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MAIN HEADLINES

- **Recent News and Developments** Page 2
 - Demolition of homes in the Jordan Valley in order to expand nearby settlements.
- **Fishermen in Gaza** Page 3
- **Latest Publications** Page 5
 - **Means of Displacement:**
Charting Israel's colonization of East Jerusalem
 - **Draining Away:**
The water and sanitation crisis in the Jordan Valley
 - **The Steel Wall:**
What is it and what are its expected impacts on the lives of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip?
 - **To Exist is to Resist:**
Save the Jordan Valley
- **Successful rabbit distribution activity in Gaza to alleviate dependency** Page 9



Demolition of homes in the Jordan Valley in order to expand nearby settlements.



On Monday 9th of August, the Israeli Civil Administration razed homes in Ein Al Hilwa area of the northern Jordan Valley, campaign. This comes after Israeli military forces along with border police demolished homes and other structures

in the village of Al Farisiya in the Jordan Valley on two separate occasions. On the 19th of July, according to OCHA, 76 structures in the village were demolished leaving 113 residents, half of them children, homeless. In addition to homes which were demolished, the Israeli Occupation Forces also destroyed farm structures and equipment including storage sheds, animal shelters, water tanks, and animal feed. Almost US\$30,000 of aid from international NGOs was also destroyed. Later, on August 5th, a further 37 structures, including 27 emergency tents recently provided by the ICRC and the PA were demolished in Al Farisiya.

Both Ein Al Hilwa and Al Farisiya are in especially vulnerable positions, surrounded by several large settlements; its destruction is an explicit message that Israel intends to expand those settlements.

The demolition of Al Farisiya and the homes in Ein Al Hilwa are not isolated incidents, but part of an ongoing pattern of village destruction and incursions by Israeli forces in order to forcibly displace Palestinians, expand settlements, and reinforce and expand Israeli control of the area. Although there is an apparent freeze on settlement building, this does not include the Jordan Valley. Other incidents have happened recently; in April settlers from the settlement of Maskiyot pitched a tent close to the village of Al Maleh in a bid to steal land in order to expand their settlement. The occupation of the village only ended when both sides agreed to take down a tent, leaving the Bedouin community with one less tent.

As well as serious incidents like these, there are also the everyday denial of rights and humiliations that Jordan Valley Palestinians suffer, including restrictions on movement, lack of water supplies and land confiscation. These actions cause high levels of poverty and deprivation and are intended to push Palestinians out slowly, but demolishing entire villages is an explicit show that Israel intends to remove the Palestinian population promptly so it can annex the area.

The Israeli authorities have breached international law by destroying private property; they have also failed to provide alternative accommodation let alone compensation to the residents for the loss of their property and possessions.

MA'AN is working, in coordination with international NGOs, to provide essential emergency aid to Al Farisiya residents. MA'AN has provided kitchen equipment for households (funded by the Norwegian Representative Office) and school bags and stationary for children (funded by Cordaid) to replace those which were destroyed. MA'AN has also provided, thanks to funding from Cordaid, a sunken, plastic lined, covered water pond with a capacity of 100 m3 connected to a 3000m pipe that will pump water to provide water to families, who even before their homes were destroyed suffered from lack of reliable water supplies and were paying 25NIS to the Israelis for 1 cubic metre of water. Local and international volunteers worked to distribute this aid and help rebuild tents and farming structures. MA'AN will soon distribute solar lights (funded by the Norwegian Representative Office) to Al Farisiya residents and more school stationary kits as well as health kits (funded by the Lutheran World Federation) to school children throughout the Jordan Valley.

MA'AN Development Center condemns this serious breach of international human rights law and the continued expansion of Israeli settlements and colonization in the Jordan Valley. The residents of Al Farisiya, already some of the poorest in the area, have now been left even more vulnerable and unable to support themselves.

MA'AN calls for the end to all demolitions in the occupied territory but particularly in the Jordan Valley, where Palestinians are especially marginalized and for too long their situation has been completely overlooked.

MA'AN also calls for continued action from both national and international supporters of human rights - this incident must not be forgotten. We appeal for the international media and international organizations to continue to publicize this latest attempt at ethnic cleansing by Israeli Occupation Forces. It is crucial that action is taken, both to give attention to the expanding settlements and to the situation of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley, some of the most marginalized and discriminated against peoples in the West Bank.

Fishermen in Gaza

On DATE, MA'AN Development Center and the Environment and Development Magazine held a seminar in the Swedish Village in Al Muwasi area in the south of the Gaza Strip entitled "Gaza Fishermen and the Israeli violation of the Marine Environment". The seminar was led by the Journalist Samar Shaheen. At the beginning of the seminar, Ms Shaheen gave an introduction to The Environment and Development Magazine outlining its objectives and the type of cases it works on to bring to public attention. During the seminar, fishermen from Al Muwasi area emphasized the importance of putting an end to Israeli occupation practices, which aim to bring the Palestinian fishing industry to an end through continued violence against fishermen.

Fishermen also stated that both the Israeli and the Egyptian authorities threaten their lives day and night, and there is no one to defend their rights and call for the implementation of international resolution on fishing areas and freedom of the sea.

The fishermen of the Swedish village in Al Muwasi made it clear in the seminar that they will never give up their rights and their livelihoods which have been passed down from father to son for generations, and that they will continue going to sea day after day even if costs them their lives. There is not a single fisherman who has not been arrested and taken into Ashdod port for detention or interrogation.

Fishermen in Gaza have a very limited area in which they can fish. According to the Oslo Agreement, the fishing area designated for Palestinians is 20 nautical miles into the sea. Some years later it became 12 nautical miles, and today it is less than 3 nautical miles.

A Painful Experience

Kamel Abou Oudeh (Abu Ala'), a 50 year old fisherman from Al Muwasi, talked about a very traumatic experience he had with the Israeli authorities. Every time he goes to sea it brings back agonizing memories of what happened to him and his son. One day while he was out fishing with his son Khalil, the Israeli navy came up to them and ordered them to go west to the deep sea. The navy then forced them to strip naked and gave them military uniforms to put on and escorted them to Ashdod port blindfolded while their hands and legs were tied. On the boat the soldiers shot their guns and bullets flew close to their heads, they also swore in Hebrew. There, in Ashdod, Abu Ala' and his son were tortured for hours and hours before they were let go.

Abu Ala', who is the main provider for family of six, states that his story is one of many in the Gaza Strip. His painful experience at sea is the everyday life of every fisherman, who wake up in morning for work never knowing if they are going to return to their families alive or a body in a box.

The Inquisition Continues

During the investigation at Ashdod port, Abu Ala' says that he was questioned about the reason he was in the sea, about Hamas and the government in Gaza. He and his son were taken to separate investigation rooms, and when the interrogators were finally convinced with the answers they got, they sent them back to the sea after threatening them that if they find them again the punishment they will receive will be far more severe.

Abu Ala' emphasizes the dire situation of fishermen in the Gaza Strip. Aside from the Israeli aggression and the limited fishing area, the Egyptian authorities also hassle the fishermen. Often the Egyptian authorities confiscate the fishermen's nets, their only method of catching fish. Abu Ala' also talked about an incident that happened some time ago, when an Egyptian cruiser chased the fishermen causing the death of 40 year old Mohammad Al Bardaweel.



As for the environmental situation in the village, he said: “the shore is polluted, wastewater flows to the sea, the smell is killing us, and the mosquitoes are spreading diseases; however, now they are starting with the wastewater management project for treating wastewater before it is sent into the sea.”

Furthermore, fishermen with small boats also have to compete with larger boats. The large boats often break their nets when they pass by and they have no consideration for the damage and loss they are causing the fishermen. Abu Ala’ has lost around \$3,000 as a result of this problem.

Abu Ala’ continues, “We cannot go beyond 3 miles off the shores of Gaza; the Israeli Police cruiser lurks day and night. Fish are scarce in the 3 mile area; some fishermen enter the Egyptian sea territory, but since the Egyptian military has been cracking down, we can now only look at the sea.”

Pollution invades the seashore

Mr. Ibrahim Odeh, a 67 year old fisherman talked about the increasing amount of pollution in the area. He said: “Our shores are polluted with wastewater... many international organizations came and took water and soil samples and also did some tests on our children. They discovered that many of our children are infected with Ascaris and other worms, and that they are anemic.”

Another fisherman, Abu Odeh, noted that it is now the summer season and people, especially children, spend their time bathing in the sea. He said people should be aware of the type of pollution and try to avoid polluted shores.

Another Painful Experience

Mohammad Abdulsalam Hasuneh (Abu Mahmoud) is a 45 year old fisherman from Gaza. Mohammad is the only provider for a family of five. During the seminar, he shared his sad story with us.

One day he was on the shores of Gaza fishing with his cousin. “We hadn’t sailed more

than one mile into the sea when the Israelis came and arrested us”, said Abu Mahmoud. The pain and the shock of the experience have left their mark on him, physically and psychologically. “Never in my life have I been so tortured and humiliated as that day when they took us to Ashdod port”.

Abu Mahmoud continues to describe his experience with the Israeli authorities: “They came to us, ordered us to take off our clothes, me and my cousin who was with me that day, and they forced us to swim about 7 miles into the sea, then they tied us down and blindfolded us after they made us put on military clothes. They also confiscated my boat which is my only source of living. At Ashdod port we were beaten and tortured.”

When the Israeli soldiers set them free, they brought them through Beit Hanon crossing point. They only had their underwear on. They took a taxi back to Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip. Four days later they were given their boat back, but it was so badly damaged that it would cost him huge amounts of money to repair it.

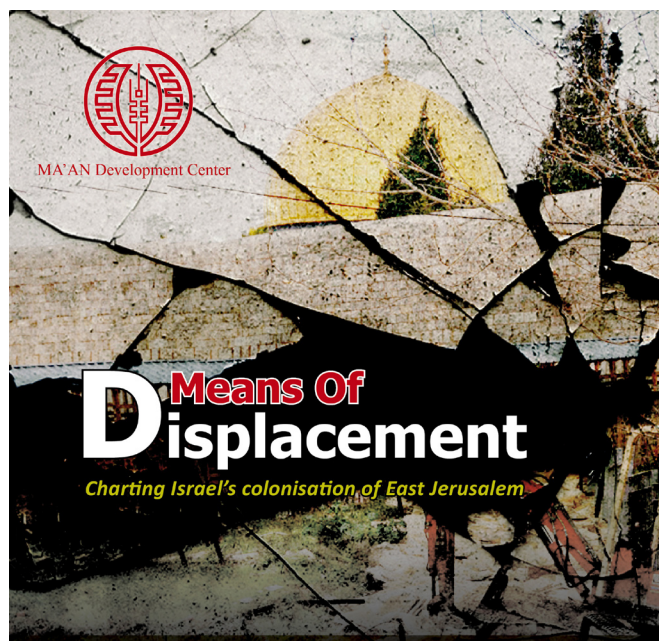
Abu Mahmoud also talked about the lack of attention given to the fishing industry, small-scale fishermen are the most ignored. He said there weren’t any kind of compensation strategies, and that big fishermen were one of the reasons for the huge amount of losses to them. He called for more support of the fishermen’s resilience.

Mr. Farhat Ashour (Abu Musheer) is a 55 year old fisherman who supports a family of 12. Abu Musheer stated that fishermen families are the poorest of the poor in the Gaza Strip. They need all kinds of support to help them survive the poor conditions as well as the Israeli aggressions against them in the sea.

At the end of the seminar, all the fishermen agreed that the crucial thing to do now is to treat the polluted shores and sea to help protect people’s lives and the marine life. They also demand that the government and non-governmental organizations take action in supporting fishermen and helping them to rise out of poverty.

Means of Displacement:

Charting Israel's colonization of East Jerusalem



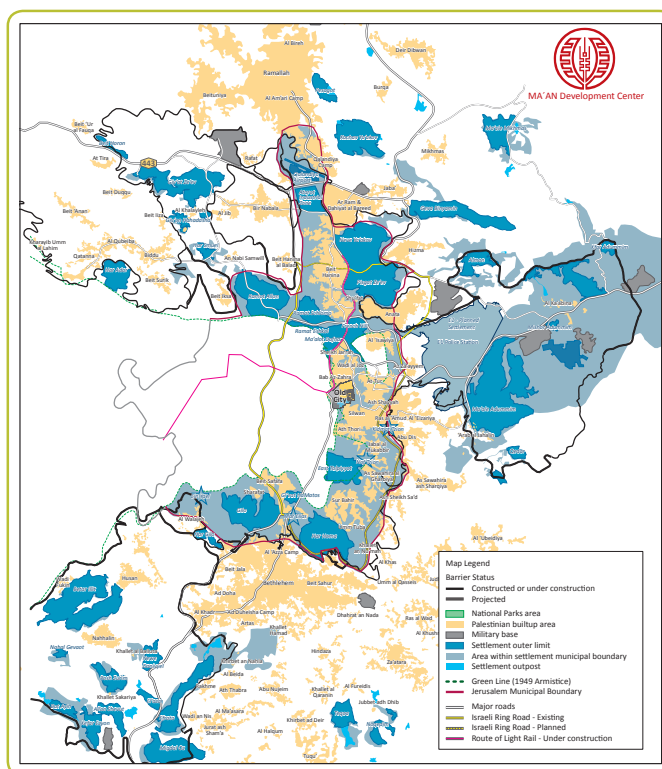
A future independent Palestinian state is one which will have East Jerusalem as its capital. During the Oslo agreements, the status of East Jerusalem, like other crucial issues including refugees, settlements, security and borders, was relegated to final status negotiations, giving Israel time to continue its colonization and Judaization of the city. This report charts Israel's process of expanding and tightening its control and ownership of the city and the tools it uses to radically change its physical, cultural and demographic landscape.

This report outlines the complexity and multi-layered approach to Israeli settlement building in East Jerusalem. Unlike settlements in the West Bank, settlement and colonization takes place in every aspect of town planning and building in an attempt to change the entire landscape of the city. Palestinian houses are taken over by settlers, their houses are demolished by the Israeli Occupation Forces, Palestinians are rarely given building permits, Jewish religious sites are being renovated and expanded at the expense of Palestinian homes, archaeological digs are used to destroy Palestinian houses from below and to find evidence of Jewish habitation and ownership of the land, and extensive infrastructure is being built such as the light railway and massive highways through Palestinian neighborhoods to link up settlements to West Jerusalem. The Israeli state is using the tools of urban planning to fundamentally change the demographic and physical landscape of the city to create 'facts on the ground' in order to reaffirm its control and possession

and make it increasingly difficult for Palestine to claim ownership.

The report carefully describes and analyzes instances of illegal settlement and colonization in East Jerusalem starting within the Old City and working out to the settlements which surround Jerusalem in the West Bank. It uses data, maps and photographs to illustrate settlement building in East Jerusalem and the methods used by the state to marginalize Palestinians, displace them and cut them off from neighboring communities in order to create territorial continuity with surrounding West Bank settlements and ultimately claim the area as Israel. Israel's urban planning policy has serious consequences for a future Palestinian state and breaches numerous international human rights laws by forcibly displacing people and denying access to culture and religion.

This publication draws attention to a central issue in the plans for a two-state solution, that of the colonization and Judaization of what is hoped to be the capital of the future Palestinian state. As Netanyahu recently told an AIPAC conference in Washington DC, 'Jerusalem is not a settlement' and that Israel would never withdraw from it, proof of which can be seen all over East Jerusalem as Israel constructs it as a Jewish Israeli city.



Map developed based on MA'AN field research using OCHA maps as base layer.

Draining Away:

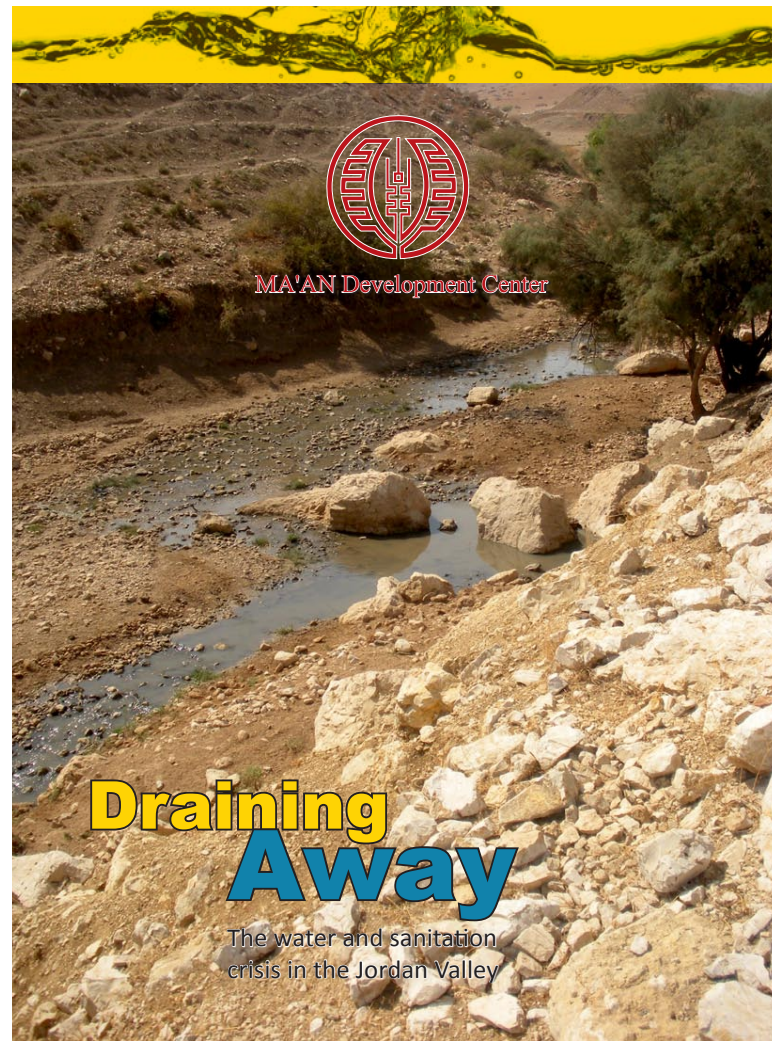
The water and sanitation crisis in the Jordan Valley

Water and sanitation have become crucial humanitarian issues in the occupied Palestinian Territory, nowhere more so than in the Jordan Valley. Since Israel has *de facto* annexed the Jordan Valley through classifying most of the land as Area C, Palestinians living in the area effectively have to rely on Israel for permission to do construction, to move around the area and for use of water and sanitation facilities. Although the Jordan Valley is rich in water resources, its distribution has become a highly politicized issue. While Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley are given all the water they need, wells are closed to Palestinians and they are not allowed to dig for new ones nor build reservoirs, they cannot use water from the River Jordan and they have inadequate sewage facilities.

The report lists some stark facts about water usage in the Jordan Valley and rest of the West Bank. It also expertly analyses the effects of lack of water and adequate sanitation have on Palestinian residents there. Lack of water and adequate sewage treatment causes poor health and an inability to sustain livelihoods which causes impoverishment and forced displacement. The report also details some case studies of Bedouin families who suffer from a lack of water, water source confiscation and the high cost of buying water from the Israelis.

Like most of Israel's policies towards Palestinians in the occupied territory, its apartheid water policies are in contravention of international law. Israel's policies regarding water usage in the Jordan Valley are part of a larger policy to restrict and constrain life for Palestinians in the area which are aimed ultimately at making life so difficult that residents will move out of the area allowing Israel to expand its control and eventually annex the area.

The report draws attention to a serious humanitarian crisis in Area C, one that should be a priority in terms of advocacy efforts for both international and national NGOs working in the West Bank.



Destruction of agricultural well in the Bardala and Froosh Beit Dajan by Israeli Occupation Forces

The Steel Wall:

What is it and what is its expected impact on the lives of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip?



This factsheet (available in Arabic only), researched and written by MA'AN's Gaza office, analyses the impact of the steel wall being built between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. It outlines the consequences and difficulties it will create for Palestinians, their economy and their environment in the Gaza Strip.

The booklet gives a complete description of the steel wall, its design, and its route. The wall will consist of steel plates inserted deep into the ground as well as huge water pipes that will pump polluted sea water into the ground to make it difficult to break through, thus blocking all tunnels which currently run between the Gaza Strip and Egypt and provide Gaza with essential goods otherwise unavailable.

Firstly, the factsheet examines the legality of the wall as well as the Islamic religious views and the morality of constructing such a wall which will lead to further poverty and de-development of the area are also analyzed.

The effects of the wall on economic sectors are also examined. The most seriously affected sector will be the agricultural sector. The waste water pumped into ground will increase the salinity of the soil around the wall making it impossible to grow fruit and veg-

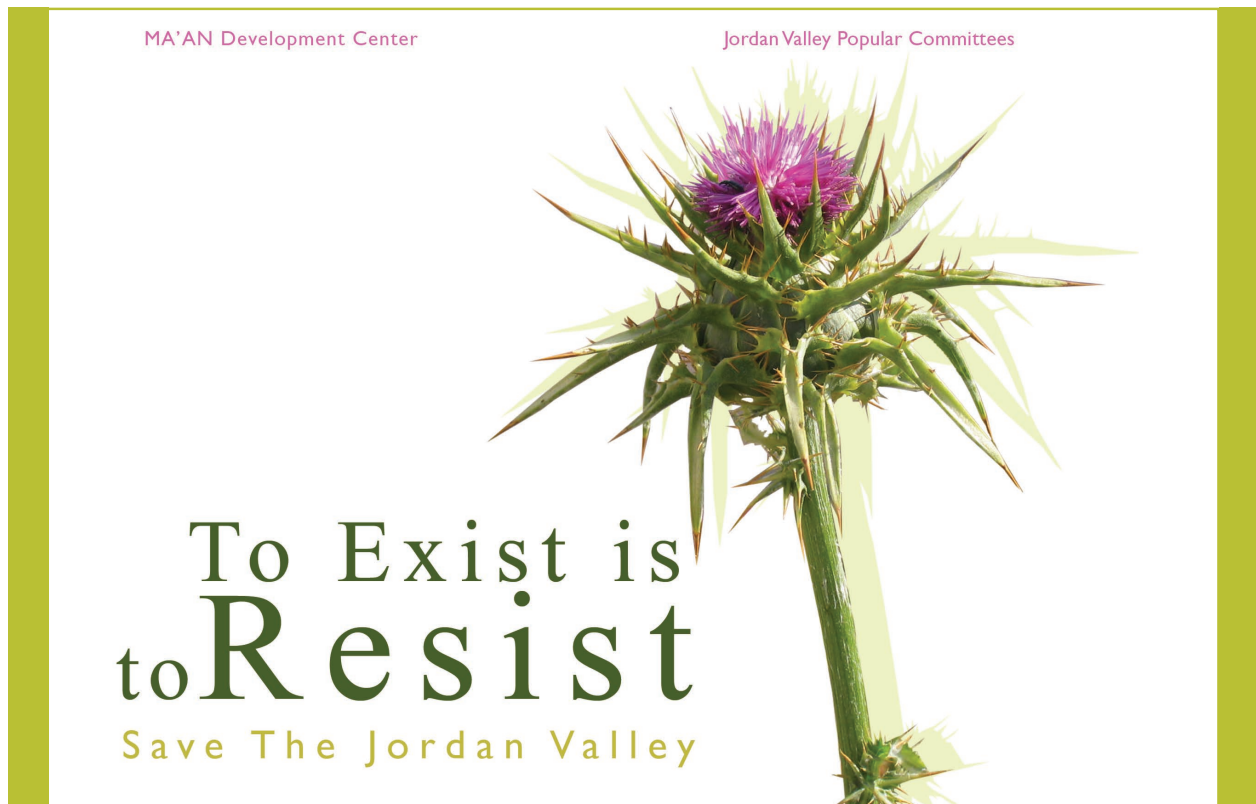
etables having serious repercussions for the food security of the area. Agriculture is one of the major contributors to the Palestinian economy. As a result of the destruction of the agricultural sector the people of the Gaza Strip will fall more deeply into a situation of abject poverty. However, the wall affects all sectors of the Gazan economy because currently 60% of the Gaza Strip relies of the tunnels. Without this access, the Gaza strip will be at risk of collapse.

As well as the economic consequences, the steel wall will also devastate the environment of the area. In addition to waste water that is to be pumped into the wall that will increase the salinity of the soil causing desertification wreaking havoc on ecosystems and biodiversity. The pumping of waste water into the ground will also pollute ground water in the area making it undrinkable for nearby residents.

The factsheet concludes with options for solution and recommendations for conciliation as a way to resolve the deteriorating situation of life in Gaza Strip.



To Exist is to Resist :
Save the Jordan Valley



The Jordan Valley Palestinians have lived with over 40 years of brutal occupation but they are as resilient as ever and continue to remain steadfast in their resistance of the attempted Israeli takeover and destruction of their land and livelihoods. They are committed to remaining on their land and maintaining it as Palestinian land, despite Israel's increased efforts to forcibly displace them. In order to achieve this, the people of the Jordan Valley have become organized into popular committees so they can better establish plans of action and work in conjunction with national and international NGOs and advocacy groups.

Together with MA'AN Development Center, the Palestinian National Authority and international solidarity groups, the Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign is working with the Palestinians in the Jordan Valley at the grassroots level. The slogan of the campaign; 'To Exist is to Resist' emphasizes the importance of remaining in the Jordan Valley to resist Israeli apartheid, colonialism and forced displacement in order to keep working for a future Palestinian state.

MA'AN's publication *To Exist is to Resist – Save the Jordan Valley* outlines the situation of the Jordan Valley in an easy accessible coffee table format. The

book is made in cooperation with the Local Popular Committees in the Jordan Valley and funded by the Representative Office of Norway. It serves to showcase the Jordan Valley, its beauty, unique landscape, its religious and historical sites, its town and villages, its people, the daily problems they face caused by the occupation and how the area is being destroyed and completely taken over by Israel. It aims to illustrate how integral the area is to Palestine, culturally, socially, economically and strategically. But most importantly this book serves to show the resistance and determination of the Palestinian people in the Jordan Valley and to show that although Israel's policies and military brutality seek to push them out, they will remain to fight against Israel's illegal occupation of their land and breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law. The marginalization of the Palestinians in the Jordan Valley is highly visible. They are facing grave difficulties on a daily basis such as land confiscation, lack of adequate sanitation treatment and they are frequently not connected to water and electricity supplies; meanwhile the Israeli settlers next door live in brand new luxury houses with unlimited water and electricity supply.

Successful rabbit distribution activity in Gaza to alleviate dependency



Israel's occupation of Palestine has resulted in numerous violations of rights and restrictions on daily life for the Palestinian people. One of the most appalling violations of international humanitarian law is Israel's and Egypt's siege and blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians are confined to the area and due to the blockade only restricted humanitarian supplies are allowed to enter. The blockade is now in its third year resulting in severe poverty, malnutrition, lack of education for children and an unemployment rate that reached 44.3 percent in the end of 2009. According to a survey conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in May 2008, more than 70 percent of the families in Gaza were living in extreme poverty, meaning an income of less than US\$1 a day per person, excluding humanitarian assistance. The same percentage constitutes the number of households receiving humanitarian assistance of which the bulk is food assistance. The year 2009 began as a humanitarian disaster with a severe Israeli military offensive not seen since 1967. Following the 23 day attack during which over a thousand lives were taken, the people in Gaza were left with an increasing impoverishment and more dependent on humanitarian aid than ever.

MA'AN Development Center is carrying out a number of programs within, among other areas, food security and poverty reduction in Gaza and the West Bank. One of MA'AN's programs, funded by the Australian Government (AusAID) and in partner with APHEDA, is the Rural Livelihoods and Food Security through Capacity Building Project. The

program started in May 2009 and will last for five years. It is partly aimed at achieving a long standing change in the lives of people and to help them out of dependency on humanitarian aid. One of the activities implemented in the Gaza Strip was rabbit distribution. 100 units of rabbits were distributed to needy households where each unit consisted of one male and two females. The targeted families were given training in handling the rabbits and the task was then to care for them until they reproduced and would then be a potential source of income as well as food.

"This was really the best help we could get. We have sold at least 15 pairs of rabbits for no less than 40 NIS each and also we have been eating some of them in the weekends. For the money we got, we managed to buy fodders for the rabbits in addition to covering some of our expenditures."

The husband of Najah Qudaih

The activity is ongoing and very successful. There are currently families with small farms of rabbits enabling them to get an income and also partly securing their food intake. Najah Qudaih is one of the beneficiaries in this activity. She lives in the Abassan area and was one of the households receiving two units of rabbits. She and her husband are now housing no less than five cages full of rabbits of all colors. The two cages they received have turned into a small farm for which they both are very proud and are talking about their success with great enthusiasm and happiness. When MA'AN visited the couple, the level of joy increased as we could see one of the rabbits giving birth to twelve babies all of which were immediately handled with love and care by the couple.

“Thank God! I think I will be able to feed my children soon as the number of rabbits will be sufficient for us to both eat and sell.”

Leila Msabbbeh

The income from the rabbits helped the couple to improve their financial situation and also provided them with a satisfying assignment. They excitedly expressed a wish to expand their business in the future.

Another family also benefitting from this particular activity is Leila Msabbbeh who is living with her husband and six children in the same area as Najah Qudaih. Her husband has been unemployed for many years and they live in a dilapidated house. The house consists of two shaky bedrooms and a bathroom and as there is no door or lobby, it feels more like living out on the street than in a house. The family has been living on food aid for a long time, so when Leila heard about this project from the local committee, she quickly submitted her application. She initially thought that the project was another strict food aid project but when she realized that it was providing rabbits, she became happy as it is not only a food source, but also the means for a secure income, if only a small one, for the family. Since the family was already receiving food aid and thus was in need of other things rather than just food this was perfect. Leila was trained into taking care of the rabbits and is now caring for

them as if they are her children. She says “the needs of my own children will, to some extent, be met through the rabbits so they definitely deserve the effort.” She is currently only selling the rabbits and is not feeding them to her family as she wants to ensure success by providing fodders for the rabbits so they will grow and breed before they start eating them. She thanks God for how fruitful her efforts has been.

One of her children, a 12 year old girl who clearly is tainted with the features of poverty, from the tattered clothes to the bare feet which are cleaved due to rarely wearing shoes, lets us know that they will feast on some of the rabbits when the month of Ramadan comes, which they are impatiently waiting for.



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