

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
July 6, 2017



Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

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The five featured articles and the related links in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on the dehumanizing results of the ten year blockade/siege of Gaza by Israel; statements at the June 29-30 U.N. conference marking "50 years of occupation"; Israel's dismissal of international calls to end the siege of Gaza; the deteriorating humanitarian situation for Gaza's 2 million people; a recommendation of a new web site which will highlight the plight of the Gaza people; 2 CMEP Bulletins; and links to other articles of interest.

Commentary: In the face of international criticism without effectual response or action, Israel has been allowed to imprison some five million Palestinians in three "open air prisons" (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza) with another two million "Israeli Arabs" under restriction in Israel itself. Gaza is the most oppressive to the Palestinians "imprisoned" there for the last ten years, with no "parole". The prison walls for the two million people of Gaza are an Israeli government which by its blockade/siege seeks to weaken Hamas' control and cut the Gaza Palestinians off from those of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, political infighting between the Fatah and Hamas leadership for control of the Palestinian people, and US support for Israel and Egypt. The plight of these two million people in Gaza unjustly "imprisoned" remains ignored by Israelis and their US supporters who themselves would never tolerate such "imprisonment" for themselves.

- *Israel Hayom* reports that Knesset member Touma-Sliman told the U.N. conference marking "50 years of occupation" that "there can be no social justice with the oppression of an entire people".
- Elior Levy & Itamar Eichner also reported in *Ynet News* that at the same conference the NGO's executive director accused Israel of labeling its international detractors anti-Semitic; and that the Joint List MK warned, 'Israel is a country that is developing clear signs of apartheid.'
- Ramzy Baroud writes in *Ma'an News* that between Israel's dismissal of international calls to end the siege and Palestinians' pathetic power game, Gazans are left alone, unable to move freely or live even according to the lowest acceptable living standards. Suicides are increasing.
- *MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians)* states that on the 10-year anniversary of Israel's tightening of its blockade and closure on Gaza, Medical Aid for Palestinians has today warned that the humanitarian situation for 2 million people is further deteriorating.
- Middle East Notes recommends the website of *Just World Educational* (<http://justworldeducational.org/>), a non-profit that provides educational resources and experiences to a broad public, on issues of war, peace, justice, and the Middle East. The Summer 2017 project will be an online informational campaign about the situation in Gaza.
- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Bulletins

1) [Israeli Arab MK calls Israel 'apartheid state' at UN conference](#), Gideon Allon and Israel Hayom Staff, July 2, 2017

"[Member of Knesset] MK Aida Touma-Sliman tells UN conference marking '50 years of occupation' that 'there can be no social justice with the oppression of an entire people' MK Oren Hazan: If Israel were an apartheid state, Touma-Sliman would have been locked up long ago. MK Aida Touma-Sliman drew outrage last week when she said that Israel was "a country that is developing clear signs of apartheid.

"Touma-Sliman, of the Joint Arab List party, made the remark during a two-day conference at the United Nations headquarters in New York marking '50 years of occupation' last week. The conference was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. During a panel discussion on Friday, Suleiman said that "there can be no democracy with occupation, there can be no social justice with the oppression of an entire people.

"She also urged U.N. members to 'exert significant pressure on Israel.' Yisrael Beytenu faction chairman Robert Ilatov was infuriated by Touma-Sliman's remarks, saying that her 'obsession with hurting the country has crossed every line.'" ...

2) [B'Tselem, MK decry 'occupation' at UN conference](#), Elinor Levy & Itamar Eichner, Ynet News, July 1, 2017

"'"Palestinians who oppose the occupation are terrorists, Israelis who oppose the occupation are traitors, and those in the international community who oppose the occupation are of course anti-Semitic,' Hagai El-Ad of B'Tselem said.

"El-Ad added, 'The Israeli government is prepared to undermine the real fight against anti-Semitism in order to preserve the occupation with minimal repercussions from the international community.'

"He said that the UN Security Council does not take Resolution 2334 against the settlements seriously and neither does Israel. He expressed his disappointment over the failure to implement the resolution and called for it 'to be given meaning as soon as possible.'

"Joint List MK Aida Touma-Sliman also spoke at the event. 'The window to the two-state solution is narrowing, but the alternative is not a single democratic state,' she said. 'Today we live in a one-state reality, but this is not a country that grants equal rights to both peoples under its rule. In order to keep alive the possibility of a two-state solution, the international community must exert significant pressure on Israel.'

"She added: 'Israel is a country that is developing clear signs of apartheid. There can be no democracy with occupation, there can be no social justice with the oppression of an entire people.'"

3) [Pushing Gaza to suicide: The politics of humiliation](#), Ramzy Baroud, Ma'an News, June 27, 2017

"Muhammad Abed is a 28-year-old taxi driver from the village of al-Qarara, near the town of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. He has no teeth. Lack of medical care and proper dentistry work cost him all of his teeth, which rotted and decayed at a very young age. Yet, his dire financial needs prevented him from acquiring dentures. His community eventually pitched in, collecting the few hundred dollars needed for Muhammad to finally being able to eat.

"Muhammad is not unemployed. He works ten hours, sometimes more, every single day. The old taxi he drives between Khan Yunis and Gaza City is owned by someone else. Muhammad's entire daily salary ranges from 20 to 25 shekels, about \$6. Raising a family with four children with such a meager income made it impossible for Muhammad to think of such seemingly extraneous expenses, such as fixing his teeth or acquiring dentures. Strange as it may seem, Muhammad is somewhat lucky.

“Unemployment in Gaza is among the highest in the world, presently estimated at 44 percent. Those who are ‘employed,’ like Mohammed, still struggle to survive. 80 percent of all Gazans are dependent on humanitarian assistance.” ...

“To think that Palestinian ‘leaders’ are actually involved in tightening or manipulating the siege to exact political concessions from one another, is dismaying. While Israel is invested in maintaining the Palestinian rift, so that it continues with its own illegal settlement policies in the West Bank and Jerusalem unhindered, Palestinians are blinded by pitiful personal interests and worthless ‘control’ over occupied land.” ...

“The suicide rate in the Gaza Strip is at all-time high, and despair is believed to be the main factor behind the alarming phenomena.”

4) [The impending humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza](#) MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians) press release, June 14, 2017

“On the 10-year anniversary of Israel’s tightening of its blockade and closure on Gaza, Medical Aid for Palestinians has today warned that the humanitarian situation for 2 million people is further deteriorating.

“A decade of closure has devastated the economy and infrastructure in Gaza, leaving 42% of adults unemployed and 80% of people dependent on some form of humanitarian assistance. This period has witnessed three major military offensives which have caused massive loss of life, internal displacement, and damage to Gaza’s ailing health infrastructure. Rebuilding from these assaults has been slowed by Israel’s restrictions on the entry of building materials.” ...

“Over the last 10 years of closure, the crisis in Gaza has been unending. It causes severe shortages of cooking gas, fuel, construction materials, medicine and medical disposables, and limits the availability of water at household level and the treatment of sewage. The current acute lack of electricity and fuel for generators is impacting services at hospitals.”

“With very limited exit via the crossings with Israel and Egypt, the population in Gaza are imprisoned. Patients struggle to access treatments which are available outside of Gaza, students are desperate to catch the training opportunities, and even humanitarian workers must justify their movements and submit to the long, bureaucratic permit procedure in order to carry out their duties.” ...

See Also:

[Palestinian Authority Prevents Gazans From Leaving Strip for Urgent Medical Treatment in Israel](#)
[Opinion Israel's Plague of Darkness for Gazans Is an Act of Terrorism](#)

5) [Just World International](#)

“Welcome! ... to the website of Just World Educational, (justworldeducational.org) a feisty non-profit headquartered in central Virginia that provides educational resources and experiences to a broad public, on issues of war, peace, justice, and the Middle East.

“Our big project for Summer 2017 will be an online informational campaign about the situation in Gaza, Palestine.” ...

6) Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Bulletins

Jun 23, 2017 - [\[Bulletin\] Peace Talks Amid Settlement Building?](#)

Jun 30, 2017 - [\[Bulletin\] Trump's Peace Process Faces Roadblocks](#)

Additional sources for information and links to articles concerning the State of Israel and the Palestinian people are:

CMEP Bulletins (Churches for Middle East Peace) www.cmep.org

FMEP (Foundation for Middle East Peace) <http://info@fmep.org/>

Americans for Peace Now - News Nosh: <http://peacenow.org/>

Jewish Voice for Peace: <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/>

+ 972 Magazine: <https://972mag.com/>

Ma'an News Agency: <http://www.maannews.com/>

Haaretz: <http://www.haaretz.com/>