

Middle East Notes

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

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Editor's Note: The next issue of Middle East Notes will focus on President Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia, Israel/Palestine, the Vatican and Brussels. This issue of the Middle East Notes includes reference to two excellent sources for information and links to articles concerning the State of Israel and the Palestinian people: CMEP Bulletins (Churches for Middle East Peace) www.cmepe.org and FMEP (Foundation for Middle East Peace) www.fmep.org. We encourage our readers to become members of CMEP and to sign up with FMEP.

The five featured articles and the related links in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on the continuing Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike; the anniversary of the Nakba; the now accessible Israeli transcripts of conversations after the Six Day war; actions which seem to indicate that President Netanyahu is basically working for one state only for Jews on Israeli and West Bank territories; and reference to CMEP and FMEP websites with their many links to other articles of interest.

Commentary: A metaphor story: A special "prison" named Nakba opened in 1947 and is still functioning today. The jailors are Israelis; all the prisoners are Palestinians. Within this "prison" are:

- ✓ Marwan Barghouti and hundreds of other "hunger strikers" have been in "solitary confinement" since April 17.
- ✓ Some millions of Gaza Palestinians are in "lock down", confined to their cells.
- ✓ Some other millions of the West Bank make up the general prison population with "inside" self-leadership.
- ✓ Other millions of East Jerusalem and "Arab Israelis" are under "house arrest" with restricted movement.
- ✓ Final millions are living as exiles and refugees in neighboring countries.

This story will only end when the Nakba prison is closed; then the former jailors and the jailed will be able to negotiate as equals finally free of their former roles. Then they will create security, and a freedom future for all.

Featured articles:

- *Ma'an News* notes that Palestinians observed a general strike on Monday, (5/22) shuttering businesses and institutions en masse in support of more than 1,300 Palestinians who have been on hunger strike in Israeli prisons since April 17.
- *AMP (American Muslims for Palestine)* reported that on May 15th Palestinians around the world and their supporters commemorated yet one more year of occupation and the continued dispossession of indigenous peoples from the land of Palestine.
- *Ma'an News* notes that as Palestinians marked the beginning of the Nakba -- or "catastrophe" -- officials and activists denounced the human rights violations Palestinians have endured since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.
- Ofer Aderet in *Haaretz* writes that fifty years after the Six-Day War, the State Archives are releasing the transcripts of government meetings in 1967 which include statements on the removal of the Arab population.
- Akiva Eldar in *Al-Monitor* during his visit to Israel US President Donald Trump should know that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is promoting neither the two-state solution nor one state for the two people, but one state on Israeli and West Bank territories, only for the Jews.
- CMEP Bulletins
- FMEP links

1) [Palestinians observe general strike in solidarity with hunger-striking](#) , Ma'an, May 22, 2017

“Palestinians observed a general strike on Monday, May 22, shuttering businesses and institutions en masse in support of more than 1,300 Palestinians who have been on hunger strike in Israeli prisons since April 17. Palestinian activists also blocked roads in the central occupied West Bank to prevent commuters from accessing Ramallah.

“The media committee for the Freedom and Dignity hunger strike said in a statement that it was ‘the first time since the First Palestinian Intifada (1987-1993) that a general strike was observed in occupied West Bank, the Palestinian territory occupied in 1948 (present-day Israel), and in the diaspora.’” ...

“Meanwhile, schools, banks, and public transit in the occupied West Bank shut down in observance of the strike, though hospitals and emergency services remained open.

“Reports have yet to emerge to confirm that diaspora Palestinians living abroad were also observing the strike. A general strike called for on the 11th day of the hunger strike was also widely observed in the occupied Palestinian territory.

“Monday’s strike was also widely observed in occupied East Jerusalem. Palestinian shops and businesses in Jerusalem shut down, including in the Old City and its surrounding villages.”

2) [Commemorating the Nakba: 69 years of the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people](#), AMP (American Muslims for Palestine), May 13, 2017

“On Monday, (May 15), Palestinians around the world and their supporters will commemorate yet one more year of occupation and the continued dispossession of indigenous peoples from the land of Palestine.

“Today, more than 1,200 Palestinian political prisoners are in the midst of a hunger strike to protest the illegal conditions under which they languish; Palestinians in Gaza struggle to find clean water to drink and exist on fewer than four hours of electricity per day; Palestinian citizens of Israel live as second-class citizens due to more than 50 discriminatory laws and Palestinians in diaspora, including refugees, are blocked from returning to their homeland.

“Now, 69 years after Zionist militias and terrorist groups killed 13,000 Palestinians, destroyed about 500 villages and forced 750,000 – two thirds of the Palestinian population – from their homes and into exile, Israeli policies, fueled by Zionism, ensure the continued displacement of Palestinians. The Nakba is not a one-time event, but rather, a continuous effort to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Palestine.” ...

“Since 1967, Israeli Occupation Forces have demolished more than 27,000 Palestinian homes, while more than 600,000 Jews currently are colonizing the West Bank and Jerusalem, illegally appropriating increasingly more Palestinian land. Also since 1967, the Israeli military has detained more than 700,000 Palestinians – 20 percent of the population - according to the First International Conference on the Rights of Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees, which was held in Geneva in March 2011.

“At least 6,300 Palestinian political prisoners currently are being detained in prisons within Israel, a direct violation of international law.” ...

“2017: 100 years since the Balfour Declaration; 70 years since the partition of Palestine; 50 years of occupation of the remaining 22 percent of historic Palestine and 10 years of the siege on Gaza.”

3) [69 years on, Palestinians see Nakba as 'ongoing journey of pain, loss, and injustice'](#), Ma'an News, May 15, 2017

"As Palestinians marked on Monday 69 years since the beginning of the Nakba -- or 'catastrophe' -- officials and activists denounced the human rights violations Palestinians have endured since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

"Every May 15, commemorations recall the Nakba, during which hundreds of Palestinians were killed by Zionist militias and more than 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their lands in 1948 and scattered across refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

"More than six million Palestinians, whether in the occupied Palestinian territory or in the diaspora, still call for the application of their internationally recognized right of return to their homes and villages in present-day Israel, a right which has been enshrined in international law following the adoption of United Nations [Resolution 194](#).

"Palestinian legal rights NGO BADIL estimates that 66 percent of the 13 million Palestinians in the world today have been displaced 'at least once in their lifetime, with significant numbers experiencing it more than once.'

"Meanwhile, Visualizing Palestine detailed in [a graphic on the occasion of Nakba Day](#) that 77 percent of former Palestinian towns and villages in present-day Israel had never been built over."

"'For seven decades, and against all odds, Palestinians have continued to assert our inalienable right to self-determination and to genuine peace, which can only stem from freedom, justice and equality,' the organization added. 'But to reach that just peace we realize that we must nourish our hope for a dignified life with our boundless commitment to resist injustice, resist apathy and, crucially, resist their 'iron walls' of despair.'"

4) [Israeli Cabinet Minutes From Six-Day War: From Fear to Euphoria to Arrogance](#), Ofer Aderet, Haaretz, May 18, 2017

"On the eve of the outbreak of the Six-Day War, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was afraid of 'a real massacre' and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan warned that 'there is a limit to our ability to defeat the Arabs.' Two days later, following the stunning victories, the tone changed to the opposite extreme and Dayan boasted that 'within a few hours' Israel's army could even be in Beirut.

"Subsequently, when the West Bank was occupied and Jerusalem was united, the government began to ponder the fate of the Arabs in those territories. 'If it were up to us, we'd send all the Arabs out to Brazil,' said Eshkol." ...

"On June 15, the ministers began to discuss the political and diplomatic future of the occupied territories as well. Eban warned of 'a barrel of dynamite' and explained the problem inherent in ruling over another people: 'We are sitting here with two populations, one of them endowed with all the civil rights and the other denied all rights. This is a picture of two classes of citizens that is hard to defend, even in the special context of Jewish history. The world will side with a liberation movement of that one and a half million surrounded by several tens of millions.'

5) [Netanyahu's vision of one-state-one-people solution](#), Akiva Eldar, Al-Monitor, May 11, 2017

"Ahead of his upcoming visit to Israel, US President Donald Trump should [update the two options](#) he presented at his joint Feb. 15 White House news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. These were either two

states for two people — one Jewish and one Palestinian, on the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River (Israel’s territory together with the West Bank) — or one state for the two people on all this land.” ...

“The truth is that senior government ministers are promoting a legislative initiative designed to turn all the Jewish population between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River into one solid mass.”

6) Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Bulletins and Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP) links

May 12, 2017 - [\[Bulletin\] Trump, Broker for Peace?](#)

May 19, 2017 - [\[Bulletin\] Jerusalem, East and West](#)

[Trump departs for Middle East tour](#), FMEP, May 19, 2017

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