



Al-Quds NEWS

Together we safeguard Al-Quds

22 June 2009

Issue 1

Volume 1

28 Jamadul Akhir 1430

Israeli settlements continue to grow

Page 1

Ehud Barack visits Cairo to discuss recognition of 'Israel'

Page 1

Netanyahu's peace plan explained

Page 2

From the Al Quds Desk

Page 4

Displacement of population in Qalqilia

Page 4

Weekly Thursday programme details

Page 4

Al Quds Foundation SA
First Floor
Little Street
Athlone (above post office)

Tel: 021 696 6545

Fax: 021 66 6469

Email:

info.cpt@alquds.za.net

www.alquds.za.net

Israel to pump \$250 million into settlements

RAMALLAH, West Bank:

The Israeli government has allocated one billion shekel (\$ 250 million) for West Bank Jewish settlements over the next two years, Israeli Army Radio reported yesterday.

The report said that the 2009-2010 budget, which passed its first reading in the Knesset last week, calls for \$125 million for various security expenses and most of the remainder for housing construction. The \$159 billion budget must pass two more readings in the Knesset.

'Jewish State' recognition urged

Israel's defence minister has said that Arabs must recognise his country as a Jewish state before an independent Palestinian state can be created.

Ehud Barak told a news conference in Cairo on Sunday that there would be "intense efforts" in the coming weeks to set out the way forward in peace talks, but more needed to be done before a two-state solution became a reality. "More steps must be taken in order to reach a situation where it is possible for Israelis and Palestinians to live in two states side by side in peace and with mutual respect," Barak said after the talks.

But he said that any resolution to the issue would need to include "respect for the nature of Israel as a state for

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyadh Al-Malki said Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank are the main obstacle to peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel. Everyone knows that settlement activities are the basic obstacle and the Israelis are trying to change the facts on the ground, Al-Malki said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who leads an expanded coalition of extremist parties, has rejected US demands to freeze settlement activities in the Palestinian territories, in-

cluding so-called natural growth. More than 280,000 Jewish occupiers live in the occupied territories.

Peace talks have been stalled since Israel launched a military offensive in the Gaza Strip in January. The installation of Netanyahu's government early in April contributed to the freezing of the peace process. *ARAB NEWS*



the Jewish people".

Barak made the remarks after meeting Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president; Omar Suleiman, the intelligence chief; and Hussein Tantawi, the defence minister, in the Egyptian capital.

'Peace and security'

An Israeli official said Barak's visit aimed to look at ways to move forward following a speech by Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, in which he applied heavy conditions for the establishment of any future Palestinian state. "He made it clear that the end result, the goal of the whole process is to have a situation where the two peoples, Palestinian and Israeli, are living side by side in two states in good neighbourliness, peace and security,"

Barak said.

"It is a really unique opportunity for the peace process because the common interest is so apparent regarding the struggle against hegemonic Iran, against radical terrorism, against proliferation of nuclear weapons."

Egypt has dismissed the speech as flawed, while the Palestinians have complained that it effectively rules out a sovereign Palestinian state.

Netanyahu said any two-state solution would first require international guarantees that the Palestinians would not be allowed army or control over their own borders and airspace.

He also ruled Palestinians being allowed to return to their lands inside what is

Cont from page 1

now Israel and said that Jerusalem would remain undivided, dismissing Palestinian claims that the east of the city should be the capital of any future state.

Recognition issues

Palestinian leaders have previously refused to recognise Israel as a Jewish state because they believe it weakens the position of the 20 per cent of Israel's citizens who are Arabs. They also say it undermines the key demand for Palestinians refugees to return to the areas they left in 1948.

Mubarak has said that Israel's call to be recognised as a state for the Jewish

who visited Egypt last month, that peace talks should resume where they left off. "The call to recognise Israel as a Jewish state complicates things further and scuppers the possibilities for peace," state news agency MENA quoted Mubarak as saying at a military ceremony.

Al-Jazeera & Agencies



Netanyahu's "brilliant" peace plan

Hasan Abu Nimah and Ali Abunimah, The Electronic Intifada

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu proposed a peace plan so ingenious it is a wonder that for six decades of bloodshed no one thought of it. Some people might have missed the true brilliance of his ideas presented in a speech at Bar Ilan University on 14 June, so we are pleased to offer this analysis.

First, Netanyahu wants Palestinians to become committed Zionists. They can prove this by declaring, "We recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own in this land." As he pointed out, it is only the failure of Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular to commit themselves to the Zionist dream that has caused conflict, but once "they say those words to our people and to their people, then a path will be opened to resolving all the problems between our peoples." It is of course perfectly natural that Netanyahu would be "yearning for that moment."

Mere heartfelt commitment to Zionism will not be enough, however. For the Palestinians' conversion to have "practical meaning," Netanyahu ex-

plained, "there must also be a clear understanding that the Palestinian refugee problem will be resolved outside Israel's borders." In other words, Palestinians must agree to help Israel complete the ethnic cleansing it began in 1947-48, by abandoning the right of return. This is indeed logical because as Zionists, Palestinians would share the Zionist ambition that Palestine be emptied of Palestinians to the greatest extent possible.

Netanyahu is smart enough to recognize that even the self-ethnic-cleansing of refugees may not be sufficient to secure "peace": there will still remain millions of Palestinians living inconveniently in their native land, or in the heart of what Netanyahu insisted was the "historic homeland" of the Jews.

For these Palestinians, the peace plan involves what Netanyahu calls "demilitarization," but what should be properly understood as unconditional surrender followed by disarmament. Disarmament, though necessary, cannot be immediate, however. Some recalcitrant Palestinians may not wish to become Zionists. Therefore, the newly

For more information on current news, analyses and events please visit our website at www.alquds.za.net

Or visit our offices :

*First Floor
Little Street
Athlone (above post office)*

Or contact us on:

*Tel: 021 696 6545
Fax: 021 696 6469
Email: media.cpt@alquds.za.net*

Feel free to pass on any articles, news and/or information to our media desk for publication in our newsletter. All content to be approved by Administration.

pledged Zionist Palestinians would have to launch a civil war to defeat those who foolishly insist on resisting Zionism. Or as Netanyahu put it, the "Palestinian Authority will have to establish the rule of law in Gaza and overcome Hamas." (In fact, this civil war has already been underway for several years as the American and Israeli-backed Palestinian "security forces," led by US Lt. General Keith Dayton, have escalated their attacks on Hamas).

Once anti-Zionist Palestinians are crushed, the remaining Palestinians -- whose number equals that of Jews in historic Palestine -- will be able to get on with life as good Zionists, according to Netanyahu's vision. They will not mind being squeezed into ever smaller ghettos and enclaves in order to allow for the continued expansion of Jewish colonies, whose inhabitants Netanyahu described as "an integral part of our people, a principled, pioneering and Zionist public." And, in line with their heartfelt Zionism, Palestinians will naturally agree that "Jerusalem must remain the united capital of Israel."

These are only the Palestinian-Israeli aspects of the Netanyahu plan. The regional elements include full, Arab endorsement of Palestinian Zionism and normalization of ties with Israel and even Arab Gulf money to pay for it all. Why not? If everyone becomes a Zionist then all conflict disappears. It would be nice if we could really dismiss Netanyahu's speech as a joke. But it is an important indicator of a hard reality. Contrary to some naive and optimistic hopes, Netanyahu does not represent only an extremist fringe in Israel. Today, the Israeli Jewish public presents (with a handful of exceptions) a united front in favor of a racist, violent ultra-nationalism fueled by religious fanaticism. Palestinians are viewed at best as inferiors to be tolerated until circumstances arise in which they can be expelled, or caged and starved like the 1.5 million inmates of the Gaza prison.

Israel is a society where virulent anti-Arab racism and Nakba denial are the norm although none of the European and American leaders who constantly lecture about Holocaust denial will dare to admonish Netanyahu for his bald lies and omissions about Israel's ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. Netanyahu's "vision" offered absolutely no advance on the 1976 Allon Plan for annexation of most of the occupied West Bank, or Menachem Begin's Camp David "autonomy" proposals. The goal remains the same: to control maximum land with minimum Palestinians. Netanyahu's speech should put to rest newly revived illusions -- fed in particular by US President Barack Obama's Cairo speech -- that such an Israel can be brought voluntarily to any sort of just settlement. Some in this region who have placed all their hopes in Obama -- as they did previously in Bush -- believe that US pressure can bring Israel to heel.

They point to Obama's strong statements calling for a complete halt to Israeli settlement construction -- a demand Netanyahu defied in his speech. It now

remains to be seen whether Obama will follow his tough words with actions. Yet, even if Obama is ready to put unprecedented pressure on Israel, he would likely have to exhaust much of his political capital just to get Israel to agree to a settlement freeze, let alone to move on any of dozens of other much more substantial issues.

And despite the common perception of an escalating clash between the Obama administration and the Israeli government (which may come over minor tactical issues), when it comes to substantive questions they agree on much more than they disagree. Obama has already stated that "any agreement with the Palestinian people must preserve Israel's identity as a Jewish state," and he affirmed that "Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel and it must remain undivided." As for Palestinian refugees, he has said, "The right of return [to Israel] is something that is not an option in a literal sense."

For all the fuss about settlements, Obama has addressed only their expansion, not their continued existence. Until the Obama administration publicly dissociates itself from the positions of the Clinton and Bush administrations, we must assume it agrees with them and with Israel that the large settlement blocks encircling Jerusalem and dividing the West Bank into ghettos would remain permanently in any two-state solution. Neither Obama nor Netanyahu have mentioned Israel's illegal West Bank wall suggesting that there is no controversy over either its route or existence. And now, both agree that whatever shreds are left can be called a "Palestinian state." No wonder the Obama administration welcomed Netanyahu's speech as "a big step forward." What is particularly dismaying about the position stated by Obama in Cairo -- and since repeated constantly by his Middle East envoy George Mitchell -- is that the United States is committed to the "legitimate Palestinian aspiration

for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own." This formula is designed to sound meaningful, but these vague, campaign-style buzzwords are devoid of any reference to inalienable Palestinian rights. They were chosen by American speechwriters and public relations experts, not by Palestinians. The Obama formula implies that any other Palestinian aspirations are inherently illegitimate.

Where in international law, or UN resolutions can Palestinians find definitions of "dignity" and "opportunity?" Such infinitely malleable terms incorrectly reduce all of Palestinian history to a demand for vague sentiments and a "state" instead of a struggle for liberation, justice, equality, return and the restoration of usurped rights. It is, after all, easy enough to conceive of a state that keeps Palestinians forever dispossessed, dispersed, defenseless and under threat of more expulsion and massacres by a racist, expansionist Israel. Through history it was never leaders who defined rights, but the people who struggled for them. It is no small achievement that for a century Palestinians have resisted and survived Zionist efforts to destroy their communities physically and wipe them from the pages of history. As long as Palestinians continue to resist in every arena and by all legitimate means, building on true international solidarity, their rights can never be extinguished. It is from such a basis of independent and indigenous strength, not from the elusive promises of a great power or the favors of a usurping occupier, that justice and peace can be achieved.

Hasan Abu Nimah is the former permanent representative of Jordan at the United Nations.

Co-founder of The Electronic Intifada, Ali Abunimah is author of [One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse](#) (Metropolitan Books, 2006).



From the Al Quds Desk.....

Welcome to our very first edition of our online newsletter. This newsletter aims to keep you informed about the latest news, events and happenings around the Palestinian situation.

From the land where voices cannot be heard and pens are trampled on, we will try our utmost to bring those voices to you and through this newsletter create the awareness needed to change the situation in Palestine.

The continued occupation, the daily checkpoints, the restrictions, the targeted killings and attacks are all a daily occurrence for the Palestinians. Each day they pay the price for one of history's shameful mistakes. What have they done to deserve this? A nation besieged for more than 60 years, uprooted for more than 60 years, living in fear for more than 60 years. When does it all end?

This conflict demands our attention, it

demands to be solved. This conflict is a humanitarian issue, one that requires each and every person to try and contribute towards ending this. It is our fellow brethren that are suffering, that are dying, and that are starving. We are all part of the human race and our conscience should be bothering us everyday if we are not disturbed and perturbed by this catastrophe taking place at a time when democracy is supposed to be at the fore.

A land was virtually stolen from its people and to this day they are struggling, struggling to get back their homes and their lives. Each life that is lost at a checkpoint because an Israeli soldier refused to let him through, each life that is lost in hospital because the Israeli occupation forces refused the entry of medical supplies, each life that is lost in Israeli air and land raids and each life that was lost since the conflict started is blood on our hands for every second that

we sit and watch and do nothing.

Since the Palestinians were brutally expelled from their land more than sixty years ago, many Palestinians still hold the keys to their homes, holding on and hoping that one day they will be able to return to their homes, to their land and to their lives. Until that day arrives, they live not here nor there but in limbo, unable to completely carry on with their existence, unable to live in freedom, unable to live....

Let us not forget the words of our great leader and liberator, Nelson Mandela, who said: "South Africa can never be free until Palestine is free".

So today, we make this promise, to do what we can to assist the Palestinians get back home.....

Displacement of population, gradual takeover of and water resources and land, underway in Qalqilia

Qalqilia / PNN – Farmers in the village of Azzun Al Atma are among thousands throughout the West Bank who have suffered land loss due to Israeli occupation. The Qalqilia Governorate village is slated to lose barns, cattle sheds and water tanks. Israeli forces handed out demolition orders Sunday.

The Farmers Association noted today that irrigation systems in use for four years are also threatened with demolition. The lands and structures to be destroyed are slated to become part of the Wall being built within the West Bank by the occupying Israeli administration. The Wall route takes a majority of the water resources to the "Israeli side."

Ponds, wells and reservoirs top the list of what will be destroyed. Amjad Omar, coordinator of the Farmers Association in the governorate of Qalqilia, said today that he was surprised at this latest step to destroy the livelihoods of dozens of families in Azzun Al Atma. He added a "strong disapproval."

Omar said, "This step indicates that the true aim of the Wall is to acquire land and displace the population."

He added, "The Israelis desire to empty the land for the ease of appropriation of that which belongs to the private farmers. They are constantly harassed by the

occupying forces. Escalations are daily on the farms now. Just this month farmers have been arrested from their own lands and held for more than five days while parts of their fields were destroyed."

The local Farmers Association says the escalation demonstrates "without any doubt" that there is a premeditated plan to gradually displace the population and seize the land. The slow process of ethnic cleansing is seen at work here as it is throughout the West Bank, added organizers from the Committee against the Wall today.

Palestine News Network

Al Quds Foundation Thursday Evening Programme:

***Join us in our weekly day of fasting towards liberation of Masjidul Quds and come and break your fast with us
This week's programme will be taking place at :***

***Salahuddin Masjid
New Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain***

For more info contact Yunus Allie on 082 967 1656