



دار الجنوب

Dar al Janub - Union for Antiracism and Peace Policy

Kleistgasse 8/3, 1030 Vienna, Austria

Tel.: 0043 (0) 676 / 78-93-413

www.dar-al-janub.net

verein@dar-al-janub.net

Symposium „Bridges to Palestine” –

On the Humanitarian And Political Situation After The Imposed Sanctions On The Palestinian People.

23d of March 2007, 7 p.m.

Kolpinghaus 18

Gentzgasse 27

1180 Vienna

**Dar al Janub - Union for Antiracism and Peace Policy
in cooperation with the Society for Austrian Arab Relationship**

About Dar al Janub:

The Union for Antiracism and Peace Policy was found on 1st of January 2004. The focus of its work is based on the political dialogue between the southern countries, especially the Arab World, and Europe, to the main stress on Palestine. One of the most important tasks in this issue is to focus on those aspects which are almost left out in the European discourse, especially to obtain a hearing to the political, scientific and social representatives of Arabic countries within Europe. Regarding the European history of colonialism and the current relation between Europe and the Arabic world, the association mainly focuses to overcome this cleavage relation and create an atmosphere of real dialogue on equal eye-level.

The unconsciousness of the backgrounds and reasons about the conflict in Palestine, the extent of the public desensitisation because of the warped and fragmentary reporting and the medial underrepresented fate of the Palestinian People, especially the Palestinian refugees induce a contradictory situation:

The European Union appears currently as an international force, which is in principal also respected as neutral and objective on the part of the Arabic side, but at the same time there are big gaps within the European public and the European foreign policy as for the knowledge of the Palestinian Society. Dar al Janub sees its main field of work to fill this gaps within the European society.

The goals of Dar al Janub are followed by organizing conferences, writing articles, editing books, organizing exhibitions, cultural events,...

Examples of activities:

- Foto-gallery **“Aidun – We Will Return – Life and Hope of the Palestinian Refugees in the Diaspora.”** with pictures from the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, which gave an impression about the humanitarian and social situation of the Palestinians in the Refugee Camps.
- Delegation to the Palestinian Refugee camps in Lebanon
- Publication of the book in German language **“... und wo ist Palästina - Eine Reise in die Palästinensischen Flüchtlingslager im Libanon?”** (“...Searching Palestine – a journey to the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon”). Besides a detailed report about the humanitarian and social situation of the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, their political demands and hopes, **“...und wo ist Palästina?”** contains interviews with political, scientific and social representatives of the Palestinian Refugees and articles of experts on the topic.
- Symposium: **“Continuousness, end or new beginning of the relations between the EU and Palestine after the elections in Palestine.”** Referents were:
 - Dr. Ali Hweidi, Lebanon representative of Palestinian Return Center, secretary general of the Palestinian NGO “Palestinian Organization for the Right of Return”,
 - his Excellency Dr. Zuheir el Wazer, Palestinian Ambassador in Austria
 - Dr. Gerhard Pulfer, Austrian Development Agency
 - Member of European Parliament Dr. Hannes Swoboda.
- Project **“Palestine – Development Behind Walls”**, grant aided by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The main aspect of this project is to picture Palestine - the development inside Palestine and in the Palestinian Refugee camps, the political and social aspects of the Palestinian question - within Austrian society and show the authentic viewpoint of Palestinians to the European public.

- Colloquium: **“A Society behind Bars – The Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Jails”** about the humanitarian situation of Palestinian prisoners
- **"Imagine Palestine" - presentation of Palestinian cities.** The idea of this project is to give an impression about the historical, cultural, agricultural, economical development in Palestine. The first represented city was Bethlehem, a city with a special meaning for all world religions. During the presentation of Bethlehem also the problem of the occupation and the building of the Wall was exposed. Future planned city-presentations are Gaza and Ramallah.

Why "Bridges to Palestine"?

More than one year after the imposed sanctions against Palestinian people the humanitarian situation in Palestine is disastrous. The USA and European Union blocked all humanitarian aid and implemented a collective punishment against all Palestinians because of their democratic choice. While Israel continued its policy of occupation, committed humanitarian crimes, killed innocent people the USA and European Union demanded at the same time to recognize the politics of a state that is constantly breaking international law. Down to the present day Israel did not define its borders, so which Israel the Palestinians should recognize? The quartet (UN, Russia, USA and EU) is practicing a policy of double standards: it demands that the Palestinian National Unity Government should renounce violence, recognize Israel and respect international treaties, while it is failing to make the same demands of the Government of Israel. The new formed government of unity is strengthening the whole Palestinian people, and also stressed on the unity between the Palestinians inside and outside West Bank and Gaza.

The continuation of the policy of boycott is targeting the Palestinian people and undermines the institutions of civil society which stands by its side. Palestinians still have hope that European Union will change its policy and pursue another course than the USA. In the focus of the symposium "Bridges to Palestine" are possible new perspectives and ways of development cooperation with the Palestinian society, which should open new ways of dialogue between European Union and Palestine. It is more important then ever to build this bridge from Europe to Palestine, no letting the Palestinians be isolated behind walls.

Referents of the Symposium:

Dr. Ahmed al Kord

Major of Deir al Balah, Gaza strip, is former employee of UNRWA and was coordinator of humanitarian projects and development cooperation in Gaza strip for many years.

- The humanitarian situation in Gaza strip,
- effects of the embargo
- possibilities for development cooperation on a new basis
- the role of NGOs in supporting and developing the Palestinian society, obstacles to the work of this NGOs from side of USA and European Union, and how to overcome this obstacles

Dr. Helga Baumgarten

Professor of Political Science, author, University of Birzeit, Palestine

- the relation between Europe and the Palestinian government since the election victory of Hamas
- the effects of the sanctions on the scientific sphere
- the current political situation in Palestine

Ramzy Baroud

Author and Journalist, Editor in Chief of Palestine Chronicle, Author of "Searching Jenin" and "The Second Palestinian Intifada", USA

- political situation in Palestine more than one year after the change of government.
- Interests of Western countries and the chances of lifting the sanctions
- General aspects of US-Foreign Policy towards Middle East and the Palestinian Cause

Dr. Ali Hweidi

secretary general of the Palestinian NGO "Palestinian Organization for the Right of Return", lives and works in the Palestinian Refugee Camp Rashidiyah.

- The role of Palestinian NGO's and Initiatives in Lebanon and the organisation of the Palestinian civil society in the diaspora as well as how the Palestinian refugees keep their association with Palestine,
- effects of the sanctions
- Palestinian National Unity Government and the relations to Europe

**Presentation prepared by Ahmed Al Kurd
Mayor
Deir El Balah Municipality**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

First I would like to thank you for this meeting, our deep thank is also extended to Dar Al Janub for inviting me to talk and participate in supporting Peace for Palestine.

My talk will focus on the obstacles facing charitable work in the Gaza Strip. In order to do so, it is crucial to go over some historical events that the Palestinian People passed through during the last hundred years. These events can be divided as follows:

1- Year 1914 to 1948

The first world war occurred during this period in which Arabs joined Britain in return for promises of independence after war. This resulted in dividing the Arab land to the current Arab countries. Syria and Lebanon were under French occupation; Jordan and Palestine were under British occupation. In 1917 this situation was worsened as England announced Palestine as the national land for Jews. Afterwards, the Zionism migrations started flowing to Palestine and therefore the Palestinian - Zionism conflict began. This struggle reached its maximum after the British withdrew from Palestine in 1948 and the declaration of the Israeli State and exiling and deportation of the majority of the Palestinian people to Lebanon, Jordan, the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

2- Year 1948 to 1967

Since 1967, most of the Palestinian people were refugees living in refugee camps depending on their lives on the aids offered by UNRWA. While they were waiting for a justified solution to their crisis and to return to their homes and lands, the rest of Palestine (the Gaza Strip and West Bank) was also occupied as a result of the war of 1967. This new occupation caused more Palestinians to migrate and leave their lands in the Gaza Strip and West Bank to other Arab countries.

3- Year 1967 to 1987

By then, all historic Palestine was under the yoke of the Israeli occupation. The Gaza Strip and West Bank were considerably suffering due to the damaging and destructing effects on the Palestinian society in educational, health, social and psychological levels. All these factors led to the first Intifada in 1987.

4- Year 1987 to 1994

Intifada is now a known term in all languages as a massive public uprising. Children and unarmed men and women participated in the Intifada in front of the Israeli military arsenal, which killed thousands of Palestinian children, women and men, and destroyed homes, uprooted trees. This increased the suffering of the defenseless people who rose up to gain freedom like all other peoples of the free world.

5- Year 1994 to 2000

At this time, the Oslo agreement was born which brought the Palestinian National Authority. As a case each time, the Israeli occupation increased the suffering of the Palestinian people and did not abide by the conventions and treaties they signed in front of the world. As a consequent, The second Intifada was burned.

6- Year 2000 to 2007

This period marked by the strongest periods ferocity as the Israeli attack affected the economic and social life and even paralyzed Palestinian daily life and full invasion of the West Bank. One of the results of this Intifada was the exit from the Gaza Strip and the occurrence of legislative elections in response to international demands, which is trying to implement democracy in Palestine. The results, as you know, Hamas won a majority, which led to the imposition of unjust siege on the Palestinian people. This situation is the worst one between the subsidized stages of pain and poverty throughout the modern history of Palestine.

This introduction is provided to put you in the picture of the repeated suffering of the Palestinians, who never cursing his breath, but they are moving from the ordeal to another where the whole world is seeing without any action.

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know our situation in the Gaza Strip. It is characterized by the following : -

- 1- The area of the Gaza Strip is 360 square kilometers, inhabited by 1.5 million people. It is considered as one of the most populated areas in the world.
- 2- The majority of the population, about a million, are refugees living in eight camps temporarily, and over 59 years waiting for a solution to their crisis.
- 3- Poor development services is provided to the Gaza Strip as it relies on assistance from the countries of the world.
- 4- A low standard of living as the majority of the residents of the Gaza Strip were working in Israel before the closure.
- 5- Tight and strong blockade that imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip since the victory Hamas, all people are suffering as a result of stop paying the salaries and cease on the financial support offered to the Palestinian people.

In front of these miserable stages and situations which the Gaza Strip is facing, the civil society organization had a very obvious role to relief the suffering of the inhabitants in social, health, education and development fields. During the occupation and in the absence of a national authority, these organizations focused mainly in relieving activities by providing the basic needs. With the advent of the Palestinian Authority the need of Palestinian society organizations and institutions increased because the budget depends mainly on aids brought from abroad.

The foregoing information shows the important role, society institutions and non-governmental organizations played for the Palestinian people. The World Bank mentioned in its annual report that the services provided by these institutions and societies approaches USD 200 million annually. This large budget confirms that these institutions and societies are necessary in the lives of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian community can not last without it.

Therefore, the charity work was targeted and the obstacles are placed on its way to reduce the impact of a prominent figure in the community as the institutions of the charity work became. These non-governmental organizations are nearly 1800 and comprise one of the major components of the Palestinian society.

Great obstacles are placed to the charity work in order to eliminate it, direct it away from its goals and even drag it into political conflicts, and embroiling the general public in issues and international crises which are not of its nature. This situation is increased considerably after the attacks of September 11th. Unfortunately, the American campaign began against what they call (terrorism), and took the opportunity to launch an unfair intensive campaign against all forms of charity work. This unfair campaign sat arbitrary actions against charitable foundations; among them are: the closure, confiscation of funds, assignment to the judiciary, fabricating accusations, undermining projects and killing intentions of charity work even if they stand by the orphan children who lost their fathers by the Israelis.

The campaign began by closing down some charitable institutions, the assets of other associations and the confiscation of others. The reason behind that is to place them on the list of all counter-terrorism and to impose more control on them. One of the main goals of this campaign to widen the need to fight all society and charitable institutions that provide any kind of support to the victims of the Israeli crimes in Palestine. The campaign reached also the Banks under the false evidence that the charity work supports terrorism.

The objective of these campaigns and accusations is to destroy the charitable and humanitarian work, because it responds to the suffering of the Palestinian people caused by the Israeli occupier.

The targeting of societies and charitable institutions had many aspects, among them are:

1-Draining the charity resources through putting pressure on the Arab governments to pursue the public finance and restricting the collecting institutions.

2-Direct the Arab public support to the Palestinian Authority or at least through it, this comes in agreement with president Bush focused on.

3-Prosecution of the activists of the institutional charity work by the Israeli security agencies, arrest them and raid the charitable institutions where they work in order to destroy the structure and their informatics.

4-Prosecution of the activists of the charitable work organizations by the American security services abroad, tightening their closure and arrest some of their officials.

5-Attempt at linking the Palestinian military activity with relief work, and giving them the image of Al-Qaida. This was done to impact on the world public opinion in an attempt to contain the Islamic social charity work at home and abroad.

6-Stop internal support by the American donor institutions and some European ones in the Gaza Strip except the institutions belongs to the Palestinian national Authority, which signed the Anti-Terrorism Document. This resulted in classifying those who did not sign this document terrorism supporting. This was completely rejected by the Palestinian institutions of all charity work.

7- Most donors classifies the charity institutions taking into consideration the political subordination to be the criterion of acceptance and rejection not integrity and transparency.

These policies will lead to a range of pressures and substantive problems, which include :

1 - These targeted institutions are well known to have clean hands and honesty. This contradicts with what the Americans are calling for financial reform and transparency. They call for something and do something else.

2-Finding alternative organizations as they became part of the social structure that could not be replaced need many years and will lead to a Palestinian social revolution.

3-The American pressure on Arab countries against charities constitutes interference in their affairs. This means offending the dignity of their sovereignty is leading to an increasing of the gap between the governments and their peoples.

4-It is proved that the promises of Americans call of a billion dollars to the Palestinian people as a substitute for social services provided by non-governmental institutions are false and have no foundation. What we see today of halting the aid to the Palestinian people and the imposition of the embargo is the best proof of that.

In summary, the aim of the war against charitable institutions in Palestine is to demoralise the steadfastness of the Palestinians and their humanity to keep them humiliated at the doors of the occupation begging for the summit live, and think only in their freedom. At the same time, we find the Arab institutions helpless in the face of such pressure on alleviating the suffering of the Palestinians. They are required to offer more help in uplifting this seize. We should note here that all what only these institutions do in Palestine is the alleviation of poverty and hunger. The infrastructure of basic services, which need tens of billions of Dollars, no one thinks of being involved in. The continuation of these policies which target the Palestinian people and undermine the institutions of civil society which stands by its side, leads (according to the equation of accumulation of social anger) to a third Intifada causing instability in the Middle East. From here, we are speaking to you to let you know the nature of the frantic targeting facing the charitable institutions in Palestine in general and especially in the Gaza Strip. We ask you to stand in front of your historical responsibilities and to bear what humanitarian duty requires from you.

Thanks for your attention

Ahmed Al Kurd

Mayor

Deir El Balah Municipality

The Arab Peace Initiative in a Changing Mideast **By Ramzy Baroud**

The rapid, almost hasty, developments on the Arab Israeli front, almost immediately following the Saudi sponsored Makkah Agreement on February 2, should be examined in their proper context, as a part and parcel of the regional shifts, exasperated by the US war in Iraq and the dramatic adjustment in Iran's position vis-à-vis the region and its sectarian, religious composition.

Two prevailing analyses have been offered; one that is skeptical, and argues that the Arab initiative, which will be articulated at a coming Arab league conference in Saudi Arabia on March 28, was brought back to the scene on the behest of the US administration: by engaging Hamas, Arabs will deny Iran the opportunity to further galvanize its regional alliances — Syria and Hezbollah — against the US and Israel, thus further cemented the Shia crescent, at the expense of the Sunni majority.

The other analysis is overtly optimistic, ranging between the view of Palestinian and Arab commentators talking of a 'historic opportunity' and Western commentators wondering if the league has finally taking charge of the Arab people's own destiny. "Worried by what they see as the Bush administration's failings, and the new regional power of Iran, the Arabs are struggling to take their destiny into their own hands," is how BBC Middle East analyst Roger Hardy worded the conclusion of his analysis, "Mid-East Package Diplomacy."

The Arab peace initiative, offering a full normalization with Israel, in simultaneous exchange for an Israeli pull out to the pre-1967 border, was made public in a March 2002 Arab League summit in Beirut. It came at the height of the Palestinian uprising. The initiative was immediately rejected by the Israeli government and accepted by Arafat. Its release was a cause of a slight discomfort for Israel, however, principally because the Bush administration viewed it in positive terms, at the beginning at least, before it disowned it before Israel's incessant rejection.

In the weeks preceding the official announcement of the Arab peace initiative, Israel had assassinated Fatah leader in Tulkaram in the West Bank, Raed al-Karmi, prompting Palestinian suicide bombings. "Karmi's assassination led to the scuttling of the truce that had lasted since December 16, 2001," wrote Akiva Aldar in Haaretz, quoting Mati Steinberg, who was the adviser on Palestinian affairs to the head of the Shin Bet security service. "It also led to Operation Defensive Shield, which pushed the Arab initiative to the margins and eliminated the opportunity to put the diplomatic track with the Palestinians on a route of direct connection with the Arab peace initiative for the first time."

But the Middle East of those days is in many ways different from today's regional realities. Although Israel's colonial project is pursued with the same level of determination (the Imprisonment wall, the settlements, the collective punishment and so forth) Israel's regional reputation as a formidable military power has received a significant blow when its army couldn't advance more than a few miles before stiff Lebanese resistance, led by Hezbollah in the 33-day war of July-August 2007. Neither Israel nor the US were willing to concede to the fact that the Lebanese ferocious fight had much to do with the people's strong belief in a just case — God forbid — but all fingers were pointed at Iran: the head of the snake as far as America's neoconservatives clique are now parroting. Iran understood that Hezbollah's victory will discourage, slow down or completely repeal an American military adventure against its own domain. Naturally, Hezbollah's defeat, relying mostly on Iranian arms, would eliminate the first line of Iran's defenses and inspire Washington's hawks, in constant coordination with Israel, to prepare the public and government for a war against Iran. Not that a war against Iran is no longer on the agenda; to the contrary, something will be done to confront the Iranian 'threat'. But one has to understand that Israel cannot possibly allow for another regional bully, aside from itself to claim an inch of what it believes as its rightful domain. It was this logic, as articulated by Richard Pearle in a set of recommendations made to then Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu in the infamous "A Clean Break, memo that envisaged the Iraq war as a strategic Israeli imperative. Iraq or Iran, Sunni or Shia, are all irrelevant semantics, in Israel's view. However, the failure to 'contain' Iran, coupled with the American disastrous war strategy in Iraq, which has given rise to powerful Shia groups, with

direct links, and in some cases allegiance to Teheran is sending Israel's military and policy planners to the table, once more, to study their future options.

Israel and its supporters in America are obsessed with Iran. In the well-attended Israeli lobby AIPAC conference (6,000 participants including half of the Senate and a large number of House members and numerous ambassadors and officials,) Israel's many friends seemed to delineate their stances from every US official based on their position on the Iran subject or the terrifying possibility of an early pull out of Iraq: neglecting the first or proceeding with the second, they argue will bode disaster for Israel's security. Thus, when House Republican leader, Rep John Boehner of Ohio addressed the conference, defending the current war strategy, he received a standing ovation; but when Speaker Nancy Pelosi — unequalled fan of the Israeli regime — dared to spell out a strategy for withdrawal from Iraq, she was booed, according to the San Francisco Chronicle.

The power of the lobby and the persisting influence of the neocons have reached new heights when Democratic leaders were obliged to strip from a military spending bill a requirement that the president must gain the approval from the Congress before moving against Iran. Pelosi and others agreed to such a removal "after conservative Democrats as well as other lawmakers worried about its possible impact on Israel," reported ABC News.

With Iran being the unrivalled focus, coupled with serious worries amongst some Arab countries regarding Iran's rise and its possible destabilization impact on the region, Israel has agreed to a conditional exchange that would allow for an implicit arrangement: to 'contain Iran — to Israel's benefit — stabilize Iraq — to the Bush Administration's benefit — and to introduce a new horizon of peace with the Palestinians — to the appeasement of the Arabs. Only the prospect of solving the Lebanon dilemma, says Roger Hardy don't look promising at the March summit.

The new horizon of peace — a new term invoked by Condoleezza Rice in her recent visit to the region — is a term that corresponds to the 'peace process': significant enough insofar as it yield a sense of hope, but clever enough for it guarantees nothing, since Israel, brimming with its unprecedented clout in the corridors of power in Washington will neither give up its grand plans of territorial conversion (annexing the settlements), nor bring to a halt the construction of its encroaching wall nor surrender an inch from the illegally annexed East Jerusalem, all, predictably key Arab and Palestinian demands.

The Arab initiative seemed deliberately vague on the issue of Palestinians made refugee by Israel in 1948 and 1967, and whose plight is as urgent as ever (considering their systematic targeting in Iraq, 500 murdered to date, and Libya's decision to deport its Palestinians refugees to Gaza, as thoughtless as this may sound.) Yet, to remove any ambiguity, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni is "demanding that the leaders of the 22 Arab states excise the right of return from it," reported Haaretz.

By crossing out the 'controversial' elements contained in the Arab initiative and then opening it up for negotiations, Palestinians — now browbeaten with a year of sanctions and near starvation in Gaza — will be taken on another peace goose chase, during which Israeli army bulldozers will hardly cease their determined colonial project. My fear is that Arabs will play a long, willingly or not, and Palestinians would be forced to partake in the charade, for their reliance on international handouts for their mere survival will make it impossible to defy the US-Israeli regional designs forever.

-Ramzy Baroud's latest book: The Second Palestinian Intifada: A Chronology of a People's Struggle (Pluto Press, London) is now available at Amazon.com.

Palestinian Cause; Sanctions, Palestinian National Unity Government and the relations to EU

Dar Al- Janub NGO event
Austria –Vienna
Friday 23rd of March 2007

Presentation prepared by
Ali Hweidi

Palestinian Organization for the Right of Return (Firm)
Lebanon- Beirut: Mar Elias camp for Palestinian Refugees.
Telfax: 00961 1 370487 Mobile: 00961 3 539692
E-mail: info@thabit-lb.org, www.thabit-lb.org
P.O.Box: Tyr 206

Ladies and Gentlemen
Assalamo Alaykom

It's a pleasure to be here this evening, and thanks for Dar al Janub NGO for giving me the opportunity to take a part in this important event, to speak about the Palestinian cause, related to new developments in Palestine after a year of sanctions, and in the shadow of the new Palestinian National Unity Government and the relations to EU.

Out of 6,4 million Palestinian refugees scattered around the world, there is 1 million Palestinian refugees living in West Bank and Gaza strip. ***Gaza Strip is the most densely populated piece of land in the world***, it has had little or no investment in infrastructure for years; humanitarian conditions have worsened since sanctions were imposed last year. Gaza strip becomes the biggest prison in the whole world; it is a special one for Palestinians.

It's an open invitation to those who care for Palestinians and their self determination, to visit Gaza, to spend just one day with the people there, to see the daily sufferings in life of the Palestinians.

Ladies and gentlemen, why Palestinians are punished?

Is it the true democracy?! Is it because Palestinians, of all different parties, have shown the whole world that they can be democratic? Just to remind you, Ladies and gentlemen, Palestinians made elections under conditions of occupation and aggression; they have been democratic and peaceful. Every Palestinian, no matter what is his political trend, voted actually for Palestine!

We as Palestinians believe that it is not the democracy of the west, but it is the hypocrisy and false democracy led by the United States government.

Quartet and Double Standards

After Hamas movement won the legislative elections last year, the quartet (UN, Russia, USA and EU) imposed sanctions and blocked economic aid for the Palestinian people, unless the Palestinian government recognizes the state of Israel, renounces violence and recognizes previous peace agreements with Israel.

Quartet is asking the Palestinian National Unity Government to recognize Israel's existence as a condition to release the humanitarian aids; otherwise, all Palestinian people should remain punished. Just to be known, *this act of collective punishment is in contravention of the 4th Geneva Convention*. In the other hand, a question raised, did Israel recognize the Palestinian rights - self determination, the Palestinian State, Right of Return..?!

Israel continues policies of house demolition, closure, restriction of movement, economic isolation, destruction of Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, extrajudicial killing and political assassination, aerial bombardment of civilians, settlements expansion, building the Apartheid Wall stealing more and more lands, and persists in its illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. *So why doesn't the international community and the Quartet isolate and punish Israel?*

Late this month in Nablus, Israeli occupation forces invaded the city, in the biggest armed operation in the last three years, 300 families are affected of fear and horror, 41 persons arrested, Israeli occupation soldiers hit a Palestinian driver to death.. Peoples are talking about what is happening to Israel, but nobody is talking about what is happening to Palestinians!? *Why?* Israel should not be above the law, and should respect the UN resolutions.

We, as Palestinians, condemn the hypocritical double standards of the Quartet which demands from the Palestinian National Unity Government to renounce violence, recognize Israel and respect international treaties, whilst failing to make the same demands from the Government of Israel.

It's a call upon all citizens of Austria and Europe to take all possible steps to bring about a reversal of this policy, and to denounce Government of Israel's actions against the Palestinian people and support its just quest for freedom and independence.

International Community has failed to achieve its goals

After a year of sanctions, International Community didn't achieve its goals, but in contrary of that, Palestinian elections on 25 of January 2006, Mecca agreement on 8 of February 2007, forming of Palestinian National Unity Government, are strengthening the whole Palestinian people, and also stressed on the unity between the Palestinians inside and outside West Bank and Gaza.

EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Walder reiterately called for Palestinian unity government to meet international conditions to win back Western cooperation. "We (the EU) have preliminary thoughts about how we could engage if it (the new Palestinian government) responds to the principles of the Quartet".

But Ferrero-Walder's position cuts against that of the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who said after a meeting with Khalid Mishal the political leader of Hamas, in Moscow that "Hamas had made sufficient progress towards meeting international demands to warrant an easing of sanctions".

Many countries recognized the new Palestinian government which represents - for the first time in Palestinian history- the whole Palestinians inside and outside Palestine. Those countries are ready to work and to cooperate to lift sanctions and implement future projects.

At the same time and in contrary of that, Israeli and American leaders criticized and reject new Palestinian unity government and officially said: We won't work with the new Palestinian government and we hope the international community will stand firmly by its own principles and refuse to deal with the government!

It's high time that the world respects the democratic political will of the Palestinians. Sanctions against Palestinians should be lifted! Failing of this government means more devastating consequences, humanitarian, security and economical crisis in the occupied territories...

Arabian Summit and lifting sanctions:

- As Palestinians, we are asking three essential demands from the Arabian Summit to be held in Saudi Arabia on 27 and 28 of this month:
 - 1- To work on lifting sanctions starting with the Arabian and Islamic countries, and then by the other countries.
 - 2- To ask the world to deal with the Palestinian unity government as a legitimate government that represents the whole Palestinians.
 - 3- To support the Palestinian people to get their rights (Palestinian state on the 4th of June 1967 borders, Right of Return of Palestinian refugees and releasing of prisoners).

Ladies and Gentlemen

Right of Return should be implemented:

In less than 10 years, UN interfered to implement the Right of Return for more than 10 million refugees from different countries in Guatemala, Mozambique, Rwanda, Eastern Timor, Kosovo and others, while nothing has been done to force Israel to implement the Right of Return resolution after 59 years of Nakba.

We, as Palestinians are looking -wondering- to what Israeli leaders said lately about Right of Return related to Arabian Summit plan in Beirut in 2002, and how they are trying to make pressure to enforce the Arab leaders to eliminate the item that speaks about the implementation of Right of Return according to the international laws.

It's usual to see that, when international community is talking about refugees in any place in the world, actually it is talking about their return to the same place where they escaped from; why the International Community is not talking about the Palestinian refugees in the same way?!

Without solving the problem of the Palestinian refugee's status according to the international laws, and there being back to the original houses inside historical Palestine, there will be no peace in the whole region.

Palestinians in Iraq:

It's an opportunity to remind you, ladies and gentlemen, about the humanitarian and security situation of the Palestinians in Iraq. According to UNHCR more than 50% of the population is displaced from their houses because of fear of killing or kidnapping. About 400 persons were tortured and killed till now, 50% were killed just because they had a Palestinian identity card. About 700 of Palestinians scattered on the borders of Iraq in five refugee camps, Rwished, Elwalid, Eltanaf, Elkarama and Elhoul. More than 200 Palestinians have left Iraq to Canada. Militias are threatening Palestinians , arresting them, kidnapping them, killing them, displacing them, in a plan aimed at evacuating Iraq of the Palestinians.

There is no need for protection for Palestinians in Iraq any more, since the occupation forces, international community and NGOs failed to protect them there.

What Palestinians in Iraq need now is to be **SAVED**; to be saved means to be transferred- temporarily- to any of the **Arabian countries**, till the end of occupation or to be back to their homes in Palestine. 15,000 Palestinians are still in Iraq - out of 40,000; it's easy that they are hosted by any of the Arabian countries. ***It needs a political will.***

It's a call upon the Islamic Conference Organization which represents 57 countries, Arabian League, Civil Society Organizations, Human Rights bodies, International Community and to every free person in the world; to take an ***urgent action*** to stop the massacres against Palestinians in Iraq.

Thank you

Contact:

Dar al Janub - Union for Antiracism and Peace Policy
Kleistgasse 8/3
1030 Vienna
Austria
0043 (0) 676 / 78-93-413
verein@dar-al-janub.net
www.dar-al-janub.net