

up front

sixty
years

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel. It also marks the 60th anniversary of the 'nakba', or catastrophe, in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes in the displacement that made the state of Israel possible.

Today, millions of Palestinians are living with human rights abuse and crushing poverty in refugee camps or under occupation. In defiance of UN resolutions, international law and global outrage, Israel has also continued to occupy the land it captured in 1967. Israel's recent blockade of Gaza has led to devastating poverty and food shortages.

The Palestinians are not victims of a natural disaster. The poverty they are suffering is an acknowledged product of the Israeli occupation. War on Want is campaigning against the root causes of that poverty, while supporting partners that aid Palestinians in the fight for their rights. May/June 2008



Against the wall

Hanni Ammar has lived in his home in the West Bank Village of Mas'ha for more than 35 years. When an Israeli settlement was built next to his home his business was destroyed and property stolen. And then came the Separation Wall.

Our partner Stop the Wall has been fighting the building of the Wall, and working to protect the lives and livelihoods of people like Hanni.

On a recent visit, Hanni told us: "The Israeli authorities came with maps and told me the Wall was to be built on my plot of land. I asked why, when there are other places to build the Wall. The Israeli authorities gave me two options, they said either the Wall goes directly on my land or right beside it so that it would enclose my house. Either way they said I might as well go. They offered me money and other ways to leave. I put up another proposal: build the Wall nearer to the settlement, away from the house. They refused.

Now, sometimes in the middle of the night, 20 soldiers will attack to search the house. This happens regularly. If anyone throws anything at the Wall, or cuts the wires, Israeli authorities blame me. The soldiers accuse me of fighting Israel, and by doing this fighting God. They have said that if my children go near the Wall, they will shoot them. The settlers also regularly harass us, throwing stones from behind the fence without warning. One of my children got hit in the face so he needed stitches. The same child also got stoned in the leg. Movement outside the Wall was at first very difficult, but now it's easier as Israeli security realise that we are determined and won't budge.

We appreciate the role of international organisations, the media and those who contact us. They make it possible for us to stay here as it highlights our cause. I feel like everyone is against me – the Israelis, the Palestinian Authority – but all that is left is the people who visit and come to see the situation for themselves. I am an example of someone who is suffering day by day, and reflect the suffering of the Palestinian people. Although I have no trust in Government who has all the power, I keep my trust in the people. There is a need for a collective effort to face this injustice. **The strength of community organisations is that they are tackling injustice and human rights abuses."**

War on Want is proud to support Stop the Wall, which has been raising awareness about the impact of the Israeli Occupation on the economic and human rights of the Palestinian population in the West Bank. By providing crucial support to War on Want you are making sure that Hanni's story is heard **and** challenging the root causes of the Palestinians' poverty.



Jo Mason Scott/War on Want

War on Want is working to end the suffering of the Palestinian people. We can't do it without you – take action and make a donation today!

The creation of the state of Israel 60 years ago was a catastrophic event not only for the thousands of Palestinians who were killed but also for the millions who still live in poverty as refugees around the region. Palestinian misery increased in 1967 when Israel took military control of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. This continuing occupation, along with the illegal Separation Wall, has destroyed any semblance of a Palestinian economy. Today, 70% of people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories live in crushing poverty, and more than half rely on food aid to survive.

As John Dugard, the UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, has written: "The Occupation is a reality, one which is to blame for the present conflict, and the source of the violation of human rights and of international humanitarian law." The UK government's Department for International Development has acknowledged in a recent report that: "Poverty in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is a product of occupation and conflict." War on Want has been lobbying the UK government to use its power to pressure the Israeli government into ending the occupation and thus giving Palestinians the chance to rebuild their economy. We also work hand in hand with groups in both Palestine and Israel who are supporting Palestinians in their struggle against poverty and human rights abuse. **To continue both strands of our work we need your support today.**

Gaza

In 2005 Israel removed its settlements from Gaza but it remains under occupation. Israel has maintained its stranglehold over the lives of the Palestinians that live there. The Israeli government controls every crossing into and out of Gaza, making it the largest open-air prison in the world. These restrictions on movement have led to disastrous breakdowns in infrastructure and shortages of food, water and medical supplies. In September 2007 Israel declared that Gaza was a "hostile territory" and that it would therefore reduce fuel and electricity supplies to the Palestinians living there. This collective punishment of a civilian population is illegal under the Geneva Conventions.

In February 2008 the UK's Foreign Secretary and Secretary for International Development released a joint statement in response to Israel's cuts in electricity to Gaza. David Miliband and Douglas Alexander called on the Israeli government "to reverse its decision immediately, to avoid any further planned cuts, and to fulfil its obligations under international law". But such words are meaningless when Israel knows it can count on the British government's political and economic backing. The UK has continued to support Israel with trade preferences and arms sales, irrespective of its treatment of the Palestinian people.



Palestine in 1917, 1949 and today. Today's map represents land occupied by Israel since 1967 as striped.

Land grab

The Jordan Valley makes up about one third of the West Bank. It is some of the most fertile land in the region, and is now dotted with wealthy Israeli settlements, sprawling agricultural plantations and impoverished Palestinian communities. The farms in the Jordan Valley grow some of the produce that Israel exports to Europe, an important engine of the country's wealth.

But the Palestinians whose land and water were taken to set up the Israeli farms see no benefit. They are systematically pushed off their land to make way for new settlements, and are then compelled to accept jobs at poverty wages in the farms and factories on their land.

The Israeli government has kept this important Palestinian farming region out of Palestinian hands by declaring it a military zone ever since occupation in 1967. When War on Want visited the Jordan Valley recently, we met the residents of the Bedouin village al-Hadidiye, who had been given 48 hours' notice of the demolition of their homes. The families in al-Hadidiye had lived there for generations, but shortly after our visit the village was destroyed. Stop the Wall, one of War on Want's partner organisations in Palestine, works closely with Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley, campaigning actively to save homes from Israeli destruction orders. We need your support so that they can expand their work in this region.

UK support for Israel

Today, 60 years on from the birth of Israel, Palestinians continue to suffer poverty and human rights violations at the hands of the Israeli state. But instead of supporting the rights of the occupied, the UK and other Western governments have given their consistent support to Israel. This stance is morally unacceptable, and a dereliction of our own responsibility under international law.

Ending poverty in Palestine requires an end to the Occupation so that a functioning economy can be revived in place of the current system of closures and restrictions. However, the UK government is supporting economic projects that could be counterproductive to Palestinian needs and actually make permanent facets of the occupation. Such proposals include an agricultural industrial park in the Jordan Valley, which could not only entrench aspects of the occupation but would generate only low-wage, dead end jobs for Palestinians.

To put an end to the decades of poverty and human rights abuse suffered by the Palestinian people, including the Israeli government's callous treatment of Gaza, War on Want has been leading calls on the British government to take action that will bring Israel in line with its obligations under international law. We call on the UK to use all the foreign policy tools at its disposal to bring an end to the occupation and thus an end to the poverty and deprivation of Palestinians.

The unfolding injustice in Palestine must end now. Take action and donate to help Palestinians today.

Dear Foreign Secretary

affix
stamp
here

Palestine is facing a humanitarian catastrophe unprecedented in its history. Israel's blockade of Gaza has led to serious shortages of food and medical supplies, making 80% of Gazans dependent on food aid. As the British government has acknowledged, millions of Palestinians face human rights abuse and crushing poverty as a direct result of Israel's occupation. Despite acting in defiance of UN resolutions, international law and global outrage, Israel continues to enjoy political support from the British government and trading preferences with Europe.

I call on you to use all the foreign policy tools at your disposal to bring pressure on Israel to abide by international law. Israel must be made to dismantle the infrastructure of occupation, including the illegal Separation Wall and settlements. Finally, the UK must take action to ensure suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Article 2 of the Agreement makes Israel's trading preferences conditional upon respect for human rights – a condition which the UN says has been breached by Israel on many occasions.

Yours sincerely,

Name in full

Email

Address

Rt Hon David Miliband MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

What your donation could achieve:

- £250 could buy a tent for a family in the Jordan Valley whose home has been demolished.
- £100 could support our partner Al-Zaytouna to help olive oil farmers gain access to international markets for their products.
- £50 could support our local Palestinian partner organisation Stop The Wall produce detailed reports of the damaging effects of the Wall on Palestinian communities.
- £20 could produce petitions, postcards and reports to lobby the UK government to demand that Israel stops building a Wall that compounds the poverty of Palestinians.

www.waronwant.org

Support War on Want today and help Palestinians in their struggle for a just peace and an end to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Their poverty is real and growing and they have little hope of decent lives under an ever expanding occupation. Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:

War on Want, FREEPOST

Name

Address please write in capitals

Postcode

E-mail please write clearly

I enclose a cheque / CAF Voucher / Postal Order / CAF Card / made payable to War on Want

Please debit my Mastercard / Visa / Switch

Card Number

Valid From Expiry Date

Issue Number Switch Only

Security Code last 3 digits on your signature strip

Name of Cardholder

Signature(s)

Date

New Gift Aid Declaration
Please tick if you would like War on Want to reclaim the tax that you have paid on your donations since 6 April 2001 and on any future donations. ■

You must have paid an amount of income and/or capital gains tax (in the UK) equal to the tax that will be claimed (currently 28p for each £1 you give).

NEWS

Results from our recent survey indicated that many of our supporters would like to get more involved with War on Want but don't know how. You can become a War on Want campaigner in your own community! We have a wide range of campaigns materials, on a variety of topics, available to our members and supporters. Bring them to your local festivals and community events and make sure your friends and neighbours know about the great work War on Want is doing. We can also provide speakers for many events. Your responses to our appeals and urgent actions are absolutely crucial. Don't forget – becoming a member is the single most helpful thing you can do. Regular donations help us plan more effective campaigns and make long-term commitments to our partners.

Our partner organisation the Malawi Union for the Informal Sector (MUFIS) is celebrating a major victory. After four years of campaigning, MUFIS has secured crucial affiliation to the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions. This official recognition for informal economy workers is a breakthrough for street and market vendors, giving their work, and their concerns, the legitimacy they have been fighting for. In addition, informal workers will now be represented in national and international trade discussions. Thank you to all who gave generously to our last appeal in support of workers like those benefiting from this landmark victory.

War on Want launched its exciting new three-year campaign for trade justice in April. The campaign kicked off in Brussels with a gathering of activists from 38 countries who joined together to take on the EU's corporate-driven trade agenda that is so harmful to women and the poorest workers. War on Want made a name for itself in the fight for trade justice with its cutting edge campaign on the World Trade Organisation, and we are excited to be taking this important work forward. Watch for more information in our upcoming newsletters.

War on Want and solicitors Leigh Day have launched a legal challenge to the government on its failure to regulate Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs). The government acknowledged in 2002 that PMSCs must be reined in, and in the last parliamentary session more than 100 MPs signed an early day motion urging the government to move towards binding legislation. But despite this consensus the government has so far failed to act. The challenge comes as part of our campaign to end human rights abuses by PMSCs, who have committed countless violations in Iraq and are currently outside any legal control.

War on Want's Members' Day is on for 21 June 2008. Come and meet War on Want's staff and Council of Management, hear about the great work you've helped us achieve over the past year and take part in the debate on our future. Some of our partners will be on hand to discuss the important work your support allows them to do in their own communities. While only members can vote, all supporters are welcome to take part. The day will be held at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD. Full details can be found on our website at www.waronwant.org/agm

In April, small farmers' organisations and landless people across the world celebrated the International Day of Peasants' Struggle, in order to commemorate the massacre of 19 landless workers struggling for land in Eldorado de Carajás in Brazil 12 years ago. War on Want's partner in Brazil, the Landless People's Movement (MST), carried out protests in remembrance of the murdered, and to highlight agricultural policies and the slow pace of land reform in Brazil. War on Want supports the MST's programme in the state of São Paulo, where it helps local farmers to develop organic farming methods, and also raises awareness nationally of the detrimental effects of the use of GM seeds on small farmers' livelihoods.