufat. "I come here every evening and will not leave until al-Aqsa is opened as it was".

The huge movement by the people in Jerusalem is attributed to their fear for the fate of their city in the face of the systematic Judaization that has affected huge swathes of land and neighborhoods.

Haj Khalil Abu Arafah (64 years of age) said: "The electronic doors sparked the uprising but they are not the whole story because this was preceded by many incidents".

Israelis do not conceal their ongoing attempts to lay their hands on the al-Aqsa Mosque, or to divide and even demolish it to reestablish a Temple on the site, which is the most sacred Jewish site in Jerusalem.

Israeli authorities have sought to control the al-Aqsa Mosque since the start of the Israeli occupation in 1967 when the Israelis took the keys for Dung Gate, one of the gates to the Mosque, and started to bring in small groups of Jews under the supervision of the Islamic Waqf during the tourism season.

After the outbreak of the second Intifada, the Israeli authorities abandoned Waqf supervision of foreign tourism and started bringing in Jewish groups numbered in hundreds. At a later stage, they also allowed the entry of Jewish clerics, politicians and organizations from "Temple" groups seeking the reconstruction of the Temple on the 144 dunums of land in al-Aqsa Mosque.

"Al-Aqsa is home and when your home is lost, you have lost everything", said the Jerusalemite doctor accompanied by his friend Mohammad Abu Zneid, an engineer from Shufat, attending sunset prayers at Lion's Gate and waiting for the evening prayer. He added: "Look around. These

are not street children. They are doctors, engineers, lawyers, university professors, women and school students. Here stand the people of Jerusalem".

Lion's Gate turned into the Palestinian liberation square during "the prayer Intifada" and

Jerusalemites gathered daily for prayers, and political and social relationships.

Every Jerusalemite was keen to engage directly in the "prayer Intifada". Women cooked meals and businessmen donated food, water, juices and prayer rugs for

worshippers who were performing the five daily prayers on the hot asphalt outside the Mosque.

This Intifada in Jerusalem received considerable support from Palestinians in the 1948 territories who hold Israeli IDs that enable them to enter

## The Chrysalis

Let us start by defining a chrysalis: This is the hard case around the cocoon, which is a larva that transforms from a caterpillar to a cocoon in a chrysalis and leaves as a butterfly at the right time. It does not fly away immediately but waits for its wings to dry before flying high.

In its path to transformation, the cocoon beats its wings inside the chrysalis to strengthen them and allow them to break open the surrounding casing to face the world. If the chrysalis is broken from the outside, the cocoon dies immediately and turns into a rotten liquid.

God is capable of creating a butterfly from scratch, but this sequential process has great wisdom, namely that everything has its value and beauty; the solutions that nurture life are born with us and are within us, but we need to perceive them and act.

Take care of your chrysalis so that you are a survivor.



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.

## The Hamas-Dahlan understandings: Mutual benefit or for the region's benefit? Will it end divisions or aggravate them?



Hidaya Sham'oun



Nujoud Al-Qasem



Riham Odeh



Rola Sarhan

### Khuloud al-Helu

Ten years after the political division, Gaza Strip governorates are in a critical economic and political situation. Hamas, which governs these governorates by force, finds itself obliged to engage in difficult political steps. The most recent of these was reaching an understanding with the dismissed Fatah leader Mohammad Dahlan, with whom Hamas fought for power in the Gaza Strip in 2007 in what the PLO termed a coup and Hamas termed the cleansing of the Gaza Strip from the 'Dahlan influence' of that time. Hamas says that the understanding with MP Dahlan achieves both community reconciliation and rescues Hamas from a difficult situation in its management of the Gaza Strip. The understanding benefits not only Hamas but also Dahlan, who will make a strong return to the political arena with operational authority if the understanding is reached. Egypt will also benefit from the understanding, which will resolve the border problems and prevent the infiltration of extremists across the Sinai to the Gaza Strip thanks to cooperation between Hamas and Egyptian security.

In this report, al-Hal interviews female political analysts about the understanding, its realization, and whether the understanding could be a substitute for national reconciliation? To what extent will the understanding create cracks or solidarity inside Hamas or Fatah? And what is the future of an understanding driven by political interests rather than emerging from the womb of national unity developed by Palestinians through history?

### Will the understanding prevent national reconciliation?

Political analyst Riham Odeh said: "Hamas-Fatah understandings cannot be seen as a replacement for national reconciliation that includes all Palestinian parties, not reconciliation between political figures and just one Palestinian faction. This may be called a three-fold deal: a security deal with Egypt in securing the borders, a political deal with Dahlan that guarantees his strong return to the political arena, and a humanitarian step as a temporary truce for the people of the Gaza Strip who suffer from poor living conditions".

Journalist Nujoud al-Qasem believes that "The understanding followed the failure of efforts at reconciliation exerted during the years of the division. According to statements that followed the declaration of the understanding, the main objective is to achieve community reconciliation and save the Gaza Strip from the horrors of the siege. If the understanding goes beyond the boundaries of humanitarianism, it will be a substitute for reconciliation because the end of the political division and achievement of reconciliation will have taken place within a holistic national framework".

Journalist Hidaya Sham'oun said: "The issue is one of readjustment of relationships between Palestinian parties in an attempt by each party to gain more supporters and achieve common interests. These understandings are becoming clearer through visits, announcements and statements by both parties that indicate the existence of dialogue. In my opinion, this will never be a substitute for Palestinian national reconciliation which necessitates the presence of all Palestinian parties".

Editor-in-chief of al-Hadath newspaper Rola Sarhan said:

"The understanding between the two parties is based on common political interests. For Dahlan, the understanding provides him with a chance to return to the Palestinian political arena via the gateway of the Gaza Strip and not from abroad. For Hamas, Dahlan represents an emergency exit in light of the prevailing regional situation and Hamas's urgent need for a rapprochement with Egypt to dismantle the siege on the Gaza Strip".

### The impact of the understanding on Hamas' internal status

The understanding with Dahlan constitutes a critical stage for Hamas, which has long justified seizing authority in the Gaza Strip by the need to get rid of what they termed ten years ago the 'Dahlan regime'. Thus we posed the following question to the journalists and writers interviewed for this report: How does this understanding affect the Hamas movement and its political position in the forthcoming stages of implementation?

Odeh answered: "The understanding will have a positive impact on Hamas to rescue them from rising popular pressure and demands for urgent solutions to existing problems in the Gaza Strip. It will also repair the troubled relationship with Egypt's Sisi government. Therefore, one of the most important consequences is that of providing Hamas with a golden opportunity to build a strong relationship with Egypt and the Gulf countries, thereby paving the road to restore Arab support".

Al-Qasem said: "There may be some limited results internally on the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and the subsequent humanitarian situation, in addition to presenting Dahlan as a savior that helps Hamas to justify and market the understanding within the movement. Here, Hamas sounds more flexible than previously in line with its new charter".

Sarhan stated: "If the understanding succeeds, it will be widely welcomed by Gazans because the disastrous situation that exists means that any improvement or change is for the better, no matter how small, and is acceptable by any party".

Sham'oun does not believe that the understanding will lead to any new developments. She said: "I do not believe that we will witness any breakthrough as a result of this understanding because the relationship between Hamas and Dahlan is fundamentally complicated. Apparent acceptance does not mean a real change in political positions but is a tactical step taken by Hamas due to the lack of options following the blockade on Qatar and the series of decisions taken by President Abu Mazen to embarrass Hamas and force them to abandon rule via the administrative committee in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, this is not a serious change but is the result of common interests and an attempt to avoid a bottleneck".

### How will the President, the government and the PLO respond?

The Hamas-Dahlan understanding will not pass unnoticed by the PLO, especially as it threatens the national reconciliation sought by President Mahmoud Abbas and all political factions to end the political divisions that dealt a fatal blow to the Palestinian cause. The question now is whether the President, political factions, the government and the PLO will respond to this understanding or ignore it? Odeh said: "I believe the President's stance is very clear.

He considers Dahlan to be a leader who was sacked from Fatah and therefore the President strongly opposes the understanding and will impose further sanctions on Hamas and Dahlan supporters in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The PLO will issue some manifestos and statements calling upon all sides to return to national unity and end the divisions".

Sarhan stressed that "The Palestinian Authority in the West Bank clearly opposed the understanding and repeatedly emphasized that it does not serve national interests and intensifies the political rupture between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We will witness additional procedures imposed by the PA in the West Bank on the Gaza Strip".

Sham'oun stated: "The Hamas-Dahlan understanding will provoke more anger and exasperation against Hamas in Ramallah because the parties influencing the understanding are not purely Palestinian. In any case, Hamas will not allow Dahlan full and open authority and will remain in control of all political and military aspects".

### Which are the factions and what political action will they take?

Any form of reconciliation is seen as beneficial in light of the prevailing anger and public unrest in the Gaza Strip governorates, but talking about understandings in Gaza alone and neutralizing other political factions is no substitute for national reconciliation that should embrace all of Palestine. Who is the main beneficiary of this understanding and will it actually be fruitful?

Odeh said: "The biggest beneficiary is Hamas as it will restore its status and repel the popular pressure it faces. Dahlan will also improve his image among the Palestinian people to enable him to run for election as president. We can say that the people suffering from the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip for more than ten years have grasped a spark of hope for a decent life. The understanding may therefore be considered a temporary humanitarian truce".

Al-Qasem emphasized that "What is needed is not bilateral understandings between Hamas and Dahlan but understandings among all national parties. The former is prompted by common interests, even if it creates national divisions and weakening of the Palestinian situation by putting an irreparable chasm in the Palestinian body. The only winner is Israel, which is attempting to establish a separate entity in the Gaza Strip".

Sarhan stated: "The primary beneficiary of the understanding is the Israeli occupation. Unfortunately we always provide it with an outlet and pretexts by revealing our divisions. We suffer from an erosion of political legitimacy and a leadership that does not represent everyone at a time when the Israeli occupation is intent on exacerbating divisions while taking land and creating new facts on the ground".

Hidaya Sham'oun described the understanding as: "Useful for both sides at the moment but trust is lacking due to the heritage of political division. As a result, it seems vulnerable in the short term but may bear fruit as the Gaza Strip is in a very bad state. At the same time it will put pressure on people who are fatigued by making them renew their loyalty to those who own more resources and who can make their lives easier. People need someone to address their suffering and will not care much about how that occurs".

Khuloud al-Helu is a student at the Media Department of Birzeit University.

## The Americans are preparing for a political process that has no ceiling or foundation

### ✦ **Mohammad Younis**

The American 'peace team' comprising Jason Greenbalt, the special envoy of President Donald Trump, Jared Kushner, the President's son-in-law, and the American Ambassador in Tel Aviv, David Friedman, are preparing to present a peace plan to President Trump for launch in the near future.

Sources close to this team disclosed that the team has held tens of official and unofficial meetings with both Palestinians and Israelis, and has submitted a plan to President Trump. This was scheduled for announcement early this month had it not been for the breakout of the al-Aqsa disturbances.

According to these sources, the plan is based on a two-year peace process during which direct negotiations are conducted between Palestinians and Israelis on issues they agree upon and not exclusively on all the known final status issues: Jerusalem, refugees, borders, water and security.

These sources said: "After a series of meetings with both sides, the American team concluded that they should not declare a peace project or road map, but rather leave it to the negotiations by both sides. The Americans thought it unwise to declare a peace plan because both sides may agree on different issues, making the plan a failure rather than a criterion of success. For instance, the Americans cannot announce

a plan based on negotiations for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state because the two sides may agree on something different".

These sources added: "Special American envoy Greenbalt met with politicians, businessmen, representatives of NGOs and youth activists to hear their aspirations and hopes. He found that some Palestinians are not in favor of an independent state but prefer alternative forms of relationship with Israel. Therefore, the American team opted to leave issues for negotiators from the two sides to determine what they want; the team will intervene to bridge gaps upon the request of the two negotiating sides to assist them to reach an agreement".

A senior Palestinian official who participated in the meetings said that the American attempt to launch a peace process "has no ceiling or foundation". He added: "They want us to negotiate back from zero and leading to nowhere".

He continued: "We told them to stop settlements first and we are ready to negotiate indefinitely because the military occupation, as bad as it is, is not as great a concern as the building of settlements. They responded by saying: 'We are talking about two years of negotiations. How many buildings would the Israelis construct during this time? A minimal number, but by the end of the two years we will have an accord and

bring an end to the conflict".

He added: "American officials told us that they are counting on changes in the region to push forward the peace process. A common enemy for the Arabs, Israelis and the United States, namely Iran and terrorism, is sufficient to bring about a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement leading to an Arab-Israeli peace agreement and broad Arab, Israeli and American cooperation to confront Iran and terrorism".

He continued: "The Americans say that there is a historic opportunity that must be exploited urgently".

The Palestinians have not shown any optimism about this plan. A senior official said: "Netanyahu succeeded in making the American team adopt his vision for peace based on indefinite negotiations and the resumption of settlement building. We stand today before a barren political process that is nothing more than a cover for the Israeli right to resolve the conflict on the ground by annexing most of the territories in Area C, the Judaization of East Jerusalem, imposing irreversible settlements, and a security status quo in the Jordan Valley, which constitutes 28% of the West Bank".

He concluded: "It is clear that Netanyahu will not offer us more than self-rule on half of the West Bank and in crowded parts of East Jerusalem. This scenario will gain the support of the Americans because the American peace team is closer to the Israeli right".

## Al-Sununu: The softness of music amid the noise of tragedy

### ✦ **Hanan Abu Dgheim**

The sound pulled us more and more as we headed towards the room where the Oud was playing, its authentic oriental sound blending with the voice of the little girl singing Mawtini (my homeland). The closer we got, the greater our sense of pleasure, pride, admiration and sense of our national spirit.

#### A fresh talent

Twelve year old Malak al-Helu was chanting Mawtini with a voice that resounded with hope and vibrant patriotism reflected in her eyes as she watched the playing of the Oud. She confirmed that she has a passion for national songs and has participated in school concerts, learning traditional Palestinian songs since childhood.

Al-Helu said: "I did not hesitate when my mother offered to enroll me in the Al-Sununu Institute (the swallow) to study music and learn to sing. Here I discovered another world and different talents that I did not imagine in such an institute here in the Gaza Strip".

As al-Helu has a distinctive voice, Al-Sununu Institute seek to enter her in the renowned Arab singing competition for children, the new season of 'Kids' Voices'.

While the child Hussein Wali masters the playing of the Oud and joins with the Al-Sununu Institute choir, he finds music as something beyond the musical instrument that he loves. He said: "This place is our special and different world. Here we live a normal childhood environment away from our suffering from the lack of electricity, political talking, and the siege. Here we are children enjoying the simplest of our rights in developing our talents".

#### My country... Oh my country

Visitors to Al-Sununu Institute in the Gaza Strip agree on the importance of the Institute in promoting patriotism for children and adults alike by playing musical instruments such as the Oud that represent Palestinian heritage, or the performance of Palestinian traditional songs that enhances the love of the homeland in the hearts of the young generation.

Poet, journalist and friend of the Institute, Kifah Ghusein, said: "Here at Al-Sununu it is another world where the kids are like dough that we shape with love for Palestine and our rich heritage of arts, not just playing music and singing, but also performing popular folklore dancing called dabka.

Ghusein, who began to learn how to play the Oud at the Institute, added: "The message of Al-Sununu transcends developing musical talent to the enhancement of national spirit and belonging to Palestine by transferring a significant quantity of our rich heritage to new generations because the most dangerous theft faced by the Palestinian people is that of their heritage".



The voice of Gaza Strip children that blends heritage with modernity in songs for peace

Community activist Hanin Rizk has two girls who learn music at Al-Sununu. She believes that the living conditions in the Gaza Strip represented in the siege, poverty and electricity cuts, have had detrimental effects on the love of the homeland and belonging. "We as parents fear this and do not want that to happen".

#### Peace doves

In addition to the importance of enhancing a sense of belonging to Palestine, the exceptional situation of children in the Gaza Strip is tackled by Al-Sununu in its attempts to improve the image of this besieged city and its inhabitants who love peace, and yearn for freedom and a quiet life with their children. This is emphasized by the Director of the Institute, Arab Mohammad, who said: "All of us in this Institute have one message and that is to deliver the voice of the children in the Gaza Strip to the world, a voice of peace and love".

She added: "Music is basically a message of peace, love and forgiveness, especially when it emerges from children as musicians and lovely singers. Thus, we attempt to transfer an alternative image of our children who wish to live in peace far from war and the repercussions of the political division that

has taken a toll on their childhood".

Mohammad talked about fifty children with disabilities in the Institute. The remarkable thing is that ten of those children were already members of the Institute but became afflicted with different disabilities as a result of the last war on the Gaza Strip. She said: "We were devastated by the disabilities caused by the last war to these talented creative children and by their psychological state when their physical disabilities isolated them and made them unable to reintegrate into society".

She continued: "We brought them back to the Institute with a number of other talented children with disabilities and started a psychological rehabilitation program to reintegrate them in the artistic programs at the Institute".

In spite of the high demand by children to join Al-Sununu Institute, there are still problems, mainly the scarcity of musical instruments and the difficulties in bringing them into the Gaza Strip due to high costs and the siege. This prevents children from participating in concerts abroad, as happened on many occasions, the last of which was the UNESCO invitation to celebrate the Day of the Child in France.

## Baskaleit: Palestinian phone games for Arab users

### □ Eman Abu Hatab

Hiba Byouk (25 years of age) stares at her mobile screen, opens the list of games, and selects the icon of a man dressed in Arab costume. She starts the game rapidly, choosing the nationality of the hero from a list of Arab flags, then she moves on to the icon that identifies his Arab attire.

Once Byouk presses the start button of the game she is engaged in it, moving her hands left and right and saying in her colloquial language: "Come on, you Arab sheikh". She smiles while playing and a few minutes later, shows us her mobile screen marking the end of the game with high score and a man dressed in Hatta & Iqal (an Arab headdress and headband) sitting near the pyramids.

She chooses another game, this time a game for preparing food. She starts preparing the ingredients required for making a carob drink. She said: "I love Arabic games so much and like to download and use them. At least they relate to my culture and community and are close to my way of thinking".

The games used by Hiba are part of a collection of games made by Baskaleit (bicycle), a team of young people from the Gaza Strip specialized in the programming, design and development of games with Arab characteristics in their content, language, and the audiences targeted. Al-Hal interviewed the Baskaleit team to find out about the design and formation of the games.

The founder of the team, Mohammad al-Madhoun, said: "We defined our action plans by mid-2016. We examined the idea and risks, then started with the production of the first game by the end of last year. In 2017, we started implementing a planned schedule of

game production".

Baskaleit is an interesting name that al-Madhoun explained: "Most of the new generation need a mobile to entertain them nowadays. We found that the bicycle had been an important part of every Arab child's life and closely linked with childhood so we agreed on this as our name".

He added: "The principle of the team's work is to make games with an Arabic content in the ideas, contents, and the drawings used to address Arabic culture, ensuring that games serve different Arab communities".

After a series of trials, the team made the first game and downloaded it to the local electronic market of Samsung and Apple. They gained approximately 5 thousand players from the Gaza Strip, which is a good figure for a starting company.

The success of the first game made the team look towards Arab markets and start the production of games that correspond with the life and culture of each of the Arab communities.

The Baskaleit team comprises six people who divide their tasks as follows: Basil al-Madhoun is specialized in researching and digging through the customs, habits, interests and features of Arabs from the Arabian Gulf through Iraq, Syria and Egypt, and ending in Morocco. Fadi Zaher takes the information from his colleague and transforms it into drawings, characters and sites. He then hands these to Usayd Madi who is specialized in animation and games programming. Following the publication of the game, the role of Mohammad al-Madhoun is as a specialist in marketing the game via social networking platforms. He is also responsible for obtaining user feedback and impressions about the game, plus their suggestions and

recommendations to develop the game or launch a new one.

Fadi Zaher, who is specialized in drawing, compared the games they make with other games. He explained that they sketch characters from Arab communities, usually dressed in Hatta & Iqal or sometimes in a Jalabiyah (Arabic robe) or a traditional Syrian costume. Sometimes they sketch Moroccan characters.

He added: "We draw Arabic faces with brown skin, a beard and moustache because these are the known features of Arab characters. This is what distinguishes our games, which mainly address the culture of Arab communities".

He pointed out that their games attempt to open up different Arab cultures to each other. Thus, a Moroccan player using a Syrian-style game will get engaged in it and will recognize the nature of the Syrian characters and their dress and customs.

He clarified that most games are in both Arabic and English: "We anticipate that there are foreign users and we need to address them in their own language. There are some Arab countries that use foreign languages such as Morocco".

Zaher disclosed that the team is creating a game with a Palestinian nature intended to explain the Palestinian cause to other Arab communities in an amusing series and to address young generations who do not understand the history of the cause and its developments.

Zaher also noted that they have produced 20 games, including a game on the challenges of Ramadan that won over one million downloads and reached the entire Arab world on habits, food and drinks in the month of Ramadan.



Programmer and developer Usayd Madi pointed to a number of challenges that were about to halt the team's work, including funding. He explained that creating games requires long periods of time and hefty capital. He added: "We have overcome a lot of obstacles and have connected with Gaza Sky Geeks, a business incubator that attracts experts in electronic games and that has opened the way for networking between Baskaleit and international companies".

Gaza Sky Geeks is a technological business incubator in the Gaza Strip that provides entrepreneurs with a convenient workspace and attracts experts to develop and market these projects.

## The mystery of 3G internet access still awaits resolution in the corridors of Israeli approval

### □ Sujoud Naji

Palestine has been expecting the arrival of a long-awaited guest. For over ten years, everyone has been waiting for 3G, the third generation service of the internet which is anticipated to make a quantum leap in internet speeds and all associated services such as video calls, maps, road directions, etc. To date these are not available on the mobile phones and SIM cards of Palestinians.

In previous media talks, the Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology Allam Musa declared that 3G would be on the market in six months but the special guest has not arrived so far. Ammar Aker, CEO of Palestine Telecommunications (Paltel) Group, pointed out that Palestine was ten years late in launching 3G internet services due to oppressive Israeli procedures. Palestinian communication companies obtained approval for the entry of 3G services to the Palestinian Territories once Israel had launched 5G in order to remain technically and technologically in the lead.

### Affordable prices

Prior to the arrival of the guest, al-Hal interviewed officials in Palestinian communication companies about their readiness for the launch of 3G internet services, how much the speed will increase for users, and whether the bills for 3G services will remain the same or if an increase is inevitable.

In an interview, Abdalla Badarneh, in charge of advertising and events at Paltel, clarified that Paltel is prepared technically for this development but is waiting the launch by Jawwal and Wataniya mobile companies. He noted that costs will stay around the same on average and should be only slightly higher in proportion to public capabilities. He explained that a slight and gradual increase may occur in conjunction with the quality and speed of services.

Badarneh clarified that the speed will be almost the same in all regions; each area will be covered as required and all networks will be enhanced.

Badarneh refrained from providing information about the new generation of internet but pointed out that it does not replace existing internet services in homes, although it represents a significant development in services and speed and will be accessible to all citizens.

After ten years of negotiations, Israel approved the provision of 3G frequencies to the Palestinian Authority. Ultimately, they granted Jawwal and Wataniya mobile companies ten MHz and another ten to share with Israeli mobile companies Cellcom and Pelephone.

### Israel hampered the entry of Palestine

Mahmoud Armoush, Director of Wataniya Mobile in Ramallah, explained in an interview that 3G exists in all countries of the world. Palestine is the last to obtain this internet generation, while some countries such as Israel are using 4G and 5G.

Armoush said that prices will not rise noticeably and will be acceptable for all customers. Prices will keep pace with the changes that occur. He added that Wataniya towers will remain the same and will not be changed; the building of special towers for 3G has never been discussed. He stressed that Wataniya has a full crew ready to work on 3G but the launch is linked to Israeli approval and the readiness of other mobile companies for a comprehensive joint launch, including Jawwal, Wataniya and Paltel.

Dr. Durgham Maraee, spokesman for Wataniya Mobile, pointed out that 3G is one of three current projects by Wataniya. The company is preparing to visit the Gaza Strip and launch 3G internet services there, renaming Wataniya Mobile as Aurido, which is the mother



Durgham Maraee



Abdalla Abu Rjeili

company. These three projects will be accompanied by new services for subscribers. He pointed out that variances in speed between regions will remain, but pointed out that differences in speed between city centers and remote villages has nothing to do with internet services or generation. Rather, city centers are key areas where speeds are activated and this issue is under review. In a phone interview by al-Hal with Jawwal, Abdalla Abu Rjeili said on behalf of the company that they are ready technically. As for the important question raised by the Palestinian public, he pointed out that prices have not been determined or agreed upon so far. He also said that speed will be distributed equitably between city centers and other areas.

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