



# Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association

## **CADFA**

### Charity 1112717



## Trustees' Annual Report 2020-21

Picture: Palestinian workers wearing Covid masks as they go through a checkpoint to Jerusalem.

## INTRODUCTION

This was the year that the Coronavirus pandemic spread. The beginning of April 2020 found us in lockdown in both countries, with our homes in Café Palestina in Camden and Dar Assadaqa in Abu Dis both closed, our health professionals' visit to Palestine planned for the end of March cancelled, fundraising for another children's visit to the UK suspended, and the many events and activities of 2019-20 seeming a distant memory.

The progress of Covid-19 was different in the UK and Palestine and so were timings of lockdowns in both places. In the UK we had two major waves of the virus, with three periods of lockdown in London and an incomplete opening in between. CADFA's home in Café Palestina was closed for most of the year, and CADFA's London staff were on furlough for the most of this period. Our book keeper Sheila returned for a short time but then retired in November 2020 and at the end of the year we are still waiting for it to be possible to have a meal to celebrate her time with us!

In Palestine, the virus did not seem so terrible at the beginning of the year as it did in the UK, but by the end there was some optimism in the UK where many people had been vaccinated and a slow opening was starting but the virus was raging in Palestine and vaccinations hardly started (\*). It is not yet clear when CADFA will go back to the activities that had seemed normal for us – visits between the two countries, events in person and in particular at Café Palestina.

### In April we wrote

Our objectives for 2020-21 must be to keep focus, keep going, keep the human rights reports from Palestine coming, keep UK people in contact with Palestine and continue with our usual activities at the point that we are able to. We hope to improve our communications systems and use of social media. We aim to extend our work with partners and continue to build our membership."

However, with the help of Zoom and of small CADFA groups and friends of CADFA across the country, our work managed to keep going in a different form. We did make progress on some of the things we thought we would only do when Covid was finished...

- Follow up our last exchanges with ... a women's magazine, etc
- Strengthen our work with new partners in both countries
- Training sessions on Palestine for Beginners, Speaking Out (for Palestinians), running exchanges with Palestine (for groups in the UK)
- More media work (products including video)



We learned new skills this year and think there are lessons from this year's work that will be useful in the future.

## THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE

This was a year of aggressive expansion by Israel across the West Bank, with the Israeli government encouraged by the Trump administration in the US to take over Jerusalem, take more land for settlements and even attempt to announce the annexation of the areas C in the West Bank as part of Israel proper. This last attempt was abandoned as it was too blatant for governments across the world, but the work continued. As the Trump administration fell, Israel was given a cover to hide the continuing expansion by the world's preoccupation with Covid.

The roll-out of vaccines against Covid provided a stunning contrast between Israeli citizens and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza with Israel vaccinating its own population at speed but refusing to help the occupied population despite this being a clear duty under international humanitarian law. This was discussed widely, and the term 'apartheid' used increasingly often about the situation in Palestine (as we have long argued is the case). In January, the Israeli human rights organisation B'tselem published a report that showed clearly the systematic apartheid in the whole area of historic Palestine 'from the river to the sea.'

The widening control of Israel across the West Bank was felt by our friends in Abu Dis, on their streets, in their homes and in the shrinking space that they were allowed to be in. Some of the texture of the year for them is shown in Appendix 1 (excerpts from our monthly human rights reports).

## ZOOM MEETINGS -SOLIDARITY IN ISOLATION – PALESTINE FOR BEGINNERS

We began the year thinking that we faced an unusual situation of perhaps a few months, with ourselves in the UK and our friends in Palestine in lockdown all at the same time. As this time grew longer however so did our skills and ideas in connection with Zoom.

We held a series of meetings "Solidarity in Action", always with speakers from the UK and from Palestine – and we had some notable online events on specific days: Palestinian Prisoners' Day, Workers' Day, Nakbeh, Balfour Day, a meeting about annexation and Human Rights Day. We held special events on Zoom for Eid and also a virtual exhibition of photos by Sarah Sanders at which she talked about the photos and her visit to Palestine with CADFA. We held some meetings called "Let's Talk About Palestine" at which other visitors spoke. We had our first Palestine for Beginners online and it went well, so we worked on the materials for it and held further meetings roughly monthly for people who knew little about Palestine and



wanted to learn. We held two virtual concerts to raise money for the Muqassed Clinic in Abu Dis with musicians from Palestine and the UK, and some open meetings for CADFA members to keep the work going.

#### WOMEN'S LINKS –MEDIA WORK –PODCAST WORK WITH SOAPBOX

The Palestinian women visitors who had gone back to Palestine just at the beginning of the pandemic (see last annual report) and the women in the UK who had hosted them met on Zoom. This rejuvenated our women's links group and it remained in touch at least once a week all year. Together, the women produced a bilingual magazine which they launched in a meeting on Zoom, and learned some video skills making a video about the autumn in both countries. They then became the core of a group working with our partners Soapbox on a podcast. At the end of March, a six-week course planned for January was still continuing with the plan to produce two or three podcasts. The women in Palestine contributed short bits of video for a brief film for International Women's Day. There are other plans including a film on prisoners.

#### STUDENTS LINKS – SPEAKING OUT - VIRTUAL VISITS

The students from Palestine who had visited in January 2020 were involved in our student links work together with new students who responded to advertisements by Al Quds University. We ran a SPEAKING OUT course which allowed them to consider the best ways of talking over Zoom in English to people in the UK and to use this in three ways: they ran a public Zoom event, joined a university class on Palestine run with Chester University, and then took part in a VIRTUAL VISIT TO THE UK, talking to people in Chester, Wales, Cornwall, Cambridge, Bedford and Derbyshire as well as London.

#### VIRTUAL VISITS BETWEEN UK AND PALESTINE

We were surprised by the effectiveness of the virtual visit format that we developed this year to stand in for our actual visits in both directions. The feedback was very good. These visits were

- June – virtual visit to Palestine
- July – virtual visit to the UK
- August– virtual visit to Palestine

We really enjoyed working with partners in both countries on our virtual visits. By the end of the year, we found that other organisations were also running virtual visits and an unexpected outcome from lockdown was that the opportunity for people in the UK to speak to people in Palestine increased! We were hit at the end



of the year by the Facebook advertising ban (\*) which cut the number of applicants to all of our events and remains to be solved.

## HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS - CAMPAIGNS TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS

Our co-ordinator in Abu Dis sent reports on the human rights situation which were used in updates to our members and in campaigning. We held information events, wrote to policy makers, wrote model letters to help others write, started petitions and (when Covid allowed) held small, socially-distanced campaigns on several issues this year: Corona and the lack of vaccine available to Palestinians; the Israeli threat to annexe most of the West Bank (in word as well as deed); about Abu Dis prisoners on administrative detention; for the release of Ahmed Eriqat's body; for the protection of Palestinian farmers who were being attacked, and trees burned, in the olive harvest.

Because of the lack of vaccine in Abu Dis and the lack of ventilators, the Muqassed Clinic there put out an appeal for help and we responded with a fundraiser concert and appeal which raised about £3000.

Because our communication was all virtual this year, it was easy also to stay

in good touch with partner groups across the country. We held several meetings for our partner groups and worked together both on our virtual visit to the UK and on small demonstrations in the street done across the country on the same day.

**CADFA Resources**

**Six more months of  
lockdown**

The first six months of  
Corona in Abu Dis, Palestine

Resources on human rights  
and people's lives in Palestine

**cadfa.org**



## RESOURCES

In August 2020, we put together resources from six months of lockdown – six human rights reports, the women’s magazine, a link to our website resources page. At the end of the year, we published a calendar with great photographs by Sarah Sanders who had visited Palestine with CADFA in 2019.

## COMMUNICATION

This year we reviewed our mailing lists and begin to use Mailchimp for our main mailings. We sent regular updates to friends and members. We used our website and Facebook but and began slowly to use Instagram and Twitter a bit more – we would like to develop these.

(\*) It was a real problem to us that Facebook banned our advertisements for no reason that we could pin down and did not respond to a letter from trustees asking for this to be overturned.

## THIS YEAR WE LEARNED

- That we miss real visits but can do useful work without them
- The power of Zoom communication with Palestine
- The usefulness of communication further across Palestine and in the UK
- The importance of our educational work.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

At the beginning of the financial year, we reviewed our financial situation because of Covid. As we were not able to run a major part of our work (visits between Palestine and the UK), we agreed to put our Camden staff on Furlough and reduce salaries of all staff by 20% (the 20% cut was stopped in the autumn).

We negotiated half price rents on our two properties in Abu Dis. The guest house (a flat we rented for our visitors) in Abu Dis was not being used because of Covid. With uncertainty around when the situation would change, in the summer we agreed to relinquish one property. This coincided with pressure from the landlord of Dar Assadaqa for us to leave as he wanted to redevelop the building, so the decision was taken to move our operations to the guest house flat.



Because of Covid our income and expenditure both about halved compared with the previous year. We managed to increase membership income by around 5% due both to the Arabic classes run by Café Palestina and to the hard work of the Fundraising Team contacting people who were close to us and encouraging them to join. The CADFA street stall and income from events at the café helped when we could run them. Café Palestina's Arabic classes continued online and the income from these came to CADFA. We could not have continued to employ our staff without Furlough payments.

On expenditure, we agreed to advance our worker in Abu Dis part of his pension. This largely offset reduced salaries and savings at the end of the year following the retirement of our part-time administrator.

We are pleased we have maintained our financial position despite Covid. At the start of the year (having taken into account payments and income that related to 2019-20) we had -£1297. With the income and expenditure from the whole year taken into account (including late items), we finished the year with a base for the coming year of £1538, an improvement of over £2800. We took out a loan of £25,000 under the Government-backed scheme, but this is not included in those figures (we have subsequently paid this back to avoid interest charges). Note the figures in the formal accounts below are slightly different as they only include transactions in the financial year.

## CADFA ACCOUNTS 2020-21

### CADFA ACCOUNTS - 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

	2019/0	2020/1
<b>CADFA Charity</b>		
Opening Balance	-10,309	1,090
<b>Income</b>		
Project grants - via CADFA Edu	19,261	0
Project grants - Other	0	0
Other project Income	36,219	2,193
Membership	22,139	23,333
Donations	8,583	5,673
Visits to Palestine	29,245	772



Furlough		25,442	
Income generation (events, stalls etc)	6,375	8,662	
Gift Aid	9,445	7,396	
Total Income		131,267	73,471
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Abu Dis running costs	7,909	3,234	
Camden running costs	24,483	20,247	
Staff costs	47,042	44,522	
Project expenditure	22,453	1,783	
Visits to Palestine cost	13,555	0	
Income generation costs	4,425	1,945	
Total Expenditure		119,868	71,730
<b>CADFA Charity Outturn</b>		1,090	2,831
Opening Balance		-10,309	1,090
Total Income		131,267	73,471
Total Expenditure		119,868	71,730
Surplus (Deficit) Carried Forward		<b>1,090</b>	<b>2,831</b>
Surplus (Deficit) for the Year		11,399	1,741
<b>Reconciliation</b>			
Account Balance at 31st March 2020		1,802	28,764
Loans Outstanding		0	-25,000
Late Transfers In		0	0
Late Transfers Out		-712	-932
Total		1,090	2,831
<b>CADFA Edu</b>			
Opening Balance		0	0
<b>Income</b>			
Project grants	19,261	0	
Total Income		19,261	0
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Transfer to CADFA Charity	19,261	0	
Total Expenditure		19,261	0
<b>CADFA Edu Outturn</b>		0	0

## BALANCE SHEET





	As at 31st March 2020 £	As at 31st March 2021 £
UK Bank Balances	-3,087.93	26,733.20
Cash in hand or in transit	4,178.01	1,097.83
Less: Loans	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-25,000.00</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b><u>£1,090.08</u></b>	<b><u>£2,831.03</u></b>
Surplus at 1 April	-10,309.15	1,090.08
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	11,399.23	1,740.95
<b>Surplus at 31 March</b>	<b><u>£1,090.08</u></b>	<b><u>£2,831.03</u></b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
UK Bank Accounts	-3,087.93	26,733.20
NIS held in Abu Dis	2,466.90	19.35
Jordanian Dinars held in Abu Dis	1.97	1.94
US Dollars held in Abu Dis	1,655.28	324.00
Balance on Camden Cash account	-443.34	0.00
Balance on PayPal account	497.20	752.55
Loans to CADFA	<u>0.00</u>	<u>-25,000.00</u>
	<u>1,090.08</u>	<u>2,831.03</u>

## CADFA OBJECTIVES FOR 2021-22

While Covid continues our objectives are to keep focus on our charitable objects and to keep going:

- to keep the human rights reports from Palestine coming,
- to keep UK people in contact with Palestine
- to make clear material and campaign on human rights in Palestine
- to improve our communications systems and use of social media
- to extend our work with partners and continue to build our membership.
- to do more work on Zoom with schools and colleges
- to enable more media work by people from the UK in co-operation with people from Palestine

As the Covid situation improves, we hope to keep an eye on the possibility of running real visits, remembering the plans last year for a health visit to Palestine, a programme of exchanges run with the Al Quds University, a youth workers' exchange to the UK run with the Higher Council for Youth and Sports, a children's visit, a women's visit – though it may be that we cannot yet run any visit in person this year.



## THANKS

The Trustees of CADFA would like to thank the members of CADFA and those active in both the UK and Palestine who kept CADFA going through this difficult year. We look forward to working with you again next year.

### **CADFA's trustees 2020-21**

**AGM was on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020**

**Daniel Guedalla** (Chair until 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 20)

**Maha Rahwangi** until 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 21 (Chair from 4<sup>th</sup> Oct until 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 21)

**Tara Seaborn** from 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 20 (Chair from 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 21)

**Mike Fletcher** until 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 21 (Vice-Chair)

**Cristina Piccoli** (Secretary)

**Hugh Wallis** (Treasurer)

**Sumiya Hemsi** until 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 20

**Fiona Millar** from 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 20



## CADFA's objects

As amended at AGM 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013

CADFA's charitable objects are to promote human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations) and respect for international humanitarian law in Palestine by all or any of the following means:

- Raising awareness of human rights and humanitarian issues relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general and to the situation of Abu Dis in particular;
- Researching and monitoring abuses of human rights and infringements of humanitarian law in Abu Dis in particular and Palestine more widely;
- Educating the public about human rights and humanitarian law;
- Promoting public support for human rights and the observance of humanitarian law;
- Working to eliminate abuses of human rights and infringements of humanitarian law in Abu Dis in particular and Palestine more widely;
- Working to obtain and promote redress for the victims of human rights abuses and infringements of humanitarian law in Abu Dis in particular and Palestine more widely and their families;
- Providing support to and relieving need among the victims of human rights abuses and infringements of humanitarian law and their families, in Abu Dis in particular and Palestine more widely.

## CADFA

CADFA came into being during 2004, was constituted as a charity in June 2005 and gained recognition as a charity in January 2006. CADFA links people from the UK to people in Palestine - in particular to Abu Dis in the Jerusalem suburb – in order to raise awareness of the serious human rights situation in Palestine and encourage people to work for human rights and respect for international humanitarian law. There is more information about CADFA and our activities on our website [cadfa.org](http://cadfa.org) and our Facebook

## CADFA Education

While we were working on projects for Erasmus+, (EU-funded youth exchange and volunteering projects), Erasmus + asked us to make ourselves into a limited company in order to give us the grant. We therefore created the company '**Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association Education**' in order to manage our big grants. Its objects are the same as CADFA's, its directors are CADFA trustees, and its money is managed by CADFA and shown in our annual accounts.



## Dar Assadaqa

Dar Assadaqa is the centre that we support in Abu Dis, Palestine – Set up in 2006 as Dar Assadaqa ('Friendship House'), it was re-licenced by the Palestinian Higher Council for Youth and Sport under the name 'Dar Assadaqa for Youth Exchange' as in Palestine its distinctive contribution is seen as the way it brings young people from Palestine and other countries together (especially the UK), through exchange visits to and from Palestine and other activities with a focus on twinning and communication to people outside Palestine such as our own CADFA links groups.

## Café Palestina

Café Palestina was set up as a social enterprise (CIC) outside CADFA and is a separate organisation. But its aim is to support CADFA. The Café is a wonderful venue for CADFA and a much better home than we ever have had. Before Covid, it provided us with work space, a public face and a lovely events room where we ran a programme of regular and occasional events, workshops and fundraisers which helped us to keep going. The use of the event room will need to be reviewed post-Covid.

## Abu Dis numbers 2020-21

<b>56</b>	people from Abu Dis were arrested by Israel
<b>11</b>	young people under 18 arrested
<b>5</b>	Prisoners held on administrative detention (with no trial)
<b>35</b>	People on average from Abu Dis were in Israeli prisons at any one time
<b>67</b>	Houses were invaded by the Israeli army during last year.
<b>2</b>	Houses demolished
<b>182</b>	People wounded by the Israeli army during demonstrations
<b>10</b>	People seriously wounded with live ammunition
<b>3</b>	Killed by the Israeli army (Ahmed Eriqat from Abu Dis and two people from Sawahreh killed at Container checkpoint).



## Appendix 1 - 2020-21 in Abu Dis – Extracts from CADFA human rights reports

### April 2020

“Israel has taken advantage of the world’s preoccupation with Corona to push on with the controversial E1 settlement development west of Abu Dis, opening a new road for Palestinians north towards Ramallah as a way to cut them off from the east (the lands Israel wants for the E1 developments).

“At the beginning of March, they destroyed two houses in Khalit Abed (an area of Abu Dis on the west of the Wall). They have started to build a new wall in Sheikh Sa’ad (south-west of Abu Dis) which will cut them off on both east and west – a small part of land separated from Jabal al Mukabbar and Jerusalem on the West as well as Sawahreh on the east of the wall. This appears to relate to the creation of an Israeli-only road between Har Homa settlement near Bethlehem and MaaleAdumim near Abu Dis and in the E1 area.”

### May 2020

“Palestinians are becoming accustomed to violence from the Israeli army that every month leaves a number of boys (usually) injured, families, including those with babies, suffering from tear gas, and sees a number of people violently arrested or returned home suffering from their time in jail and their families suffering from fines of thousands of shekels. Between 30 and 40 people are in prison which has a big effect on all of their families. This month again saw a series of army invasions and imprisonments by the army”.

### June 2020

“This month was worse: a young man (Ahmed Eriqat) was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers on 23rd June. At the time of writing (August), the Israelis still have not returned his body to his family.”

“[This Israeli] plan was to build a road to connect Har Homa settlement (south of Jerusalem) with Qidar settlement (east of Jerusalem and on Abu Dis land). In order to do this, they would need to go through/ past/ over the Wall from west to east. The Israelis were exploring a route from Har Homa to Surbaher to Sheikh Sa’ed going on the west of the Wall and going through the Wall at Suwanet Salah (the area in question) and then on to Qidar. As part of this plan, there would be a special terminal through the Wall at Suwanet Salah specially for the Al Quds University students and faculty – though it would leave local people in the area with miles to go round to other terminals if they wanted to go to Jerusalem. Under this plan, the Israelis would build a military camp on the area we are now calling the sports field, to be in charge of this new ‘terminal’ in the Wall.

“During this period the Israeli army came several times and destroyed several houses in Khalit Abed and Suwanet Salah. Some of these houses were old and built before Israel came to the area. But after Israel came, the land officially became “without owners” and destroyed anything that was built there, saying that there were no licences. Obviously the local people don’t agree that there are no owners here – but they don’t have the power to do anything about this.”

“Many other human rights issues – in the summer, the distribution of water taken from the Palestinian hills, at any time the issues of movement, passes, and residency...”

## July 2020

“The Israelis went back on the promise they had given to Ismail Khalaf, one of the administrative detainees who did a long hunger strike a year ago and was due to be released with no additional terms give in early July. This month they renewed his detention by another 6 months (still with no trial). Meanwhile the other Abu Dis hunger striker from 2018, HuthaifaBadr, is also once again imprisoned with no trial.”

“This month marks three years since the killing of two young people in Abu Dis (Mohammed Lafee and Yousef Kashour) and one month since the killing of Ahmed Eriqat at the Container Checkpoint. The Israelis still have not returned the body of Ahmed Eriqat who was killed on 23rd June and his family have been leading a campaign for the return of his body so they can bury it. This is not entirely an individual issue; currently the Israelis are holding 63 young people in their refrigerators. This seems to be both to put pressure on the families and potentially (as has happened before) for bargaining purposes in the future?”

“The Maqassed Health Centre that has been under huge threat relating to the stoppage of funds to the Maqassed Hospital had a potential stop date at the beginning of July. It managed to struggle on but with minimum services”

“The summer saw more of the problems with water that have become more and more frequent in the past few years. People in Abu Dis have water to their area on certain days of the week only and store this in tanks on their rooves, but there is not enough. Meanwhile they are living in sight of the Israeli settlements of MaaleAdumim, Qidaretc where there are water sprinklers for lawns and flowers and people have swimming pools and no lack of water at all.”

## August 2020

“By now the economic difficulties were biting that resulted from the Palestinian Authority’s refusal to go along with the Israeli annexation plans for the West Bank. In June, the PA refused to co-ordinate with Israelis they had been going on since set up by the Oslo Accords 27 years ago. In retaliation and to put pressure on the PA, Israel withheld taxes that should be paid to the Authority, who have now been unable to pay salaries to hundreds of thousands of employees, causing economic hardship across the community. The Abu Dis Health Centre is under threat as its parent, the Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem is also uncertain that it can go on as funds have been stopped. Currently both



are managing to struggle on but with minimum services and doctors have not been given their salary for the past four months.”

“People in Abu Dis are trying to get on with their lives in a normal way but their lives are systematically interrupted by movement restrictions, separation from family members, economic and environmental problems. People are becoming accustomed to violence from the Israeli army that every month leaves a number of boys (usually) injured, families, including those with babies, suffering from tear gas, and sees a number of people violently arrested or returned home suffering from their time in jail and their families suffering from fines of thousands of shekels.”

“This month, changes in the ‘permission’ system compounded health and social problems for many people in Abu Dis and the issue of fines was a pressure on the families of prisoners as well as the imprisonment itself. The Israelis still have not freed the four Abu Dis prisoners on administrative detention who are held with no trial, still defying the agreement they themselves made to release Ismail Khalaf at the beginning of July.

“They have not returned the body of Ahmed Eriqat who was killed on 23rd June and his family have been leading a campaign for the return of his body so they can bury it.”

“In the recent past – before Corona – before the stopping of the Israeli co-operation with Israel, women over 50 and men over 55 often used to be able to go to Jerusalem without ‘permissions.’ It was a long process; people had to get to the checkpoint, and then had to wait in a long queue and go through the electronic gates. This severe restriction of movement is in itself a violation against the human right to free movement inside your country.”

## September 2020

“The people of Palestine were still under pressure from the local rise of Covid, which was on the rise in the area, as well as from the military occupation. Sometimes these came together: when Israeli soldiers came close to people in house invasions and arrests, the soldiers were not wearing masks. The restrictions on movement from Covid built on to the restrictions imposed by the Occupation and became worse this month when Israelis had a religious holiday.”

“It was a new step (since Oslo) for the Israeli Civil Department to intervene directly to close down local businesses in the name of social distancing – This would previously have reached local people from the Palestinian Authority but the PA ended co-ordination with Israel as a protest against plans to annexe and to withhold tax money.”

## October 2020

“[This] was the last month before the American election and its result was uncertain. While both of the parties standing for re-election in the US had promised to be good friends of Israel and the Palestinians had no special hope from either, Trump was a very active supporter of settlement expansion. Encouraged by his support and the ‘Deal of the Century,’ and not clear what the result of the election would be, the Israeli government



was working hard to clear the areas that they wanted for new settlements and put in the infrastructure for more building.”

“There were now five Abu Dis prisoners on administrative detention - held with no trial - still defying the agreement they themselves made to release Ismail Khalaf at the beginning of July. There were around thirty prisoners from Abu Dis in Israeli jails including at least four children.

“The Israeli authorities have not returned the body of Ahmed Eriqat who was killed on 23rd June and his family continued to campaign for the return of his body so they could bury it. “

## November 2020

“The US election was important in Palestine because – while both candidates for president and their parties have supported Israel – Trump had taken a very pro-active stand in support of Israeli control of Jerusalem, settlement expansion and annexation and the Israeli authorities had been very encouraged to push towards annexation and further expansion. The month finished with Biden having won but no concession from Trump; Israel appeared to be using the time by activities in the Jordan Valley and agreeing more settlements. “

“One problem with a report based on one month in an on-going occupation is that we talk of things that change, particular things that happen, and often don’t talk about the things that continue and have become (under occupation) “normal” even though they are clear violations and unbearable. In a discussion with women from Abu Dis, one said sadly how difficult this year had been. She has not been able to see her family (her parents and brothers and sisters) in Jerusalem since last December. This is because – years ago - the Israelis gave her a different coloured ID from her family (green instead of blue) and they use these colours to decide where they will allow people to go. “

“A second woman talked about the Wall, and how her children don’t know life without the Wall (which went up from 2002 and progressively cut Abu Dis from Jerusalem). She said, “They don’t know Jerusalem, they don’t know how we were free before.” “Free?” said another woman. “We weren’t free. Even then the Israelis didn’t allow me to go to my village which I was born in.”

“Not really free,” said the second woman, “We were under occupation. But before the Wall we could go to Jerusalem or Jaffa or Haifa if we wanted to. Now we are really in a prison.””

## December 2020

“The report this month shows the Israeli army repeatedly blocking the ways in and out of Abu Dis along the main north-south road that affects the whole of the West Bank south of Ramallah”





“Most parts of Palestinians’ lives are affected by the military occupation and apartheid imposed by Israel. Water is one example, with the allocation of water in the West Bank itself controlled by Israel and unequally divided, so there is already a general shortage of water in Abu Dis. Israeli settlers moving into the West Bank have at least six times as much water available per head as the Palestinian population. The Israeli settlements have watered lawns, flowers and swimming pools – just as dramatic, they have continuous water coming to their homes through a mains supply. Palestinian homes have water tanks on the roofs as they have occasional distribution of water – in Abu Dis often for two days a week only - so it has to be saved; and they are used to running out of water especially in the hot weather.

“A real crisis ensued in mid-December because the main pump in the Wadi Jheer pumping station broke. This usually gives 70% of the water in the area, and the people in lower areas depended on 30% of water from Israeli companies – They refused to give more than this quantity or to raise the pressure so the majority of people in hilly Abu Dis and surrounds were not able to get mains water and were forced to pay for private tankers to bring water, and then pump it to the tanks on their roofs.”

## January 2021

“News came that the Israeli government had approved the building of a new road for Palestinians to keep Palestinian traffic separate from Israelis and also away from Maale Adumim settlement. According to this plan, traffic from Abu Dis will go north through Al Azariyeh and under a tunnel towards Anata and then Ramallah. Most of the roads now used by Palestinians will now be used by settlers with no Palestinians on them.

This is part of the E1 plan and will cut people from the area away from the east. The area of the Bedouin villages Jabal al-Baba, Wadi Abu Hindi and others will be inside the area with the settlements and we can expect that their people whom Israel have made insecure for years will be pushed out of their homes.

“This is the state that the world is calling for Palestinians – a state of restrictions, underground tunnels and control by Israel,” says a friend from Abu Dis, “with half of the area of the West Bank cut off from us as securely as the rest of Palestine.”

“Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza urgently need access to Covid vaccination in order to begin to reverse the worsening Covid situation. The fact that Israeli settlers living in the same land are already enjoying a huge roll-out of vaccine throws a clear light on the apartheid situation in Palestine. Israel, as an occupying power, has a responsibility under the Geneva Conventions to ensure health care of the occupied people. They could supply the Palestinians with vaccine but are not doing so. Israel is vaccinating its own prisoners but Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails are not being vaccinated.”

## February 2021

“The Israeli military together with the Civil Department are beginning work on the west side of Qidar settlement – there are diggers working which indicate that they have taken over another big area of Abu Dis land. When Israel occupied the West Bank, they put a



military order on this area which stopped Palestinians from using the land. There were protests near the land and an unsuccessful attempt to get it back through the Israeli High Court – but Qidar settlement was started in 1985 on Abu Dis land and has been extended over the years. Now it is expanding further towards Abu Dis.”

[As is so common], “After the Friday prayer, the Israeli army put a checkpoint in the middle of Abu Dis at the crossroads to the military camp and began to check people’s IDs. There was a demonstration and the Israeli army shot tear gas all over the town.”

## March 2021

“On 1st March a Palestinian car drove into the area of Kubsa in the middle of the day, and Israeli soldiers jumped out, dressed in plain clothes, and arrested two men... They took them into the civil car and drove out of the area, shooting, and now protected by Israeli army vehicles which had followed them there. The two men were taken to Maale Adumim police station but released after a few hours, saying that they had taken the wrong people, but leaving local people wondering whether all the drama was perhaps a form of army training?”

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