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# Al-Quds NEWS

Together we safeguard Al-Quds

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## Al-Quds Foundation (SA) embark on a National Awareness Programme

On Saturday, 25 July 2009, Mln. Ihsaan Hendricks - Director of the al-Quds Foundation (SA) – accompanied by Sheikh Isgaak Taliep – executive manager of Al-Quds foundation (SA) embarked on an awareness programme in Johannesburg and surrounding cities/ towns. The purpose of this programme was to create a consciousness about the current situation in Palestine but more importantly to explain the dire situation of al-Masjid Al-Aqsa al-Mubarak. Mln. Ihsaan and Sh. Isgaak were very ably assisted by Mln. Ahmed Mohammed, Director of the Al-Quds Foundation (SA)'s Johannesburg office, as well as the

staff of the Johannesburg office.

The towns that were covered are: Bosmond, Roshnee, Rustenberg, Magaliesberg, Laudium, Pretoria, Middleberg, Benoni, Pietersberg/ Pholokwane and Ennerdale.

During the lectures Mln. Ihsaan Hendricks made use of Powerpoint presentations in order to explain the the current challenges faced by al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak and the city of al-Quds. This interactive method proved very successful and positive feedback was received from the attendees. One particular visit that proved to be an out-

standing and emotional one was the visit to the Crescent of Hope Health Spar in the Magaliesberg. At this health spar they focus on and treat people that suffer from substance abuse. Mln. Ihsaan Hendricks presented a very powerful and inspirational message and it was well received by the youngsters. He spoke to their hearts and impressed upon them that Islam, and al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak needs them for its liberation.

This will be an ongoing project of the al-Quds Foundation (SA) to educate the South African masses and to rectify misconceptions around al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak and the city of al-Quds.

## Israeli municipality digs up 300 Muslim graves in Jerusalem for "Museum of Tolerance"

Violations of the international laws that make Israeli measures to overtake East Jerusalem illegal are on a serious rise.

Neighborhoods like Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah are continuing to resist threats of home demolition and land confiscation by hosting Friday prayers today. But stopping the occupying Israeli administration is far off. This week the Israelis excavated 300 Islamic graves in Ma'man Allah Cemetery.

With the help of the "Museum of Tolerance" in Los Angeles, the Israeli-controlled Jerusalem Municipality is continuing work to place another "Museum of Tolerance" atop the Muslim cemetery.

When the Israelis took the skeletons from 300 graves this week, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights confirms, they dumped them into one mass grave.

The Ma'man Allah Cemetery near Hebron Gate in Jerusalem began being systematically destroyed for this museum two years ago. A court case slowed it down. The cemetery is approximately 200 dunams in size and includes graves of Muslim intellectuals and soldiers who fought the Crusaders in the city as part of Salah Addin's army.

Also in the city this week as part of public Israeli efforts intended to establish a Jewish majority in occupied East Jerusalem, they demol-

ished two houses in Beit Hanina and Silwan claiming that they were built without permits.

[www.pnn.ps/english](http://www.pnn.ps/english)

### Material for Newsletter

If you have any information, articles or anything of interest that you would like to contribute to our newsletters, please feel free to forward them to: [media.cpt@alquds.za.net](mailto:media.cpt@alquds.za.net)

Or contact the media department on 082 0400 123 Or 021 6966545 or fax us on 021 6966 469

## Bill punishing Nakba memorials passes first round in Israeli legislature

A bill passed in the Israeli legislature yesterday bars organisations from commemorating the 1948 Nakba, in which thousands of Palestinians died or lost their homes.

The new law, which passed its preliminary reading by 38 votes to 14, denies funding and support to any group participating in "Nakba day" and other mourning events.

The bill originally proposed that such involvement would be punishable by three years' imprisonment, but after discussion this was replaced with financial sanctions.

Jamal Zahalka, an Arab member of the Knesset (or legislature), has condemned the new law as "racially directed against Arabs."

"This law is designed to deny us freedom of expression," he said. "All the laws will not be able to control our thoughts or remove our memories of the tragedy of the Palestinian people."

He also pointed out fears that the law

could affect Israeli academic institutions that attempt to publish articles on the Nakba.

Ahmed Tibi, another Knesset member, accused the Israeli parliament of being home to Nakba deniers.

"There are ministers in the government who think that by changing street signs or cancelling education programs they can rewrite history. There are racists in this Knesset afraid of historical truth, who deny the pain of the other," Tibi said.

"They deny that families were destroyed in 1948 – their homes destroyed and their lands taken."

But MK Alex Miller, the bill's initiator, welcomed the decision: "The Knesset stated clearly today that the State of Israel should not be funding organizations denying its Jewish character, supporting armed resistance against it, or offending its national symbols ... This is an important and proper bill drafted in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence."

Resistance to the bill began last month when 230 Israeli academics signed a dec-

laration that they would "publicly violate" the law if it was passed. The declaration described the law, along with the proposed citizenship laws, as "harshly anti-democratic."

This is not the first blow to the remembrance of Nakba this week. Last Wednesday the Israeli Education ministry banned a children's textbook used in Arab schools that described the 1948 war as a catastrophe. A passage in the book states that "Arabs call the war the nakba — a war of catastrophe, loss and humiliation — and the Jews call it the Independence War."

A spokesman for the Education Minister said that the description of the war in these terms was "inconceivable." But Arab lawmakers remain adamant that the Nakba cannot be forgotten. "It was a personal, familial, and national disaster," Tibi said, "no matter what the reason."

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## Netanyahu rebuffs US

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying he would not take orders over Israeli settlement in East Jerusalem, rejected Sunday a US demand to halt plans to build more homes for Jews in the disputed area.

New friction with Washington over the project to build 20 apartments in a part of Jerusalem captured by Israel in a 1967 war could deepen the most serious rift in relations between the two allies in a decade. Israeli officials said the State Department had summoned Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador to Washington, and told him plans for the construction approved this month by Jerusalem municipality should be suspended. "We cannot accept the idea that Jews will not have the right to live and buy (homes) anywhere in Jerusalem," Netanyahu said, calling the city Israel's united capital, a claim that is not recognized internationally.

"I can only imagine what would happen if someone would suggest Jews could not live in certain neighborhoods of New York, London, Paris or Rome. There would certainly be a great international

outcry," he told reporters at the weekly Cabinet meeting. "We cannot accept this edict in Jerusalem." Netanyahu and President Barack Obama are already at loggerheads over the US leader's call for Israel to freeze Jewish settlements on occupied land Palestinians want for a state.

Obama's Middle East envoy, George Mitchell, due back in the region soon, and Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak have been trying to work out a settlement deal that would include initial steps by Arab countries to normalize relations with Israel. But constraints on Jewish settlements in Jerusalem could put a heavy strain on Netanyahu's coalition, in which the future of the holy city is a red-flag issue for Jewish religious and ultranationalist partners. Responding to Netanyahu's comments, Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said the Israeli leader had to realize that "settlements and peace are two parallels that do not go together." Israel annexed East Jerusalem and declared all of the city its capital after the 1967 war. Palestinians say settlements on occupied land could deny them a viable state.

Jeffrey Heller—Reuters

## Some poetry for the soul.....

### O people of Palestine

By Mariam Salie

*O People of Palestine,  
Your cries echo through the mountains and seas  
We hear you, we see you and we feel your pain  
Soon justice will prevail, and the evils of  
Zionism will cease*

*O People of Palestine,  
The blood of your children that runs through  
the street  
Has not flowed unforgotten and unnoticed  
Soon, freedom will prevail, but this freedom,  
a freedom complete*

*O People of Palestine,  
Save your tears for your victory celebration  
Turn your tears of sadness into tears of joy  
When victory prevails and revives your beautiful nation*

*O People of Palestine stand firm and stand strong,  
Your time is near now, it won't be long,  
O People of Palestine, your sacrifices are not in vain,  
Soon the suffering will be over and Palestine shall be yours again!*

## Saudi's reject call for Israel ties

Saudi Arabia has dismissed calls by the US government to mend relations with Israel to help restart peace talks between the Israel and the Palestinians. Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi foreign minister, said on Friday that Riyadh would not consider forging links with Israel until it agrees to withdraw from all occupied Palestinian territories.

"Incrementalism and a step-by-step approach, has not and, we believe, will not lead to peace," al-Faisal said on Friday, after holding talks with Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state, in Washington. "Temporary security and confidence building measures will also not bring peace."

### Final status issues

Al-Faisal said that Israel must adhere to what is stipulated in the Arab Peace Initiative, which has been endorsed by the 22-member Arab League, in order for it to have a constructive relationship with Saudi Arabia.

"What is required is a comprehensive approach that defines the final outcome at the outset and launches into negotiations over final status issues," he said. Those final status issues include marking the borders of a future Palestinian state, control of the city of Jerusalem,

the right of return of Palestinian refugees, security and water rights.

Barack Obama, the US president, Clinton and George Mitchell, the Middle East peace envoy, have all called on Arab states to build relations with Israel. Measures such as opening trade offices, allowing academic exchanges and permitting civilian Israeli aircraft to overfly their airspace have been touted by Washington as a way for Arab nations to show they are committed to peace in the region.

The Obama administration wants "the Arab states, including our friends in Saudi Arabia, to work with us to take steps to improve relations with Israel, to support the Palestinian Authority and to prepare their people to embrace the eventual peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis," Clinton said after talks with al-Faisal.

"Saudi Arabia's continued leadership is absolutely vital to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace," she said.

### Dramatic geture'

Her remarks about the importance of Saudi Arabia to the process were supported by more than 200 US politicians who urged King Abdullah, the Saudi

ruler, to push Middle East peace efforts forward with "a dramatic gesture".

"We have been disappointed thus far to see the public reaction of your government to President Obama's request," they wrote in a letter to the monarch. "We urge you to assert a strong leadership role and help lead the Middle East to a new era of peace and reconciliation by stepping forward with a dramatic gesture toward Israel akin to the steps taken earlier by the leaders of Egypt and Jordan."

Egypt and Jordan are the only Arab nations which have diplomatic relations with Israel.

But al-Faisal said Israel was ignoring the Arab Peace Initiative, a proposal in which Arab states would formally recognise Israel in return of its withdrawal from Arab territories occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

"The question really is: 'What will Israel give in exchange for this comprehensive settlement offer?'" he said.

"Israel hasn't even responded to an American request to halt settlements [in the Israeli occupied West Bank], which President Obama described as illegitimate," he said.

Aljazeera & Agencies

## Day and night demonstrations against the wall

At the weekly nonviolent demonstration against the Wall in western Ramallah's Bi'lin Village, residents and supporters chanted slogans for peace.

Approximately 100 meters from the Wall, which in this part of the West Bank is a tall guarded fence, Palestinians, Israeli activists and a foreign supporter addressed the Israeli soldiers. "We are against the continuing military occupation and we condemn its actions... We demand peace."

The group moved toward the Wall and rolled out its own barbed-wire as part of a symbolic action. Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition. Another round of gas was fired as about a dozen soldiers came

through the gate in the Wall. "They grabbed an international activist with a camera in his hand whose face was covered with a kafiya," described Iyad Burnat, a leader of the local nonviolent resistance movement.

Israeli forces then fired a smoke bomb followed by a round of noxious water which dispersed demonstrators. More gas followed but demonstrators kept returning to the front lines chanting for peace.

The army then burst through the gate a second time and fired more gas and concussion grenades at members of the press who were filming. The noxious water again drenched all in its path.

In a Thursday night demonstration in Bil'in against the regular arrest raids, activists wrote short messages on plastic bottles. "No to the Wall" and "Peace" were illuminated through the bottles with small flashlights. At the same time Palestinian flags were flying and activists chanted for justice.

Several military jeeps drove to the Wall and soldiers fired gas at the houses nearest the area the Wall was built.

Tens of members of the Bil'in nonviolent movement have been arrested in what residents say is an attempt to squelch the resistance.

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### From the Al-Quds Desk.....

We have come a very long way from our violent, prejudiced apartheid past. As South Africans, we are well aware of what it is like to live with limits. We know what it is like to live without freedom, and to live in fear.

Many of our fathers and forefathers sacrificed their time, their energies and in some instances, their lives, all so that we may live in freedom and peace.

Therefore it is of utmost importance that we, the next generation do all that we can to ensure that the Palestinians are able to enjoy the same freedoms that we do now. We should not take one day for granted, not one breath that we breathe in freedom. Each time we go to the shop, or visit a family member or go to the beach on a warm and sunny day, we should bear in mind that somewhere, in

a village in Palestine, there is someone being terrorized or injured or killed.

One of the rights that I as a South African am very proud of is my religious freedom that I enjoy. And with that comes of course the right to worship in religious institutions. As a Muslim I was taught to respect all religions and to respect their churches, temples etc.

However, in Palestine, not only is Muslim rights' trampled on but Christians as well. There are many mosques that have been desecrated and/ or destroyed over the years. There have been many churches destroyed as well.

Is this the mannerisms of a democratic people? Is this the mannerisms of a people who respect all religions and treat all equal? We have to ask ourselves. Who would deliberately destroy a place of

worship? Who would deliberately destroy peoples homes, their lives and all that they have?

It is very easy to live our lives and forget that there are people out there who are suffering every day, every week, every month of every year. It is very easy for us to carry on with our daily activities and not bear a thought for the little girl who just lost her entire family, or the old man who lost his entire farm, or the woman who lost her husband and son and has no source of income. It is very easy. But we should not let that happen.

Each day when you wake up, say a little prayer for those who when they wake up make a special prayer to one day wake up in freedom and breathe freely, eat freely and finally live freely.....

### Al-Quds Foundation hosts spiritual programme in solidarity of Al-Aqsa Al-Mubarak

On Saturday 18 July, Al-Quds Foundation SA hosted a spirituality programme in solidarity with al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak. The programme which took place after the Ishaah solaah at Masjid ar-Rabi in Portlands, Mitchells Plain was well attended by both young and old.

The MC for the evening was none other than Sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels, a personality well known for his work for Palestine. The programme was opened with some Qiraa'ah which was rendered by 4 well known local Qari's namely: Qari Leak, Sheikh Ismail Londt, Sheikh Muhammad Philander and Sheikh Abdurrahman Saydien.

Thereafter Moulana Ihsaan gave a motivational lecture about the importance of al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak in the life of a Muslim. The lecture was followed by a 1 hour powerpoint presentation on al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak and the current dangers that it faces.

Shaykh Isgaak Taliep then did a short powerpoint presentation on the different doors of al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak; its names, a bit of history as well as those doors that were closed and the reason/s why it was closed.

After this formal programme supper was then served followed by a special rendi-

tion of Salatut Tasbeeg. The tasbeeg salah was lead by the two sons of Sh. Ebrahim Gabriels- The first two by Zainuddin Gabriels and the second two by Abdullah Gabriels.

Sh. Ebrahim Gabriels then lead the congregation in Salatut Layl, followed by a very inspirational and heartfelt dua. The program ended on this very high note at 2:00 am the following morning.

The congregation left on a spiritual high and armed with a renewed intention and hope to liberate our beloved al-Masjid al-Aqsa al-Mubarak. May Allah SWT reward all those who took time to attend.

#### Al-Quds Foundation Thursday Evening Programme:

*Join us in our weekly day of fasting towards liberation of Masjidul Aqsa and come and break your fast with us  
Our next programme on the 13 August 2009 will be taking place at :*

*Ruiterwacht Masjid*

*For more info contact Yunus Allie on 082 967 1656*

*May Allah SWT reward all those who regularly assist us in our efforts towards safeguarding Al-Quds*