



Dome of the Rock

Al Aqsa



Al-Aqsa Mosque

QUARTERLY

NEWSLETTER 7

DEC 2000

Remembering atrocities

Remembrance is in the air. We have had the annual Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London, when the nation remembered the dead of two world wars and numerous smaller conflicts that claimed the lives of millions of people. In January, the country will have its first "Holocaust Memorial Day". The official reason for such a day is "to ensure that the terrible crimes against humanity committed during the Holocaust are never forgotten and that its relevance for each new generation is understood."

Earlier this month, the extra-judicial execution of a leading Palestinian figure was carried out by an Israeli helicopter gunship firing a missile at his car. Two elderly women, Azizi Gubran and Arachme Shaheen were innocent participants in this execution, losing their lives at the hands of the completely misnamed Israeli *Defence Forces*. This took place with the full support of the Israeli Prime Minister. More than 200 Palestinians have been shot and gassed by Israeli soldiers in the latest uprising against the military occupation of their land. Tanks and missiles are being used daily against civilian targets, including churches.

It is important for people to remember conflicts and the terrible loss of life that took place, mainly in Europe, in the 20th Century. Commentators have rightly said that in that century, Europe was indeed the "Dark Continent". It is right for people to remember the appalling genocide of the Jews known as the Holocaust. It is, as any student of history will tell you, also right that we should learn from the past mistakes of our predecessors so that they are not repeated. But what, we are entitled to ask, and entitled to demand answers for, have the Israelis and those who support them, Jew and gentile alike, learnt from past atrocities?

From Deir Yasin through Sabra & Chatila up to the present day, it is ironic that the survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants, in their understandable desire to ensure that such an obscenity as the Holocaust never happens again, have embraced many of the tactics and attitudes of their Nazi persecutors in their own treatment of Palestinians. Beatings, collective punishments, torture, extra-judicial killings, deportations and similar outrages have all been practised against Palestinians by Zionist soldiers and civilians since the end of the Second World War. It is vital to remember in this discussion that

we are not talking about a Jew/Muslim thing: this is an issue about

Zionism. Not every Jew is a Zionist, and not every Zionist is a Jew. Rabbi Elmer Berger, speaking in Dublin in 1970, said, "The State of Israel, as presently conceived, and Zionism are both contradictions of every liberal humanistic dream of free men... the two are entirely divorced from Judaism." Professor Israel Shahak, a survivor of Belsen concentration camp, wrote in 1975 that, "the State of Israel is a racist state and its racism is a necessary consequence of the racism of the Zionist movement."

I mention this point because I think it has to be kept in mind what sort of state we are talking about when we discuss the situation of the Palestinians today, more than 50 years since the catastrophe of 1948 that was the root cause of the problems being faced now.

What, exactly, has the world learned from the Holocaust, and why should its remembrance be pushed, at public expense, while the sons and daughters of the Holocaust are committing relentless genocide against the Palestinian people? Western governments pay lip-service to human rights, while continuing to give massive aid, financial and military, to a state that Amnesty International has said is guilty of crimes against humanity as well as war crimes. The language of the media betrays a duplicity that borders on hypocrisy; Palestinians are killed in "clashes" with Israeli troops. No mention is made of the fact that they are fighting against a military occupation of their land, stones against bullets and bombs, civilians fed up of years of oppression, with little to lose except their lives, against one of the best equipped and trained armies in the world. Something is seriously wrong with a world community when the so-called leaders of that world actually support such oppression. Indeed, one newspaper has said that if the Palestinians were black, the USA and Britain would be at the forefront of the movement to free them from their ordeal. But they are not black, they are Arabs, and anti-Arab racism, like Islamophobia, is a prejudice that is still acceptable for "civilised" circles to endorse.

So let us remember, by all means, the atrocities committed against the Jews in the Holocaust. But let us also remember the atrocities committed in their name by Zionists whose vile ideology threatens civilisation and civilised behaviour wherever and whenever it raises its pernicious head.

Eyewitness of another gruesome murder by Jewish terrorists

"We were awaiting his return, he returned, a dead body," said Ala Mustafa, the eldest son of Musafa Ilayan, 55, whom a band of Jewish terrorists murdered Tuesday as he was returning home to Nablus from the village of Anata, near Jerusalem, where he was working at a grocery store. According to Mustafa Musalam, 35, who was with Ilayan when he was attacked and killed by the settlers, thirteen Jewish settlers attacked them with stones and iron bars. "They were like mad dogs, evil was coming out of their eyes. They wanted to kill us all." Ilayan was earlier stopped and turned back at an Israeli roadblock 15 miles north of Ramallah. The soldiers told him that the road was closed and that he ought to return back to where he came from. "We told the soldiers that all we want is just to go home and that there is no law in the world that prevents a person from going to his home." Hearing this, the commanding soldier at the roadblock pointed his M-16 towards them, saying threateningly "if you don't return now, I'll spill your brain down the road." Ilayan then took an alternative road in a desperate effort to return home before nightfall. That proved to be a fatal mistake. Musallam recalls what happened then. "When we passed by the settlement, known as Koukab-Sabah, about thirteen settlers attacked us with stones and iron bars. The driver speeded up in order to avoid the settlers, but suddenly a settler smacked a big stone at the windshield of the car, killing Mustafa immediately." Mustafa Ilayan is the 12th Palestinian to be murdered by the settlers who had received a religious edict from the council of Gush Emunim rabbis, permitting, even exhorting them, to murder Palestinians "men, women and children, young and old, combatant and non-combatant." Most of the victims of Jewish terrorists have been Palestinian farmers harvesting their olive crops in areas adjacent to Jewish settlements in the central and northern parts of the West Bank. Normally, the Israeli occupation authorities turn a blind eye to such often-gruesome crimes on the ground that it is difficult to ascertain that the settlers are the perpetrators. **Khalid Amayreh Occupied Jerusalem: 15 Nov.**

American taxpayers help Israeli killing machine

The Clinton administration has asked Congress to grant extra aid to Israel - to the tune of \$450 million - in addition to the \$2.78 billion it already gets. In all, the Clinton administration asked Congress to approve an extra \$750 million in aid to the Middle East - Egypt would get \$225 and Jordan \$75 million. In the request submitted by Clinton said the additional aid would strengthen U.S. interests in the Middle East. The additional aid asked for Israel includes \$250 million towards the cost of the Lebanon withdrawal, which Israel estimates at \$925 million. The remaining \$200 is to develop defences - such as the Arrow - against a potential ballistic missile threat. The request also included a suggestion that Israel's military aid next year should include an extra \$350 million.

Synagogue opens near Al Aqsa Haram Sharif

In what is viewed as provocative and a dangerous step, the Israelis have opened a synagogue in a school that was confiscated from Palestinians in 1967. The school overlooks Al Aqsa Haram Sharif and on October 9th it was opened by the occupying authorities for Jewish prayer.

Handling the media

The media obviously has a major role to play in shaping opinions about issues at home and abroad. For the past fifty years or so the Zionist influence has ensured that pro-Israeli propaganda has been dominant in discussions and information on the Middle East situation. Palestinians have always been cast in a negative light, so much so that until fairly recently the words "Palestinian" and "terrorist" have been synonymous.

But now the tide is turning. The latest al Aqsa intifada has seen a small but significant increase in the number of articles displaying if not overtly pro-Palestinian tendencies, at least sympathy for their cause. This is an encouraging development and one that Muslims, Christians and others concerned about human rights abuses by Israelis should exploit. How? By becoming active in the media at every level.

For a start, local groups can be established to monitor the media. This is something that must be consistent and thorough if it is to be effective. Once started, it should not be stopped, and so it requires a great deal of commitment. Reading newspapers, listening to the radio and watching news and current affairs programmes on terrestrial and satellite television is not easy. But it can be done, insha'Allah, by spreading the workload among dedicated people in a well-organised, disciplined manner.

Secondly, it is time for those who care about the rights of Palestinians to be proactive. Approaches need to be made to the media, insisting on air-time or space to submit articles, programmes and contributions to the debate. Without being in any way slanderous or racist in tone or content, articles should be balanced and clear; if quotes are given, they should be referenced. Facts quoted should be verifiable and accurate. Let the head rule the heart and avoid empty rhetoric.

Thirdly, anyone and everyone can and should respond to the media by telephoning television and radio stations, and writing letters to the editors of national and local newspapers. Letter-writing techniques can be developed and successful, insha'Allah. Anyone interested in doing so should contact Friends of Al-Aqsa. A teaching and learning workshop is insh'Allah going to be arranged for all who want to be active in this field.(See page 5).

Ahmed Yasin to OIC: We want actions not words

Hamas founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yasin has called on the leaders of the Muslim world to take strong decisions in support of the Palestinian people whom he said are "being subjected to a slow genocide at the hands of the Zionist regime. "In his appeal, Yasin urged the Muslim states to "wake up from its long dormancy and take tangible measures in support of the oppressed men, women and children in Palestine, who are defending Alquds and al-Masjidul Aqsa on behalf of the Muslim Umma." "I appeal to you in the name of the children of Palestine, in the name of the widows and the orphans, in the name of the martyrs and the wounded, to do away with indecision and hesitation. The martyrs have topped 200 and the wounded exceeded 10,000. We don't want to hear the words of denunciation and condemnation, we want actions, because without actions, the Zionist danger will spread to other parts of the Muslim world." Yasin also called on the Muslim world to help the Palestinians with weaponry and money. "Why don't you support us with arms with which we can defend ourselves, why don't you allow Muslim volunteers to carry out a jihad warfare against the Zionists. The Palestinian people are crying out for your help. The clarion cries of the widows are echoing throughout the globe. "Finally, Sheikh Yasin undertook to keep up the intifada. "I assure you that we will continue in this path of Jihad, and that we will not be intimidated or scared by enemy might, for this might will vanish and Israel will be doomed by its oppression." **Khalid Amayreh Occupied Jerusalem: 12 Nov.**

Your window to Palestine

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Plus*Much*Much*More

US THINK-TANK URGES THE TORTURE OF PALESTINIANS.

A draft report by the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) revised on 21 October, Peace and War: Israel versus the Palestinians, has hailed the use of terrorism as a technique to establish "peace" in the Middle East. The report has urged the Palestinian Authority to clamp down "ruthlessly" on Palestinians who oppose the Oslo agreement. It also encourages the use of "excessive force" against Palestinians throwing stones. Excusing Israel's use of live ammunition against stone-throwing civilians, the report argues that CS gas and rubber bullets are usually "not effective in stopping large groups". It alleges the necessity of Israel's escalating response to stone-throwers in the form of mobilisation of armour, the sealing off of Palestinian towns, and "the use of helicopter gunships and snipers to provide mobility and suppressive fire." The document further indicates that Israeli military actions should end with "forced evacuation" of Palestinians from "sensitive areas". The report can be read at <http://www.csis.org/stratassessment/reports/israelpal/estine.pdf>

Masjid Al-Aqsa- Beware of Zionist plans!

There is a noticeable confusion between 'Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa' and the 'Dome of the Rock'. Whenever Al-Aqsa Mosque is mentioned in the media, the picture of the Dome of the Rock appears instead. The main reason for this is the public ignorance which is in line with the Israeli plans. This observation was consistent during my stay in the USA where I was informed that Zionists in America print and distribute such pictures and sell it to the Arabs and Muslims, cheaply or give out for free so that Muslims can post it every where, in their homes and offices. This confirmed to me the conclusion that Israel wants to vanish the picture of Al-Aqsa mosque from the minds of people, so they can destroy it and build their temple without any publicity. And if anyone condemn or complain, then Israel will show live the picture of the 'Dome' and reply that they didn't do anything. What a plan!
Dr. Marwan Saeed Saleh Abu Al-Rub

To receive daily updates on the situation in Palestine

Email : info@aqsa.org.uk

Request to be put on the mailing list.

Be on the forefront of information. Learn & know what the Israelis are upto!

Long walk to freedom.

From the minute I was born, I was told and taught, that my name is Jumana Odeh from Lifta. At first I thought Lifta was a member of my family! I was confused over this, thinking: "but I was born in Jerusalem and raised in Ramallah, so why don't I say: I'm from Ramallah?" Then one day my Dad took us to a frontier village, near Jerusalem to show us Lifta, his village, where he was born as well as his grandfather and great-great-great grandfather. I found out that there was a meaning to "Lifta". It simply meant "the homeland" to my Dad. For me Lifta became a nice dream. One day I visited Lebanon and I saw the sea for the first time in my life, so I began dreaming that one day, my beautiful Lifta would move in one of the many cars that I saw and go to the sea shore. I was 11 years old in 1967 when I heard my Dad saying: "No, I'm not going to leave my home again, one time was enough to be uprooted from my land, I'll die here..." I can't forget those moments when the Israeli army occupied Ramallah and I was hiding with my brothers and sisters under the beds waiting until we all would die under the heavy Israeli fire.

I tried after that to live a "normal" life with my family, to go to school, play and dream of a better life. I was still 12 when for the first time I participated in a demonstration against the Israeli occupation and I cannot to this very moment forget the pain I felt when a soldier beat me until I lost consciousness. It took me a long time to realize why that soldier had beaten me so harshly. My small heart, full of the love and forgiveness with which my parents and grandparents had raised me, could not understand why. After all, I had done nothing except peacefully to say: "I don't want you here on my land."

When I was 18 I left my country alone on a scholarship to study medicine abroad. I used to go and come via the bridge to Jordan and each and every time I crossed the bridge I felt the humiliation that the Israeli occupiers used against us Palestinians. Each time I came home I was challenged by the Israeli soldiers, each time I was kept for many hours, just like many other students and young people, and asked lots of questions about my study, about my friends and about my political views. My answer was each time was very simple, that I love freedom, I hate the occupiers and this is my political view. Once I was interrogated because

I was reading a book while waiting for my turn to go through. I was stopped for 2 hours just because I was reading.

I graduated from medical school to become a young physician and started working in our hospitals and learning what medical schools couldn't teach us, what it means to work under military occupation, to feel so frustrated that you are running out of cotton or bandages or essential antibiotics for your dying baby patient. Or to be faced by injured youth when you are not trained to deal with "war casualties". I learned, as of my other colleagues, the real meaning of health in its social, economic, human, psychological and political dimensions.

Still I had a space for "the other". I was on call in the emergency room when casualties from a traffic accident arrived at the hospital. I can still hear the voice of the Israeli settler mother calling for her "tinok" (meaning baby in Hebrew). I was in tears and I fetched her baby, and brought it to a semiconscious mother to tell her that her baby was safe. I kept the baby with me until an Israeli ambulance came to pick up the casualties. And again, I can't forget his eyes, calling for help. He was a young Israeli soldier who had run away from the middle of the confrontation: Palestinian youths throwing stones at Israeli soldiers and getting shot. This soldier was injured. I treated him and helped him to escape to a safe area: I saved his life. I have no regrets.

Still I had space for the other. I always tried to see the other side of each and every Israeli that I met, including the Israeli soldiers on the many checkpoints through which I had to go through four or five times a day, on my way to work as a paediatrician. I even tried to learn more about the Israeli people, their culture, their religion and their language. And I made some Israeli friends.

To know what it means to live under occupation, you have to go through it, you have to live the occupation. It means to be humiliated and harassed every minute. Your water, your electricity, your economy, your freedom to move around, your freedom to express yourself and your land all are controlled by a foreign military force. To live under occupation means to leave your home to work, not knowing if you'll come back or not, it means that your children go to school and you don't know if you will see them again or not. You ingest the occupation in the oxygen that you breathe, the water that you drink, the food that you eat, and the news that you read or watch at the end of the day. I tried my best, not to accept but rather to try to live with it, to adapt to it and find ways to live a "normal

life", like people all over the world do. I wanted to live in peace with myself and with my family, and to be honest with my daughters. I even tried to explain to my daughters, when they asked me why an Israeli soldier had killed our cousin Fadi in 1994, that we are in crisis and that the 16 year-old Fadi had been killed by a crazy Israeli individual.

Yes, I tried to be myself and live to love rather than to hate. But to see the 12 year-old Mohammad al-Durra being killed in cold blood! And to read that General Mofaz of Israel, the educated, civilized, democratic father, thinks that Mohammad had been participating in demonstrations against the occupiers before, that is to say, when he was 7 years old, and so Mohammad deserved to die! And Sarrah, not yet two year-old Sarrah, killed by an Israeli settler! Why? And what should I tell my daughters, when they ask me "Mom can you protect us, Mohammed's father and Sarrah's father couldn't protect them!" Or when Ramallah was bombed by helicopters and my daughters with their schoolmates witnessed all that and were terrified, or when my 16 year-old daughter Dana tells me: " No, Mom, I'll never leave my home again", because she and her sister had been taken by their grandparents to stay with them and be with their cousins in a safe place after the bombing of Ramallah? And she says: "I would like to ask those soldiers, why do you kill children? Can you go to sleep after that? Don't you have children? If they ask you: where have you been, do you tell them that you were involved in killing Sarrah, Mohammad, Nizar and many other kids?

Don't you think that all of those kids have mothers and fathers just like you and they want to be hugged and be loved, exactly as you and your kids do?" Or when my 11 year-old daughter Tala asked me: "Why, Mommy, do settlers shoot at us every night? Why do they start so late at night? I'm scared. Why do they kill children?" And it's true, there are some settlers living in a settlement at the edge of Ramallah, and they begin shooting every night at 30,000 people in Ramallah and El Bireh. What do they want from us? I believe that the message we are being sent from all that is: shut up, you sub-humans! It is a case of power over justice, over humanity and over peace, of arrogance against civilization.

The recent deaths of over 200 speak eloquently of their desire to kill Palestinians, in large numbers. I hear behind the din of these cold statistics and of my daughters' cries, the echo of Mohammad al Durra's voice, asking for protection for our people in the 21st century. This plea must be heeded by all those who still believe in humanity.

On the other side, it is clear that the Israeli military institution is building a sick society, and that they will be faced by a whole generation of psychologically ill people. This is the fate of children and youth who are only taught to speak the language of power and of violence. And finally: I am left with no answer to the many questions from my daughters, to the call of the statistics, to the plea from Mohammed, except that: we are freedom fighters. **Jumana Odeh. MD, MPH.**



Friends of Al Aqsa Appeal

Since the launch of Friends of Al Aqsa we have tried our best to inform people of the situation in Occupied Palestine, work towards protecting Masjidul Al Aqsa Haram Sharif and promote Palestinian Human Rights by:

- Holding seminars in cities and universities up and down the country.
- Distributing over 50, 000 leaflets and newsletters per year for FREE.
- Holding national conferences.
- Campaigning against companies and organisation that promote Zionist regime and distort Palestinian facts.
- Meetings with government departments in UK and abroad.
- Meetings with International Institutes like UN Human Rights and others
- Publishing a referenced bi-annual journal.
- Hosting a website with daily updates

We appeal to all Brothers & Sisters to help us with the running cost. Only LILLAH please.

Your donation will insh'Allah be rewarded in the hereafter and we pray it will work towards the liberation of Masjidul Al Aqsa Haram Sharif. Amount £ _____ [cheques to- Friends of Al Aqsa]

Name & Address _____

Post To: Friends of Al Aqsa, P.O. Box 5127, Leicester. LE2 0WU.

Muslim group returns from Palestine

Since the beginning of Al Aqsa Intifada 4 British Muslims groups have visited Al Aqsa. They all tell of the urgent need to help victims of the Intifada and the continued threat to Al-Aqsa. In response to nightly images of suffering on their TV screens, the Muslims from Leicester, Preston, Bolton and London decided to spend some time in the war-ravaged area. Their mission? In the words of Ibrahim Sabat, "to see how we could help Palestinians and Masjid al-Aqsa." Although they were based in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem's old city, the groups, consisting of professionals and businessmen, visited many trouble spots. One group experienced a close shave when their coach drove into a clash between trigger happy Israelis and Muslim Palestinian youths in Ramallah. In another hair-raising incident Israeli soldiers trained their guns on Muslims from Britain when they arrived at the mosque of Ibrahim in Hebron, currently closed to Muslims as the town remains under curfew. "The most frightening thing was crossing the checkpoint between the PNA and Israeli controlled areas to get to Ramallah," said Zafar Desai, aged 37 from Preston. Praising their Palestinian hosts as warm and hospitable, the groups also took in several hospitals to visit the wounded of the Intifada. "I was shocked at some of the injuries," said Br Yusuf Mangera, a medical nurse. "Israeli soldiers have been aiming to kill and maim, firing live bullets at the heads and upper bodies of demonstrators." The groups were also astonished to experience for themselves the restrictions imposed by Israel on worshippers wishing to enter Al-Aqsa. They reported being harassed by Israeli police and troops on many occasions as they tried to enter the mosque. They all reported the visit had been a hugely fulfilling whose main aim - to give support to the Palestinians - had been served. They all encourage and send an invitation for the rest of the British Muslims to visit Al Aqsa and Palestine as soon as possible.

Palestinian school girl loses eyesight after being hit on the head by Israeli soldiers

As Zionist terror against the Palestinian people continued unabated, a Palestinian school girl on Monday lost her eyesight after she was beaten mercilessly by two Israeli soldiers in East Jerusalem. Palestinian sources said Shifa al-Hindi, 16, could no longer see after two border-policemen (Zionist equivalent of the Nazi Gestapo) beat her mercilessly on the head with the butts of their guns. Eyewitness said the soldiers forcibly removed al-Hindi's head scarf, and when she sought to resist what she considered an act of humiliation, they beat her with the butts of their guns. According to eyewitness, the soldiers also made derogatory remarks about Islam and the Prophet Muhammed [saas]. Sources at the Augusta Victoria eye hospital in East Jerusalem said Hindi was undergoing medical examinations to determine if the loss of her eyesight was permanent or not. A spokesman for the Israeli government said he was not aware of the incident. **Occupied Jerusalem. 6 Nov.**

2-month Palestinian baby killed by Israeli troops in Hebron - Al-Khalil

A two-month old Palestinian baby was killed in Hebron on Saturday 4th November when Israeli occupation soldiers fired tear gas shells into Palestinian houses in this town of 180,000 Palestinians. Hospital sources in al Khalil said the baby, Hind Nedal Ahmed Qweider, died of gas inhalation, at her home at the Jabal Jouhar neighbourhood. Thus far, the Hind is the youngest Palestinian to be killed in the five-week Palestinian intifada. Meanwhile, another 14-year-old Palestinian girl was critically wounded when Israeli soldiers opened fire on school children returning home outside al-Khalil. Palestinian sources said the girl, Ghazala Joudeh, was shot in the head shortly after she walked out of school near the Bani Naim Junction, on the eastern suburb of al-Khalil. The sources said the girl was shot in the head after she walked out of school and into a confrontation between trigger-happy Israeli soldiers and unarmed Palestinians protestors. The child was pronounced "clinically dead" Saturday evening. Over fifty Palestinian childrens, including at least three babies, have been shot dead by Israeli occupation since 28 September. **Hebron. 4 Nov**

Israel lay mines around Palestinian districts

On 22 November, while Palestinian residents were attempting to remove a roadblock, which the Israeli had erected inside the village of Abu Da'eef, they discovered four anti-personnel landmines buried inside the blockade. Prior to this incident, approximately one week ago, a landmine severely injured 10 year old Khalil Atallah from Balatta Refugee Camp as he was on his way to the bakery. We view with grave concern the Israeli practice, which violates the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. This practice also constitutes a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, NGO's in the West Bank revealed that Palestinians fall victim to landmines and UXO explosions each year, with an estimated 2,500 injured or killed since 1967. Moreover, the research indicated that the majority of these victims are children. Since 1997 alone, over 35 Palestinians have been injured or killed by landmines. To date, the Israeli government has refused to sign the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. The recent discovery of landmines in Palestinian civilian areas constitutes yet another element of an ongoing siege against the Palestinian civilian population by the apartheid Israeli occupation authorities.

Over 5000 Muslims in "Brilliant" Al-Aqsa Demonstration

As part of the ongoing campaign against injustice in the Holy Land, Friends of Al-Aqsa organised three demonstrations, in Leicester, Bolton and Swansea. All three passed off peacefully; the officer in charge of the police operation in Leicester praised the conduct of the 5000-strong Muslim protesters, calling the whole day, "Brilliant".

The Chairman of Friends of Al-Aqsa, Ismail Patel, was elated at the response of the community to the crisis in Palestine. "Muslims in three cities of Britain have shown today that they care about the struggle for justice in Palestine," he said, "and they have done so in a way that illustrates the Islamic concern for the rights and property of others in every respect." When asked what the organisation will do next, he said that it all depends on how the crisis develops. "We shall use all legal means necessary to liberate Al-Aqsa Mosque from the yoke of Zionism and to obtain justice for our brothers and sisters. Don't forget, Palestinians have spent the past 52 years oppressed by a country sponsored and armed by Western governments." Where, he asked, is the British government's "ethical foreign policy" over Palestine?

Speakers at the Leicester rally included Sheikh Riyadh ul Haq who told the enthralled audience of the need to defend Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque against Zionist aggression. "Religion cannot be taken out of the equation when discussing this issue," he said, "the rabbis of Israel have made their position clear for all the world to see: they regard the lives of Palestinians Muslims and Christians alike as less valuable than those of Jews, and thus expendable." This, added Sheikh Riyadh, is unacceptable and everyone, of whatever faith, should campaign against such racist attitudes. It was also pointed out by Ismail Patel that if the Palestinians were 'black', the USA and Europe would be leading the call to dismantle the apartheid state of Israel. However, because Palestinians are Arabs, and mostly Muslims, Western taxes pay for Israel's oppressive policies.

The marches were silent to convey the message that:

1. Muslims show respect for all who have lost their lives, men, women and children;
2. Palestinian children have been cruelly silenced;
3. World leaders have largely been silent about the Palestinian cause and the human rights abuses committed by the only so-called democracy in the region.

Coffins were carried by marchers at the front of the demonstration, symbols of the young lives cut short by Israeli bombs and bullets. (From Muslim News UK)

If not now ...When?

Masjid Al Aqsa and the Muslims of Palestine
Await the support of the Muslim Ummah.

Visit al Quds this Ramadhan.

Show your support for the Muslims of Palestine
and claim your right to pray in the blessed
Masjid of Al Aqsa

Imams in Masjidul Al Aqsa Haram Sharif

The following scholars of Islam are at present in the service of Masjidul al Aqsa Haram Sharif:

1. Imams in Masjid al Sakhra [Dome of the Rock]:

- a) Shaykh Khalid al Ghazawi, 48 years of age, MA in Islamic Studies, leads in Zuhr and Asr Salah.
- b) Shaykh AbdulKarim al Zirba, 43 years of age, Diploma in Shariah, leads in Magrib and Isha. [NB no Fajr Salah in al Sakhrah]

2. Imams in Masjidul al Aqsa:

- a) Shaykh Ali al Abbasi, 40 years of age, MA in Shariah, leads in Fajr.
- b) Shaykh Muhammad Jum'ah, 50 years of age, BA in Shariah, leads Zuhr and Asr.
- c) Shaykh Yusuf Abu Sneneh, 43 years of age, BA In Islamic studies, leads Maghrib and Isha.

3. Imams performing Juma Salah:

- a) Shaykh Ikrimah Sabri, 60 years of age, Mufti of Palestine.
- b) Shaykh Hayyan al Idrisi, 65 years of age, assistant of Qadi al Quds.
- c) Shaykh Yusuf Abu Sneneh.
- d) Shaykh Yusuf Salamah, 65 years of age, minister in Awqaf.
- e) Shaykh Muhammad Husain, 55 years of age, assistant director of Masjidul al Aqsa.

If any person is presented as an Imam of al Aqsa Please confirm with those who have knowledge to ensure of any new appointments.

Media Monitoring Workshop

A one day session will be held in Jan/Feb 2001 on how to respond to the media and writing articles for the Press.

All those interested please send us the following details:

Name _____

Add _____

_____ Post Code _____

Tel _____

Email _____

Occupation _____

Further details will be sent nearer the time.

**Post To: Friends of Al Aqsa, P.O. Box 5127, Leicester.
LE2 0WU or Email info@aqsa.org.uk**

Tony Blair supports Jewish charities

The Jewish Chronicle has reported that Tony Blair is due to be the guest speaker at the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) fundraising dinner in January. The UJIA has already collected over £13.4 million some of the money is used to support Jewish immigration to Israel. These Jewish immigrants carted from Russia, Ethiopia and other parts of the world once in "Israel" occupy Palestinian land. This according to international law, and UN resolutions is illegal. Tony Blair already gives his name to the UJIA Blair Fellowship that arranges for young Jews from Britain to "volunteer" in northern Israel.

He has also been extremely quiet about the current atrocities and murders being carried out by Israel. The General Election is not far off. Now is the time to let Tony Blair know that we are disgusted by what Israelis are doing. Doing nothing while tanks and helicopter gunships fire into civilian areas is an unacceptable response for the Prime Minister of Britain, or any of his Ministers.

Please use the text given below to write to the Prime Minister, making it clear to him that Muslims have long memories and if he wants the Muslim vote he must start to be more sympathetic to the plight of Muslims and his co-religionist Christians in Palestine.

The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, MP,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON,
SW1A 1AA.

Dear Prime Minister,

For weeks now, ever since Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque, protected by Israeli soldiers and police, the Israeli Defence [*sic*] Forces have carried out armed atrocities in Occupied Palestine. They have shot, bombed and gassed unarmed civilians men, women and children, some in the full glare of the world's media in Al-Aqsa itself and across the West Bank and Gaza. There is a definite shoot-to-kill policy; most of the injuries have been to the head and upper body.

This is a complicated situation, and I don't pretend that there are any easy solutions. However, I do believe that the response of an army under supposedly democratic control, not only against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories but also Israel's own Arab citizens, has been excessively disproportionate. When two British undercover soldiers were beaten to death at an IRA funeral a few years back, the British government did not send helicopter gunships into west Belfast. And yet that was the response of Israel to the death of its own undercover soldiers, the condemnation of which was deafening in its silence. (And anyone who believes that the two Israelis were "off-duty reservists who took a wrong turning" is extremely naive.)

At the very least, it is reasonable to expect our government to condemn such excessive force and seek to bring the criminals responsible for human rights abuses to trial. Taking a dispassionate view, it appears (and this view is increasingly also held by respected journalists and commentators) that the victims are being cast as the villains, and the villains as the victims. Twelve year old Muhammad Al-Dhurra obviously should have known better than to put his body in the way of automatic gunfire aimed at him by Israeli soldiers; such is the ridiculous implication of Israel's apologists' rhetoric.

As our Prime Minister, I know that you have expressed your concern about human rights abuses all over the world. I also understand that you will be supporting the United Jewish Israel Appeal's dinner in January and that you already give your name to the UJIA Blair Fellowship for young Jews to "volunteer" in Northern Israel. Clearly, you are a friend of Israel and her people. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised his companions to help their friends, even when they are oppressors. When asked how this could be done, he replied, "Stop them from oppressing people." The arguments over right and wrong in the Middle East are complex, but what is in no doubt is the illegal nature of Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. The UJIA and other Zionist charities in Britain help Israel to occupy that land, contravening international law and basic human rights. In supporting the UJIA, you are sending a very clear signal that such illegal activity is acceptable.

In the interests of community relations and the upholding of international law, I would urge you to condemn publicly the Israeli response to Palestinians suffering under occupation for more than half a century. I would also ask you to reconsider your proposed attendance at the UJIA dinner. Helping your friends in Israel by pointing out the error of their ways not only signifies a real concern for human rights, but also that you support justice for all who have been wronged, regardless of the identity of the wrongdoers. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

[At the bottom CC all letters to Friends of Al Aqsa]

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