

The Link

*Published by Americans for
Middle East Understanding, Inc.*

Volume 41, Issue 3

Link Archives: www.ameu.org

July-August, 2008

The Grief Counselor Of Gaza

BY DR. EYAD SARRAJ

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About This Issue

Eyad Rajab El Sarraj, in 1998, received the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. In his acceptance speech he said that the award reminded him of a Palestinian whom he had left behind in prison. "Don't forget me," the man begged. "Please...don't forget me."

Eyad Sarraj has not forgotten. He has been imprisoned himself more than once — and tortured — by the Palestinian Authority for protesting its human rights violations and its corrupt practices.

Trained in Egypt and at London University, England, Dr. Sarraj is founder and president of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, the major provider of rehabilitation for Gaza's numerous trauma victims.

Also a recipient of the Physicians for Human Rights Award, Eyad is a member of the International Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims, Secretary General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens Rights, and an active member of the Campaign against Torture and the International Campaign to End the Siege.

We are honored to welcome Dr. Sarraj to the pages of *The Link*. The title of his article, "The Grief Counselor of Gaza," is ours, not his. We did change it to "A Grief Counselor in Gaza," thinking the author would prefer the more modest description. Certainly, there are other doctors and nurses in Gaza doing extraordinary work under the most stressful conditions. We suspect, however, that they would be the first to tell us we were right in reverting to the original title.

In his recent tour of the Middle East, President Jimmy Carter had lunch with a dozen or so Palestinian leaders from both Fatah and Hamas.

At that meeting he embraced Eyad Sarraj, whom he called a courageous human rights leader and longtime acquaintance. (The press thought, wrongly, that Sarraj was a Hamas member, and it became an international news story that the former U.S. president had embraced a Hamas leader.) When Carter returned from his fact-finding trip, he wrote an article that appeared in *The Guardian* on May 8, 2008. We think this is such an important assessment of the situation in Gaza, we have reprinted it in its entirety on page 11.

On page 12, we introduce a new feature "From *The Link's* Links." Each issue will profile a link to a website listed on the Resource page of our website: www.ameu.org. The hope is to put a human face on the digital address by interviewing one of the people involved with the website.

To launch our new feature, we have invited Nadia Hijab, senior fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies, to tell us about the Institute's website: www.palestine-studies.org. This includes not only its flagship publication, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, but other unique services, such as its Congressional Monitoring Project, which Nadia explains.

Our catalog of current books and videos is listed on pp. 13-15.

Finally, it is with sadness we announce the death of Leila Haddad. While hers was a very special presence here in the New York City area, her quiet dignity was felt by many well beyond our tri-state area. A personal reflection is offered on page 16.

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

The Grief Counselor of Gaza

Today was not such an unusual day in Gaza. Eight people were killed during an Israeli air raid. Border crossings were closed. Few cars were on the road. More people were walking.

Mr. Krayyim came into the office of End the Siege Campaign for help. His 16-year-old son has been in a Tel Aviv hospital for the last two weeks receiving treatment for acute leukemia. Doctors want to give him a bone marrow transplant, but \$40,000 must be paid. It could make the difference between life and death. When the father was not allowed to cross the border to see his child—at 37, he is three years under the minimum age that Israel requires for security clearance—we intervened successfully with the health ministry in Ramallah to let the father cross.

Riham, a researcher for the End the Siege Campaign, gave me a report on the increasing prices of bread and fuel. Because of the Israeli-imposed siege, car fuel, unavailable at gas stations, is six times more expensive on the black market (around \$150.00 a gallon). Commodity prices have increased multifold. Since the siege began two years ago, only 20 commodities out of 9,000 are permitted entry. As Harvard University Professor Sara Roy and I pointed out in a Boston Globe article earlier this year, the Israeli government has cut Gaza's daily requirement of flour so drastically that it has sent the prices of foodstuffs sky high.

In the evening my friend Hassan came around and suggested we pay our respects to our mutual friend, Abed, on the passing of his father. On the road, Hassan made jokes about the smell of frying falafel coming out of cars using cooking oil for fuel. His car was running on cooking gas, which alarmed

me. He and I were amazed how resilient people can be. I said it is ironic that Israel is forcing us to be fit and slim by walking. Hassan interrupted by saying that walking long distances actually requires more energy and thus more food, which many people can't afford.

I return home and my two-year-old son points a toy gun at me and shouts: "I shoot you." He mumbles something about " Hamas and Fatah killed the man."

Welcome to Gaza.

The Gaza I love used to be beautiful. Memories of that Gaza fill my heart and mind: the smell of orange blossoms in the spring... the white daffodils on the beach... the clear water of the sea... the crawling crabs.



Dr. Eyad Sarraj

Photo: Al Jazeera Eng. Archive

I come from a family of ten brothers and sisters. We grew up in a small house in the Rimal area of Gaza city. From the edge of our street, a forest reached all the way to the beach. During the holy month of Ramadan and other religious holidays, we visited family members and enjoyed

their warm welcome. My father insisted on ten such visits a day.

That Gaza is gone. Time and turbulence, politics and wars, money and deprivation have changed the way it looks today.

The Trauma Cycle

In 1948, Gaza became the host and haven for hundreds of thousands of refugees uprooted by Israeli forces from southern Palestine.

In 1956, Israel occupied Gaza during the Suez war when many of our people were killed, especially in Khan Younis.

In 1963, I went to study medicine in Alexandria, Egypt, then trained in London as a psychiatrist.

In 1967, Israel occupied Gaza for the second time, an occupation that now seems everlasting. A legitimate national armed resistance emerged involving multitudes of freedom fighters. I recall that, while working in the early 1970s as a casualty officer at al-Shifa hospital, the largest hospital in Gaza, we received several murdered freedom fighters every day. Reacting to that resistance, Israeli forces arrested tens of thousands of Palestinians and subjected many to systematic forms of torture, all well documented by Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations.

As a psychiatrist I could see how the effects of such torture went beyond the individual to affect his family and the wider community. The most common problem is the violence directed against women and children. The victim harbors a festering desire for revenge and unconsciously resorts to the tactics of his or her torturer.

I saw this battered child syndrome first-hand some years later when, under the rule of the Palestinian Authority, I was put in prison for criticizing Yasser Arafat and the P.A.'s human rights record. The prison they put me in used to be an Israeli prison, where my Palestinian interrogators had themselves been imprisoned. One day from my cell I overheard another Palestinian being interrogated. When the prisoner didn't answer, the Palestinian interrogator became ever more enraged, until suddenly he burst out in Hebrew, which, of course, was the language of his torturers.

In 1987, the first intifada erupted in Gaza. It raged for six years (Dec. 1987 to Dec. 1993) during which time thousands were killed and maimed, and more were imprisoned and tortured. At the start of the intifada, I founded, with limited personal funds, Gaza's first community mental health center. Today we have eleven community centers that provide mental health services geared to the needs of children, women and victims of torture, whose number

is in the thousands. In addition, we have trained hundreds of doctors, nurses and teachers in basic counseling.

The Palestine Human Rights Information Center estimates that during the first intifada Palestinians suffered 130,472 injuries and 1,282 deaths, of which 332 were children. These numbers include victims who were shot, beaten, tear-gassed or burned to the extent of permanent disability. Approximately 57,000 Palestinians were arrested, and many of them were subjected to systematic physical and psychological torture. Over 481 Palestinians were deported, and 2,532 had their homes demolished.

In a 2004 article I co-authored with Dr. Samir Qouta ("The Palestinian Experience" in *Disasters and Mental Health*), we reported that most children living in the Occupied Territories either personally experienced physical or psychological violence or witnessed acts of violence directed towards their families and friends. The first intifada glorified Palestinian children as "children of the stones," the kids who confronted Israeli tanks with slingshots. But these young heroes are still flesh and blood, subject to the same traumatic stresses felt by professional combatants.

At the Gaza Mental Health Program we conducted research on 3,000 children and found all had been subjected to multiple traumatic experiences, including being witnesses to killing, being beaten, having their bones broken, and being tear-gassed, all of which left indelible scars on their psyches.

For many of these children the most excruciating ordeal was to see their fathers being beaten by Israeli soldiers—and not offering any resistance. This is truly a terrifying experience. As is the image of a young boy being shot at and killed while his father stands and screams in a futile effort to stop the bullets. This will have a lasting impact on any observer, but particularly on children. No wonder the Palestinian child will see his model not in his father, but in that soldier; and no wonder his language will be the language of force and his toys and games the toys and games of death.

Our report also traced the psychological effects of

watching the demolition of one's home by enemy soldiers. Home is associated with feelings of security and consolation.

We also looked at the consequences of long-term curfews, a form of collective punishment banned by the Geneva Convention and by international human rights organizations. During the five years of the first intifada, Gazans were confined to their homes every night from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m., essentially turning every home into a prison. We have documented how this breakdown of the normal patterns of social and economic interactions, particularly among children, leads to active aggression and, in some cases, apathy and depression.

Our results were in line with other independent studies, which have found that responses to life-threatening experiences include anxiety, withdrawal symptoms and, especially among children, regression to earlier stages of development, such as clinging to parents and bed-wetting.

In 1994, Yasser Arafat and his P.L.O. forces returned from Tunis and entered Gaza with the familiar V sign, which proved not to be such a very good omen.

The second intifada, which broke out in September 2000, was caused, in part, by the disillusionment resulting from a failed peace process and, in part, by the image projected by the Palestinian Authority. This was an image of a corrupt, despotic regime that alienated the people and threw the community into chaotic nepotism and military tribalism.

For centuries two security systems worked in parallel harmony: one represented the tribal community (families and clans); the other represented the state (police and courts). Arafat's regime initiated a historical precedent by penetrating the tribal system with his officers. These officers, in turn, became agents of their tribes. The result was an inevitable chaotic security situation and the emergence of various militias with conflicting loyalties.

In the closing weeks of 1987, there appeared in Gaza a new group called Hamas. Most of its leaders traced their roots back to the worldwide Muslim

Brotherhood, and most were involved in religious, cultural, educational and organizational activities, first through the Islamic Society, later through the Islamic Center in the Gaza Strip.

During his reign, Arafat tried to destabilize Hamas by arrests, torture and political maneuvering, but the Islamic movement regained its presence in the wake of the second intifada, aided by a highly motivated and committed army of the faithful, an economic infrastructure, and a large social support system.

Throughout the second intifada the prime minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, made clear that he was not interested in making peace with Palestinians. Sharon found the justification for his strategy in the behavior of the Palestinian leadership and its predictable reflex in resorting to violence.

In January 2002, Arafat was caught trying to buy a shipment of 50 tons of weapons and explosives. Sharon used this to convince the U.S. administration that the Palestinian leader was not a partner for peace. Islamic and other resistance groups then fell into the pre-set stereotype of terrorist organizations when they embarked on a series of suicide bombings of Israeli civilians.

Sharon exploited this Palestinian terror to destroy the rudimentary Palestinian state infrastructure. Israeli tanks and bulldozers wrecked Gaza's only airport in Rafah, and construction began on the Wall in the West Bank.

Then Sharon declared his unilateral disengagement from Gaza, which was hastily completed on Sept. 12, 2005. Palestinians were confused as to its significance. Hamas would say Israel was withdrawing because of a thundering resistance. For Hamas it was a V sign. Sharon's senior advisor, Dov Weinglass, was quick to explain to Haaretz that the plan was meant to destroy the peace process and also rid Israel of a demographic problem. Gaza and its burgeoning population could not be absorbed by Israel without jeopardizing the Jewishness of the state.

But we should not delude ourselves. We are still under the effective control of Israel. Israel controls

the air above us and the water around us. It controls our tax system, the import and export of goods, our freedom of movement, and our access to health care. It maintains a special unit in Kesufim that monitors the movement of every Palestinian. Our IDs and our passports are still issued by the Israelis. Our names, dates of birth, families and addresses are all registered in Israel. And recently Israel reestablished military control over more than a quarter of Gaza's territory, calling it a "border security zone."

In 2004, Arafat died and was succeeded by Mahmoud Abbas. Initially, the new leader was ambitious and inspiring, but quickly was weakened by Fatah's internal divisions and by Israel, which was not interested in a peace process. President Bush, for some reason, insisted on a legislative election in January 2006, and this resulted in the Hamas victory. In shock and disbelief, Fatah's ruling party was torn apart and the surprised American administration was quick to impose a blockade of the new Palestinian government, a decision observed by Europe and the Arab regimes.

In June 2006, I was among a small group of Palestinians who met with Elliott Abrams, President Bush's deputy national security advisor, in his office in Washington, DC. Mr. Abrams made it painfully clear that the democratically elected Hamas government had to be pushed out at any cost. I am not a Hamas follower, but we tried to persuade Abrams that engagement, rather than confrontation, was the better choice. But his determination was unshakable: There would be no accommodation with a Hamas government. "Democracy is good," he said "but not Hamas."

Later I would learn from a Vanity Fair article that President Bush had assigned to Condoleezza Rice and Elliott Abrams the task of provoking a civil war in Gaza in which Abbas's Fatah militias were to overthrow the Hamas-led government. We warned Abrams there would be suffering and starvation, even armed conflict. But to no avail. It would not be the fault of the United States were that to happen, the deputy national security advisor told us.

Unable to contend with their loss of power, some Fatah leaders, with support from the U.S. admini-

stration, did unleash their security forces with the aim of crippling the Hamas government. A period of chaos ensued; Gaza became notorious for the kidnapping of foreigners and the killing of locals.

In the summer of 2005, the Egyptian envoy to the P.A. told me that Hamas was equipped to take the Gaza Strip over militarily in less than three days. Hamas, he said, maintained higher standards of leadership, loyalty, discipline, and training than the 40,000-strong P.A. forces. In the battle of June 2007, Hamas proved him right.

In the savage factional war that lasted for less than a week, Gaza witnessed a wave of brutal atrocities that shocked us all to the core. There were cases of people being thrown from high buildings, wounded people killed in hospital, maimed bodies and scores of tortured victims on both sides.

It is clear that a state of chronic toxicity permeates our society, the accumulation of years of trauma. The Nakba—the uprooting in 1948—the living in refugee camps, the violent abuses and torture by the Israeli army of occupation, the chronic divisions, the lack of leadership, the loss of hope, all have contributed to our tragic, and traumatic situation.

Now, over the past two years of siege, the image of the father figure has been further undercut by high unemployment that renders the father unable to provide for his family. Mothers, meanwhile, have become more politicized and more militant as their instinct to protect their offspring has heightened with Israel's aerial bombing campaign, to which we are all vulnerable. It is not surprising that Hamas's electoral victory was decisively decided by women voters.

In January of this year Rania Kharma, a member of the End the Siege Campaign, and I accompanied a foreign camera crew to several places in Gaza. At al-Shifa Hospital, we introduced the producer to a 19-year-old patient who had been shot several times by an Israeli soldier. The young man faced the amputation of both legs unless could he could undergo a complicated medical procedure that was not available in Gaza. He is one of 1,500 patients who have been denied permission to leave Gaza for medical

treatment.

Next we visited the dialysis unit. Ten machines were gathering dust in the corridor. A technician explained that the lack of spare parts, disposable items such as needles, and medicines prevented them from operating the life-saving machines.

At the Children's Hospital in the Nasser area of Gaza City we went to the infant care unit. Here several incubators were in use, while others stood empty in a corner. The camera focused on the unnaturally small newborns struggling for each breath. I explained that the food crisis in Gaza has forced undernourished mothers to give birth to unhealthy babies.

We next visited a tile and brick factory that had shut down due to the lack of cement and machine parts. Forty workers were out of their jobs, their families without income. They are among the 67,000 other factory workers and their families who are out of work and out of income in Gaza, where the annual per capita income is \$600 (as opposed to \$21,000 for Israelis).

We could have taken the film crew to our port, where, of the 40,000 fishermen and others who make a living from the sea, barely 700 are still working. Their boats need fuel. Israel will not let them have it. Nor will Israel let them fish far off the coast: the 1993 Oslo Accords had stipulated Palestinians could fish up to 20 nautical miles; this was reduced to 12 miles in a 2002 agreement between the United Nations and Israel; now Israel will not let Palestinians fish beyond six nautical miles.

CARE International summed up the situation here in its July 7, 2007 appeal: "The recent destruction of essential infrastructure compounds the difficulties faced by thousands of Palestinians whose resilience has been tested by increasing levels of violence, food shortages, and loss of income... Of immediate concern is the impact of food and power shortages on access to water, disposal of sewage and maintenance of emergency health services. Of longer term concern is ... the psychological trauma of conflict on the civilian population, especially children."

In October 2007, over 30 humanitarian leaders in Gaza launched the Palestinian International Campaign to End the Siege (www.end-gaza-siege.ps). A petition was circulated and by December close to 4,000 people had signed it. As head of the Campaign, I made my way through one of the checkpoints and took it to the Israeli peace group Gush Shalom.

On January 18 of this year the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the status of human rights in the Palestinian territories, John Dugard, condemned Israel for violating the strict prohibition on collective punishment contained in the Fourth Geneva Convention, and for violating "one of the basic principles of international humanitarian law that military action must distinguish between military targets and civilian targets." Such violations, he said, are "cowardly acts," and those responsible are "guilty of serious war crimes and should be prosecuted and punished for their crimes."

Still, the siege of 1.5 million human beings, all squeezed into a 139-square-mile strip of land, grinds on.

The Martyr as Suicide Bomber

One day, in my clinic, a boy of 16 came to see me. He said: I am not a patient. I need your help.

I said: What is it you need?

He said: I need a bomb.

I said: What do you need a bomb for?

He said: I lived all my life in Gaza. I've read all the books on Palestine that I can get my hands on. And I've figured out a solution. And the solution is this: each one of us should kill a Jew and kill himself. And this is why I want a bomb.

I don't know what happened to this boy. I didn't give him his bomb. But it is a graphic example of how a Palestinian youth can feel after a long history of traumatization, victimization, and humiliation.

For a long time I, too, dreamed. I imagined my-

self attacking the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, rounding up its members and pinning them with my arrows to the ceiling.

A journalist once asked me to introduce him to a potential martyr.



did not say was that, at the age of six, he had witnessed his father being beaten by Israeli soldiers. The sight of his father being dragged away, blood running from his nose, never left him.

A 16-year-old boy in Gaza today is somebody who thinks of life as a prison. He's not allowed to



September 30, 2000, Jamil al-Durra tries to protect his son Mohammad from Israeli fire near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim in Gaza. He failed. Mohammad was killed and slumped into his father's lap.

—Photos by Talal Abu Rahma for France 2 Television

“Why would you blow yourself up?” he asked the young man.

The young man replied: “Would you fight for your country or not? Of course you would. And you would be respected in your country as a brave man. So will I be remembered as a martyr.”

In the Koran, the most influential book in Arabia for the past 14 centuries, God promises Muslims who sacrifice themselves for the sake of Islam that they will not die. They will live on in paradise. Muslims, men and women, even secularists, hold to that promise. Heaven is the ultimate reward of the devout who have the courage to take the ultimate test of faith.

What the potential martyr did not say was that he was burning with a desire for revenge. What he

leave Gaza. He has seen bombings, and killings, and murders, and blood, and humiliation. He doesn't think he has a future as a scientist, a doctor, an engineer. Sadly and tragically, many of them think that the best thing to do is to become a martyr.

As a psychologist, I look at this as a product of our environment. People are not born to become martyrs. People are not born to become heroes. If you have an environment of hope and joy, people will do everything to deter death, and killing, and murder. If you have an environment of hopelessness and despair, you have a martyr, someone who thinks death is the beginning of life.

There is a moment for any potential martyr when he or she decides to be one. But there is a process that takes them through this path, a process of a kind

of internal transformation. Then the moment comes when the would-be martyr meets somebody—in a mosque, or on a street, or in a school, wherever—and that person introduces him to others who are prepared to help him attain heaven.

I have been asked over the years to explain to Western audiences why anyone in their right mind would want to kill themselves along with innocent people. Six years ago Paula Zahn of CNN asked me that question. I responded that today's suicide bomber—or martyr, as we call them—are the children of the first intifada, many of whom, at the age of 6 or 7, witnessed soldiers beating their fathers or spitting at them in contempt. So much revenge has been bottled up within them. Now teenagers, their identity has become molded with the identity of their people who have been suffering for over a half century, since the uprooting from their homes in Palestine.

Zahn then played a video clip of United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld claiming that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was giving thousands of dollars to the families of Palestinian martyrs.

Our interview continued:

Zahn: So Dr. Sarraj, how much of a motivating factor is this big money? We all know the economy in the Occupied Territories is in shambles.

Sarraj: Yeah. Well, in fact, from all the cases I have observed myself, in the clinic and outside the community, money or financial situation has never been a motive for anybody to kill himself really in such a way at all. The economy factor, or the education factor even, was not a significant one. What was very significant, in our research, was the personal history of trauma. The culture in which the people are brought up in and the type of—or the degree of faith these people have and their own interpretation of themselves, the nation, the conflict and Islam itself. That is the most—these are the most important factors.

With that, our interview came to an end.

I have said that the struggle of Palestinians today

is how not to become a bomb and that the amazing thing is not the occurrence of suicide bombings, rather the rarity of them. The outside world still finds it hard to grasp why this is so. It's so much easier to say they do it for the money. They do it because for them martyrdom is a form of power, the power over death and life. In an environment of absolute despair, the model of the martyr tells you exactly what you feel, that life and death are equal. So the bomber becomes the model. And, yes, this is very sad.

Beyond Martyrdom

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter recently visited Gaza. In an article for *The Guardian* (May 8, 2008) he wrote: "The world is witnessing a terrible human rights crime in Gaza, where a million and a half human beings are being imprisoned with almost no access to the outside world. An entire population is being brutally punished."

What the former president goes on to say is very important, and the editor of *The Link* tells me that it will be reprinted in full at the end of my article.

In his article, President Carter makes reference to a report by B'Tselem, a leading Israeli human rights group, which says that 106 Palestinians were killed between February 27 and March 3 of this year. Fifty-four of them were civilians, and 25 were under the age of 18.

The president could have also cited an earlier report from B'Tselem showing that, after the Israeli disengagement on September 12, 2005, through July 25, 2007, 668 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip by Israeli security forces. Over half were non-combatants and 126 were children. During this same period, Qassam rockets and mortar shells fired by Palestinian militants killed eight Israelis, half of them civilians.

As Professor Sara Roy and I concluded in our *Boston Globe* article (Jan. 30, 2008), Gaza is no longer approaching economic collapse. It has collapsed. Given the intensity of repression it is facing, can the collapse of its society—family, neighborhood, and

community structure—be far behind? If that happens, we shall all suffer the consequences for generations to come.

I have listened to so many stories of children who have been traumatized by what they have seen and heard, who suffer from loss of appetite, insomnia and fear of going out of their homes. For years parents have had to give their children sleeping pills at night because otherwise they cannot sleep. Now, we are running out of sleeping pills. And the question is: Are we running out of hope?

I agree with President Carter's condemnation of Hamas's rocket attacks on the Israeli town of Sderot. I concur with his urging Hamas to declare a unilateral ceasefire or to orchestrate with Israel a mutual agreement to terminate all military action in and around Gaza for an extended period.

Hamas leaders told the president they have made such overtures in the past that Israel has rejected, but that they were prepared to support a mutual ceasefire restricted to Gaza. This offer, too, Israel has rejected.

I have spent many years observing Hamas at close range and debating politics with its leaders. I believe it has an incentive to halt its terrorist activity. Following its astounding victory in Gaza's municipal elections in May 2005, it now has a guaranteed political future when and if it chooses to abandon the armed struggle.

I believe, with President Carter, that the time has come "for strong voices in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere to speak out and condemn the human rights tragedy that has befallen the Palestinian people."

My hope is that the new American administration will seek the path of diplomacy, not confrontation, in the Middle East. I believe that if you sit with Hamas and recognize that it is a major player, the question of the rockets can be resolved. If you don't, and you continue to isolate the movement, the rockets will continue. There is no popular movement against the firing of rockets. How can people oppose this kind of resistance, if there is no hope of ending

the occupation? People cheer rockets against Israel and will continue to do so until there is hope that Israel will end the occupation and give Palestinians back their land, their rights and their freedom.

To be sure, the chances of some kind of Palestinian-Israeli reconciliation are remote. Even if Palestinians want reconciliation, I think there is strong American resistance to the idea of any dialogue with Hamas.

The real player in the game today is the fundamentalist regime in America, and I doubt it is ready to talk to Hamas. Washington will simply collude with Israel to continue the siege. Our hope is that the next American administration will see things differently. Reconciliation is possible only if there are leaders of courage and wisdom on both sides.

I do see some hope on the Israeli side. Three years ago, I was stopped at a Gaza border crossing along with some colleagues. Inside the fortified post was an Israeli soldier, his face appearing every few minutes through a small opening in the concrete. To my surprise he called me over to ask, "Your friend says you are a psychiatrist. Can I ask you something?" "Yes," I replied warily. The soldier said, "I have a problem, doctor. I live in a settlement in Hebron, and I want to leave."

I hid my surprise and played the psychiatrist, listening calmly as this young man with his baby face and thin beard continued: "My parents want me to stay, but I know it will only lead to more killing. I don't like it there, but I don't want to anger my father and mother who have devoted their lives for me."

After a moment, I said, "I think it is best if you talk about your feelings with your mother and your father. It will be best if you convince them of your decision. But I want to tell you something else, my friend. The soldier smiled in anticipation as I continued: "By choosing to talk to me about yourself, you made me feel proud of humanity and sure of its future."

He stretched his arm through the hole to shake my hand, saying, "I trust you." ■

A Human Rights Crime

The world must stop standing idle while the people of Gaza are treated with such cruelty.

By Jimmy Carter

The world is witnessing a terrible human rights crime in Gaza, where a million and a half human beings are being imprisoned with almost no access to the outside world. An entire population is being brutally punished.

This gross mistreatment of the Palestinians in Gaza was escalated dramatically by Israel, with United States backing, after political candidates representing Hamas won a majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority parliament in 2006. The election was unanimously judged to be honest and fair by all international observers.

Israel and the US refused to accept the right of Palestinians to form a unity government with Hamas and Fatah and now, after internal strife, Hamas alone controls Gaza. Forty-one of the 43 victorious Hamas candidates who lived in the West Bank have been imprisoned by Israel, plus an additional 10 who assumed positions in the short-lived coalition cabinet.

Regardless of one's choice in the partisan struggle between Fatah and Hamas within occupied Palestine, we must remember that economic sanctions and restrictions on the supply of water, food, electricity and fuel are causing extreme hardship among the innocent people in Gaza, about one million of whom are refugees.

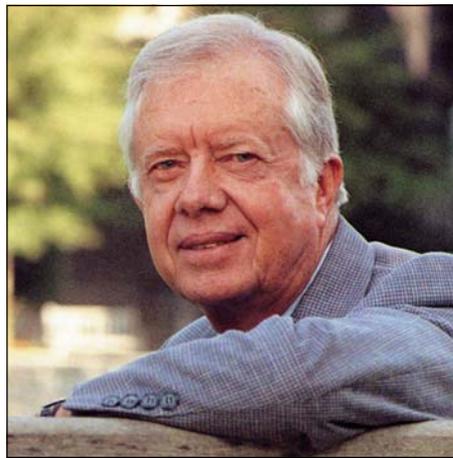
Israeli bombs and missiles periodically strike the area, causing high casualties among both militants and innocent women and children. Prior to the highly publicized killing of a woman and her four children last week, this pattern had been illustrated by a report from B'Tselem, the leading Israeli human rights organization, which stated that 106 Palestinians were killed between February 27 and March 3. Fifty-four of them were civilians, and 25 were under 18 years of age.

On a recent trip through the Middle East, I attempted to gain a better understanding of the crisis. One of my visits was to Sderot, a community of about 20,000 in southern Israel that is frequently struck by rockets fired from nearby Gaza. I condemned these attacks as abominable acts of terrorism, since most of the 13 victims during the past seven years have been non-combatants.

Subsequently, I met with leaders of Hamas—a delegation from Gaza and the top officials in Damascus. I made the same

condemnation to them, and urged that they declare a unilateral ceasefire or orchestrate with Israel a mutual agreement to terminate all military action in and around Gaza for an extended period.

They responded that such action by them in the past had not been reciprocated, and they reminded me that Hamas had previously insisted on a ceasefire throughout Palestine, including Gaza and the West Bank, which Israel had refused. Hamas then made a public proposal of a mutual ceasefire restricted to Gaza, which the Israelis also rejected.



There are fervent arguments heard on both sides concerning blame for a lack of peace in the Holy Land. Israel has occupied and colonized the Palestinian West Bank, which is approximately a quarter the size of the nation of Israel as recognized by the international community. Some Israeli religious factions claim a right to the land on both sides of the Jordan river, others that their 205 settlements of some 500,000 people are necessary for "security".

All Arab nations have agreed to recognize Israel fully if it will comply with key United Nations resolutions. Hamas has agreed to accept any negotiated peace settlement between the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, provided it is approved in a referendum of the Palestinian people.

This holds promise of progress, but despite the brief fanfare and positive statements at the peace conference last November in Annapolis, the process has gone backwards. Nine thousand new Israeli housing units have been announced in Palestine; the number of roadblocks within the West Bank has increased; and the stranglehold on Gaza has been tightened.

It is one thing for other leaders to defer to the US in the crucial peace negotiations, but the world must not stand idle while innocent people are treated cruelly. It is time for strong voices in Europe, the US, Israel and elsewhere to speak out and condemn the human rights tragedy that has befallen the Palestinian people.

—Reprinted from *The Guardian*, where it appeared on **May 8, 2008**. Photo of President Carter courtesy of Carter Center.

From *The Link's* Links . . .

<http://www.palestine-studies.org>

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Interview with Nadia Hijab, senior fellow at the Institute of Palestine Studies, author and frequent media commentator.

IPS is perhaps best known for its quarterly *Journal of Palestine Studies*, begun in 1971, now edited by Columbia University Professor Rashid Khalidi. Our office has most of the back issues, which we refer to often, particularly the Chronology section. How much of the *Journal* is available online? All of the *Journal* is available online—and quite a bit is available free of charge. The IPS website carries a full article online every issue. In addition, the full text of the *Journal's* Quarterly Update as well as its Chronology will be available as of 2001 (with a 2-year “firewall” to protect sales of the last two years). It is also easier now for readers to buy single articles or sections online at <http://caliber.ucpress.net/> — these are available as of the year 2001. And, of course, all of the *Journal's* content is available on JSTOR (which has a 3-year “firewall”).

The IPS website also monitors Congressional discussions on Palestine and Israel. How does that work? IPS began monitoring all Congressional bills, resolutions, and speeches relating to Israel and Palestine in 2006. We published the results for the 109th Congress in the Summer 2007 issue of the *Journal* (No. 144), and the first session of the 110th Congress in the Spring 2008 issue (No. 147). In fact, we're constructing a database that will make this unique resource available online some time in the summer of 2008. The database will cover all Congressional sessions during both Bush administrations. Our indefatigable researcher has also monitored the statements of the

president and secretary of state from 1993 to 2007. All of this material will also be available online as soon as it is ready for posting.

What position does the Institute take on the Palestinian-Israeli question? The Institute is a nonprofit, independent organization whose mandate prevents it from taking political positions. What we do is marshal the facts, make sure they are well documented, then let the reader come to his or her own position.

Many of the books that *The Link* has listed in its catalog over the years have been published by the Institute. Could you mention some of the books listed on your website that you think would be of interest to our readers? My all-time favorite is Walid Khalidi's "Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians 1876-1948." I've personally purchased over a dozen that I give as gifts when I'm invited to speak on the issue. The pictures and historical accounts are proof—should it be necessary—that a thriving urban and rural society existed in Palestine for millennia. Other best-selling IPS books are: "Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948," by Nur Masalha; "Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," by Michael Fischbach; and Walid Khalidi's other seminal works "All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948," and "From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948."

One last question. Should a visitor to your site wish to talk to a real live human, is there a number to call? In Washington, DC, it's 202-342-3990. I would also like to note the services of our IPS library in our Beirut headquarters. It has the biggest collection of materials on Palestine in the region; researchers worldwide can email their questions to library@palestine-studies.org.

— Interview conducted by John Mahoney

AMEU's Book Selections

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See page 15 For AMEU's video selections.

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Authors	Publication	Year	Pgs	List	AMEU	Summary
Abdul-Rauf, F.	What's Right With Islam	2004	314	\$23.95	\$12.00	Islam and modernity.
AMEU	Burning Issues	2007	439	\$16.95	\$12.50	The most relevant <i>Link</i> issues from the past 40 years.
Armstrong, K.	Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths	1999	474	\$17.50	\$16.50	Well written, critically acclaimed history.
Aziz, B.	Swimming up the Tigris	2007	314	\$24.95	\$19.95	Real life encounters with Iraqis.
Baltzer, A.	Witness in Palestine	2007	400	\$26.95	\$19.95	Jewish-American condemns Israel's occupation.
Bamford, J.	A Pretext for War	2004	420	\$26.95	\$19.50	How the White House abused US intelligence agencies.
Baroud, R.	The Second Palestinian Intifada	2006	216	\$18.00	\$16.50	Palestinians respond to ethnocide against them.
Beit-Hallahmi, B.	Original Sins	1993	227	\$19.95	\$12.50	Reflections on Zionism and Israel.
Burge, G.	What Land? Whose Promise?	2003	286	\$23.00	\$17.50	What Christians aren't told about Israel & Palestinians.
Carter, J.	Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid	2006	265	\$27.00	\$19.50	A critical analysis of Israel's occupation.
Chacour, E.	Blood Brothers	2003	240	\$12.95	\$10.95	Updated ed. with introduction by James Baker III.
Chapman, C.	Whose Promised Land	2002	329	\$17.99	\$12.75	Zionism and role of biblical promise; updated edition.
Chapman, C.	Whose Holy City?	2004	253	\$15.99	\$12.50	Jerusalem and the future of Middle East peace.
Chomsky, N.	The Fateful Triangle	1999	578	\$22.00	\$16.95	United States, Israel, and the Palestinians.
Cook, J.	Blood and Religion	2006	222	\$18.00	\$16.50	Can Israel be both a Jewish and a democratic state?
Cooley, J.	An Alliance Against Babylon	2005	258	\$26.95	\$17.95	Traces the Israeli factor in the US-led invasion of Iraq.
Dwork & Van Pelt	Holocaust: A History	2002	444	\$15.95	\$12.50	15 years of oral histories.
Eady & Mast	Sahmatah	1998	40	\$10.00	\$10.00	One-act play for 2 actors; see <i>The Link</i> , Feb. 1999
Eldar, A. & Zertal	Lords of the Land	2007	531	\$29.95	\$15.50	Inside account of Israel's settlement policy.
Ennes, J.	Assault on the Liberty	2002	301	\$30.00	\$25.00	Updated edition.
Esposito, J.	Unholy War: Terror in the name of Islam	2002	196	\$25.00	\$19.95	Good study of militant Islamic groups.
Faber, S.	Radicals, Rabbis, and Peacemakers	2005	252	\$19.95	\$15.95	Conversations with Jews against the occupation.
Fayez, J. ed.	The Colonization of Palestine	2007	56	\$9.95	\$1.00	Updated listing of 452 destroyed cities, towns, villages.
Findley, P.	Silent No More	2001	323	\$23.95	\$19.50	Confronts America's image of Islam.
Findley, P.	Deliberate Deceptions	1993	326	\$14.95	\$8.00	Former U.S. Congressman on U.S.-Israeli relations.
Finkelstein, N.	Beyond Chutzpah	2005	332	\$22.50	\$17.50	The misuse of anti-semitism & the abuse of history.
Finkelstein, N.	The Holocaust Industry	2000	150	\$13.00	\$12.50	Reflections on the exploitation of Jewish suffering.
Finkelstein, N.	Image & Reality of Israel-Arab Conflict	1995	243	\$18.95	\$17.95	What the facts on the ground are telling us.
Fishbach, M.	Records of Dispossession	2003	467	\$39.50	\$28.50	New facts and figures about the land "swap" of 1947-48.
Giladi, Naeim	Ben-Gurion's Scandals	2003	340	\$18.95	\$15.50	Updated and revised edition.

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Grodzinsky, Y.	In the Shadow of the Holocaust	2004	280	19.95	\$16.50	The role of Holocaust survivors in Israel's founding.
Hagopian, E. ed.	Civil Rights in Peril	2004	322	\$22.95	\$15.50	The targeting of Arabs and Muslims in the US.
Halper, J	Obstacles to Peace	2005	93	\$19.95	\$15.50	Camp David's ungenerous offer, 15 full-page maps.
Hiro, D.	Sharing the Promised Land	1999	400	\$18.95	\$16.95	Good history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
Hroub, K.	Hamas: A Beginner's Guide	2006	170	\$18.95	\$14.50	Good introductory history.
Jamail, D.	Beyond the Green Line	2007	313	\$20.00	\$18.75	Iraq through the eyes of an unembedded journalist.
Jayyusi, S.	Anthology	1996	754	\$22.00	\$17.50	Collection of modern Palestinian literature.
Karmi, G.	In Search of Fatima	2002	288	\$26.00	\$15.00	Poignant memory of Palestinian exile.
Karmi, G.	Married to Another Man	2007	350	\$29.95	\$22.50	Israel's dilemma in Palestine.
Khalidi, R.	The Iron Cage	2006	281	\$24.95	\$19.95	Why Palestinians don't have a state.
Khalidi, R.	Resurrecting Empire	2004	223	\$23.00	\$17.95	Analysis of the US role in the Middle East.
Kovel, J.	Overcoming Zionism	2007	299	\$26.95	\$18.95	How Israel can heal its "state-sponsored racism."
Laird, E.	A Little Piece of Ground	2006	216	\$9.95	\$8.50	A 12-yr.-old soccer-loving Pal. in occupied Ramallah.
Masalha, N.	Expulsion of the Palestinians	1993	235	\$11.95	\$9.50	Examines Zionist notion of "Transfer." 1882-1948.
Nathan, S.	The Other Side of Israel	2005	310	\$25.00	\$17.50	How non-Jews are treated in the Jewish state.
Nawwab, N.	The Unfurling	2004	118	\$14.95	\$10.95	Saudi poet reflects on her country.
Neff, D.	Warriors Against Israel	1988	372	\$19.95	\$7.00	How Israel won the battle to become US's ally.
Pappe, I.	The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine	2006	320	\$27.50	\$19.95	Author is Senior Lecturer at Haifa University.
Petersen, E.	Israel and Palestine	2003	246	\$16.00	\$10.00	Well organized data for research and study projects.
Prior, M.	Zionism and the state of Israel	1999	304	\$75.00	\$59.50	A moral inquiry.
Prior, M. ed.	Speaking the Truth	2005	254	\$17.95	\$13.50	Ilan Pappé et al. on Zionism, Israel, and Palestine.
Reinhart, T.	The Road Map to Nowhere	2006	248	\$18.00	\$16.50	How Road Map is used to seize more occupied land.
Reinhart, T.	Israel/Palestine	2002	280	\$11.95	\$10.95	"Deserves to be read by every American."--Edward Said.
Rose, J.	The Myths of Zionism	2004	232	\$23.95	\$15.50	The myths used to justify Israel's expansionist policies.
Said, E.	Culture and Resistance	2003	225	\$16.00	\$12.95	Author envisions a secular, democratic Middle East.
Shulman, D.	Dark Hope	2007	226	\$22.00	\$14.95	Memories of an Israeli peace activist.
Sgrena G.	Friendly Fire	2006	216	\$20.00	\$17.95	Inside story of Iraqi occupation by Italian journalist.
Swisher, C.	The Truth About Camp David	2004	455	\$14.95	\$12.95	Why the peace process collapsed.
Terry, J.	U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East	2005	168	\$24.95	\$15.50	The influence of lobbies on government policy.
Warschawski, M.	On the Border	2005	228	\$17.00	\$15.50	An Israeli looks at the forces destroying his country.
Warschawski, M.	Toward an Open Tomb	2006	250	\$12.95	\$10.95	From West Bank massacres to The Wall

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- AJPME, **Israel: Myths & Propaganda** (2008, 58 minutes) Ilan Pappé, author of this *Link's* feature article, challenges the official Israeli version of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war in part 1, and responds to his critics in part 2. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- AJPME, **Beyond the Mirage: The Face of the Occupation** (2002, VHS, 47 minutes). Israeli and Palestinian human rights advocates challenge misconceptions about the Occupation and Palestinian resistance to it. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- AJPME, **Imagine ...** (2005, DVD, 15 minutes). Palestinian education under Israeli occupation. Excellent for discussion groups. **AMEU: \$15.00.**
- Baltzer, Anna, **Life in Occupied Palestine** (2006, DVD, 61 minutes). Anna is the granddaughter of a Holocaust refugee, and the author of this *Link's* feature article. This is her powerful account of the occupation. **AMEU: \$20.00.**
- DMZ, **People and the Land** (2007 updated version of 1997 film, 57 minutes). This is the controversial documentary by Tom Hayes that appeared on over 40 PBS stations. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- FMEP, **Searching for Peace in the Middle East** (2006, DVD, 30 minutes). A film by Landrum Bolling. **AMEU: \$10.00.**
- IAK, **The Easiest Targets** (2007, DVD, 10 minutes) Films various aspects of the occupation, including Israel's policy of strip-searching women and children. **AMEU: 10.00.**
- Jordan Sandra, **Dispatches: The Killing Zone** (2003, 50 minutes, only in VHS). British correspondent reports on violence by Israeli forces against international aid workers and reporters in the Gaza Strip. Includes the bulldozer killing of Rachel Corrie. Widely shown on British TV, this powerful documentary has been aired on only a few U.S. public access channels. **AMEU: \$10.00.**
- Munayyer, F. & H., **Palestinian Costumes and Embroidery: A Precious Legacy** (1990, VHS, 38 minutes). Rare collection of Palestinian dresses modeled against background of Palestinian music, with commentary tracing the designs back to Canaanite times. List: \$50.00. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- NEF, **Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land** (2004, DVD, 80 minutes). Excellent analysis of how the U.S. media slants its coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Pilger, J., **Palestine Is Still the Issue** (2002, DVD, 53 minutes). Award-winning journalist tells why there has been no progress toward peace in the Middle East. **AMEU: \$25.00.**
- Real People Prod., **Sucha Normal Thing** (2004, DVD, 80 minutes). Six Americans document a "normal" day under military occupation in the West Bank. **AMEU: \$25.00**

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Remembering Leila

When I heard last week that Leila Haddad had died, the word that came to mind was "dignity." A serene dignity that graced all her accomplishments. Leila was a founding member of the Arab-American University Graduates and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. She also supported numerous other organizations, including our own.

We would meet every year at the ADC convention in Washington, DC. She would come by our book table — in the last few years it was with the aid of a walker. I would give her a hug and declare that now the conference could officially begin. She would reward me with one of her wonderful smiles, then inquire about my family.

AMEU will be at the ADC convention again this June. We'll have our book table. But, for me, there will be no official opening this year.

—John F. Mahoney

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