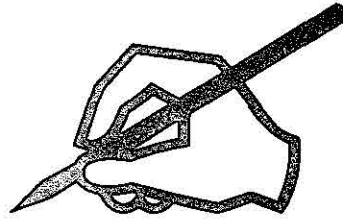


NEWS FROM



PALESTINE

A Bi-Weekly Report

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Settlers of Gillo , built over confiscated lands from Al-Walja and Beit Jala , and those from Goush Etsion said that the project will result in a radical demographic changes in the region. It will help the development of the Jewish settlements south of Jerusalem. The head of the local council of Goush Etsion said that the settlers dream has been realized as there will be no need for them to use the roads passing through the Arab towns.

Hebron Area

According to a report published by Al-Haq 'a Palestinian Human Rights Organization' about 53% of Hebron's district has been confiscated for military and settling purposes. By the end of 1995 about 400,000 dunams have been confiscated, in addition to 190 square kilometers according to an order by Illn Biran, the commander of the so-called central area issued on March 1996.

The Israeli authorities closed 7 thousands dunums on the pretext that they are natural reserves in Razih village, Beit Khalil, Halhoul, Tarqumia and Beit Oula.

In addition to the leasing of 5000 dunums by Jewish businessmen for establishing stone quarries.

The same report indicates that the Israeli authorities have confiscated 4500 dunum to establish the bypass roads confirming that 27 settlements are constructed on the land of the province. Four settlements around the city five settlement pockets inside the city. Eleven settlements expanding parallel to the Green Line. Seven settlements established near the Palestinian villages.

In Yatta, settlers had attacked and randomly opened fire on the farmers and the shepherds in the village preventing them from entering their lands especially the land near 'Atear' settlement at Um-Al-Khus area.

Netanyahu's Government Procrastination and no Action

The Israeli right-wing government still uses swerving tactics even after Beit Hanon's (Erez) summit between President Yasser Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu.

It is known that Netanyahu did not go to meet President Arafat willingly, he was under pressure to do that. Jewish observers termed the meeting a "turning point" in the Palestinian Israeli relations, Netanyahu they believe did not participate as a representative of the government, but represented the Likud party, which is a natural extension of "Herot" an Israeli pre-state movement advocating the concept of controlling what it termed "Eretz Yitsrael" Israel's land.

According to Danni Robenstein, a leading columnist in the Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz and 'expert' in Palestinian affairs, the meeting was a victory for the Palestinian leader, the PLO, and the PNA, and additional positive step taken by the Likud camp towards recognizing the principle of the partition of country between the two peoples, Palestinians and Israelis.

Another columnist Nahom Barisi' a leading political commentator working for the Israeli daily Yedi'ot Ahronot described the meeting as the most courageous decision taken by Netanyahu since his election last May.

He wrote, no body can minimize the significance of this meeting since it has come to complete the circle of Israel's recognition of the existence of the Palestinian people.

Another columnist in the same newspaper Nohama Dewqick wrote: the summit has closed a chapter in the life of the likud party.

The statements given by infrastructure minister Ariel Sharon and Knesset member Auzi Landaw, behind closed door meetings that the likud party has come to an end, demonstrate that the likud will become a different party, and that the small gap between it and the labor party will be minimized if it does not disappear altogether before the next Knesset elections.

Apart from acknowledging the significance of this summit, the Palestinians are primarily concerned with a full implementation of the Oslo accords.

Netanyahu's conduct and statements unveil however that, he intends to adopt a policy of procrastination in an attempt to evade the fulfillment of all the pledges and commitments of the previous Israeli government.

The best proof to what has been said so far is Netanyahu's statement made during the meeting of the Likud party on Sept. 5, 1996 in Tel-Aviv. During the meeting Netanyahu said that he will never allow the establishment of an independent state or an

Palestinian Prisoners Endure Inhuman Conditions in Israeli Jails

The daily violations and the continued use of torture by the Israeli security service (Shen Bet) against Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails prompted the Palestinian Ministry of Information to send an urgent appeal to all international legal and human rights organizations asking them to assume their responsibilities and intervene with the Israeli government for the unconditional release of all prisoners as per clause 20 of the Cairo agreement signed on May 4, 1994, between the PLO and the government of Israel.

Facts and Figures

The Data Processing Department at the Ministry of Information has monitored the following violations during the month of August 1996 committed by the Israeli Authority against Palestinian prisoners.

* The daily raiding of prison wards.

Telmond prison is an ideal example of these daily raids.

* Preventing sick prisoners from visiting the out-patient clinics and hospitals for treatment, further complicating, and endangering their condition.

Jalami prison will confirm our claims.

* Minimizing the daily food rations, in quantity and quality, as a means of physical and psychological pressure against prisoners.

Shatta prison is an example to this treatment.

* Torturing prisoners inside interrogation cells under a "legal" umbrella. This method has been legalized through a ruling issued on August 21, 1996, run by the Shen Bet, and headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The ruling has legalized the torturing of prisoners and detainees including "violent shaking" which was applied against martyr Abdul Samad Hereizat, and many others.

* Over-crowded cells and prison courtyards:

Palestinian prisoners complain from over-crowding inside their cells and at the courtyards.

For example, Majeddo prison contains at one barracks, 10 tents each accommodating 20 prisoners, exclusive of the 170 prisoners who are administrative detainees.

Three cases Expose the Ugly Face of Israel's Military Occupation

The first case;

Prisoner Ahmed Jaradat:

* Protesting the inhumane conditions prevailing throughout the Israeli jails, Jaradat went on a hunger strike at Majeddo prison.

In a desperate attempt to persuade him to end the strike, the Israeli prison guards have broken his hands and tried to kill him by forcibly pouring hot soup in his nose.

The second case;

Prisoner Abdul-Fatah Jabareen:

* The 27-year old prisoner from Sa'ir town, Hebron has been undergoing violent interrogation at Maskobeyya prison in Jerusalem for two consecutive months.

He was denied the right of sleep for three days in order to compel him to confess to a crime he has never committed.

His sister Abbla, a student at Bir-Zeit University was also arrested by Israeli police, to use her as a means of pressure against her brother.

The third case; Prisoner Abdul-Jabar Yousif:

* The 28-year old prisoner is suffering internal bleeding due to violent corporal punishment which has been legalized by the Shen Bet (Security Service) Ministerial committee supervised by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Ministry of Information seeks your assistance to press the Netanyahu government to abide by the basic human rights and all conventions related to prisoners.

To facilitate your job the Ministry list down all relevant accords and laws, to convince Netanyahu that harm will not be rectified by another harm and violence will lead to more violence and that the foundations of the Middle East process are doomed to collapse if his mentality and that of his government persist:

01. The 1984 Anti-Torture Convention signed by Israel.
02. The 1996 International Law on Civil and Political rights.
03. The 1995 Basic Rules on the Treatment of Detainees.
04. The UN General Assembly Resolution 43/173/1988.
05. Clauses 32, 33, 39, 49, 52, and 116 of the Geneva Fourth Convention.

Unbalanced Reporting by the Newsweek

A reader who is not conversant with, or who has a shallow understanding of the Palestinian problem will, upon reading the Newsweek's feature on Palestine - 'An Authority or a Mafia' (Newsweek August 19th) - would conclude that a Mafia is ruling the Palestinian territories.

Putting the reader in the picture with regard to what is happening in Palestine would have made the said feature more balanced, as it was, the feature was grossly unfair.

The tasks undertaken by the PNA are immense. Building a country and a modern state is a formidable challenge. The recently elected Israeli right-wing government totally opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state, and at least one of our other neighbours object to the creation of a Palestinian state.

In between, short of outright military intervention, the PNA is subjected to all kinds of physical, psychological, and political warfare affecting all aspects of Palestinian life.

The Likud and its coalition governing parties are the most extreme in Israel's history. They are determined to empty the peace accords signed by the PLO and Israel, of their contents rendering them unworkable. This they are doing through continuous procrastination regarding implementing what has been agreed, and so far they have not engaged the Palestinian side in genuine negotiations. Israel is squeezing the PNA financially, and they are doing their utmost to discredit the PNA amongst its constituency - the Palestinian people. Palestinian houses are demolished, land is being confiscated, by-pass roads are built, Jewish settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories go on unabated.

Building a civil society and enhancing democratic norms are hard under normal circumstances. Our circumstances in the Palestinian territories are in no way normal, 98% of our territories are still under occupation, and within this occupation our economy is under siege, 50% of our workforce is out of work. The forces interested in the failure of the PNA are using all relevant resources to topple the PNA.

No-one in the PNA could or would condone any abuse of human rights in the Palestinian territories or anywhere else for that matter. This however does not mean that abuse does not occur. It would be almost impossible to prevent such abuse 100%. However, what can be done is to strengthen the rule of law, to

to the region and also a sharp decline in the budgetary revenue of the Palestinian Authority .

Although we understand the importance of maintaining security, and it is needed for both Israel and the Palestinian authority to take proper measures in this regard , It is not justified that tightening security will result in placing heavy burdens on the Palestinian economy . It is also feared that the negative impacts caused by these measures would be detrimental to the environment surrounding the peace process. While appreciating the steps taken so far by the Israeli side to improve the situation, I would like to underline the importance of Israel implementing further measures towards early lifting of the closure .

The Government of Japan has been actively engaged in providing assistance for the Palestinians as a part of international efforts to advance the peace process . Japan has disbursed, as of September 5, close to \$220 million since 1993, when the government announced its pledge to provide assistance in the value of \$ 200 million in this field over the next 2 years .

Of this assistance , the Government of Japan has contributed, for the present fiscal year beginning this April , about \$12 million to the Japan - Palestinian Development Fund of the UNDP for eight new projects .

In addition, Japan extended direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority in the amount of about \$20 million in July as grant aid for the construction of Jericho Hospital . This contribution together with Japan's two other grant aid projects, which had already been implemented in March for providing educational medical materials, makes Japan's total amount of direct grant assistance about \$42 million.

Implementation of the "Employment Generation Projects " is urgently needed to improve the dire situation of the Palestinian people who suffer, as a result of the closure, from a high rate of unemployment. Recognizing this urgent need , Japan has already contributed about \$12 million for eight job creation projects through UNDP since April 1996, as I mentioned earlier, we are now considering further possible measures to alleviate the situation.

Japan is determined to continue to provide assistance for the Palestinians, taking into consideration "the core Investment Programme," which was agreed to at the ministerial level Conference on Assistance to the Palestinians in January.

I would like to announce that the Government of Japan will invite Chairman Arafat to visit Japan from September 10 to 13. **This invitation reflects the eagerness of Japan to support the Palestinian track.**

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Within this framework, the Palestinian delegation introduced a proposal at the first meeting of the joint Palestinian-Israeli water committee, for drilling new water wells at Maythalon, Jenin to resolve the water crisis at this area.

The head of the Palestinian delegation at this committee Dr. Nabil Sha'rif, announced that the Palestinian national authority will drill new wells at Jenin District.

On the other hand the mayor of Hebron Eng. Mustafa Abd-Al-Nabi Al-Natshih said that the municipality has submitted tender, for the construction of a 7 million gallons water cisteron at Al-Maskobbeya quarter in Hebron, in addition to commencing the third phase of upgrading the water networks through the extension of 17Km. Long of water pipes.

He said the initial cost of this project is estimated at \$ 2 million, will be financed by the Italian government through UNDP.

The mayor added that the project is due to commence very shortly to contribute in partially solving Palestinians in Hebron by serving about 40,000 person.

In Khan-Younis city Dr. Ammed Abu Kheir, member of the central blood bank society said that laboratory tests showed that 80% of the population of this city are suffering from parasites due to the leakage of waste water with potable waters.

The society confirmed that about 90% of the children visiting its clinics are suffering parasites diseases.

The city inhabited by over 150,000 person, still has no sewage networks, and is totally dependent on old fashioned sewage pools.

The head of the Palestine water authority Eng. Nabil Sharief, held the Israeli government the full responsibility for stealing underground water.

He said Israel has established its settlements in Gaza Strip near an over rich water reservoirs and that these settlements control the big portion of water resources.

He warned that the illegal presence of these settlements has created this water crisis in the Gaza Strip.

He said our dependency on rain water is very limited since the running water at Gaza valley go directly to the sea. In the winter season all waste waters are discharged into ten valley which makes its water contaminated and undrinkable.

Palestine in The Foreign Press

On the issue of the Palestinian Israeli peace accords, the foreign press focused in the past few days on the tension caused by the reluctance of the hard-line Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu to comply with the Oslo and Taba accords and to take the right decision toward pushing the peace process forward. Some of the papers reported on the dangerous vacuum caused by the Israeli Prime Minister's lack of decision making. The papers noted the Palestinian reactions and how they intend to proceed as the peace process eradicates.

On the procrastination of the Israeli government, the Guardian published a report on August 24, by its correspondent Derek Brown, titled 'empty promises threaten peace,' in which he said:

"The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, promised Yesterday that peace talks with the Palestinian liberation organization would resume soon.

That is not news - he has been promising as much for two months, since taking office.

Just as he has been promising, every couple of weeks, to say how his government will fulfill Israel's commitments to redeploy its occupation troops in the West Bank town of Hebron."

The correspondent noted another example of the Israeli government's procrastination, through reviving the old idea of 'Lebanon first.' Damascus rejected that proposal and termed it as a ploy to blame Syria for lack of progress. Then, eight days ago, Israel let it drop that it no longer felt bound by the tentative understandings achieved in negotiations in the United States earlier this year.

Israeli government argued that it is committed only to signed agreements.

That last observation, as the correspondent said, raised hollow laughter among the Palestinians, who have waited in vain for Mr. Netanyahu to move beyond his repeated claims that the PLO is violating the peace accords by maintaining offices in Jerusalem.

Israel's argument, that Jerusalem is its exclusive property, is in itself a violation of the peace accords.

Derek Brown concluded his report saying that the Palestinian authority is under great pressure. It desperately needs a prop from Israel, in the form of some progress in the interminably delayed peace process. Instead, all it is getting is promises."

The Washington post wrote about the Palestinian reaction to the violation of the accords. The newspaper published a report on August 29, by its correspondent Barton Gellman, under the title "Angry Arafat Lashes out at Netanyahu" in which he said:

Palestine leader Yasser Arafat today abandoned a three - month effort to woo Israeli public opinion, lashing out at what he called a government of "Ediots", and accusing

fundamental relearning than he realizes. If he does that, he can bring to Israeli society a consensus about moving forward that no one also can. If he does not do that relearning, he not only will miss out on the personal greenness to which he aspires, but he also will plunge Israel into a very, very serious crisis."

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ESCWA Accuses Israel of Obliterating the Identity of Arab Jerusalem

The Economic and Social Committee for West Asia (ESCWA) published Monday Sept. 9, 1996 a report on the economic and social implications of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights, occupied in June 1967.

According to the report, Jewish settlement expansion escalated at high speed since the beginning of this decade as a result of the Israeli government's and other financial tax incentives rendered to the Jewish settlers, these have encouraged settlers to build apartments over Palestinian lands.

The Israeli successive governments are encouraging building large settlements in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Tulkarm, Qalqilia, and Nablus districts, and to expand existing settlements in the Jordan valley.

The report highlighted a survey compiled by Peace Now Movement, sampling Jewish settlers, 32% of those surveyed are ready to move out if they are given adequate compensations, 26% will remain, 15% will leave even without compensations, and 27% do not know.

The survey indicated that the number of those willing to move increases, in the areas of Ariel, Amanuel, Alfe Minashe, and Qiryat Arba'.

According to the report 26% are not intending to leave even if their settlements become under Palestinoian sovereignty, 29% will stay if Israel remains in charge of security matters, 25% will move to inside the Green Line and 8% will leave to other settlements in the Palestinian territories.

along the Green Line and 1800 units in the West Bank.

Concerning water rights, a tripartite committee made up of Palestinians, Israelis, and the American, has been set up to examine the usage, distribution, promotion, and control of water resources in the Palestinian territories.

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Recruiting Gazan Children in the Black Labor Market

In a comprehensive survey published by UNICEF about the deteriorating conditions endured by Gazan children, it was revealed that 44% of those children have been transformed into laborers as a direct result of poverty, exacerberated by the closure of the Palestinian territories on the hands of the Israeli military government.

The survey found that 8% of this percentage left schools, while the others work outside school hours.

According to the survey, 30% of those children are working in mechanical and electrical workshops as well as in car maintenance garages.

Unemployment rates in Gaza reaches new heights.

* A separate report issued by Gaza Center for Human Rights and Law, unveiled that the closure of the territories has caused heavy material loss to all Palestinian economic sectors, this loss estimated to be around \$6 million per day, the percentage of unemployment increased to 60%.

The closure of the territories is not limited to the labor force, the Israeli military authorities bans hundreds of Gazan students from joining their universities and educational institutions in the West Bank.

The same report disclosed that Jewish settlers in Gaza Strip control 30% of the total area of its lands and that a settler consumes 10 times the amount of water used by a Palestinian.

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evidence about its establishment, at least in the near future, and 5% said it will never exist.

On the expansion of the Jewish settlements 41% supported the expansion of Jewish settlements over the Palestinian territories.

As for the peace process, 51% do believe that President Arafat is fully committed to the peace process and 38% said that Arafat is not really interested in peace.

67% supported the continued aid provided to the PLO by the Clinton Administration.

Regarding the prospects of peace between Israel and Syria, 87% support the continuation of peace negotiations between the two Mediterranean countries, but 54% have opposed the return of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in June 1967, to Syria.

Binjamin Netanyahu, the Most Disappointing Israeli Politician

* According to the results of a poll conducted recently by an Israeli poll center, 30% of Israeli individuals insist that Netanyahu is the most disappointing Israeli Politician.

* 82% Support Arafat - Netanyahu Summit

38% of Gazans Sell Household Items to Buy Food

Poll prepared by the Childhood Care Society, based in Gaza, revealed that 38% of Gazans were compelled to sell their furniture to buy food supplies following the closure of the territories by Israel.

The percentage of unemployment rose up from 14-25%, the average monthly income has dropped from 1304 NIS to 892 NIS.

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Palestinian - American Congress (PAC)

Background:

PAC a non-for - profit and a grass root organization founded in May, 1995 by the Palestinian American Community. In its brief history, PAC has become an established name in the Palestinian Community with 20 Chapters across the United states. By combining it's Community Members' sincere detection and meticulously planned and executed vision, of stronger and united Palestinian American Community. As such. PAC has an outstanding reputation in the Palestinian community .

Why PAC is needed?

In an effort to develop an atmosphere that encourages political participation of all Palestinians regarding national and international issues, PAC stands alone and above other organizations, its excellence lies in its effective involvement with the Palestinian people and optimum utilization and management of all Chapters and Members' resources. PAC presents an outstanding values and platform for all Palestinians at all times, where people give cheerfully of their time, knowledge and experience along with great understanding and mutual support among all people. PAC encourages open communications throughout all organizational levels and the Palestinian community .

Who can join?

Any person of Palestinian origin or the spouse of any person of Palestinian origin who is at least 18 years of age. and who support the principles of the constitution and By-Laws .

How do I join?

By writing to PAC or contacting any local chapter and paying annual dues of \$25. PAC has chapters in New York, N.J, CA, MI, FL, D.C, L.A, TX, PA and OH.

Goals and Objectives:

- . To organize our community,
- . To lobby the U.S government and it's elected officials,
- . To serve as an advocate for Palestinians living in the U.S.A, and protect their civil and political rights,

Palestine Ministries Activities

*** Ministry of Local Government:**

The Ministry introduced modern building scheme to update old rules and procedures so as to conform with the socio-economic developments.

*** Ministries of Labor, Higher Education, and Education.:**

A joint meeting was held by the three ministries to discuss a unified vocational, and training strategy responding to the basic requirements of the local market and procure qualified staff and technicians.

*** Ministry of Sport and Youth:**

The Ministry is coordinating with the Palestinian Olympic committee and the local sport unions, for the election of a sport unions' committee due to its paramount significance to the society.

*** The Ministry of Economy and Trade:**

An economic agreement has been reached between the Palestinian and the Tunisian Ministries of Economy and Trade to encourage joint projects, commercial exchanges, and the establishment of a supreme council for businessmen.

*** The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation:**

The Ministry is engaged in following up the file of industrial parks by initiating development projects including improvement of fishing and the creation of work opportunities for Palestinian laborers.

*** Ministry of Agriculture:**

The Ministry organized a workshop on new agricultural techniques at two Palestinian villages.

The workshop was held in conjunction with the French General Consulate and the Faculty of Agriculture at Al-Najah University.

- C. The Department of Antiquities at the Ministry has been engaged in supervising cleaning works, underway at old springs in Salfit town.
- D. An agreement has been reached between the Department of Antiquities and the Antiquities Section at Laden University in Holland to establish a joint excavation project to unearth Antiquities at Balama village in Jenin.
- E. The Department of Antiquities has hired 450 laborers to clean about 100 archaeological sites in Palestine.
- F. An important archaeological site dating back to the Can'anite era, has been unearthed on the southern entrance of Jenin.

Cultural Activities in Palestine

The Israeli practices impeding the cultural activities in Palestine are continuing. Israeli authorities had prevented Ahmad Dahbour, a Palestinian poet from participating in a symposium in Majd Al-Kroum village inside the Green Line, Al-Ba'th choral from Shafa Amr was prevented from participating in the Gaza festival held in summer 96, many other Palestinian troupes were also prevented.

Symposiums:

The English Literature Club at the British Council has organized a lecture on the working class novel in the victorian age titled "Elizabeth Gasckel" a prisoner writer in working class novel by Dr. Sa'id Abdul-Wahed at Al-Azhar University.

* The Palestinian Writers Union in Gaza has organized a workshop on the "short story" in the presence of Tayser Mhiesin a short story writer.

On the occasion of commemoration of Naji Al-Ali, the renown Palestinian caricaturist, the Palestinian national theater has organized a symposium in which many Palestinian writers like Ibrahim Jawhar, Khaleed Abu Anata talked about the distinguished role of Naji Al-Ali.

An abstract exhibition for the Palestinian Artist Ismael Assfour was opened by the Ministry of Culture at Rashad Al-Shawa Cultural Center on August 29.

The Palestinian folklore exhibition was opened by the governor of Tulkarm at the "injured institution" in Tulkarm on Sept. 2.

Festivals:

Artas Festival Activities ended on August 23, 1996 during which "Ibda" as well as other Palestinian troupes had presented many performances at the site of the historical Suleiman pools.

Al-Quds Islamic Art Festival ended on August 29, 1996 at An-Najah University campus.

New Publications:

The Alternative Information Center issued a book about Palestinian refugees entitled "Refugees and the Dream of Return" by Salah Abed Rabbo a writer from Al-Dheishei refugee camp.

A book on the Ministry of Health achievements under the PNA was issued by the Ministry of Health.

* The 12th report on the Israeli closure of Gaza was issued by the Palestinian Human Rights Center, it discusses the results and effects of closure on the most densely populated area in the world.

A special report on the 27th anniversary of Al-Aqsa mosque burning was issued by the Ministry of Information. It includes a historical background about the mosque, the crime and the different reactions to the crime perpetrated by an Australian Jew.

A press directory is another publication by the Ministry of Information which includes the addresses of all the local press institutions, ministries and bureaus in PNA provinces.

Gaza municipality has issued a booklet titled "the citizen directory" In English. It includes a historical background about the city of Gaza and the municipal councils and the services offered by the municipality.

