MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Remembering the Palestinian diaspora evokes feelings of sadness, pride, and hope. Sadness because the circumstances of their exodus still stir up unhealed trauma and because so many Palestinians are not allowed to return, not even for a visit. Pride because many expatriates have achieved great successes abroad, and hope because both these successes and the continuing connection of many of the foreign-passport-holders-of-Palestinian-lineage with their homeland reflect a great potential and may even carry a promise. These doctors, lawyers, engineers, politicians, businesspersons, educators, scientists, and experts in whatever other professions they pursue can be fellow warriors in the fight for justice and human rights, as one author points out. Moreover, they show what Palestinians are capable of once given the freedom to flourish and excel, as another author highlights.

In true TWiP fashion, this issue focuses on the positive aspects. And it is truly international. Authors inform you about the ongoing efforts to conduct a worldwide census of persons with Palestinian heritage, the launching of an international academy of Palestinian scientists, the history of Palestinian emigration and expulsion that has led to success stories worldwide, and the ascension of the Palestinian state to international treaties. You will be introduced in particular to Palestinian expatriate communities in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Greece, and the United States. Thanks go to our authors H.E. Dr. Nabil Shaath, H.E. Dr. Ola Awad, Dr. Abdelhadi Alijla, Cathrine Abumsha, Ambassador Izzat Abdelhadi, Ambassador Marwan Toubassi, Terry Morris, Diego Khamis, and Ualid Rabah as well as to translator Dr. Hanna Safieh. Last but not least, I wish to give a special Thank You to Xavier Abu Eid who has made several substantial contributions to this issue, including the translation of articles from Spanish.

Enjoy our Limelight section that is particularly rich this month. Our two Personalities of the Month are Basem Hishmeh and Fernando Aguad, Artist of the Month is Wissam Boustany. Visit the Educational Bookstore in Jerusalem and grab a copy of Global Palestine, our Book of the Month, or take a trip to Birzeit University to enjoy Jack Persekian’s Past Tense, our Exhibition of the Month. Where to Go? Take a trip to Jericho and visit the only Palestinian salt factory. Let TWiP Kitchen inspire you to cook the Chilean-Bethlehemite-Palestinian version of maftoul/marmaon that will likely be a favorite with your children or grandchildren, and enjoy the listed events, many of which are child-friendly as well.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish you a happy Valentine’s Day and are looking forward to hearing from you via our website or through email. TWiP would feel honored to serve as a medium of communication and information exchange between Palestinians in Palestine and the diaspora.

Sincerely,

Tina Basem
In 1948, the Israeli onslaught on Palestine resulted in the expulsion of 750 thousand Palestinians from their homes and homeland. The Palestinians who remained in Palestine lived in the West Bank under Jordanian control, in Gaza under the Egyptian government, and in the rest of Palestine occupied by Israel. In 1967, another 250 thousand refugees were created.

In 2020, the Palestinians inside historical Palestine counted 6.7 million, and the Palestinians in the diaspora are estimated to have reached up to 6.5 million. The growth of the expatriate population stems, beyond natural growth, from the Palestinian people’s continued emigration from their homeland, caused mainly by the impact of Israel’s colonial-settler occupation.

As a consequence of the Nakba, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was created to protect and support the Palestinian refugees in Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. During the 1960s, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) furthermore established its own national network to support Palestinian refugees and immigrants in the west and the rest of the Arab World, particularly in Egypt, Iraq, the Gulf countries, and North Africa. Among the Palestinians living outside of Palestine, prominent communities were formed in Europe, North and Latin America, and Australia, and some Palestinians went to other parts of Africa and to Asia. To create connections between the displaced Palestinians and the PLO – the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people – created its own structures, adamantly defending the principle that all Palestinians have the right to return to their homeland, irrespective of whether they were forced out as a result of Israeli actions and policies or prevented from returning to it as full citizens.

The PLO created the Department of Expatriate Affairs in 2008, twelve years ago, as an umbrella organization that forges and maintains relations with and among Palestinians worldwide, except those living in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The number of Palestinian expatriates outside the latter countries is estimated to be around 3 million people, yet no comprehensive census has ever been arranged to determine the exact number. Most of these individuals have obtained other nationalities, and their country of origin is registered in their adopted countries based on the passports they carried when they entered, which includes Jordanian, Egyptian, and Lebanese passports, among others – as Palestinian passports did not exist before the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

In September 2018, president Abbas assigned me to run the PLO’s Department of Expatriate Affairs based on my extensive experience in dealing with diaspora Palestinians. I have had many opportunities to meet with our expatriates worldwide since 1974, when President Arafat asked me to plan his historic trip to the United Nations. Around that time, I became his adviser on foreign affairs and was assigned head of the PLO Planning Center, the responsibility of which included the Palestinian diaspora. Holding this post for ten years, I have traveled around the world to meet our expatriates.

When I came back home to Palestine in 1994, I continued to work closely with our expatriates while serving as the minister of planning and international cooperation, the name for the ministry of foreign affairs and economic planning in the early days of the PA. My relationship with our expatriates continued when I served as foreign minister of Palestine from 1999 until 2004, as the leader of Fateh’s foreign relations commission from 2009 to 2015, and as adviser on foreign relations to both president Abbas.

Between 1995 and 2000, Palestinians in the diaspora transferred to Palestine 1.5 billion dollars a year, whereas the international community and Arab donors transferred only one third of that amount annually.
I knew I was facing an immense challenge. Embarking on further travel to meet and communicate with our expatriates worldwide, my engagement was affected first and foremost by the lack of reliable data. Thus, in cooperation with Dr. Ola Awad, the head of the Department of Statistics (whose high level of professional expertise has recently been honored by president Abbas by granting her the status of a minister), and with the financial support of the president, I have initiated the ambitious statistical project of conducting a census of our expatriates. We began in Venezuela and Turkey, intending to use these countries as samples, in the hope of learning lessons that will enable us to adjust our methods to cover all expatriates around the world.

Starting the census with a European country was natural and necessary. Europe is the closest continent to Palestine that has accepted refugees. They came to Europe in 1948, 1967, 1982 (from Lebanon), 1991 (from Kuwait), and at other times. Still highly connected with the homeland and the Arab world, European expatriates pledge political allegiance to the various Palestinian parties, supporting Fatah, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), among others. As a result, each political party has supported the creation of a separate union of Palestinian expatriates in Europe. Furthermore, there operates a union that calls itself the Independent Union, a phenomenon that is unique, as similar developments happened with neither the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) nor women unions, workers unions, or other associations.

As my first project, I plan to form one overarching body to reunite the expatriates and consider a democratic election as the best way to form a Union of Expatriates. A committee of representatives of political parties and respected personalities, with the support and participation of the PLO’s Department of Expatriate Affairs, shall handle, organize, and supervise the election process that shall start in cities and provinces, then move to the state level, and finally cover the entire European continent. Thus, one democratically elected union shall emerge in Europe. Similar processes shall cover North America, South America, Australia, and the Arab World (including the remaining expatriates in Africa and Asia). This shall lead us to one International Union of Palestinian Expatriates, an association representing 6.5 million Palestinians. A major achievement!

Palestinian expatriates started emigrating from their home country in the late nineteenth century (1860), a trend that continued in the early years of the twentieth century. Early migrants were mainly Christian Palestinians who suffered from discrimination and endured poor economic conditions under the Ottoman rule. A preferred destination for refuge was South America, with Chile in particular. Later on, economic conditions led to further migration to Central and North America, Europe, and Australia. In Latin America, the majority of Palestinian immigrants originates from the Bethlehem area; in North American, they came mainly from Ramallah and its surroundings; in Europe, they came from all over the homeland or from refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and the Gulf countries. In 1948 came the forced expulsion carried out by the Zionist gangs, followed in 1967 by the Israeli apartheid-style occupation of what had remained of Palestine.

Palestinian immigrants in the Americas have enjoyed great professional, economic, and social successes. Our expatriates have succeeded in creating businesses, reaching government positions, and establishing themselves as professionals, medical doctors, university professors, and technical experts. They have become citizens in their new countries but never forgot Palestine.

Expatriates’ commitment to their homeland Palestine and to their families over the decades expressed itself in their transfers of funds to their families. Many saved their money to be able to purchase land and real estate, and some have...
been giving donations to charitable organizations. Numerous buildings at Birzeit and Najah universities were donated by expatriates. In Gaza, they built the power company and telephone system and explored for gas offshore. But the majority invested in real estate. The reasons are clear: with Israel’s ongoing aggressive acquisition of our land and the continuing colonial settlement program, the price of the remaining land goes up and the value of building rises, and managing investment in real estate is much easier than managing industrial and agricultural businesses. There is also the patriotic romantic yearning to own a home in Palestine. All of these factors explain the continued interest of investing in Palestinian real estate.

But there are also other, practical forms of engagement. Palestinian medical doctors in the diaspora yearn to contribute to Palestine. Obtaining a medical education in Europe has been the dream of many Palestinians. Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Russia, and the Ukraine are countries that have produced thousands of Palestinian medical doctors. While some of them returned home or found employment in Arab countries, the majority remained in Europe, with the exception of graduates from the ex-Soviet Union. These doctors can help their country. German graduates have developed a program through which groups of medical doctors, in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, spend three months in Palestinian hospitals as volunteers, treating patients, performing difficult operations, training local doctors and medical professionals, and bringing with them donated equipment. Whenever one group leaves, another group of volunteers arrives. We have been able to expand the program this year to include Palestinian doctors from all around Europe.

My vision is, furthermore, to bring “home” expatriate business people as well as experts and trainers in various fields, enabling them to transmit their knowledge and help develop their mother country, Palestine. This endeavor requires much work from local businesspersons and from staff at the ministries of economy, education, construction, health, finance and planning, agriculture, and industry. These ministries have already provided information and are giving incentives to expatriates to come back home in order to participate in, finance, and develop businesses and successful professional institutions.

Education is another important element of my vision for the development of Palestine, as I aim to encourage expatriates to continue their relations with their home country by sending their children to study at Palestinian universities, particularly in summer courses. Interested in developing summer camps for expatriate children, I have found readiness and support from our universities, the ministry of education, and the youth and sports council. Palestinian universities are planning to offer courses in the geography, history, and political science of Palestine in English, Arabic, and Spanish. We are also planning to help start Palestinian schools in the diaspora, particularly in Europe and Latin America. I hope these programs can be started this year.

We need to provide services to our expatriates as much as we want them to provide help for their country. We have been highly engaged in the unification process and the forming of the International Union of Palestinian Expatriates because it will help rebuild important, strong institutions for the expatriates through democratic means. Such institutions will be able to help expatriates in their new homeland while simultaneously enabling them to help and support their original homeland, Palestine.

Of strategic importance is that strong unions of expatriates can serve as actors in the exerting of political influence on behalf of Palestine in the adopted countries. These unions will strengthen and enhance diaspora Palestinians’ ability to influence the political positions of countries worldwide. One should only remember the influence of Palestinian real estate.

The Department of Expatriates provides information to Palestinian expatriates through social media and the internet and supports cultural activities in the diaspora.

The latest success has taken place in Australia, where our expatriates were able to place pressure on the prime minister, preventing him from moving the Australian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In Europe and Latin America, our close ties with social democratic parties have been strengthened by the voting power of our expatriates who as voters and party members of these parties have encouraged them to support Palestine. And we should not forget the support our expatriates have given to our quest to achieve recognition as an independent Palestinian state from countries worldwide.

We must realize also, however, that in Palestine, we have to offer more...
services to our expatriates. One immense problem expatriates face is related to inheritance. When a father or grandfather dies, expatriate relatives have great difficulties in securing their rights. They need legal advice, and we are planning to offer it. Initial difficulties we had in defining our relation with the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies vis-à-vis the Department of Expatriate Affairs have been overcome, as I was able to clarify the relationship. Palestinian expatriates consider and deal with Palestinian embassies as the representatives of our state. The embassies issue their passports, and all official interactions with Palestine are carried out via the embassies. The international organization of expatriates, their elections, unions, and relationship with the homeland, on the other hand, shall be managed by the PLO and its expatriate department. The International Union of Expatriate Affairs protect and guarantees the quest to achieve the refugees’ right of return; it will also help arrange for the election of their representatives at the Palestine National Council (PNC).

The financial difficulties the Palestinian government is facing have made it very difficult to hire personnel and arrange for visits or to initiate projects for our expatriates in their adopted countries. The PLO’s expatriate department has been able to organize a conference in Bucharest, Romania, that was attended by 168 representatives from all over Europe, plus some 100 expatriates from Romania. It resulted in the formation of a Palestinian Businessmen Committee, a medical committee, and committees for women, youth, Jerusalem, and other political issues such as the right of return, fighting Israeli settlements and apartheid, and a committee on achieving unity.

Concrete action as a result of this conference is under way. The businessmen and medical doctors’ committees have started to plan and implement their programs. A meeting in Athens has produced an investment fund for Palestine, which will allow small investors to invest in their country of origin by buying shares. Investors do not need to assume any management responsibilities for their investment in this fund, as it will have experts on the ground searching for industrial and agricultural projects, beyond real estate. Cooperation between Palestinian businesspersons and medical doctors may also lead to investment in private hospitals and pharmaceutical industries.

In conclusion, I can assert that a year of running the PLO’s Department of Expatriate Affairs has been a marvelous opportunity to work with expatriates everywhere. Success has been achieved in producing measures towards unification and institution building. It will require more work, however, to achieve the hoped-for International Union of Palestinian Expatriates that shall represent our expatriates in Europe, the Americas, the Arab world, and Australia.

Bringing expatriate investment to industry and agriculture in Palestine can proceed nevertheless, given the fact that, according to IMF figures, Palestine expatriates have in 2019 transferred 2.8 billion dollars to Palestine, 4.4 billion dollars to Jordan, and 1.6 billion dollars to Lebanon. We must develop the policies and plans that can attract such support and tie these funds to projects that can truly build Palestine and help establish its independent economy while protecting the interests and investments of our expatriates.

We need to regain other expatriates’ interests and commitment to Palestine and earn their trust in our government and its institutions as well as in the PLO as the political representative of the Palestinian people. We have to assure them of our commitment to their right of return and must involve them in our decision-making processes. We hope that our expatriates will continue their efforts and engagement to maintain unity and democracy out of commitment to their home country, Palestine.

After all, our expatriates constitute half of our people. We love and trust them. We have to work together for the liberation and development of Palestine.

Born in 1938 in Safed, H.E. Dr. Nabil Shaath has an extensive and distinguished record of political engagement in Palestine. With degrees from Alexandria, Egypt, and a PhD from the Wharton School of Economics, University of Pennsylvania, he has also taught at the American University in Beirut and worked as an industry consultant and management trainer (heading a company called TEAM) in Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon.
statistical data indicate that on the eve of the 1948 war, the population in Palestine had reached 2.1 million, 1.45 million of which were Palestinians. Varying estimates and divergent figures have been circulated by different sources regarding the number of Palestinian refugees displaced from their homes during this war. The Israeli occupation took over 774 Palestinian cities and villages, 531 of which were completely demolished, whereas the others were subjugated to the Israeli occupation and its regulations, eventually to be incorporated into the Israeli state. In the course of their ‘cleansing process,’ Zionist gangs committed more than 70 massacres against the Palestinian people and caused the death of more than 15 thousand Palestinians. The most modest estimates of Palestinian refugees counted around 736 thousand individuals, more than 50 percent of the Palestinian population. They were moved to refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the neighboring countries Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

In the early 1950s, as the suffering of the Palestinian refugees at the economic, social and living levels kept increasing, some of them, separately or jointly and collectively, started to move to Arab states and to countries in Europe and the two Americas, searching for a better life. Although many of them have integrated into the societies into which they migrated and are making effective contributions at the economic, social and cultural levels in their adopted countries, they have not forgotten their homeland or discarded the Palestinian cause. Thus, they started forming groups and gatherings, creating Palestinian communities in the diaspora that hosted and engaged in social, cultural and political activities. These communities aim to save and preserve among their members and over generations the strength of their Palestinian national identity, knowledge of their heritage, and feelings of belonging to their homeland.

At the end of the year 2019, according to data gathered by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the estimated number of Palestinians in the world reached about 13.4 million. At least 50 percent of them live outside their homeland or in refugee camps, whether in neighboring Arab states, places, and as conflicting figures are available from different sources regarding their numbers, moreover not knowing their characteristics and geographic distributions – data that frequently are subject to the speculations of researchers, academics and interested persons – PCBS has put on great efforts to collect, tabulate, and disseminate all statistics related to Palestinians in all places of residence worldwide.

Many diaspora Palestinians are highly accomplished and stand out in various fields that include medicine, the arts and literature, the economy, social sciences, natural sciences, and more. Given PCBS’ responsibilities in providing official statistics on Palestinians in all locations and places, and as conflicting figures are available from different sources regarding their numbers, moreover not knowing their characteristics and geographic distributions – data that frequently are subject to the speculations of researchers, academics and interested persons – PCBS has put on great efforts to collect, tabulate, and disseminate all statistics related to Palestinians in all places of residence worldwide.

PCBS has begun to collect historical statistical documents on Palestine before the year 1993, which includes the periods under Ottoman rule, the British Mandate, the Jordanian government, and the Israeli occupation. We managed to obtain from the Italian Statistics Library reports of censuses that were implemented by the British government in historical Palestine in 1922 and 1931. Also, we...
New platforms are needed to familiarize new Palestinian generations with their history, strengthen their identity, and work towards assuring their right of return to their homeland, Palestine.

Historical statistical data collected by PCBS include documents obtained from the times of the Ottoman rule and the British Mandate Era, such as the 1922 and 1931 censuses.

Ola Awad is the president of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the former president of the International Association of Office Statistics (IAOS). She holds a Doctorate in Business Management from the University of Liverpool. Currently, she is a council member of the International Statistical Institute and a member of many UN and national technical committees at the international level.
Kuwaiti friend of mine told me a few years ago that when she was a kid, her mother used to tell her that the Palestinians are so smart at school because they eat much zaatar (Palestinian thyme). Therefore, she recounted with a smile, she used to exchange her cheese sandwiches for zaatar sandwiches so that she would become smart and achieve her goal of becoming a professor. Funnily, today she is a professor.

Many friends and colleagues in Europe and the Middle East, in places where there are Palestinians, have asked me, “Why are Palestinians so smart and well-educated?” The answer is always, “Hardship must be faced with and countered by education. Because we were uprooted from our homes and to make a decent living, we must prove ourselves as educated people.”

Although there are no accurate numbers of Palestinians worldwide, it is estimated that around 50 percent of Palestinians live in forced exile in the diaspora. Around 5 million live in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, 1.53 million live inside historical Palestine (most of them now Israeli citizens), and around 6 million live in the Arab world. Only a little more than 700,000 live in the rest of the world. Many of the first-generation Palestinian refugees in Western Europe have lost contact with Palestine as a result of multilayered rounds of forced migration, starting with the Nakba in 1948 and followed by the Naksa in 1967, the 1990-91 Gulf War, the 2003-11 Iraq War, the siege of Gaza that has been in place since 2007, and the Syrian civil war that has been ongoing since 2011. The new generation and the second and third generations of refugees and migrants, however, have begun to recognize their identities, proclaiming them strongly and proudly, even though they are well-integrated in their second homes and societies in North America and Europe.

Education, exile, and “ghourba” (longing, especially for home) are always connected, as the family expects those who leave to return with a higher education or an advanced degree. It is a matter of honor to educate one’s sons and daughters who then either return to Palestine or (as in many, if not most cases) establish their lives abroad yet maintain their connections with the country of their origin. In recent years, we have seen many influential scientists of Palestinian heritage, some young, others more senior, being praised for their contributions to science. Many of them hold important positions. For instance, the post of chief of NASA’s Exploration Mission Planning Office is held by the Palestinian scientist Nujoud Merancy; Munir Nayfeh is one of the most prominent professors in cross-cutting physics in the United States; and Majid Kazmi, Abdulrahman Saleh Khamis, Basheer Nafi, Rashid Kahlidi, and others are leaving great legacies as Palestinian scientists. Other great Palestinian thinkers included Edward Said and Ibrahim Abu Lughod.
These scientists have played fundamental and crucial roles in fostering social and political change in their host countries and communities, at universities and institutions, providing great examples of how Palestinians have been important contributors to science despite being refugees, stateless, and vulnerable both as communities and individuals. In the last two decades, the second and third generations of Palestinian refugees of 1948 have become phenomenally influential and active in their fields. They have established themselves as prominent young scientists who can participate in the setting of the global science agenda for the next century. The challenge, however, is to know where they are based. Even though the Palestine Academy of Sciences and Technology (PAST) is making great efforts to gather the names and affiliations of Palestinian scientists around the world, there are still many barriers to reaching them, particularly those located in Latin America and, to a slightly lesser extent, in North America.

Young Palestinian scientists in the diaspora have high social capital within their countries and their academic communities, but they tend to be weak in terms of individual or institutional contacts and connections with other Palestinian scientists in Palestine and the diaspora. The chance that young Palestinian scientists would move back to Palestine or work in Palestinian institutions is very limited because those who left over the last two decades as a result of the occupation, racism, inequality, and corruption have found easier conditions and are able to lead better lives abroad. The alternative to enticing them to remain in or return to their home country is to develop a strategy that activates Palestinian scientists in the diaspora and connects them to other Palestinian scientists both in Palestine and abroad, encouraging research collaboration as well as face-to-face meetings. Besides initiating individual scientific exchange and collaboration, Palestinian scientists based locally (including in historic Palestine) and abroad can play a vital role as a lobbying force, forging connections between institutions in the Palestinian diaspora and Palestine.

There is, therefore, the need for a collective effort and a body that can bring together the young generation of Palestinian academics in historic Palestine and the diaspora. This body should coordinate with Palestinian universities, institutions, and scientists as well as with the Palestine Liberation Organization’s education and science department that is responsible for all education-related issues for Palestinians living inside and outside Palestine. Such a body would identify, locate, and document Palestinian scientists who are working at middle-level and advanced institutions abroad and invite them to be part of the body’s activities.

To this end, a new initiative titled Palestine Young Academy (PYA) will be established under the umbrella of PAST. This initiative is the result of long discussions and great efforts among young Palestinian scientists and scholars who are interested in engaging in scientific and policy debate. As an independent, non-partisan body, this initiative will focus its activities on five pillars, namely internationalization, connectedness, evidence-based work, excellence, and transdisciplinarity.

One of PAST’s goals with PYA is to strengthen relations between young academics and Palestinian decision-makers — enabling academics to affect policies — and between academics and their communities. The academy furthermore aims to enhance the capabilities of young Palestinian researchers in occupied Palestine and historic Palestine, assist in the mobilization of resources, and connections between institutions and communities. The PALAST umbrella of PAST will be stronger, and its initiatives will be more effective.

**Palestine Academy of Sciences and Technology (PAST)**

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and help develop solutions to important challenges facing Palestinians at the national and international levels.

Members of the initiative will be young and prominent researchers (up to the age of 40 years when selected) from all over the world who have an interest in developing natural and social sciences in Palestine and among Palestinians at home and abroad. The members of the academy must have distinguished scientific positions in their academic institutions and possess multidisciplinary academic knowledge. They will be selected members for a period of five years, based on research excellence and social and academic engagement. PYA will have 30 members only.

With PYA, PAST aims to achieve a proper representation of the Palestinian scientific community at home and abroad, away from internal political divisions, and to forge strong connections among the Palestinian academic community across various fields.

Abdalhadi Alijla is a social and political scientist. He is Max Weber Stiftung’s post-doctoral fellow at the Orient Institute in Beirut (OIB), a co-leader of the Global Migration and Human Rights working group at Global Young Academy, an associate researcher, and regional manager for the Gulf countries at Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) institute at Gothenburg University, Sweden.

This body aims to be the seed of larger initiatives that shall connect Palestinian scientists at a broader level and on a larger scale, playing a part in intensifying and preserving the Palestinian identity. Therefore, PYA will serve Palestine and Palestinians on the scientific, political, and educational levels.

The Palestinian Sunbird is featured in PYA’s logo with its true colors to reflect the academy’s aim of sending Palestinians scientists as birds into the world to serve the sciences and humanity.

4 Munir H. Nayfeh, Grainger College of Engineering, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, available at https://physics.illinois.edu/people/directory/profile/m-nayfeh
5 For more information, please visit the academy’s website at http://palast.ps/
The State of Palestine was recognized as a non-member observer state at the United Nations (UN) on November 29, 2012. Many considered this step a milestone, as it allowed Palestine to accede to a series of international instruments. Since then, the State of Palestine has joined over a hundred international treaties, concerning issues that range from international human rights and humanitarian law to international criminal law, and numerous conventions pertaining to diplomacy, international relations, trade, and corruption, among others. Since April 1, 2014, and up to date, the State of Palestine has acceded without reservations to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties and to four of their optional protocols.

The ratification of human rights treaties by the State of Palestine does not alter, however, the reality of Israel’s prolonged military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, in place since 1967, nor has it prevented Israel from exercising effective control over the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). In fact, international human rights and humanitarian law places on Israel, as occupying power, the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to self-determination and to permanent sovereignty over natural wealth and resources, in the best interest of the Palestinian people.

At the same time, the context of Israel’s prolonged occupation does not absolve the State of Palestine of its own obligation, under the same treaties, to uphold the human rights of all Palestinians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction.

The core international human rights instruments to which the State of Palestine has acceded are of substantial value in improving the lives of Palestinians, as they enshrine human rights and fundamental freedoms that are universal, inalienable, interdependent, interrelated, and non-divisible. These include the full spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that derive from the inherent dignity of the human person as well as from international principles and standards. Together, they aim at the protection and promotion of all human rights. They are applicable in times of peace as well as in situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation. Even when a state’s accession to international treaties is made voluntarily, legal obligations arise under the instruments to which the state accedes. Whether positive or negative in nature, such obligations provide both a standard and the stipulation that the state must respect, protect, and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The legal obligations imposed on the State of Palestine with its accession to the core human rights treaties are applicable to all the state’s governmental branches and other public and governmental authorities.

As of January 2020, the State of Palestine has acceded without reservations to the following core international human rights law instruments: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
Furthermore, while obligations may vary between one convention and another, all human rights treaties require the state party to refrain in its laws, policies, and practices from directly or indirectly violating human rights. This includes the prohibition of imposing arbitrary restrictions that would impair the enjoyment of fundamental rights and undermine the object and purpose of the treaty. Alternatively, the State of Palestine shall take all possible measures to achieve the full realization of these rights for all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including in legislative, judicial, administrative, educational, and other matters.

The state must also raise awareness about the content and provisions of the treaties to which it has acceded, not only amongst public officials and state agents but also amongst the population at large, to ensure that individuals are adequately informed about the individual and collective rights to which they are entitled. These rights include the right to self-determination, the right to a life of dignity, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, the right of peaceful assembly and of association, the right to education, the right to work, as well as the right to participate in political life and in decision making.

Moreover, the state must uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination; the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to a fair trial; the protection from violence; and the right of victims of human rights abuses to reparations that shall be determined by competent, independent, judicial, administrative, and legislative authorities. The cessation of ongoing human rights abuses and the non-repetition of such violations are considered essential elements of the right to an effective remedy. Furthermore, the state must also provide information on existing obstacles to the effectiveness of existing remedies.

The State of Palestine’s ratification of core human rights treaties is an important step towards fulfilling the rights of all Palestinians throughout the oPt. However, the real test of effectiveness is not measured in form, but in the realization and enjoyment of individuals’ rights in practice as well as by the overall awareness amongst the general public of their fundamental rights.

There are a number of clear obstacles standing in the way of Palestinians enjoying their rights in practice. The first and most obvious is the prolonged Israeli military occupation and the occupying power’s widespread and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people. The second is the continued decline of the human rights situation internally – even since the State of Palestine’s accession to core human rights treaties in 2007; the lack of unity between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on various levels; the ongoing violation of Palestinian constitutional principles reflected in the rule of law, the separation of powers, and the independence of the judiciary; as well as the prolonged absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), since 2007, and its unconstitutional dissolution by a Supreme Constitutional Court decision in 2017. The ongoing decline in the Palestinian political system has resulted in a monopoly of power and in the unconstitutional hegemony of the executive authority and its apparatus which continue to unduly interfere in state powers. Another important factor leading to the deterioration of the human rights situation is the absence of regular elections, both presidential and legislative, throughout the oPt, including in occupied East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip. The absence of elections has hindered the decision-making processes within the State of Palestine and resulted in a lack of community participation in public policies and decision-making, accompanied by a lack of accountability and of effective remedies for victims of human rights violations.

These obstacles undermine the fulfilment of human rights and per se violate the amended Palestinian Basic Law of 2003 as well as Palestinian national legislations, impeding the implementation of core human rights treaties in practice. Moreover, and despite the state’s accession to these treaties without reservations, the Palestinian Supreme Constitutional Court, in non-compliance with the state’s international obligations, decided in Decision No. 4 of 2017 to consider the supremacy of international instruments over domestic legislation only insofar as they are consistent with the so-called “national, religious, and cultural identity of the Arab Palestinian people.” In addition, in Decision No. 5 of 2017, the Supreme Constitutional Court adopted the principle of dualism, ruling that “international treaties or conventions are not in themselves applicable in Palestine, but must gain strength by going through the formal stages required to pass specific domestic legislation to enforce them.” These decisions may impede the enjoyment of the rights safeguarded in these treaties for all individuals without discrimination.

The context in the oPt creates serious difficulties for the realization of all human rights in the State of Palestine. As such, it is all the more important for independent international bodies to monitor the implementation of the human rights treaties to which Palestine acceded without reservations. All core human rights treaties have established UN treaty bodies, composed of experts, who monitor a state’s
implementation of its obligations under the treaties. The State of Palestine must periodically report to the competent treaty body with comprehensive information on the progress it has made towards the fullfilment of its human rights obligations. The UN committees receive the state party’s report and examine it together with parallel reports submitted by civil society organizations, which may provide data and recommendations to ensure a constructive dialogue between the committee and the state party during the review session committee. In conclusion of the review process, the treaty bodies deliver concluding observations on steps a state must take to ensure its compliance with the treaty in question.

To date, the State of Palestine has been reviewed by two UN treaty bodies for its human rights record, including the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in July 2018 and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 2019. Its third review, by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, is scheduled to take place on 28 and 29 January 2020, with a number of Palestinian civil society organizations, including Al-Haq, having submitted parallel reports to the reviewing committee ahead of the session.1

In its engagement with the UN treaty bodies, Al-Haq has repeatedly highlighted the overall deterioration of the human rights situation in the oPt and recommended that the committees call upon the State of Palestine to undertake serious reforms in its political system, including to hold general democratic simultaneously legislative and presidential elections, unified between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to enable all Palestinians, especially the youth, to exercise their participation in political life and in decision making. Al-Haq has also stressed the need for the State of Palestine to conduct serious reforms in the judiciary and in the justice sector and to restore the constitutional role of the PLC in the implementation of laws and conventions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, considering the central role of the legislative power in ensuring good governance. Moreover, Al-Haq has stressed the need to set a timeframe for publication of the human rights treaties in the Palestinian Official Gazette, highlighting the need for genuine awareness-raising efforts on the content of these human rights treaties, and called for the harmonization of Palestinian legislation with their object and purpose.

The concluding observations issued by the CEDAW and CERD committees following their review of the State of Palestine reflected Palestinian civil society’s active engagement and recommended that the State fully and expeditiously incorporate the provisions of the conventions into its domestic laws – and publish them in the Official Gazette – while adopting all possible measures to ensure their implementation throughout the oPt. The committees requested that the State also take appropriate and urgent measures to reconvene the PLC, noting that, owing to the political and geographical fragmentation of the State’s territory, women and girls continue to be subjected to multiple legal systems that gravely impede the full realization of their rights, including their political and economic empowerment. Notably, the CEDAW committee requested the State to expedite the review and adoption of draft laws, including the draft penal code, the draft personal status code, and the draft law by decree on the protection of the family from violence, and to ensure their harmonization with CEDAW. In addition, the committee urged the State to pursue the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, particularly in political and public life; to intensify efforts in raising awareness among both men and women, including through educational and media campaigns, of the criminal nature of gender-based violence in order to challenge it within society; and to address the stigma that is discouraging victims from reporting abuse.

The concluding observations of the UN treaty bodies offer a general understanding of the reality of the human rights situation since the State of Palestine’s accession to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties in April 2014. In 2020, the State of Palestine will be reviewed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee Against Torture. These reviews create opportunities for civil society organizations to raise and challenge human rights violations committed by the State party and its organs, with the committees constituting effective monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of human rights treaties in the oPt. Ultimately, with the people constituting the source of all powers, it is fundamental that the State of Palestine work without delay towards fulfilling the human rights of the Palestinian people in order to guarantee the exercise of their inalienable rights, in particular to decision making and self-determination.

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Palestinians arrived in Australia mostly through identifiable waves of migration. The first major wave followed the Nakba, the second occurred in the 1960s, and the third and final one was triggered by the displacement of Palestinians from other Middle Eastern countries. The Israel-Lebanon War of 1982 sparked Palestinian migration to Australia and was followed by another surge in the early 1990s when 300 thousand Palestinians left Kuwait during the Second Gulf War. Since 9/11, there has been a considerable decrease in the number of Palestinian-born persons migrating to Australia; a trend that mirrors the Australian government’s increasingly stringent migration policy.

According to the 2016 census, there are 13,293 people in Australia who identify as having Palestinian ancestry, with 2,939 of these born in Palestine. Of those identifying as having Palestinian ancestry, the majority live in New South Wales (62.1 percent) and the next largest group in Victoria (21.4 percent). These figures, however, do not reflect the true size of the community with Palestinian heritage and roots, as many of them hold other passports and may not necessarily identify themselves as Palestinians. We estimate that the actual number of Palestinians in Australia currently sits between 20 thousand and 25 thousand people, with populations concentrated, for the most part, in the metropolitan areas of Sydney and Melbourne. Given this size, there exist several Palestinian organizations that either advocate for Palestinian issues or simply provide a space for the Palestinian community to associate and socialize.

Because being stateless frequently results in a lack of community participation, measures that build on the Palestinian community’s social capital within Australia and encourage community engagement carry particular relevance. The concept of social capital “refers to the specific processes among people and organisations, working collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust, that lead to accomplishing a goal of mutual social benefit.” Social capital is critical in efforts to hold communities together through the development of strong connections, relations, and interests within the community. Social capital may be developed through social networks within a community that aim to ensure that people “feel like members of an identified community that they both contribute to and benefit from.” Social cohesion is a term employed to characterize a sense of community, an attraction-to-place, patterns of regular interaction among themselves, and a sense of trust and mutuality. Social capital is critical to empowering communities – this is, however, a non-linear relationship.

With such considerations in mind, the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Australia held six consultation workshops a few years back that resulted in the establishment of six state-based Palestinian-community coordination committees in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, and South Australia. These committees provide a forum in which existing Palestinian community organizations can all be represented and, importantly, consult and coordinate meaningfully with one another. The establishment of these committees has facilitated a more unified Palestinian voice that enhances the effectiveness of advocacy work by creating a shared strategic vision amongst Palestinian-Australians. Furthermore, the committees aim to empower Palestinian women and youth and increase their influence on the strategic objectives of Australia’s Palestinian community.
The endogenous challenges facing the Palestinian-Australian community are at times mutually reinforcing and have played a significant role in impeding the formation of inclusive and effective Palestinian advocacy bodies in the past.

The Palestinian community in Australia is facing a number of challenges, some of which are exogenous – such as discrimination from the Australian public, the strength of the Zionist lobby, and the lack of an enabling political environment – whereas others are endogenous and include issues of identity, issues surrounding political engagement, factionalism and political infighting, and leadership and technical and professional capacity.

The political environment in Australia is not conducive to engagement in Palestinian issues and concerns. As there are no Palestinian-Australians in Australia’s federal parliament, this lack of direct representation makes it difficult for advocates to entice parliamentarians to put Palestinian rights on the national political agenda. Other factors that contribute to the prevailing lack of an enabling environment include the relative unimportance of Palestine to Australian political decision makers and the insular, cautious character of Australian politics. Decision makers are inclined not to take any controversial foreign policy positions, lest these decisions impact Australia’s relationship with the United States (strategic) or China (economic).

Regarding endogenous factors, the identity of Palestinians living in Australia is critical to an understanding of their community dynamics. Palestinians who were rehomed in Arab states "share with their host populations the Arabic..."
language, the general contours of culture, a common historical experience, and often religion. The Australian experience is vastly different. Accordingly, one commonality among the Palestinian community in Australia is a shared experience of living in a country that is in almost all aspects entirely different from their homeland.

Palestinians living in Australia form part of the global Palestinian diaspora network that connects groups of people on the periphery through their shared experience of feeling connected to their homeland.

Consequently, the dream of returning represents a search for identity as much as it is directed towards a place and results in the formation of an imagined community that aims to maintain a connection to the homeland. For many, however, the lived reality is that of Australia being home.

Australia naturally forms a large part of the identity of Palestinians born in Australia. The conflicting identity of being both a Palestinian Arab and an Australian is further complicated by other forms of identification such as class, gender and religion. In a study conducted by scholars at the University of Sydney, one respondent cited that developing a strong sense of community was obscured by the fact that many Palestinians in Australia come from countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Israel. Nevertheless and importantly, the shared experience of forming an (imagined) community in Australia can be harnessed to form a more empowered and cohesive community with which young Australian-Palestinians can engage.

Identity issues may constrain the potential for capacity building and outreach. The distance from Palestine and Palestinian culture that comes with being part of a diaspora facilitates identity displacement and reduces the drive of Palestinian-Australians to involve themselves in specifically Palestinian causes. Furthermore, it was noted that tensions between religious and Arab-nationalist identities frequently cause friction within the community and undermine attempts at building shared visions and goals. Conflict between Australian and Palestinian identities was also noted as a factor preventing Palestinian community members from deeper engagement with Palestinian issues, a factor that is likely to worsen over time, as new generations of Australian-Palestinians are becoming increasingly detached from their ancestry. This highlights the importance of youth engagement in both, the organizations and the activities of the Palestinian community. Another common identity-related constraint was that the sometimes conservative and patriarchal attitudes among Australia’s Palestinian community may tend to marginalize women and female decision makers.

Among endogenous challenges, the observed lack of political engagement among Palestinian communities throughout Australia is attributable to a number of factors that include community members’ unawareness of the political rights they possess in a liberal democracy, cynicism that stems from the failure of past political processes and from what many view as the intractable nature of the conflict, family and work constraints, and cultural issues such as patriarchal attitudes and a tendency to ignore the voices of young people.

Factionalism and political infighting within the Palestinian community and the tribal nature of Palestinian politics was an issue highlighted in the study, as was the tendency for ego and personality politics to override issue-based politics, impacting the effectiveness of the Australian Palestinian community and its lobby groups.

The final endogenous challenge is leadership, specifically a lack of technical and professional capacity within the Palestinian community organizations. To mitigate the impact of this condition, capacity building programs such as leadership and advocacy training have been conducted. Also, databases of Palestinian professionals have been created to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas, the results of which can be utilized within the programs of the various Palestinian community organizations. Furthermore, democratic and merit-based organizational processes in the committees are designed to elevate the most qualified community members into leadership positions.

To strengthen the Palestinian-Australian community, the coordination committees that were formed as a result of the conducted workshops will engage in community outreach work to increase awareness of Palestinian issues amongst both the Australian public and the Australian-Palestinian community – with Palestinian youth of particular importance. They hope to enhance the feeling of identity in the community that has Palestinian roots and to foster a positive perception of Palestinians amongst non-Palestinian Australians. Some of the activities noted at the consultation workshops include:

- Hosting social events, such as picnics, and commemorations of the Nakba and UN solidarity day
• Conducting Palestinian cultural exhibitions and facilitating cultural programs such as dabkeh and Arabic language lessons
• Performing charity work that helps the wider, non-Palestinian Australian public
• Developing interfaith dialogue
• Reaching out to Palestinian families, given the importance of the nuclear family in educating children and enhancing their knowledge of the Palestinian cause
• Conducting monthly meetings within Palestinian communities
• Creating physical spaces for the Palestinian community to meet
• Establishing a Palestinian community radio
• Campaigns that enhance the Palestinian identity among young people
• Highlighting the stories of Palestinian-Australians in the media
• Organizing special programs that help the Palestinian community cooperate with the Australian community in the pursuit of shared goals, e.g. disaster relief and more.

To foster gender and youth empowerment, programs aim to increase the influence of women and youth within the community by amplifying their voices. Youth engagement in particular is considered essential for preserving the Palestinian identity among new generations of Palestinian-Australians. Proposed activities include:

• Youth development programs such as trips to Palestine through the Know Thy Heritage initiative
• Conducting special meetings with Palestinian youth enrolled in Australian universities
• Gender mainstreaming programs

To facilitate the efficacy of Palestinian advocacy and lobbying, programs aim to promote shared visions and goals through cooperation between key stakeholders in the Palestinian community. Facilitating engagement in the defense of Palestinian rights is considered a key objective in the mandate of the committees. The proposed strategies and activities in this field include:

• Parliamentary lobbying and communicating with Australian MPs
• Attending annual diners with Australian politicians
• Participating in Palestinian cultural exhibitions and promoting Palestinian products
• Civil society outreach
• Media outreach and participation
• Creating focused campaigns on issues that resonate with the wider Australian public (such as children’s rights)
• Training sessions to enhance the communication skills of Palestinian community members engaging in lobbying and advocacy work, including in social media, and to impart knowledge of international law
• Support APAN with a unified and influential Palestinian voice

The Palestinian Embassy has a unique role to play in community development within Australia. The core role of the Delegation can be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Means of achieving mandate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community empowerment</td>
<td>Provides the community with the means and information necessary to develop the community and engage in advocacy programs without impeding their capacity to form an independent community in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Regularly sends information to Palestinian community organizations and to individuals; provides information on how individuals and community groups can engage in advocacy activities in compliance with Australian laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational and civil society support</td>
<td>Organizes meetings in the various states to unify the Palestinian community; links Palestinian community organizations and individuals to each other and establishes a consultative process among them. The Delegation seeks to maintain a bottom-up approach and not to impose on the autonomy of the organizations and civil society organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community outreach</td>
<td>Remains visible in the community; attends and participates in the various activities organized by the community; links the Australian community with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consular support</td>
<td>Provides various consular services to the Palestinian community; links up new community members with existing local community groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Born in 1957 in Nablus, Palestine, Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi was the founding director general of Bisan Center for Research and Development, a leading NGO in efforts to strengthen civil society and promote cultural development, prior to joining the Palestinian diplomatic corps. In 2006, he was appointed ambassador of Palestine and head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. He is an active member and general secretary of the Council of Arab Ambassadors in Canberra and holds the post of deputy president of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) heads of mission group.

Australian National University students Sarah Barrie and Reece Gittins served as interns at the Palestinian embassy in 2017.

7 Jeremy Cox and John Connell, ‘Place, Exile and Identity, the Contemporary Experience of Palestinians in Sydney’ (2010), Australian Geographer 34(3).
A LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP
PALESTINE AND GREECE

By Marwan E. Toubassi

The Greek and Palestinian people have numerous points of connection. They share religious ties, as most of the Palestinian Christians are Orthodox. Since the 1960’s and 70’s, many Greeks have visited Jerusalem in religious pilgrimage, especially during the Easter period (Hagina), creating social relations with the Palestinian families of Jerusalem. Furthermore, during the late 1960’s and early 70’s, many Greeks who belonged to the socialist anti-dictatorship movement were trained in PLO camps in Lebanon to fight against the dictatorship along with some Palestinians who joined the struggle. Hundreds of the many Greeks who served in medical relief efforts in Palestinian refugee camps remained and started their own families.

In 1975 and again in 1982, large numbers of Palestinian immigrants came to Greece fleeing the civil war in Lebanon. A first wave of migration of Palestinians to Greece had begun back in the 1960’s and early 70’s, when thousands of Palestinian students pursued or finished their university studies in Greece (education is free for Palestinian students in Greece, and living expenses were low). Many of these students went to Thessaloniki to study medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, law and sciences.

The Palestine Liberation Organization opened a representation office – which later on was upgraded to a diplomatic representation office – in Athens in 1982, the same year in which Greece adopted new legislation (EY81) that enticed offshore companies to move their headquarters to Greece. Many Middle Eastern companies whose representative offices originally had been based in Beirut now moved their headquarters to Greece, bringing along some of their employees. Among them were well-known companies, such as the Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC) that has its headquarters in Athens but mainly employs Palestinians. Also, when the PLO was forced to leave Lebanon, Greece was chosen as its first destination, as chairman Yasser Arafat had developed brotherly ties with the Greek prime minister and leader of the Socialist Party, Andreas Papandreou. Many Palestinian freedom fighters have remained in Greece since that time, as they married and started their own families.

The second wave of migration to Greece came with the first Gulf War in 1990–91. Many businessmen left Kuwait at that time and took their families and businesses with them. Numerous Palestinians followed and were recruited by Palestinian and local companies in Greece.

Even though since then, the number of Palestinian immigrants has dropped, families and their children have begun to grow, these children married in Greece, and so the Palestinian-Greek community has grown and expanded. It is worth mentioning also that at various times, people of Greek origin who lived in Palestine (mainly Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah) decided to return to their homeland as well. In a rough estimation we could say that today, around 5,000 Palestinians live in Greece, over 3,500 of them in Athens while the rest resides in major Greek cities such as Thessaloniki and Patras.

Over the last decade, Greece’s proximity to Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey – the latter two among the main countries that are receiving refugees from Syria by land and sea – has resulted in a mass influx of refugees into the country. This is mainly because refugee camps in Syria have been demolished and access to the Gaza Strip has been blocked. Thus, along with thousands of Syrians, many Palestinian refugees from Syria have ended up in Greece. Their exact number...
is difficult to assess accurately, as most of them have not claimed asylum in Greece. Some were unable to do so because the sheer numbers of refugees caused an overload in the Greek asylum system and, at times, made it inaccessible; others preferred to continue their journey to other EU countries and to claim asylum there.

We can find hundreds of specialists such as doctors, dentists, and others in Greece’s medical sector; some are department directors in Greek hospitals and clinics. They participate, make contributions, and are integrated fully into Greek society.

Other Palestinians are involved in politics, where a few are active members of left-wing political parties. Although no Palestinians have been elected to the Greek Parliament to this day, some have been elected to municipal councils.

The Society of the Palestinian Community has two branches, one in the capital, Athens, and the other in Thessaloniki. They host cultural and social events at national occasions and offer tutoring in Arabic language and sports activities. In Thessaloniki, the Union of Friends of Palestine brings together hundreds of Greek and Palestinian members, focusing on the enhancement of the friendship between the two peoples. Recently, they have sent a medical delegation of Greek and Palestinian medics to Palestine, arranged through the Embassy by the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Regardless of internal political differences, all Greek governments have stood in support of the Palestinian cause, endorsed the two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as Palestine’s capital, and voted in favour of the most crucial UN resolutions regarding Palestine.

University scholarships are awarded by the Greek Ministry of Education, and humanitarian aid is offered to the illegal immigrants who have fled from Syria and the Gaza Strip (around 2000 persons).

Besides offering consular services to all Palestinians and guidance and assistance for the newly arrived students, the Embassy of the State of Palestine approaches and strives to strengthen relations with the Greek public by hosting cultural events, gatherings, and discussion sessions on national Palestinian holidays. It engages in public diplomacy with municipalities, NGOs, and political parties by holding joint cultural and solidarity events. Beyond the official diplomatic relations, the embassy makes efforts to facilitate official exchange visits and to build bilateral agreements in various sectors. In December 2015, the embassy succeeded in obtaining an unanimous parliamentary vote on a resolution that called on the Greek Government to recognize the State of Palestine within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Another vote, this time on the decision to deem illegal the Israeli colonial settlements, is still pending. A Greek-Palestinian Parliamentary Friendship Group and, more recently, a Joint Ministerial Committee have been established.

Lately, tens of Palestinians have been coming to Greece in order to invest in the real estate sector.

The Greek people have always stood in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their national struggle to end the Israeli colonial occupation.
Palestinians in the diaspora have a “Palestinian radar.” We can spot a Palestinian in a room full of strangers and will gravitate to him or her. “Ana Dammi Filistini” (my blood is Palestinian) are not merely words from a beautiful song; they are the mantra of our lives. In the United States, people who come from Palestine or have a Palestinian lineage enjoy a unique sense of kinship, a relationship to both each other and their homeland. We are proud of our culture and heritage and consider ourselves part of the struggle. Our identity is printed in our hearts and demeanors. Regardless of whether we are immigrants, first-, third-, or fifth-generation descendants of Palestinians, we feel honored to be Palestinian Americans.

Whether we live in Detroit or Alabama, are Muslims or Christians, or come from Ramallah, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Al-Bireh, Beit Hanina, Birzeit, Jifna, or Deir Dibawan, we manage to build a mosque, church, social club, or cultural center to tie people together. One of the most successful organizations with the mission to connect people and promote the Palestinian way of life is the American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine (AFRP). Established sixty-four years ago by young university students who wanted to maintain their identity and connect with others throughout the country, the federation started with a small gathering and has grown to 40,000 members who live throughout the United States. Today, the AFRP has 33 branches in 33 states and publishes a bi-monthly magazine that provides its members with information about the community from the womb to the tomb.

The Ramallah family and their descendants in the diaspora are well versed in their history and conscious of the richness of their culture. They have made great strides and thrive in their new country, yet their souls lean toward Palestine. To keep lit the flame of their love for their country of origin, they have developed ways to keep the community together and support Palestine as much as they can. With the help of its members, the AFRP has developed numerous programs in which the communities in the United States and in Palestine can engage, all of them geared toward building connections between Palestinians who reside in the US and their brothers and sisters in Palestine.

These successful programs include scholarships for needy students in the US and Palestine (60 scholarships annually); annual medical missions in which health care professionals travel to Palestine to provide medical care, hold training sessions, and deliver needed equipment to health care facilities; as well as educational and cultural exchange missions, established in an effort to connect influential leaders in the US with the Palestinian people. Project Hope, a program geared towards college students, aims to link young adults with Palestine and the City of Ramallah and to awaken and cultivate the spirit of volunteerism in the community. Students aged 13 to 17 years from across the US gather in Camp Ramallah to experience Ramallah’s legacy and learn about Palestinian history and culture while enjoying adventurous outdoor experiences.

One of the most significant and enduring AFRP activities is the annual convention, held in major cities in the United States and in Palestine. This event brings together about 3000 members each year to celebrate, reenergize, and educate; it connects members with each other and engages them in issues that affect them. Long before the rise of social media, the AFRP convention was an eminent venue where many Palestinians found – and still find – their soulmates; numerous nuptials have occurred as a result of these conventions. But besides fostering social relations, these conventions serve as incubators for innovative ideas and programs such as the Memory Project in which the AFRP chronicles the stories of its members, archiving them for the future. These are but a sample of programs organized by the AFRP.

The AFRP is possibly the largest Palestinian organization that keeps the Palestinian people linked to their motherland, but it is by far not the only one. Communities such as...
Deir Dibwan, Al-Bireh, Birzeit, and others have built similar infrastructures to ensure that the people from their communities are aware of their family tree, ingraining in their members the importance of their Palestinian identity. Besides village-based organizations, Palestinian communities in the US have built many non-profit and civic organizations that aim to help keep Palestinian heritage, customs, and concerns at the forefront of their members’ minds and to raise awareness of Palestinian issues among their contemporaries. Organizations such as the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA) are committed to alleviating the suffering of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan. The UPA concentrates its engagement on supporting the long-term socio-economic and cultural development of Palestinian society. Likewise, the Palestinian American Community Center (PACC) in New Jersey’s sole mission is to sustain and strengthen ties to Palestinian traditions while empowering the entire community to safeguard its success and well-being. Like the AFRP, the PACC brings families together to keep them rooted in their ethnicity.

These are but some samples of organizations active in the United States. While these organizations play a pivotal role in connecting Palestinians with their homeland, they pale to the work that is being done by our younger generations, whose voices are being heard throughout the country. Generation X and millennials bring hope to their predecessors who set forth the foundations of the Palestinian heritage but have failed to execute their plans strategically due to fear of negative repercussions. These upcoming Palestinian-Americans possess more courage, drive, and intellect than their predecessors. Almost at every major university in the United States, one can find the footprint of work being done by Palestinian students. Despite many obstacles and a prevailing lack of adequate funding, our university students ensure that the voices of the Palestinian people are being heard. They build coalitions with members of other cultural, human rights, and civic institutions and participate in civic activities. They recruit and engage people from various backgrounds in speaking out for the Palestinian cause. For the first time in history, a number of university student councils have supported the Palestinian cause in the face of mounting powerful and well-financed opposition.

Activism and support for the Palestinian struggle and culture do not stop at university doors, Millennials and Generation X speak proudly of their heritage – even if it costs them friends and funds. Super models such as Gigi and Bella Hadid are part of the movement of young people who stand tall to proclaim their pride in their Palestinian ancestry. Comedians such as Mo Amer, Amer Zahr, and Maysoon Zayed use comedy to promote an accurate narrative of the Palestinian people and history.

Even though the American government’s opposition to the Palestinian people and their aspirations seems unsurmountable, especially in the halls of Congress, we can be inspired by congressmembers Justin Amash (Ramleh) and Rashida Talib (Beit Ur Al-Fouka) and their unwavering support of the Palestinian people. Despite threats, they steadfastly speak on behalf of the Palestinian people; they oppose the unequivocal support to the State of Israel and are not afraid to talk about Israel’s oppression of the Palestinian people. Both congresspeople have become an example that many wish to emulate. Inspired by their courage, many young Palestinian Americans throughout the United States are now venturing into politics and participate...
in local, state, and the federal government. A few are running for elective offices.

This was not the case in earlier years, when our elders, fearing for our safety and hoping to shield us from harm, encouraged us to stay away from politics. While they imbued us with Palestinian culture, they warned us to be careful when being vocal. Many instructed us to say that we are Syrian or Greek for fear that someone might harm us. One can count on one hand the number of people who in the 1980s and early 1990s worked in government and were not afraid to speak out. Very few people actively and publicly voiced their concern over the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinian people. We admired professors Edward Said, Rashid Khalidi, and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod but did not know how to communicate our position to mainstream society ourselves. Our voices during that era addressed mainly the Palestinian and Arab communities. Working for the regional government in Michigan and active in the Democratic Party, I frequently found myself alone when speaking out on behalf of the Palestinian community. Even though I became the first assistant county executive in my regional government and was a delegate for president Clinton at the Democratic convention, many in my community warned me of speaking out. They feared for both my safety and my career. There were some elements of truth in their fear, but, luckily for all of us, we have transcended this fear and are now moving forward on all fronts.

Today, the Palestinian community is engaged in all aspects of society. Instead of keeping the beauty of Palestine to ourselves, we now show the world our history and civilization without feeling abashed. For example, the first Palestinian museum opened in Washington DC in 2019. Its visitors come to learn about the Palestinian narrative and its stories. Exhibits portray the reality of Palestine and dispel the prevailing inaccuracies and stereotypes. Yet while they address the atrocities, they concentrate on history, culture, and civilizations.

On a personal level, the Palestinian people in the United States have achieved the American dream. They are considered among the most successful immigrants in the country. The strides the Palestinian community has made on all fronts is impressive and amazing. An internal survey of our community found that the Ramallah community in the diaspora is 25 percent more educated than average Americans. Our college and post-college graduation rates are second only to Asian Americans. You can find Palestinian Americans leading in every corporation, in hospitals, and in various non-profit organizations. We excel as physicians, lawyers, and engineers. We are the entrepreneurs who are making America great, the educators who are molding the future of America and Palestine, and the journalists who bring accuracy to the news. We are the inventors who advance technology and the philanthropists who help civil and human society, both in the US and in Palestine.

That is not to say that our community does not face problems. Like all societies, we have the good, the bad, and the ugly. Some of us still hold on to traditions that long have become outdated. These people impose restrictions on their children, especially their daughters, that drive them away from their heritage. Some still believe that we can circumvent the system and succeed with our aspirations. Indeed, with education and the flow of global information, things are changing for the better. Collectively, our ancestors can be proud of our accomplishments.

Our ancestors gave us roots and wings, and we soar with pride, holding on to our Palestinian identity.
More than 13 million Palestinians in the world at the end of 2019

- 5 million in the West Bank & Gaza Strip
- 1.6 million in 1948 Palestine
- 6 million in Arab Countries
- 727K Rest of the World

Life Expectancy at Birth (2018)

- Lebanon: 79 Years
- Palestine: 74 Years
- Jordan: 74 Years
- Egypt: 72 Years
- Iraq: 70 Years

GDP Per Capita

- $8,270 in Lebanon
- $3,198 in Palestine
- $2,549 in Egypt

Fertility Rate

- West Bank & Gaza Strip: 4.1 (2013)
- Palestinians in Jordan: 3.3 (2010)
- Palestinians in Lebanon: 2.7 (2017)
- Palestinians in Syria: 2.5 (2010)
We have no accurate numbers to assess the size of the Palestinian expatriate community nor do we have exact information regarding their conditions or the full extent of their achievements. The main reasons for this lack of information include the conditions under which Palestinian diaspora communities were established. Palestinian immigrants arrived in their adopted countries holding a variety of means of identification. In most cases, they presented Ottoman documents, British papers, refugee identity papers, or Jordanian or Israeli passports. Only after the signing of the Oslo Agreement, the Palestinians who in 1967 lived in the occupied territory (Gaza and the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem) and their descendants received Palestinian passports. But these are a minority compared to those who live outside Palestine.

But Palestinians have not needed official papers to identity with Palestine. The Orientalist statements of numerous Zionist and Israeli leaders who have claimed that Palestine were a “desert inhabited by a few Bedouins,” or “a land without a people for a people without a land,” as well as Golda Meir’s statement that “there are no Palestinians” and Ben Gurion’s false prediction that “the old will die and the young will forget” have proven to be political marketing to justify their policies and wishful thinking. These assertions were far from objective descriptions of reality.

A decisive moment in Palestine’s history, the Nakba caused the forcible displacement of almost two thirds of the Palestinian people. Yet while it shaped the identity of its nation, it did not cause it to vanish. On the contrary! The year 1948 marks the beginning of thousands of stories that reflect the resilience of a nation that is determined to keep its name and country, Palestine, on the map.

Many could not handle the march into exile and died on the way. Countless babies did not survive the cold winter of 1949 because they were without safe shelter. But many of those who survived the Nakba have become successful, established themselves all over the world, and are contributing to all aspects of society. They form the continuation of a Palestine that was disrupted in 1948 and are testimony to a country that has some of the highest educational, economic, and artistic indicators in the Arab world.

Even before 1948, interaction with different cultures, learning foreign languages, or setting up enterprises were activities not unfamiliar to many Palestinians. Palestine was home to a sophisticated urban elite with many international connections. Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, Nazareth, Gaza, and the surrounding villages all had dealt with foreigners. Moreover, there were the Palestinian emigrants who had established themselves abroad before the Nakba, such as Palestinians in the Americas who largely emigrated in a broad migratory wave from east to west in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Unlike other immigrants, such as the Irish, Italians or Greeks, Palestinians soon had no place to go back to.

As expressed satirically by Palestinian-American lawyer and comedian Amer Zaher, “We have to be successful because we don’t have a Plan B.”
Jala, and Beit Sahour. Yet locations such as Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, Safad, Jaffa, Taybeh, Deir Jarir, and even the Druze town of Horfeish are mentioned, among others, as places of origin as well. A quick search into the archives of “The Arab World” (“El Mundo Arabe”), a paper that for decades published news on the social, cultural, and political activities of the Arabs in Chile, indicates the achievements of Palestinian lawyers and medical doctors during the 1940s. Their campaign against the 1947 partition of Palestine aimed to secure Chile’s abstention in the voting on UN Resolution 181. One of Chile’s first reactions to the Nakba was the professionalization of the “Palestino” football team. This was done with the main goal of keeping the name Palestine alive. The move was successful, as Club Deportivo Palestino moved to the Chilean top league in 1955 and stayed within the top teams of Chilean football for almost 70 years. Today, the team is sponsored by Bank of Palestine in what has become a role model for relations between the Palestinian private sector and Palestinian diaspora organizations.

In North America, several Palestinian communities had been established after the First World War. Many of the early immigrants coming from Ramallah and the surrounding villages, they constituted the first generations of university graduates who have well integrated into their new societies. Soon after 1948, Palestinians began adapting to their new realities abroad. In the 1950s, the young generation established the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), based on a student movement that had its roots in the 1920s, to represent the increasing number of Palestinians who were seeking a higher education. From the resulting professionals, many moved to the Arab Gulf where they were instrumental in the building of institutions. For example, president Mahmoud Abbas, a refugee from Safad, worked in 1957 as a teacher in Qatar, having pursued his education in Syria. And even though many had lost all their belongings, resources, and investments in 1948 – especially those who had relied on agriculture – successful Palestinian enterprises such as the Arab Bank, established in Jerusalem by Abdel Majid Shoman, or the Mercedes Benz franchise for the Middle East, held by the Gargour family in Jaffa, endured and continued operating after having moved their headquarters to Amman and Beirut respectively.

Among the most successful enterprises established by Palestinian refugees is the Consolidated Contractors Company (CCC), founded by Said Khoury and Hassib Sabbagh from Safad. Many Palestinian engineers found jobs in what became the largest construction company in the region. Another source of employment for Palestinian engineers was Al-Hani Construction and Trading firm, established by Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan, a refugee from Jaffa who participated in the foundation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and established a foundation that has successfully contributed to the development of the homeland. The turbulent fate of Yousef Beidas, the Palestinian banker who succeeded in Beirut yet ended up being persecuted by the Lebanese State during the sixties, shows that things were not always easy. Nevertheless, many Palestinians managed to excel. By the 1950s, some of the largest textile companies in Chile and Peru were owned by notable Palestinian families such as (Abu) Yarur, Sumar and Sa’id. Indeed, success stories have continued to multiply and cover all aspects of life. They range from Palestinians serving as diplomats in New York and other foreign capitals (representing Arab and other

Considering the many achievements of Palestinians in exile and in the diaspora, one may simply call to mind the verses written by the late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish: “I shall write a phrase more precious than honey and kisses: ‘Palestinian she was and still is.”
countries), to government officials, medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, technicians, businesspersons, artists, university professors, and more.

The family of John Sununu, President George W. Bush’s chief of staff, once owned a house in Talbiyah, West Jerusalem. This was not far away from the Bisharat Villa, known as “Haroun Al Rashid,” that was looted in 1948 and later occupied by Israel’s prime minister Golda Meir. Their grandchild, George Bisharat, is a professor and one of the most distinguished commentators on Middle Eastern issues in the United States. In the same neighborhood was the home of the late Edward Said, a professor at Columbia University who is considered to be the greatest among Palestinian intellectuals and whose master piece, Orientalism, constituted a turning point in the studies of the East. He was very close to another outstanding intellectual, Ibrahim Abu Lughod, a refugee from Jaffa (known by Palestinians as the “bride of the sea”) who lived for many years in the United States, with one of his main concerns being the education of Palestinians. When after the signing of the Oslo Agreements a number of foreign consultants were sent to Palestine, Abu Lughod asserted, “We cannot depend on the achievements of other societies. We need to generate our own specialists on the ground.” He returned to Palestine to engage in and contribute to forming Palestinian professionals. His efforts are honored through the Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute of International Studies at Birzeit University. His funeral in May 2001 ended with a “secret” burial in his hometown Jaffa, as Israel would not have permitted his return to birthplace, even if in a coffin. Dozens of Palestinian flags were raised in the “bride of the sea,” honoring Abu Lughod’s dedication to his country and his people.

The successes of Palestinian Diaspora members are various, whether collectively, such as in the Palestinian football team in Chile, or individually, as in the case of thousands worldwide. An article in The Atlantic, published in 2012 in the context of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney stating, while visiting Israel, that Palestinians are poor “because of their culture,” quoted former President Bill Clinton as saying, “I have never met a poor Palestinian in the US.” The message is clear: Wherever Palestinians have been given the freedom to create and grow, they have not only succeeded but also become important contributors to their host countries’ development and social fabric. For this reason, many are not surprised to see Rashida Tlaib and Justin Amash being elected to the US Congress, Diamela Eltit receiving the Chilean National Prize for Literature, Dr. Imad Meri being recognized by the Russian Ministry of Health, Dr. Ramzi Khamis being hailed as one of the most talented cardiologists in London, or leading scientist Nujoud Merancy working for NASA, among many others.

Freedom is precisely what Palestinians have been denied in the homeland. And while some have insisted that economic development is possible under Israeli occupation, as voiced recently in president Trump’s plans, most agree that without sovereign control over its natural resources, borders, and destiny, Palestinians cannot possibly reach their full potential. Even though they are a resilient nation that has proven elsewhere what it can accomplish and could make of Palestine — if given the chance.

While the lack of official figures certainly undermines the prospects of networking and of cooperation between the Palestinian diaspora and the homeland, it should not be considered an unsurmountable obstacle to the implementation of changes into relevant Palestinian structures that would allow these institutions to further integrate all Palestinians.

The integration of their successes into the national narrative, moreover, will not erase what Palestinians have faced in exile, including the persecution of Palestinian refugees in Iraq after the US invasion, the further displacement of Palestinian refugees in Syria, or the dramatic conditions that despite numerous attempts at eliminating the term Palestine from the international lexicon, Palestinians not only continue to exist, they are actually thriving.

Xavier Abu Eid is a political scientist specialized in international relations and diplomacy. He dedicates this article to the memory of his grandfather, Judeh Farah Abu Eid, a stonemcutter who left Palestine after the Nakba but made sure his oldest grandson would never forget his roots.
To refer to the Palestinian community in Chile is literally to speak equally about Chile and Palestine. As some estimations suggest that as many as close to half a million Palestinians and their descendants of various generations live in Chile, the sons and daughters of Palestine have become an integral part of the country’s social fabric; they enjoy a unique status and positive appreciation from the rest of the close to 19 million Chilean nationals.

Most Palestinian immigrants came from the Bethlehem area, including Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour. Others have come from Jerusalem, Ramallah, Beit Safafa, Silwan, Jifna, Bir Zeit, and Taybeh, among others. They began their lives in Chile as street merchants, then moved into formal commerce, and have turned into leading founders of Chile’s national industry. Mostly a rural country in the past, Chile’s process of industrialization was in many aspects led by Palestinians, particularly in the textiles sector. Others became active in banking services, retail, and a diversity of other economic areas. Thus, some of the first industries expropriated by the government of President Salvador Allende (1970–1973) belonged to the Bethlehemite families (Abu) Yarur, Hirmas, and Said, as well as the Sumar family from Beit Jala.

The contributions made by Palestinians in Chile reach beyond the economy, however, and involve all aspects of society. For example, a significant number of parliamentarians have been of Palestinian origin, beginning in the 1940s, and some have been cabinet members. In fact, the current minister of women’s affairs is a descendant of the Jarufe (Kharoufe) family from Beit Jala. In the arts and culture, national awards have been given to individuals of Palestinian origin. In sports, the first Chilean to obtain a gold medal in the Olympic Games was Nicolas Massu (Massou), originally from Beit Jala. In the arts and culture, national awards have been given to individuals of Palestinian origin. In sports, the first Chilean to obtain a gold medal in the Olympic Games was Nicolas Massu (Massou), originally from Beit Jala. In the arts and culture, national awards have been given to individuals of Palestinian origin. In sports, the first Chilean to obtain a gold medal in the Olympic Games was Nicolas Massu (Massou), originally from Beit Jala.

In general, the contributions made by Palestinians to Chile in various fields and aspects is not only unquestionable; it is well acknowledged by Chileans.

Palestinian presence permeates the entire country. A Chilean saying states that for a town to be referred as such, there are three requisites: it must have a priest, a police officer, and a Palestinian. This statement, made by president-at-the-time Ricardo Lagos in an address by to the Palestinian community, has become rather popular.

Palestinians’ geographic distribution has given rise to numerous Palestinian community organizations that are spread all over the country, reflecting another distinctive aspect of our community: it enjoys a diversity of organizations, the history of some reaching back more than 100 years. They include schools, charitable...
organizations that benefit Palestinians and non-Palestinians as well as our people in the beloved homeland, and social organizations that include clubs and associations solely aiming to defend the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

We expect for Chile to be vocal when it comes to the respect of international law and human rights in Palestine. Today, for example, the largest committee in the Chilean congress is the Committee of Solidarity with Palestine that involves 100 out of the 155 members.

It would be impossible to speak of the Palestinian community in Chile without talking about football, our biggest pride. Club Deportivo Palestino, a team created around 1920, has for decades held very high the colors of the Palestinian flag, both in Chile and in Latin America – while elsewhere many attempts were made at deleting Palestine and her people from the map. Here in the southern country, every weekend the flag of Palestine is raised in a different stadium, with local media showing our colors and flag. The team is sponsored by Bank of Palestine.

Just as the Palestinian community is part of Chile’s social fabric, it is also inherent to Palestine’s social fabric and identity. As President Abbas said during his first visit, “I came from Palestine to Palestine.” We are the guardians of an old Palestine. In Chile, we still eat dishes that in Palestine have become merely a part of memories. In any home or restaurant, you can regularly eat massareen (stuffed intestines), and charshat (stuffed stomach) is another common dish. The majority still speak Arabic with the “chaf” (pronounced tsh). Here, the Knafeh is “tshnaf,” and it is not from Nablus but from Bethlehem, i.e., without cheese.

In other words, in Chile we live and keep a share of Palestine not only in our hearts but in all aspects of our daily lives. We are Chileans, yes, but undoubtedly, we are also Palestinians.

From Chile, we continue to work and dream every day – just like any other Palestinian – that one day soon, we will see a liberated, free Palestine where people live in peace.

Diego Khamis is a lawyer and the secretary general of the Palestinian Club in Santiago, Chile.
It is evident that the main actors engaged in ending the foreign occupation of Palestine are those of us who physically remain in geographic and historical Palestine, closely followed by those who are living the misfortune of dwelling in refugee camps in adjacent countries. But we should not forget the important and irreplaceable role of the Palestinian communities that live far from the motherland in the so-called diaspora, also called the expatriate population. For their engagement to be effective, however, these communities must be well organized and connected to the Palestinian state and resistance institutions, particularly the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (PLO).

According to accepted estimates, the Palestinian population approaches 14 million, close to 0.2% of the world population. Moreover, despite the brutal, previously planned and methodically executed ethnic cleansing of 1948, we are again the majority in historical Palestine. Close to 7.1 million Palestinians inhabit this geographic area, 5.3 million in the so-called West Bank and Gaza and an estimated 1.8 million in the land taken in 1948. The other around 7 million Palestinians live, mainly as refugees, in the countries of the region, in the Arab countries, as well as all over the world. It is estimated that around 700 thousand persons with Palestinian lineage live in Latin America; some say that this estimate includes the United States and Canada, whereas others claim that the Palestinians living on the entire American continent exceed 1 million.

Since the 1970s, it has been widely acknowledged that the Palestinian communities that reside outside Palestine and beyond the Middle East play an important role in the fight against the occupation. For this reason, numerous movements and organizations to unite the diaspora communities have been launched, supported by the PLO. In Brazil, where the Palestinian community may number 70 thousand members, dozens of Palestinian societies have sprung up. Originally, they were composed mostly of immigrants, since their organization started among expatriates who had recently arrived in Brazil, and extended to the new Palestinian-Brazilian generation that was just beginning to be born.

The first community meeting of national character and with a view towards organizing a general Palestinian entity took place in 1979 in Brazil’s federal capital, Brasília. In the following year, the first congress of the Palestinian Arab Federation of Brazil (FEPAL) was held in Porto Alegre, the capital city of Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost Brazilian state where most of the Palestinian-Brazilian community is concentrated. Other organizations sprang up, to varying degrees and with varying success, in other countries on the continent, calling themselves societies and federations.

Special factors facilitated the setting up of these community organizations in the early days. First: the Palestinians targeted by these initiatives tended to be newcomers to Brazil. This facilitated both, approaching them in terms of the Palestinian question and communication in Arabic, still spoken by many back then. Second – this reason not always being...
The big question is always: What is the purpose of these communities? As a rule, the answer seems simple: To preserve traditions, culture, and language, keep a connection to Palestine, and, of course, be part of the resistance. To a large extent, that has been achieved. Without these communities, we would no longer have even residual traces of what we call “Palestinism” amongst many Palestinian expatriates.

This problem has always existed, however, and makes the current level of organization among the Palestinian community in Brazil even more commendable, especially when compared to other countries on the continent that are much smaller and where communities tend to be concentrated in only one region, sometimes even in one city. The biggest problem today is the change in the level of awareness and involvement found among the new generations, when compared to the first, immigrant generation.

The Arabic language is no longer spoken, which has caused the loss of connections with Palestine, both among family members and as a source of inspiration and information. Moreover, most Palestinian-Brazilians are no longer traders, nor are they located on more or less one street. Today, they are professionals who work in various fields and are spread over the entire country. Many (in some regions, the majority) are not particularly concerned with Palestinian issues, let alone connected with Palestinian organizations and leaders; they do not know the history of Palestine or its liberation movement. Most of them have children, sometimes even grandchildren, who were born in Brazil and whose attitudes regarding Palestine and its cause are even more precarious.

The situation is delicate in the Palestinian expatriate community in Brazil. Its gravity becomes even greater when considering the challenges it is faced with and must overcome. The first task is to revive contacts within and among the communities, organizing them and inserting them into the Palestinian context. In other words, we must re-Palestinize the generations born here. The second task is to organize the community, i.e., integrate this community with the Palestinian-Brazilian institutions. And the third is to find ways to turn Palestinian-Brazilians into activist, militants of human rights and the Palestinian cause, and thus form the new cadres necessary for the maintenance.
of our identity, the continuation of the national struggle, and the preservation of Palestinian institutions, culture, and heritage.

Some first steps have already been taken. One of them, very importantly, is the rescue of the youth organization. Already, it has held informative sessions, including a specific plenary session at the 10th FEPAL Congress (held from April 26 to 28, 2019) followed by a regional meeting that included dozens of participants. Also, a youth secretariat was created at the congress as part of FEPAL's executive committee. In another important step, Palestinian-Brazilian women organized themselves, also holding a special plenary session at the 10th FEPAL Congress and creating an unprecedented women’s secretariat – that at this time is preparing the first women’s meeting in Brazil. Increased attention has been given to refugees, which has led to the creation of yet another exclusive secretariat in FEPAL’s executive committee.

Prior to the 10th FEPAL Congress, we already sought to organize the community by professional affinities. Thus, a collective of jurists of Palestinian origin was born, another one of health professionals, and one of technology experts. In the midst of the 10th Congress, a group was born that brings together Palestinians and their descendants involved in public service.

These have been and remain formulas that render effective efforts that aim to recover FEPAL’s ties with its community members, also attracting them to the cause – judging by the successful 10th Congress in which many of the delegates were elected from the grassroots due to new organizational methods. All these developments made this event the largest Palestinian-Brazilian meeting in history.

Another highlight: 40 percent of FEPAL’s new board is made up of women, another unprecedented development in our history.

A challenge that has intensified in recent years, with severe setbacks for the Palestinian cause, is the change of political climate in Brazil. It has affected also the Brazilian-Palestinian community, its society and institutions and their relations to Brazilian society, political parties, governments, parliaments, media, and other social organizations. We need a new and reinvigorated strategy, both politically and socially, in order to face and overcome this new adverse situation. As outlined above, efforts towards this end are underway.

Notable is the potential impact of the Palestinian-Brazilian community, given Brazil’s strategic importance on the continent, seconded only by the United States. Brazil is a leader in Latin America and the Caribbean and an integrating actor in BRICS, the association of five major emerging national economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. It is one of the largest countries in terms of territory and population and one of the largest economies on the globe. In addition, Brazil has one of the largest Arab emigree communities in the world – a significant factor in terms of sympathies with the Palestinian cause and regarding the organization of its expatriate community.

In this larger context, we must consider the importance of Brazil and its Palestinian community. Into this framework we must place the work we can carry out, whether through FEPAL, the PLO, or the Palestinian government. New strategies must be designed and methodically applied. Delegations should visit Brazil to meet both high-level Brazilian political, social, and religious authorities and leaders as well as members of our Palestinian community, both to raise their morale and to make them fellow protagonists in addressing the cause.

Simple initiatives can quickly improve the current situation in Brazil. One of them, not very complicated yet very important, is related to communication. It is essential and urgent that all official Palestinian websites and communication, whether issued by the state or resistance-related institutions and others, be published in Portuguese and Spanish. In this way, messages may reach and be understood by almost the entire continent as well as by speakers of these two languages in Europe and Africa. In other words: we can increase our reach and communicate, beyond our own expatriate communities, with an audience of hundreds of millions of people who do not speak Arabic or English. There is untapped potential. Let us access it.

Ualid Rabah is president of the Palestinian Arab Federation of Brazil–FEPAL. The son of Palestinian immigrants from Kobar (father) and ‘Arura (mother) who arrived in Brazil in 1960 and 1965 respectively, Ualid was born in December 1966 as the first of four children, all born in Toledo (Paraná). Trained during his secondary technical education in agriculture and fish farming and holding university degrees in economics and law, he owns a law firm that administers portfolios of clients engaged in various enterprises. He is married to journalist and writer Cassiana Pizaia with whom he has two teenage children, Sofia and Gabriel.
Basem Labib Hishmeh was born in Jerusalem on June 8, 1941, to Labib and Frida Hishmeh. Raised in Ramallah along with his three siblings Isam, Salwa, and Marwan, Basem was 15 years old when he and his family emigrated to the United States. Church members in Cleveland, Ohio, sponsored the family. These strangers helped the Hishmeh’s find housing, jobs, and schools and adjust to life in their new country.

Basem soon learned the impact of supporting each other. One of the families that had sponsored the Hishmeh’s helped Basem receive a scholarship to a private school for boys. For a year-and-a-half he lived with this family during the week and went home only on weekends. Having graduated from high school, he managed to get a full scholarship to attend Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, Ohio. Four years later, he graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Shortly after he had taken on his first position, working for Bailey Meter in Cleveland, Basem met Muna Shami, the daughter of Yousef and Naimeh Shami from Ramallah who had emigrated to Cleveland, Ohio, a few years after 1948. Two years after they met, Basem and Muna were married.

Basem was quite a success, taking on various positions in different departments and studying towards an MBA degree at night. By then, Basem and Muna had two children, Amal and Robert. When Basem started to work in the international department, he began to tinker with the idea of working overseas. He eventually accepted a job in Saudi Arabia and packed up his family to accompany him. In his new position of general manager at a company that manufactured floor tiles, Basem was extremely successful. The children attended the American International School together with children from 36 different countries, and the family traveled all over the world, gaining many experiences and meeting new people wherever they visited.

Nevertheless, when after five and a half years in Saudi Arabia, Basem was presented with the opportunity to buy into a manufacturing company in New Jersey, he immediately accepted, and eventually he and his family moved back to the United States. Manufacturing water heaters and boilers for commercial buildings, Basem employed around 125 persons in New Jersey and circa 100 representatives around the country and worldwide.

After having owned and run the company for 25 years, Basem and Muna decided to sell it. As discussions regarding the sale were underway, they developed the idea to start a foundation, knowing that they had to help others as they had been helped as immigrants. Thus, the Muna and Basem Hishmeh Foundation was established with the aim of helping children gain exposure to the arts. Organizations in the United States and in Palestine that give underprivileged children the opportunity to learn all forms of the arts receive funds through this foundation. (For more information, please visit www.thehishmehfoundation.org.)

When during twice-yearly trips to Palestine, Muna and Basem noticed that there was a shortage of playgrounds, they met with Hashim Shawa, Bank of Palestine’s chairman of the board, and decided to build playgrounds in a joint project titled Al-Bayyara (Orange Orchard). Shortly after, other organizations joined in, and bayarat are now being built all over Palestine.

In Nisf Jbail, the village of Muna’s father, a community center was built, the little church in the village was restored, and 1,200 olive trees and about 200 fruit trees were planted in the nearby city of Beit Imreen, making a crucial contribution to the reforestation of Palestine. In October 2019, the first olives were harvested and the olive oil was shipped to New Jersey.

Because he strongly believes in paying back to his home country, Basem is currently involved in a number of development projects in Palestine, helping local people and supporting the economy.

In March 2019, ACCESS of Dearborn, Michigan, honored Muna and Basem with the ACCESS Arab Americans of the Year Award.
Fernando Aguad's life has been marked by his Palestinian ancestry. “When my family got together, they would talk about their olives and their land, but mainly they would speak about the apricots. They spent hours harvesting them and more hours comparing them with the apricots of Palestine. Everyone agreed that in Palestine the apricots were sweeter,” he reminisces, referring to the ancient *mishmish bajjali*, the *baladi* (lit. country) apricot. As a member of the Palestinian Club, the main social institution of the Palestinian community in Santiago, he met many people who brought him closer to Palestine. Encouraged by his late sister Sonia and a group of friends, Fernando learned more and more about the Palestinian cause. Instrumental at this stage of his life was the late Eugenio Chahuan (Shahwan), the founder of the Center for Arab Studies at the University of Chile.

Whoever follows closely the news about Palestino must have noticed that Aguad’s taking up the club presidency marked a turning point. Fernando just about made it his personal challenge to advance the team that at the time was not achieving the expected results. And things did change. “In 2012, I organized an event with the players at the Palestinian Club,” he remembers. “I told them about Mohammad Assaf’s victory in the Arab Idol contest. How he came from Gaza and made great efforts to finally be able to give our people happiness and pride. I told them that we could do that too. We also could give the Palestinian people who live under occupation a reason to feel proud. ‘We can give them happiness,’ I said. ‘And I’m sure this is how they feel when they see our colors, our flag. When they watch us playing in the most important stadiums of Latin America, against great teams like Boca Juniors, River Plate, or Flamengo.’”

When the map of historic Palestine was added to the jersey, a campaign against the team was initiated by Zionist organizations. Yet neither the team nor Aguad were intimidated. “The team is not political, the map is a symbol of our identity. This is how Palestine was in 1920 when the team was created,” Aguad stated.

Fernando is proud of having sent the mayor of La Cisterna, the municipality in which the football team is based, to Palestine, followed by an event that allowed the mayor to share his experiences with other Chilean authorities. Under his presidency, the team adopted the slogan “More than a team, a whole nation” Aguad wants to open up the team to include all Palestinians. “I invite everyone to become a member of our team, to get the jerseys, to follow us,” he asserts.

Fernando was decorated in 2015 by the State of Palestine with the “Star of Palestine” for his role as club president and for his engagement in promoting the Palestinian cause. When asked about a dream, he did not think for a second before he stated, “I wish to create awareness about Palestine, to let people know how the daily reality of the Palestinian people is, how they struggle for freedom, for statehood. And I wish to accomplish all of this through our football team.”
The last decade has seen an increasing interest in both Palestine and the ways in which settler colonialism is understood and critically analyzed. In *Global Palestine*, Collins offers a refreshing perspective. He argues that Palestine – unlike how it has traditionally been placed – is not a passive actor shaped by transnational processes such as militarization, racialization, and capitalistic exploitation, among others, but that it is also a shaper of these processes. Nevertheless, it serves as an indicator of broader, interlinked global power relations that are at play. Making a distinct point of discard prior literature that falls into Orientalistic or patronizing, top-down views of subaltern populations, Collins identifies and criticizes this outdated mode of historiography, steering Palestine to the center of global analysis.

A phenomenal piece of literature, *Global Palestine* is designed to uproot the reader’s preexisting beliefs. He presents an alternative assessment of the relationships between global power structures within a settler colonial framework on the one hand, and critically examines the ways in which we have been educated – and frequently misled – into perceiving these structures on the other.

The author begins by discussing the dangers of falling into the trap of Israeli exceptionalist claims. Exceptionalism is identified as one of the driving forces preventing the expansion of comparative case studies involving Palestine. If the circumstances surrounding the Israeli occupation are exceptional, then comparisons with other colonial and settler-colonial projects can be discredited by skeptics and believers in this project and deemed illegitimate. This view is a key tool weaponized by settler-colonial regimes in order to invalidate valuable research and excuse violence, with colonial expansion and domination forging on all-the-while. As the author makes clear, the analyzing of Palestine from a settler-colonial lens in an effort to combat Zionism and Israeli exceptionalism has been one of several turning points in recent years, facilitating a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of Palestine’s global relevance.

One of the author’s primary assertions, to keep in mind throughout the book, is that the global importance of Palestine appears to continue – increasing at an inverse proportion to the amount of territory controlled by Palestinians – and that this phenomenon is no coincidence. Placing settler colonialism at the nucleus of the discussion, the author strategically breaks the book into chapters that can be read in a linear fashion or assessed and enjoyed individually in order to embrace the presented concept. They are titled: Approaching Global Palestine, Colonization, Securitization, Acceleration, Occupation, and Decolonization. With each chapter serving its own unique purpose, the author delves deeply into the ways in which the measures of settler-colonial state building are intrinsically linked to Palestine in a world that struggles to decolonize and recover from the results of the global politics of settler colonialism.

Drawing a large portion of his theoretical premise from the works of celebrated minds such as Edward Said, Karl Marx, Frantz Fanon, Michel Foucault and others, the accumulation of knowledge and philosophical input make this read challenging, yet irresistible.

Not a light read, *Global Palestine* is a brilliant piece of academic literature and deserves the proper time to be digested and reflected upon. A thought-provoking and necessary text, *Global Palestine* sits at the frontier of groundbreaking approaches by which the Israeli settler colonial regime should be discussed and addressed.
Wissam Boustany is a prestigious Lebanese-Palestinian flautist whose passion, musicality and charisma have shaped his reputation as a world-class soloist. Whether he performs classical, baroque, romantic, or improvisational music, Wissam’s love for humanity takes his audience on an emotional, captivating musical journey.

Wissam is a Trustee and Music Advisor of PalMusic UK, a UK-based charity that was established to empower and support aspiring young Palestinian musicians on their music education journey. PalMusic UK has teamed up with the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Palestine (ESNCM) to establish the Gaza Long Distance Learning (LDL) programme. LDL overcomes the severe restrictions imposed on the strip by offering master classes via Skype for students at ESNCM’s Gaza branch, connecting them with renowned musicians such as Karin Norlen (viola) and Aleksander Szram (piano).

In March, Wissam will visit Palestine on a mission. Primarily, he will serve as a jury member at the 6th Palestine National Music Competition in Jerusalem. But also, he will perform on Sunday, March 22, alongside Aleksander Szram and Karin Norlen in the “Jasmine Festival” at Al-Sharjah Hall at ESNCM’s Ramallah branch. This performance aims to raise awareness of and funds for PalMusic UK’s LDL Programme in Gaza, enabling it to continue enriching the lives of budding musicians and audiences here in Palestine.

Wissam’s music, vision, and mission surpass limits. In 2018, his exceptional ability to inspire and empower lead him to establish the Pro Youth Philharmonia (PYP) that by now has completed two successful tours, inviting prominent soloists and professional orchestral musicians to collaborate in rehearsals and concerts as leaders and mentors. These guests help shape and inspire the young emerging musicians, providing a valuable opportunity to gain experience and establish connections within the wider professional orchestra scene.

Wissam, in short, harnesses music towards humanity and love of life.
This project studies a selection of century-old photographs of various historic sites, urbanscapes, and landscapes in the city of Jerusalem in an attempt to understand its present-day reality. Delving into the transformation of the city’s architectural and urban build-up, the project reveals layers of its reconfiguration by and for the new occupiers. It also exposes Jerusalem’s reconstructed historicity and remodelled image, created to serve a claimed narrative.

Through a process of overlaying present-day photographs, taken from the very spot where historic photographs were shot, Persekian is emulating archaeologists in excavating layers of history, zooming in on specific sites, and following leads through Jerusalem’s streets, buildings, walls, and hills.

Persekian’s project places the act of photo documenting and archiving at the forefront of historical research and studies. It shifts our perception of old photos of Jerusalem – holy sites, souks, alleyways, and nomads – from mere romantic and nostalgic representations of “glorious” bygone times to documents that are rich with information, facts, and real stories.

The exhibition is structured around 15 areas or locations in Jerusalem, each featuring a central pair of photographs in a (freestanding) light box and contains several other images and wall text that narrate the history and unveil the process of change that has taken place over the last century. A set of images, reproduced as transparencies in A4 size, work in pairs, representing past and present, to be examined separately and together against a hanging lightbox, just as doctors used to inspect x-rays before the introduction of digital imagery. Through these interactive techniques (the lightboxes and transparencies), the audience is actively engaged in the processes of examining the city’s urbanscapes and sites across time and space, discovering and learning about its past, present, and what possibly is envisioned for its future.

In this expansive presentation, Persekian captures the intrigues of colonialism and its aftermath in Jerusalem through photo-overlays, collages, plans, renderings, expert reports, and eye-witness accounts, creating a body of work that is both visually and intellectually engaging.
our hundred meters below sea level, on the shores of the Dead Sea, a small, old, rusty refinery is bustling around the clock to produce the finest and richest mineral salt in the world.

No sign on Highway 90, the road that crosses the Jordan valley from north to south, points to the refinery. On a junction to the north of the Dead Sea, a narrow potholed road leads to abandoned buildings in the east, a place that some years ago used to bustle with tourists and bathers yet now features merely a few ghost-like buildings. (Location: 31.774603, 35.515253)

According to Hussam Hallak, the CEO of the company, the Dead Sea has retracted over a distance of 1.5 kilometers over the past 50 years, leaving behind the refinery. Over 30 percent of the Dead Sea has evaporated. The sad reality of the lowest lake on our planet.

This refinery is at the heart of the West Bank Salt Company, established 60 years ago by Othman Hallak, a chemical engineer who graduated from Ohio University. It is the only Palestinian company operating at the shores of the Dead Sea.

In 1964, Hallak reached an agreement with the Jordanian government and assumed the ownership of what was then a small Jordanian/British Potash factory to reopen it as a salt extraction plant.

Since then, the company has been producing traditional commercial table salt that is delivered to markets in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan. Dead Sea brine is pumped into 12 ponds that spread over the 600 dunums operated by the refinery. The saline is left for eight months to evaporate in the hot, arid Dead Sea climate where temperatures reach over 40°C and there is very little precipitation. Once crystalized, the salt is milled in the factory.
When Elizabeth, a Chilean-Palestinian philanthropist and TV host, and I tried to think of a recipe that links Palestine to its diaspora – a recipe that changed with time yet remained a favorite among Palestinians who had left to faraway places in the early 1900s – maftoul, came to our minds, or more specifically, marmaon. (Maftoul is the general name in Palestine, and marmaon is very specific to Bethlehem.)

Elizabeth asserts, “Marmaon is very popular among Chilean Palestinians. It reminds us of our original home in Bethlehem, Palestine. This is a quicker version than the original marmaon, adapted to our faster lifestyle. It is basically pasta, cooked in a tomato sauce made of chicken- or meat broth and garnished with whatever meat that we choose to use.”

“We cannot do it every day in the traditional way because we don’t have the time. And even though my grandmother would rise from her grave if she knew I’m still doing the “fake marmaon,” we love it, and it makes us long for Palestine! Marmaon is a dish we serve either as a quick dinner or, in the more elaborate version, when we are having a family gathering. It is always there!”

“Our family business is a meat processing company where the sausages are our ‘stars.’ So in my house, marmaon and sausages are a perfect match! They are extremely tasty, with pine nuts and parsley, and they are spicy! And since you can find delicious sausages in Bethlehem, we thought that combining marmaon with sausages will be the perfect marriage between the Palestinians in Palestine and the Palestinians in the diaspora. After all, Fadi performs his magic by masterfully transforming traditional Palestinian cuisine, adding touches of the modern world. What we are presenting to you is a sublime dish that pleases not only our palates but also the ones of our children.”

We sincerely wish that everyone will enjoy our marmaon recipe!

**Ingredients**

- 18 Palestinian lamb or beef sausages
- 100 g chickpeas
- 500 g fresh tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 150 g tomato concentrate
- ½ liter water
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 18 Palestinian lamb or beef sausages
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground dried chili
- 1 small onion
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 500 g dry maftool/marmaon
- 1 liter of chicken stock
- 50 ml olive oil
- parsley (to garnish the dish)

**Method**

1. **Prepare the tomato-chickpea sauce**
   a. Cut the onion into small cubes
   b. Cook the onion in olive oil until translucent, then add the chopped tomatoes
   c. Reduce the heat and let simmer until the tomatoes wilt
   d. Dilute the tomato concentrate in the water, pour over the onion and tomatoes
   e. Add the chickpeas and simmer until the sauce thickens
   f. Rectify seasoning with salt and pepper

2. **Cook the marmaon**
   a. Chop the onion, place into a pot together with the olive oil
   b. Start cooking on low heat and add the spices
   c. Once the onions and spices are well mixed, add to the marmaon
   d. Stir well to coat the marmaon with the spices and oil
   e. Over a pot of steaming water, place the marmaon in a colander and cover tightly
   f. Leave to steam for 20 to 30 minutes
   g. Once the marmaon is cooked, place in a pot and slowly add the hot chicken stock until the marmaon stops absorbing it and fluffs.
   h. Toss the cooked marmaon in some more olive oil, rectify salt.

3. **Cook the sausages and plate**
   a. Palestinian lamb or beef sausages are fatty, so grill over a ribbed pan or over a very hot barbecue rack
   b. Once the sausages are cooked, plate a large spoon of the marmaon, add the tomato-chickpea sauce, lay the sausage on top, garnish with parsley
### Jerusalem

#### Exhibitions
Monday 10
11:00–18:00 Aelia handicrafts exhibition offers local products handmade by young, creative, and innovative men and women of Jerusalem. Jerusalem Hotel.

### Bethlehem

#### Concerts
Friday 7

### Ramallah

#### Children’s Events
Monday 3, 10, 17, 24
15:30–16:30 A Game, a Story, and a Song presents an entertaining interactive program for children aged 2 to 5 years. Organized by Children & Youth Public Library and Ramallah Municipality. Children & Youth Public Library.

### Qalansiyah

#### Concerts
Sunday 16
17:00 Student Concert, organized by Al-Kamandjati. Qalansiyah Women’s Center.

Saturday 29
17:00 Student Concert, organized by Al-Kamandjati. Qalansiyah Women’s Center.

#### Exhibitions
Saturday 1
10:00–19:00 Shoreless Sea solo art exhibition presents artworks by Tayseer Barakat that aim to remind viewers of the hundreds of refugees who lost their lives on their journey to “shoreless” Europe. The exhibition is open daily, except Fridays, until April 2, 2020. Zawyeh Gallery.

### Halhul

#### Concerts
Tuesday 11
19:30 Advanced Piano Students Concert, organized by Al-Kamandjati. Al-Kamandjati Center.

### Gaza

#### Theatre
Sunday 9
14:00–16:00 Group 8 celebrates women’s creativity, resilience, and strength in a storytelling grand opening, produced by Theatre Day Productions on the occasion of their 25 Years Jubilee. Performed by eight young women, the play tells of women who rise above oppression and the problems of their daily lives. Theatre Day Productions Theatre Hall.

### Special Events
Saturday 29
15:30–18:30 Roller Coaster Challenge is a science challenge in the spirit of teamwork and communication, organized by the Palestinian Institute for Training, Teaching & Innovation (PITTI) for participants aged 8 to 22 years. To register, please visit https://forms.gle/AjtTbWYGKyzttGrf7. PITTI Academy.

## Jalazone

#### Concerts
Monday 17
17:00 Monthly Student Concert, organized by Al-Kamandjati. Jalazone Child Center.

### Jenin

#### Concerts
Saturday 1
19:00 Wa concert celebrates the release of Kamilya Jubran and Werner Hasler’s album that unravels a musical universe of possibilities. Organized by Simsara Music Almoharek Live Musici with support from Pro Helvetia Cairo–Swiss Arts Council. Reservation strongly recommended. For more information, please contact 0599-504 646. Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center.

Sunday 2
16:00 Concert, organized by the Palestine Doctors Association and Al-Kamandjati Center.

#### Exhibitions
Saturday 1
10:00–19:00 Shoreless Sea solo art exhibition presents artworks by Tayseer Barakat that aim to remind viewers of the hundreds of refugees who lost their lives on their journey to “shoreless” Europe. The exhibition is open daily, except Fridays, until April 2, 2020. Zawyeh Gallery.
CULTURAL CENTERS

Al Ma’amal Foundation
Al-Jawalida St. #6, New Gate, P.O. Box 14644, Jerusalem 91146
Tel: 02-6283457, Fax: 02-6272312
Email: info@almalamfoundation.org, www.almalamfoundation.org

Palestinian Heritage Museum
Abu Obaida St., P.O.Box 19377, Jerusalem.
Tel: +972 2 6272531, Fax: +972 2 6272341
Email: info@dta-museum.org
Website: www.dta-museum.org

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM)
Jerusalem 11 Azzahra St, Shihabi Building
Tel: +972 (0)2 626 3230, Fax: +972 (0)2 627 1711
PO Box 66676, Jerusalem, 91666
Email: info@ncm.birzeit.edu, http://ncm.birzeit.edu
https://www.facebook.com/esncm/

Birzeit University,
Old Girl’s Hostel, Birzeit, Tel 02-281-9155/6
Ramallah Tel: 02-2959070-1, Fax: 02-2959071
Beit Sahour Tel & Fax: 02-2748704
Tchaikovsky Musical School Tel & Fax: 022778606
Nablus Tel & Fax: 09-2387773
Gaza Tel & Fax: 08-2628903

Photo courtesy of ESNCM

Yabous Cultural Centre
10 Al Zahra St, P.O.Box 54874
Jerusalem, Palestine
Tel: 009722 6261045, Fax: 009722 6261372
Email: officemanager@yabous.org, Website: Yabous.org

Dar Al-Sabagh Centre for Diaspora Studies and Research
Star Street, Bethlehem, Tel and Fax: +970-2-2742225,
Email: daralsabagh@cchp.ps, daralsabagh
Facebook: Dar Al Sabagh Diaspora Studies and Research Centre

Palestine Museum of Natural History
Mar Andrea, Antoyna Street, Bethlehem
Tel: 979-22773553 info@palestimenuature.org
www.palestinenature.org/visit
Facebook: Palestine Museum of Natural History

A.M. Qattan Foundation
27 An-Nahda Women Association Street, Al-Tra, Ramallah – Palestine, P.O. Box 2276. Postal Code 90606
Telephone: +970 2 296 0544/+970 2 296 3280, Fax: +970 2 296 0544
Email: info@qattanfoundation.org, www.qattanfoundation.org

Popular Art Centre
Al-Ain Street, Box 3627, El- Bireh, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 240389, Fax: +970 2 2402851, Mob: +970 5 98947907
Email: info@popularartcentre.org, www.popularartcentre.org
Facebook: Popular Art Centre
http://twitter.com/PAC_ArtCentre
http://instagram.com/pac_artcentre

Sareyyet Ramallah- First Ramallah Group
Al-Tineh Street, P.O.Box: 2017, Ramallah- West Bank, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 295 27 06 / +970 2 295 26 90
Email: saryyret@saryyret.ps / art@saryyret.ps, www.saryyret.ps
Saryyret Ramallah

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Email: Info@palcircus.ps, www.palcircus.ps
The Palestinian Circus School

The Palestinian Museum
Museum Street, PO Box 48, Birzeit, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 294 1948, Fax: +970 2 294 1938, Email: info@palmuseum.org
The Palestinian Museum
@palmuseum / palmuseum
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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>541 2222</td>
<td>582 8202</td>
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<td>Ambassador Boutique</td>
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<td>+972 2 632 5000</td>
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<td>Via Dolorosa 37, P.O.Box 10900, Jerusalem 91194</td>
<td>+972 2 6265800</td>
<td>+972 2 6265816</td>
<td><a href="mailto:office@austrianchospice.com">office@austrianchospice.com</a>, <a href="http://www.austrianchospice.com">www.austrianchospice.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Casa Nova - Jerusalem Hospice Guesthouse</td>
<td>Casanova Street, New Gate</td>
<td>02 627 1441, 02 626 2974</td>
<td>02 626 4370</td>
<td><a href="mailto:casanovaj@custodia.org">casanovaj@custodia.org</a>, <a href="https://casanovaj.custodia.org/">https://casanovaj.custodia.org/</a></td>
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<td>Christmas Boutique Hotel</td>
<td>Ali Ben Abi Taleb Street, Jerusalem</td>
<td>02 628 2588, 02 626 4417</td>
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<td>Gloria Hotel</td>
<td>Latin Patriarch St. 33, Jerusalem</td>
<td>628 2431</td>
<td>628 2401</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gloriai@netvision.net">gloriai@netvision.net</a></td>
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<td>Jerusalem Hotel</td>
<td>15 Antara Ben Shadad St., Jerusalem</td>
<td>628 3262, 628 3392</td>
<td><a href="mailto:raed@jewishhotel.com">raed@jewishhotel.com</a>, <a href="http://www.jewishhotel.com">www.jewishhotel.com</a></td>
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<td>Knights Palace Hotel</td>
<td>Freres Street, New Gate, Jerusalem</td>
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<td>Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center</td>
<td>3 Paratroopers Road, P.O.Box 20531, Jerusalem, 91204</td>
<td>627 9111, 627 1995, <a href="http://www.notredamecenter.org">www.notredamecenter.org</a></td>
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<td>Ritz Hotel Jerusalem</td>
<td>8 Ibn Khaldoun Street, P.O.Box 19196, Jerusalem</td>
<td>+972 (0) 2 626 9900, +972 (0) 2 626 9910</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:reservations@jerusalemitz.com">reservations@jerusalemitz.com</a>, <a href="http://www.jerusalemitz.com">www.jerusalemitz.com</a>, <a href="http://www.facebook.com/RitzHotelJerusalem">www.facebook.com/RitzHotelJerusalem</a></td>
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<td>Seven Arches Hotel</td>
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<td>St. George Hotel</td>
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<td>+972 2 627 7232, Fax: +972 2 627 7233</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@stgeorgehoteljerusalem.com">info@stgeorgehoteljerusalem.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tantur Hills Hotel</td>
<td>Hebron Road 303 (before Rachel's Tomb) P.O.Box 19250, Jerusalem 911201</td>
<td>+972 2 5658800, Fax: +972 2 5658801</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:reservations@tanturhills.com">reservations@tanturhills.com</a>, <a href="http://www.tanturhills.com">www.tanturhills.com</a></td>
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<td>Caesar Hotel</td>
<td>Al Mayyoun, Ramallah</td>
<td>022979401</td>
<td>022979401</td>
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<td>Al-Mayyoun, Ramallah, Palestine</td>
<td>2972222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemzo Suites</td>
<td>Al-Bireh, Ramallah, P.O. Box 4101, Tel. 02-2409729, <a href="mailto:gemzo@palnet.com">gemzo@palnet.com</a>, <a href="http://www.gemzosuites.net">www.gemzosuites.net</a></td>
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<td>Lavender Boutique Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millennium Hotel Palestine Ramallah</td>
<td>P.O Box 1771, Palestine, Ramallah, Al Mayyoun</td>
<td>+970 2 2985888, Fax: +970 2 2965333</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:reservations.mhra@millenniumhotels.com">reservations.mhra@millenniumhotels.com</a>, <a href="http://www.millenniumhotels.com">www.millenniumhotels.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taybeh Golden Hotel</td>
<td>Main Street 100, Taybeh (Ramallah District) Tel 289-9440</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@taybehgoldenhotel.com">info@taybehgoldenhotel.com</a>, <a href="http://www.taybehgoldenhotel.com">www.taybehgoldenhotel.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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https://www.facebook.com/NativityBellsHotel/

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Facebook: Ibda'a Cultural Center

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Jericho Resorts ****
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reservation@jerichoresorts.com, www.jerichoresorts.com
Facebook: Jericho Resort Village

Moon City Furnished Apartments
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(Between the Telephérique and the Jericho Resorts Village)
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Oasis Hotel - Jericho
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Email: info@oasis- jericho.ps, website: http://www.oasis- jericho.ps
Facebook.com/OasisJericho, Snapchat: oasis.hotel

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Restaurant | Coffeehouse | Lounge
Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem 97200
Tel +972 (2) 532-8342, borderlinejlm@gmail.com
Facebook: Borderline JL | Borderline_Jlm

Cheese & Wine Rooftop Restaurant
(Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center)
Tel: 627 9177. rooftop@notredamecenter.org, www.notredamecenter.org

Jerusalem Hotel Restaurant (Kan Zaman)
15 Antara Ben Shadad St., Jerusalem
Tel: 628 3282, Fax: 6283282, raed@jrshtel.com, www.jrshtel.com
Facebook: Jerusalem Hotel Mediterranean Cuisine

La Collina Bistro and Restaurant
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Facebook: Tantur Hills Hotel

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E-mail: info@stgeorgehoteljerusalem.com
RESTAURANTS

Bethlehem

Al-Jisser Pub
Al Madarees Street, Beit Sahour
Mobile: 0597492175
Facebook: Al-Jisser, Instagram: ajisser

Bab idDeir Gallery & Kitchen
D’alk Quarter, Manger Street, Bethlehem
Tel: 02 276 9222
Facebook: Bab idDeir Gallery & Kitchen
Opening hours: Tuesday-Sunday (9:00 AM - Midnight)

Fawda Restaurant Chef’s Table
A modern take on Palestinian cuisine
Hohe Al-Syrian Guesthouse, off Star Street, Bethlehem
Tel: 02-2747529, Email: reservations@hoshaalyrian.com
Bookings required at least a day in advance

Q Lounge
Nativity Street (opposite Arab Bank), Bethlehem
Tel 02-2771481, Email: salibaasfour@gmail.com
Facebook: Q Lounge 1, Instagram: qlounge1
Closed only on Tuesday 11:00 AM till 1:00 AM

Shams Al-Aseeel
Enjoy Palestine’s nature and cuisine
Al Makhrou Valley, Beit Jala, Tel: 059-481-6011 / 052-744-2003
Facebook: www.fb.com/shamsalieseel.palestine

Singer Café
Old City Street, Beit Sahour
Tel: 02-2771171, Email: Info@singercafe.com
Facebook: Singer Café

Ramallah

Azure Restaurant
Mediterranean and Steaks
Tel and fax numbers +972-2-2957850, Email: Azure resta@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Azure.restaurant

Pronto Lounge
Italian Restaurant Est. 1997
Dr. Issa Ziadeh Street, Ramallah, Palestine
Tel: 02-286-7312 or 0599-795-978, prontocafearamallah@gmail.com
Facebook: Pronto Restocafe, Instagram: prontoramallah

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Facebook: zeitouzaanter

Zest
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Tel: 02.295.3555, Email: info@zest.ps
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Artoos
The Art of Gelato
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Lilac
Pizza, Pasta, & Pastries
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Qburger
Burger
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Shrak
Shawarma & Falafel
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
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Siroter
French Café & Bakery
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Zeit ou Zaater
Tel: 09 233 3555 Fax: 09 233 3666
Email: info@alysmeen.com, www.alysmeen.com
Facebook: zeitouzaanter
**ATTRACTIONS**

**Jerusalem**

**Levantine Gallery**
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**Ramallah**

**Birzeit Brewing Co. Shepherds Beer**
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Email: info@bdc-ps.ps, Website: www.shepherds.ps

**Poster**
Making Palestinian Art Accessible to Everyone. Get yours now!
7A President Square, Al-Balo', Albireh
Tel: 02 2426486, Mob: 0592847732
zanani@zawyeh.net, www.zawyeh.net

**Taybeh Brewery**
Proudly Brewing & Bottling Premium Palestinian Beer since 1994
Near the rotary, Taybeh Village, Ramallah District
Tel: 02-289-8866, taybeh@palnet.com, www.taybehbeer.com
https://www.facebook.com/taybehbeer/
Opening Hours: Monday- Saturday 8 AM-3:30 PM

**Taybeh Winery**
Making Boutique Palestinian Wines since 2013
Main Street, Taybeh Village, Ramallah District
Tel: 02-289-9440, info@taybehwinery.com, www.taybehwinery.com
https://www.facebook.com/Taybehwinery/
Opening Hours: Daily 9 AM-5 PM

**Zawyeh Gallery**
Current exhibition: "Shoreless Sea" by Tayseer Barakat
Running until 2 April 2020
7A President Square, Al-Balo', Albireh
Tel: 02 2426486, Mob: 0597994997
zanani@zawyeh.net, www.zawyeh.net

**Jericho**

**Telepherique & Sultan Tourist Center**
Enjoy the panoramic view of Jericho
Elisha's Spring, P.O.Box 12, Jericho
Tel: +972 (2) 2321596; Fax: +972 (2) 2321596
info@jericho-cablecar.com, www.jericho-cablecar.com

**Museums**

**Sa'adeh Science & Technology House- Alnayzak**
We bring joy and science together and it's for everyone!
Location: Al Haq Street in The Old City of Birzeit
Tel: +970 2 281 9523 +970 2 281 9040
Email: sciencehouse@alnayzak.org, www.sciencehouse.ps
Al Nazyk - Science and Technology House

**Rawabi**

**Fun Factory Rawabi**
Spacious indoor amusement park that introduces fun, comfort, and happiness for all ages.
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 059 594 9026, https://www.facebook.com/funfactoryrawabi/

**Rawabi Extreme**
Exciting outdoor games in the beautiful nature of Palestine.
WaDina, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 059 420 4377, https://www.facebook.com/RawabiExtreme
TRAVEL AGENCIES

Daher Travel, Ltd.
14 Azzahra St., P.O.Box 19055, Jerusalem
Tel: +972 2 6283235, Fax: +972 2 627 1574
Email:Daher@netvision.net.il

George Garabedian & Co. L.T.D.
Tourist & Travel Bureau
24 Saladin St., Jerusalem
Ticketing: +972-2-6283554, Incoming: +972-2-6283398
ggc@ggc-jer.com, www.ggc-jer.com

SAMARA
Tourist & Travel Agency
1 Greek Orthodox Pat. Rd., P.O.Box 14058, Jerusalem 9114001
Tel: +972-2-6276133, Telefax: +972-2-6271956
info@samaratours.com, www.samaratours.com

Golden Globe Tours
Ensal St., Ensal Center, Amaar Tower, 5th floor
Box 4181, El Bireh, Ramallah-Palestine
Tel: +972 2 2421878, Fax: +972 2 2421879, Mb: +972 56 2550031
Email: info@gg-tours.ps, Web:www.gg-tours.ps

TOUR OPERATORS

Laila Tours & Travel
Grand Park Hotel, Second Floor, Manger Street – Holy Land
Phone: +970 2 2777997/+970 2 2764886, Fax: +970 2 2777996
Mobile: +972 528412911, Email: team@lailatours.com
www.lailatours.com, Laila Tours & Travel

Filistin Ashabab
February issue #158

We make the change
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www.filistinashabab.com
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NOT RIGHT NOR FAIR

During the last days of December 2019, Israeli archaeologists found a hoard of Islamic coins that included rare specimens of golden dinars minted by the Aghlabid dynasty that ruled North Africa in the region of modern Tunisia. Another specimen was issued by Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid (786-809 AD), the ruler entertained by Shehrazade in the famous One Thousand and One Nights. The antiquities authorities date the coins to the ninth century AD, the early Abbasid period, named after the caliphate that had its capital in Baghdad. This treasure was found in a town that today is called Yavneh, located 20 kilometers south of Jaffa. Yavneh was inhabited as early as the Middle Bronze Age (2,200–1,570 BC) and has witnessed the entire succession of occupying powers that this region has known. Usually considered a Philistine town, referred to as Jabneh in the English translation of the Bible, it was a Palestinian town before 1948, called Yibna. The inhabitants fled on May 27, 1948, after the nearby villages Al-Qubayba and Zarnuqa in the Ramle Subdistrict had been taken.

The reasons why this part of the world has been inhabited for millennia are manifold and may include that is part of the Fertile Crescent, has a temperate climate, and has been considered the Holy Land for centuries. The 10,000-year-old Palestinian city of Jericho boasts of being the longest continually inhabited city in the world. The peoples who have lived on or temporarily ruled this land are way too many to be listed in this short column, but dig anywhere and you’ll find remains of the numerous Canaanite peoples, the Phoenicians, Philistines, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Umayyads, Abbasids, Ottomans – and in a century or two, future generations will certainly find the remains of other races and nationalities.

I read today a very interesting article by anthropologist Ali Qleibo about the subterranean, 5,000-year-old Semitic Edomite city of Beit Jibrin that was carved into rocks and matches in grandeur the Nabatean City of Petra. The city comprises over five hundred caves that include pagan temples dedicated to the Canaanite deity Ashtar and is listed on UNESCO’s list of World Human Heritage (more on that in later issues this year). After reading Dr. Qleibo’s article, I sent him a text message saying that paradoxically, our challenge as Palestinians today is that we must prove to the world that we are part of this human lineage and that it constitutes our cultural patrimony.

As wonderful and pleasurable it is to learn about the human history of our region, I feel compelled to spoil the enjoyment by connecting it with the calamity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I feel the need to reiterate what many Palestinian scholars, including the late Edward Said, have stated: It is not right nor fair for any one people that has lived on this land for a certain period of time to claim exclusive sovereignty over its entirety. It is not right nor fair to deny the rights of existence to those who never left, tilled the land, and fed every occupier over the past centuries, even millennia. Irrespective of what language these people spoke a few thousand years ago and what religion they believed in, the indigenous people today call themselves Palestinians. It is their prerogative.

Long live Palestine

Sani Meo
Publisher
In December 2019, *This Week in Palestine* published a multi-lingual special issue on the occasion of the completion of the restoration work at the Church of the Nativity. The issue was published in cooperation with the Presidential Committee for the Restoration of the Church of the Nativity and sponsored by Bank of Palestine and Piacenti S.p.a.

In addition to the regular distribution points, it can be found at https://www.thisweekinpalestine.com/issue/issue-260-5/ or by scanning the attached QR code.