

# **In the Shadow of the Wall**

*An Entrance into the Lives of Displaced Palestinians*

by  
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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

*I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.*



## ABSTRACT

What totalitarian regimes do is to—and this is what makes them extremely devastating—is they look at you and say, “You are not.” Or, “You are something else.” Or, “This event didn’t exist.” This power, that is only God’s power. If a regime, or some people, think they are God, they can have the right to make you animals or human. They can create you or kill you. And this is unbearable. So the only thing you can do—and the most subversive thing you can do—is to tell the truth. This is devastating because each time you come back with the truth, you deny their prerogative of creating a fictitious world where they can say whatever they want.<sup>1</sup>

Ladan Boroumand

I am an estranged Palestinian born to estranged Palestinian parents. The Hagana troops, and later the Israeli forces, evacuated my grandparents from Palestine. I know Palestine in fragmented pieces, events, and experiences. I know Palestine through songs and through old family photographs. I know Palestine as a worn image vaguely existing in a photo album. I am an estranged Palestinian born to estranged Palestinian parents. When the Israeli state was born, my grandparents became refugees. Exiles.

In this book, I present the Palestine I know. I introduce my homeland through snapshots of Palestinian lives. From the narrow alleys of refugee camps to the disconnected territories in the West Bank, I move through Palestine. I document it. The land, the people, the memories still exist. They continue to exist.

This book is an entrance into the lives of Palestinians. It is a stand in the face of injustice—a voice against the Israeli occupation. In the words of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, in this thesis “I don’t decide to represent anything except myself. But that self is full of collective memory.” The Palestinian lives in a constant state of exile; a state of exile that is inherited, one generation after another.

This book goes through five movements. The first movement: a visit to the land through which I encounter Palestine for the first time. The second: the wound—a force cutting through the land and the continuity of Palestinian lives. The third: loss. The fourth: love. Then, a departure. Through the refrains of poetry and stories, this book reconstructs Palestine. The Palestine that continues to exist.

<sup>1</sup> Ladan Boroumand, an Iranian Exile speaking at United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, June 7, 2007



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To write about one's forbidden history is a challenge. The journey to dig up the past, to learn it, to force oneself to encounter the aftermath of a protracting conflict is hostile. Thank you to those who have encouraged and supported me throughout this research process.

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*To my Palestine*





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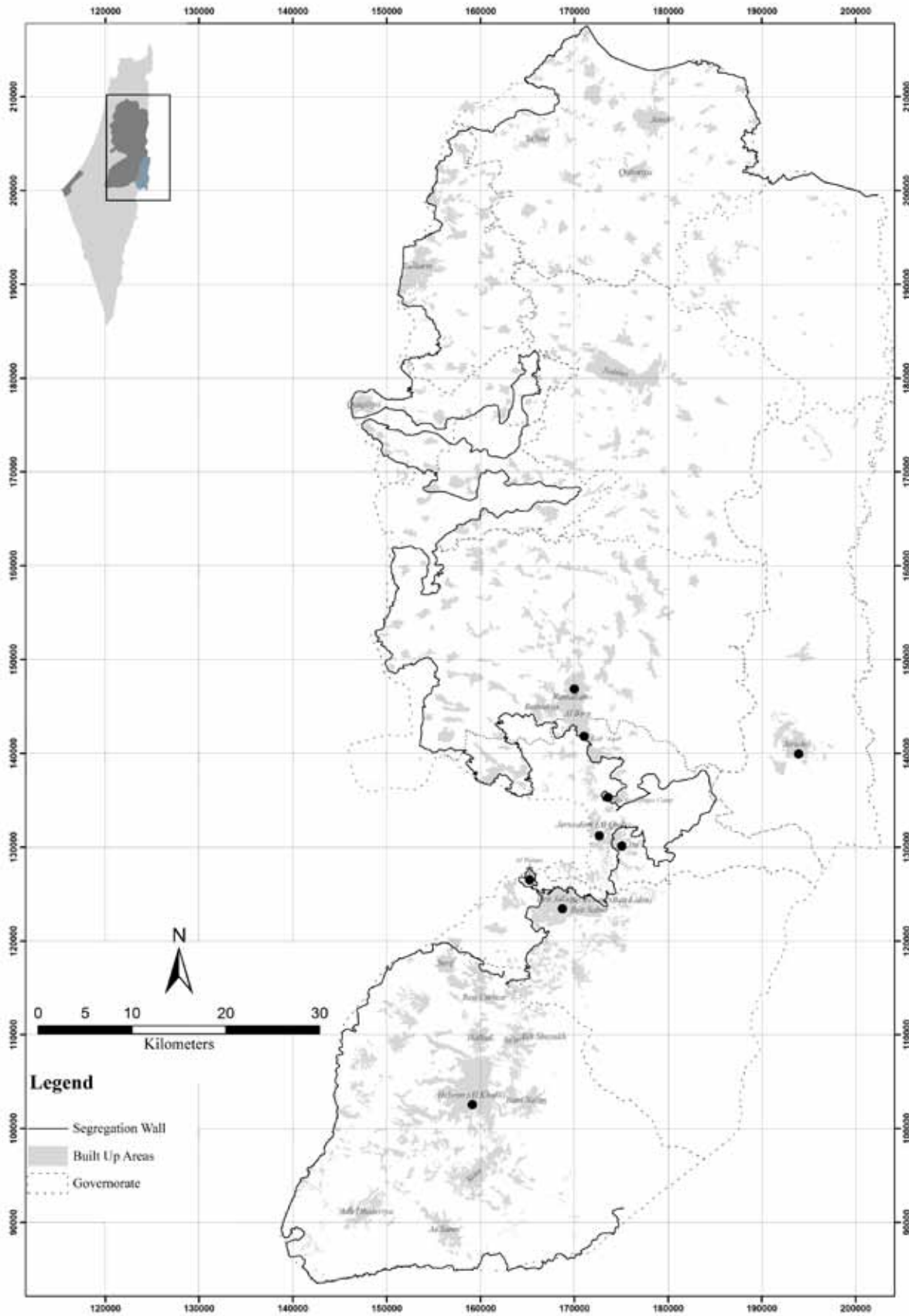
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## **THE AUTHOR'S TRAVELS IN PALESTINE**

The following map shows the main areas in Palestine where the Author travels, photographs, and Interviews Palestinians and their families in the summer of 2017. The author obtained the base map of the West Bank during her research trip from the State of Palestine Environment Quality Authority, Information Systems and GIS Unit.



01 Map of Author's Travelled Areas in Palestine. Base Map Obtained from the State of Palestine Environment Quality Authority, Information Systems and GIS Unit

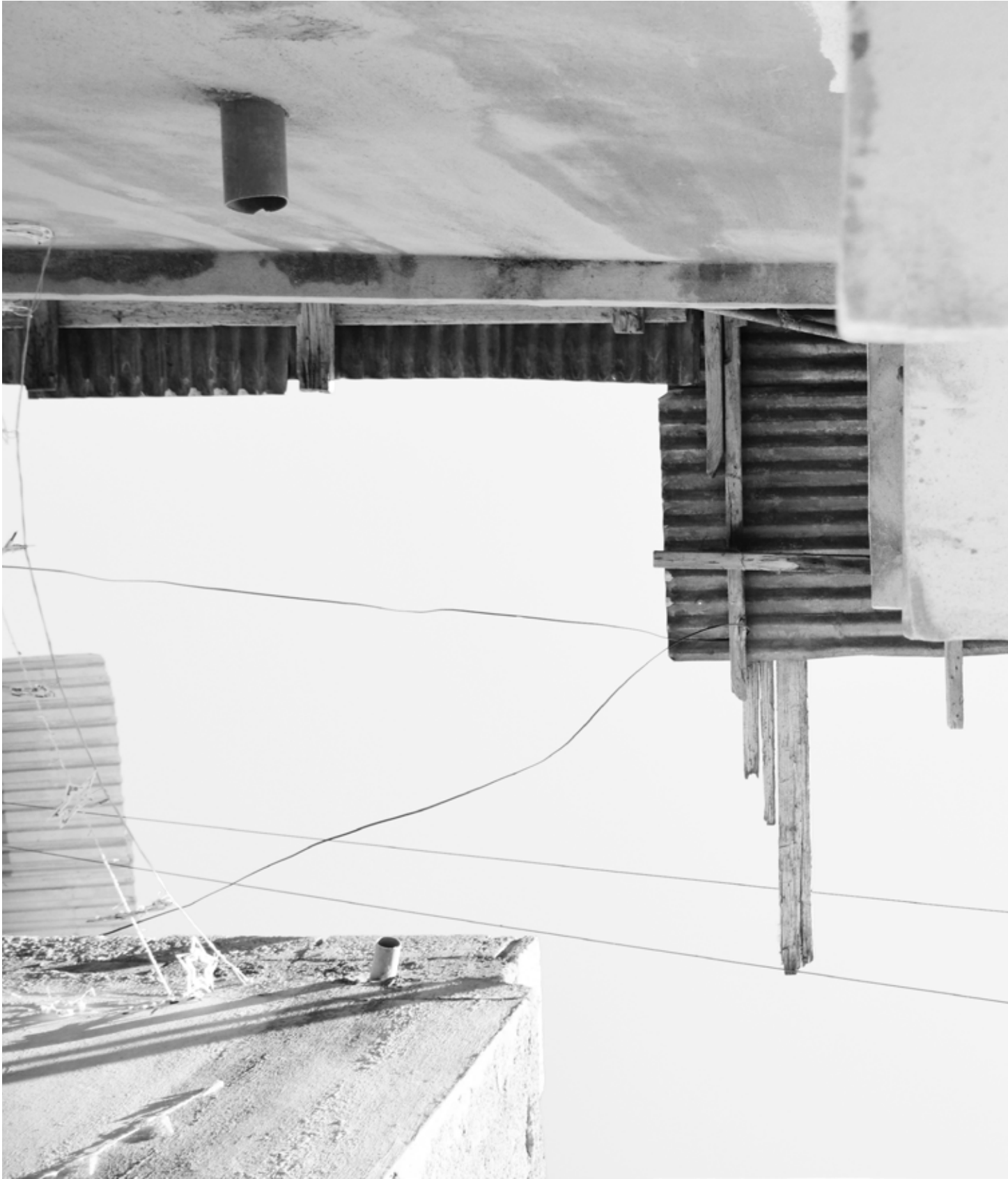


**FIRST DATE**  
*One*



Since our history is forbidden, narratives are rare; the story of origins, of home, of nation is underground. When it appears it is broken, often wayward and meandering in the extreme, always coded, usually in outrageous forms — mock-epics, satires, sardonic parables, absurd rituals — that make little sense to an outsider. Thus Palestinian life is scattered, discontinuous, marked by the artificial and imposed arrangements of interrupted or confined space, by the dislocations and unsynchronized rhythms of disturbed time. ... no straight line leads from home to birthplace to school to maturity, all events are accidents, all progress is a digression, all residence is exile. We linger in nondescript places, neither here nor there; we peer through windows without glass, ride conveyances without movement or power. Resourcefulness and receptivity are the attitudes that serve best.<sup>1</sup>

1 Said, *After the Last Sky*, 20-21









**About a camp: A Fragile Dream**

Their house is different from others in the city.  
The roof,  
Zinc sheets with heavy stones.  
In the winter the rain falls on the roof,  
a loud noise,  
They cannot sleep.  
Sometimes,  
the lower part of the house floods.  
In the summer, it is unbearably hot.

Their street—a very narrow street—  
Is so crowded with people.  
Kids play with stones and broken toys.  
People park their worn-out cars in a very narrow street,  
Far from their house,  
And walk up a hundred steps to get there.

A family of eleven lives in a two-room home.  
Sometimes with an extended family as well.  
Eight girls, a boy, and my grandparents, all live there at once.

The houses are simple,  
The markets,  
The daily routines  
—life.

Long ago, there was hope of a return to Palestine.  
My great-grandfather did not want to leave the camp.  
He had hope to go back to his land—  
the land before 1948.  
He wanted live the temporality of exile.

Almost twenty years ago he died,  
In this refugee camp,  
Under this zinc roof.

### ***The Mukhayyam (the camp)***

---

On Thursday of every week, my parents take us to the mukhayyam to visit my grandparents (on my mother's side). We wake up very early in the morning to get ready. My dad drops us off at teta's<sup>1</sup> house.

For many of my mother's childhood years, her parent's house is a small, one-storey concrete building with a single window in the main room overlooking the alley. The window, which is a one-meter-by-one-meter opening, is the only way for fresh air to enter the house. Sometimes my grandmother leaves the main door open to allow for better ventilation.

The main room is the larger of the two rooms in the house. It serves as living space during the day and a sleeping space for my mother and my seven aunts at night. When I ask my grandfather about their house, he tells me that the UNRWA<sup>2</sup>—United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East—assigns a piece of land to each refugee family in the camp based on the number of family members. The UNRWA assigns larger families, such as my grandfather's, a hundred-square-meters piece of land in the mukhayyam. The relief agency then gives them a tent structure to house them. Later on, each family settles in the camp and replaces the tent with a simple concrete block room.

My great grandfather, as well as other families in the camp, built the room by digging twenty centimeters into the ground for foundations, filling it with gravel, then pouring it with concrete. He built the walls with concrete blocks, and the roof from zinc sheets piled on top of one another. Each family built their room to the edges of their land attaching it from three sides to adjacent rooms. Twenty-seven years later, my grandfather demolished the small room to build a more stable structure and add a second storey to their home. He built two more rooms, a kitchen and a second bathroom. The house still shares three sides with its neighbouring houses.

As children, we enjoy going to the mukhayyam. The place has a very different spirit to it. The simple things, like waking up in the morning to the sound of a fresh-bread seller walking down the alley, are full of life. As children, we feel safer playing in the alleys of the mukhayyam than in the streets of our new neighbourhood. I am familiar with the place and its people; yet, I never give much thought to the word

1 An Arabic word for grandmother

2 Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, the United Nations General Assembly established the UNRWA—which quickly became an embedded agency in the lives of Palestinian refugees. The organization helps Palestinian refugees build refugee camps, schools, and medical centers.



03 Stairs of an Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017

'mukhayyam'. I am too young to understand that the word is more than a random name given to this area. The word carries the struggle of the exiled people and the painful history that transforms them into homeless refugees.

As I get older, I begin to understand the camp, its origins, and the people's history. I learn that my great grandparents, like many others in this camp, come from a small village on the outskirts of Al-Ramla—Al-Muzayri'a. Hagana troops evacuated them from their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The troops cleansed their village, along with many others.

I did not experience the war, nor did the Hagana troops force me out of Palestine. Yet, I feel a sense of belonging to that world—the world of exiles. Every time I visit the mukhayyam, I am living in the aftermath of the 1948 war. I live as a Palestinian refugee. A couple of worn images, and some stories about the land narrated by my grandparents are enough to bridge the gap in history, distance, and time between the past they lived and my current existence. Every photograph and every story affirm my exile—an exile from Palestinian people, culture, and land. This feeling of dispossession and forced detachment from my Palestinian home grows every time I visit tetā's house.

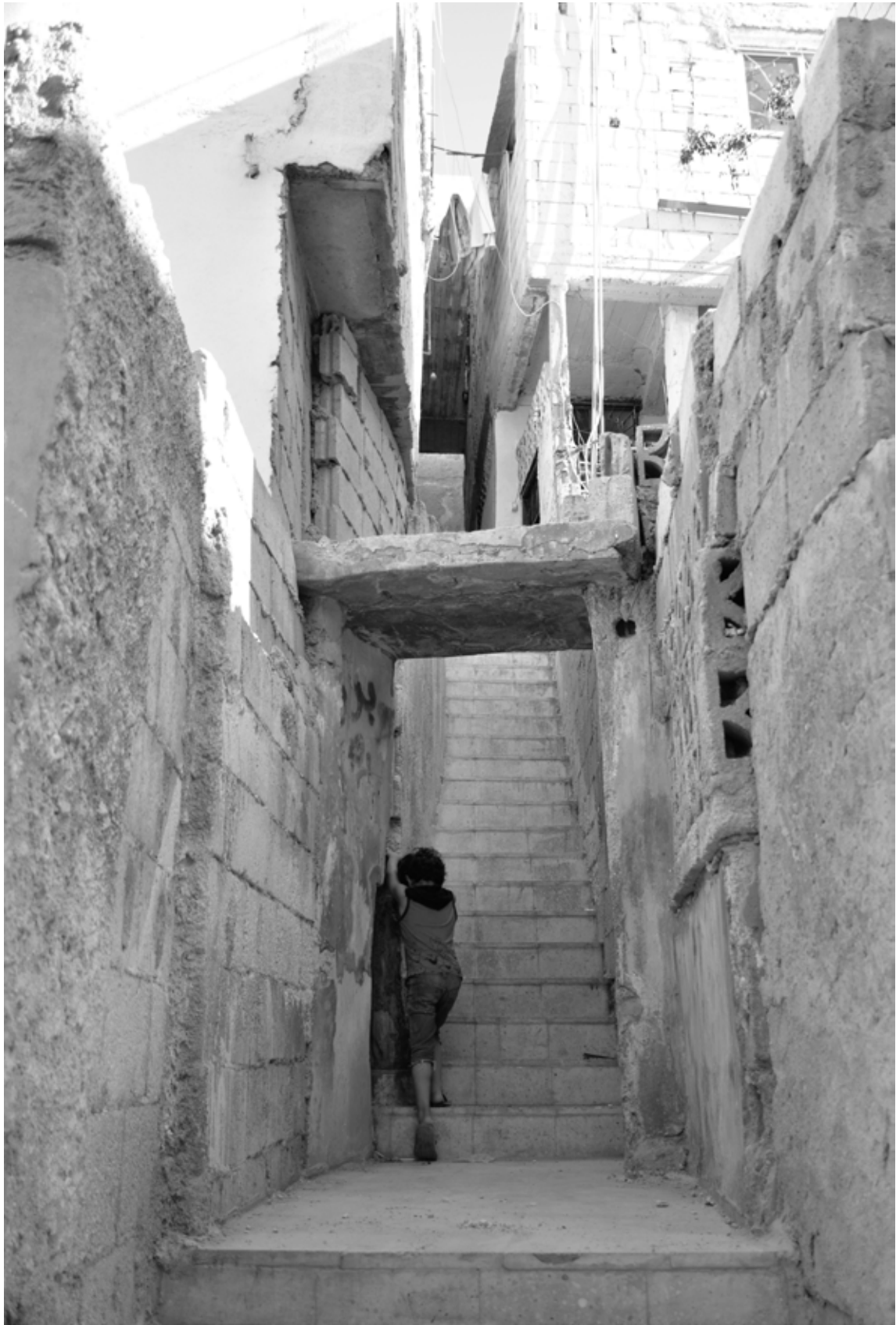
As I get older, the same alley in the mukhayyam seems to get narrower. The people seem to be exhausted. Tetā gets older. All she remembers of Palestine is her mother's green eyes.

Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, 1998. My feeling of exile is born.





04 Boy. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017



05 Entrance. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017





06 Boys in an Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017







07 Two girls. Al Baqa'a Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017







08 View of the Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017





09 Girl in an Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017

## My Mother

When I was a child I was never allowed to ask about Palestine. I was about eight years old when I asked my mother if we were Palestinians. She told me that I was too young to talk about politics. I never asked her about it again. Every day I walked from our house in the refugee camp to school—a school run by the UNRWA—not knowing what my house nor my school stand for. I did not know the difference between my school and other public schools at the time. When I was about ten years old, I accidentally learned that I was Palestinian from a school friend of mine. I did not talk about it with my mother.<sup>1</sup>

Feryal Al Ramahi

My grandmother—who was born in Dayr Ghasana<sup>2</sup> after her parents fled their home village of Al-Muzayri'a—hesitated sharing her family's past or talking about it. “How does a mother confirm her intimate recollections of childhood in Palestine to her children, now that the facts, the places, even the names, are no longer allowed to exist?”<sup>3</sup> As my mother grows older, she starts to narrate her stories of the homeland to her grandchildren—us. Fragmented, discontinuous, always narrated without a defined beginning nor end. Her stories always start by complaining about life in the refugee camp then comparing it to the life in Palestine. She moves from one event to the other, her stories overlap. She ends every one of her stories in the same prayer—a prayer to return to her hometown.

My grandfather—who is born in 1947, a year before Al-Nakba—flees Al-Muzayri'a as an infant carried in his grandmother's arms. He flees Palestine leaving behind his home and his childhood. He carries the burden of exile as he enters Al Hussein refugee camp. In the camp he meets my grandmother, they get married, and, together, they raise their nine children. Seventy years pass since Al-Nakba. The burden of exile gets heavier.

1 Feryal Al Ramahi. Interview by author. January 05, 2018.

2 A small Palestinian village North-West of Ramallah

3 Said, *After the Last Sky*, 23



**The Fourth Generation in Exile**

Some memories live in us,  
they are planted deep in our souls,  
they grow  
Rupturing our ability of expression.  
Out of fear, some questions cannot be asked;  
those about identity and exile.  
Silencing the past is important.  
*Silence.*

### *Tell me about Palestine*

Israeli forces exiled my grandfather twice; once from the old village of Al Walaja, and then a second time from Hebron. Israeli military forced him out of the village before I was born. He settled in Jerusalem, then moved to Hebron—my birthplace. I remember when the Israeli troops entered Hebron in 1967. My grandfather was playing Backgammon with his friend under the Grapevines. I was standing beside him. On the radio, they said to raise the white flags because Israeli troops have entered Hebron. A few minutes later, we heard gunshots. My grandfather tied a white cloth on the roof of the house to show that we are civilians, and that we have surrendered. My father was working in Saudi Arabia at the time. My mother gathered our belongings and took the five of us, your uncle Abed was an infant at the time, and we walked a long distance searching for a bus to take us to Amman. The bus dropped us off at the bridge—which was nothing but a couple of wood pieces bridging the river. When we got to Amman, we settled in Al Wehdat Refugee Camp for three months before we joined my father in Saudi Arabia. My grandfather left Hebron and moved to Amman six months later. Since we left, I have not visited the city.<sup>1</sup>

Hamzeh Abuhasan

In the cold winter days, my siblings and I gather around the gasoline heater in our second-story home. My father brings a big map of Palestine and tries to teach us some history of the place. Sometimes he draws the map of Palestine on a piece of paper, then, he draws a line around the West Bank and Gaza and says, “Well, this is what is left of Palestine now.” All I remember from those talks is two dates that my father always repeats: Al-Nakba (the Palestinian exodus) in 1948 and Al-Naksa (the setback/defeat of the six-day war) in 1967. As I grow up, I become more interested in the history of Palestine and my family’s origins. Al Walaja village, Al-Muzayri’a village, Jerusalem, Hebron.

My father lived his childhood in Hebron in a house full of details that he remembered. Since they left, neither he nor his brothers have settled in one place. They moved from one city to another in an attempt to find a home. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Kingdom, Oman, Yemen, the United States, Canada. Nomads. We are nomads. We travel as foreigners; always perceived as foreigners to a new environment.

<sup>1</sup> Hamzeh Abuhasan. Interview by author. January 05, 2018.



10 Light Entering an Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017

I move with my parents from one place to another. We find fragments of the homeland through Palestinians we met. A traditional dress, a necklace, a large picture frame of the Dome of the Rock, an old key to a Palestinian house destroyed in the war, lines of poetry sung by the Palestinians. We collect the fragments. We build a home.



11 Girl in an Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017



### *On Poetry*

Perhaps like me you have no address  
What's the worth of a man  
Without a homeland,  
Without a flag,  
Without an address?  
What is the worth of such a man? <sup>1</sup>

Poetry weaves a life  
It stitches fragments of the life of one human into those of another.  
Through words  
A connection develops.  
Sometimes I think we create a territory with poetry,  
We build a home, we furnish it, we plant the front yard with olive trees  
and roses  
We unite in a place that is totally ours,  
A place that cannot be confiscated.

Maybe this is what Palestinian poets attempt to do,  
They re-own the land with poetry,  
They mark their territory, and then invite us to join them there for a cup  
of coffee.

Through poetry they take us there—to every village and to every house,  
Through poetry they try to save a home that is slowly vanishing.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Mahmoud Darwish's poem, A Letter from Exile.







12 Zinc Roof. Marka (Hittin) Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017





13 Zinc and Concrete. Al Wehdat Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017







## *The Crossing*

In the summer of 2017, I take my first trip to Palestine. I visit the land in my grandparent's stories. I visit the land in my father's childhood photographs. I visit the land I that I grew attached to over twenty-six years. I travel from Canada to Jordan, a fourteen-hour flight I became very used to over the last twelve years. From there, I cross into the West Bank through the King Hussein Bridge.

The Bridge Terminal is the main point of entrance into the West Bank, and it is the only exit for West Bank Palestinians travelling to other countries. Palestinians are not allowed to cross the West Bank Wall into Tel Aviv and travel through Ben Gurion Airport. Their only option is to cross the Allenby Bridge Terminal into Jordan and then travel internationally through Queen Alia International Airport. Thus, the Bridge Terminal—entirely operated by Israel Airports Authority—acts as the sole exit for West Bank Palestinians into the outside world.

Having grown up in Jordan, I am familiar with the bridge as the King Hussein Bridge—a name given to it after the former king of Jordan. As I arrive at the Bridge, I discover that three names simultaneously overlap to define this threshold. Israelis—who solely operate this bridge but who do not allowed their citizens to travel through it—refer to it as the Allenby Bridge Terminal. To them, the bridge carries the name of Edmund Allenby, an English soldier and a British Imperial Governor. Palestinians, on the other hand, refer to it as Al Karameh Bridge. Al Karameh—an Arabic word meaning dignity—is the name of a Jordanian town near the Bridge. The town was the main battleground between the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) joined by the Jordanian Armed Forces on March 21st, 1968—The Battle of Karameh. Like most places in this region, the bridge carries a multiplicity of names; people in the region use each name alongside the other to label places in the West Bank.

The bridge has three main parts. The bus drops us off at the first terminal—the Jordanian Terminal. We arrive to the tourist terminal building where we scan our bags and move to get our passports checked by Jordanian Immigration staff. We pay the exit fee, they check our passports, and ask us to wait for the shuttle bus to arrive. We sit in the waiting hall, which is relatively empty, for about fifteen minutes until the staff tell us to board the shuttle bus. My grandmother, my two sisters, and I sit on the bus waiting for more people to board—the bus driver does not depart until the bus is full. Twenty minutes later, we start moving towards the Israeli Terminal. This second part of the trip is a ten-





minute drive between terminals. We stop at a checkpoint along the way and then continue to the second terminal. The bus stops, we exit, take our bags, and enter the Israeli Terminal. From the moment we enter this checkpoint at the bridge we face the reality of life in the region.

I stand in line, my grandmother and two younger sisters stand before me. Sleep deprived. Tired. None of us fell asleep last night. A young Israeli soldier stands before us to check our passports from behind a glass window. He scans the passports, one after another. He gestures for us to go through the metal detector. It beeps when my grandmother passes. Another young soldier approaches her, holds her arm, and forces her to sit on one side of the room for further search.

At the age of seventy-two, my grandmother still wears heavy pieces of gold jewelry given to her by my late grandfather. She proudly wears his gifts and her own family inheritance of jewelry wherever she goes. She has not taken them off since I have opened my eyes to the world. She has travelled to many countries and has been through their airport checkpoints, never has any one asked her to remove her jewelry until today.

I pass to the open waiting room with my sisters, they stand in line for our luggage search. I stand waiting for my grandmother to join us. She sits on the metal bench on the far side of the room with the young soldier standing before her. She takes off her rings, earrings, some bracelets and places them in the plastic tray the soldier carries. She struggles to take off the rest of her jewelry. Over the years, her necklace clasps became harder to open. She looks at me and asks me to come help her. I walk towards her.

*"Inta wain mfakker halak rayeh?"* "Where do you think you're going?" An angry soldier yells at me, in broken Arabic, addressing me as a male. I freeze.

"I'm going there to help my grandmother take her jewelry off so she can pass."

"No, you are not allowed there. Go back. Back" He yells. Using his rifle, he gestures at me to step back. I go back to the waiting room.

I stand far from them and look at my grandmother. Her eyes almost tearing up she asks the soldier to help her. He angrily tries to open the necklace clasps but fails. I can still hear the anger in his tone today, months later.





“Is that your mother?” A young female soldier approaches me asking.

“Yes. My grandmother”

“Go help her”

“I tried but he sent me back.” I point at the soldier who stands at the gate. “Come with me so he knows that you asked me to go.”

She escorts me to my grandmother.

I have never seen my grandmother’s hands so bare from rings and bracelets. Her wrists have taken the shape of the bracelets she wore for almost five decades. Today, an Israeli soldier stripped her of her jewelry, her inheritance. With nothing left to hand to the soldier, she passes through the metal detector.

They search our luggage and we move to the next hall. We stand in line again, this time for another passport check. They ask us to sit and wait for somebody to interview us. We all sit beside each other, our bags piled in a corner, and we wait.

For five hours at the Israeli border, I sleep on metal chairs waiting for them to call my name. Soldiers with their black rifles walk in and out of the waiting room. Other Israeli authorities interview travelers at the bridge. A female soldier escorted by a male soldier approach me. In broken Arabic she explains that I will be the only one interviewed since I am the oldest of my sisters. We move to a small counter where she pulls out a pen, a piece of paper, and begins to ask me questions about my background and the purpose of my visit to the land. I attempt to remain relaxed; I answer her questions. She asks me about my parents’ place of birth— my mother’s: a refugee camp in Amman, my father’s ... I forget the English name of the city. To her, I look confused. I try not to wait too long to answer; “*Al Khalil*” I say. It is never good to seem confused. It is never good to answer the questions wrong. “Hebron” She says. She nods and leaves.

Half an hour later she comes back to ask me more questions about my life in Canada; the year I moved to the country, what I do there now, and where I study. She asks me questions about each of my two sisters. She questions if any of my family members holds a Palestinian ID. She asks where I plan to stay during my visit, what places I will go, and how long I expect to be in the region. I answer her questions and she disappears again. Later, another soldier approaches me and asks me to join him for another interview. We leave the waiting hall and enter

*At the Bridge Terminal*

2:47 Pm  
We sit in the waiting hall.  
Ten glass windows  
Cold steel chairs.  
They refuse to talk to us.  
“Do not ask questions.  
Wait until we call you.”

Hebrew and Arabic  
Intermingle  
In the hot room air.

Three checkpoints  
Along this bridge  
Violently divide  
Two regions.  
They cut the land.  
They consume you.  
They drain you.

A long bridge of division.

Third hour  
Exhausted.  
And waiting.

The wait glorifies the homeland.

a hallway leading to many small offices. Everybody turns and looks at me. He escorts me to a small office where a female soldier asks me to sit down for further questions.

Three interviews and five hours later, I am allowed into the West Bank. And, a small slip of paper—my visa—is granted to me. I pass through the bridge terminal. I return, more than fifty years later, to places that I have somehow inherited.



They didn't see me in the shadows which  
Suck out my colour in a passport  
In their view my wound was an exhibit  
To a tourist who adores collecting pictures/  
They didn't recognize me      Ah ... don't leave  
The palm of my hand without a sun  
Because trees  
Recognize me  
    All the songs of rain recognize me.  
Don't leave me pale like the moon!<sup>1</sup>

Mahmoud Darwish









19 Two Men walking to Prayer. Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem. May 2017



**THE WOUND**  
*Two*



The stability of geography and the continuity of land—these have completely disappeared from my life and the life of all Palestinians. If we are not stopped at borders, or herded into new camps, or denied reentry and residence, or barred from travel from one place to another, more of our land is taken, our lives are interfered with arbitrarily, our voices are prevented from reaching each other, our identity is confined to frightened little islands in an inhospitable environment. ... Continuity for them, the dominant population; discontinuity for us, the dispossessed and dispersed. <sup>1</sup>

1 Said, *After the Last Sky*, 19-20

### Layers of Division in the West Bank

[1]

From the Bridge Terminal, I enter Jericho. A white car drives us from the bridge terminal to Kafr 'Aqab; a Palestinian-Arab neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. On both sides of the road, mountains fold into one another to surround small, scattered houses built at their valleys. As we drive by, I cannot help but think about all the history that this land has seen and all the layers of memory that fold into one another to create this 'present'—an unstable present that I am about to become immersed in.

As we drive by, the landscape continues to escort us to our destination. My sisters and grandmother fall asleep in the car—an expected outcome of our long day at the bridge. I stay up, convincing myself that I am here—in Palestine. I am in the place that seemed far from reach for most of my life. I think about my grandparents, who need a special permit to enter Palestine. And my mother who has never seen the land her entire life. I am fortunate to be here. Fortunate that I am allowed in. Fortunate to be able to breathe the air of Palestine “the Palestinian weather is the most beautiful in the world” my grandmother always repeated. She is right.

“This is your first time in Palestine, right?” the car driver—who looks like he is in his late forties—asks as he notices my interest in photographing the land. I nod. “Remember, all you see here, wherever you go, is Palestine. We have the most beautiful country in the world. This is why they are occupying it,” He says, lighting a cigarette.

We continue moving towards Kafr 'Aqab. Fifteen minutes pass and the wall appears. Cutting the landscape with its concrete blades. I stare at the wall—which now replaces the landscape on the left side of the road—unable to comprehend the complexities of its presence. As we get closer to Kafr 'Akab the wall grows in height. It moves closer to the edge of the street. The cars begin to move slower. Traffic. The car driver, who was very strict about putting our seatbelts on at the beginning of our ride, took his seatbelt off and lit another cigarette; “this is the usual traffic,” he says. We are in a Kafr 'Aqab—a very complicated and chaotic zone in the West Bank.

The town, as I learn from our car driver, falls under the municipality of Jerusalem—an Israeli controlled area. However, the West Bank wall separates the town from the rest of Jerusalem. Since Kafr 'Akab falls on the *excluded* side of the West Bank wall “Israel does not want anything to do with the area,” our car driver explains.

In his book, *Hollow land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*,



Eyal Weizman writes “Sharon, fearing accusations about ‘portioning the city’ included within the Wall around Jerusalem most of the Palestinian neighbourhoods that belong to the municipal area.”<sup>1</sup> However, Kafr Akab is not one of those included neighbourhoods. Thus, the town suffers from a complete lack of any municipal control. The lack of planning and of services is evident in the streets of Kafr ‘Akab. Garbage piles the main street. Buildings are ten to twelve floors high. “Most of these buildings are illegally built to this height—but no one is checking. People want to make more money by renting the floors out; so they build more floors.” The car driver explains. “The Palestinian municipality, which controls the majority of the West Bank, also wants nothing to do with this town; so if we have an emergency, we cannot call either police for help. We pay municipal taxes to Jerusalem for services that Israel does not provide,” he continues to explain. The situation in Kafr ‘Akab is a completely chaotic.

[2]

Most residents of Kafr ‘Akab work in Jerusalem. They cross checkpoints along the West Bank wall on a daily basis. Some students attend schools on the other side of the wall. Checkpoints, closures, and roadblocks become a daily obstacle that every Palestinian has to face.

The checkpoints not only carve up space, but divide up time as well. Israel changes to daylight-saving time a month after the rest of the world because of coalition agreements with ultra-Orthodox parties whose constituency’s hours of prayer are governed by celestial composition and level of daylight. The Palestinian Authority shifts its clocks to daylight-saving time in tune with the rest of the northern hemisphere. In spring, a one-hour time difference opens up across the two sides of the checkpoints, creating two time zones.<sup>2</sup>

The division of time at each checkpoint only adds to the complexity of life in the West Bank. Azmi Bishara, a Palestinian political intellectual writes:

The working day ends at 6pm local time but 7pm checkpoint time. The checkpoint shuts at 7pm its time. Until everybody got used to move the clock backwards and finish work an hour

1 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 177.

2 *Ibid*, 148-149.





21 A Palestinian Woman. Qalandia Checkpoint, The West Bank. May 2017

earlier, the checkpoint was blocked with hundreds of winter time people begging the summer-time soldiers to allow them back home.<sup>3</sup>

Israel considers Kafr 'Akab to be part of the Jerusalem municipality. Residents of the area carry Israeli residency cards. The Israeli residency cards allow Palestinians carrying them to move more freely through checkpoints in comparison to other residents of the West Bank: they do not need a special permit beforehand to cross. However, many residents doubt that the current situation will last very long. "After they built the wall, they could take away our residency cards any day. We will be no longer allowed into Jerusalem." Our car driver explains. The fact that residents of Kafr 'Akab do not need a permit to cross into Jerusalem does not undermine the distress of passing through checkpoints on a daily basis.

I have to leave the house at 5Am to make it to work on time. The traffic at the checkpoint is usually very bad. I sold my car and bought a motorcycle to move faster through the morning traffic.

A Palestinian Man  
Kafr 'Aqab  
May 16, 2017

[3]

Throughout our trip, I notice that places in the West Bank make a transition from one identity to another. In the midst of the chaos of the conflict, places lose their original identity to adopt new labels assigned by Israel. Qalandia, as I learn from residents of the area, was a small Palestinian village in the West Bank. During the British mandate for Palestine, the village became home for Qalandia airport, the first airport—built in 1920—and the only airport in Palestine until 1930. In 1949, after Al-Nakba, the village became a refugee camp for Palestinians escaping the war from their hometowns and cities. The camp still stands today, a few meters away from Qalandia checkpoint—a dehumanizing checkpoint constructed by Israel to control Palestinian movement into Israel and East Jerusalem.

3 Bishara quoted by Weizman. *Hollow Land*, 148-149.



They put Palestinians in a cage. Whenever they please they open the door, and whenever they want, they close it. What the wall did is change the large prison in which we were held into a smaller one. Israel controls all the entrances and exits through the watching towers and Israeli soldiers guarding the checkpoints. Any Palestinian that comes close to the Wall is at a risk of being killed. It's never been easier for Israel to control us. The city of Qalqilia, for instance, is entirely surrounded by the wall. It has only one entrance. The city of Ramallah has two main entrances—the Israeli military could easily close both of them and imprison us at any time. The situation is a million times worse in Gaza strip.

A Palestinian man  
Qalandia Refugee Camp  
May 30, 2017

Qalandia checkpoint is one of the many checkpoints along the West Bank wall. Before my visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, I studied the wall, its path, and its checkpoints. However, the experience of being there is beyond anything written in books.

Walls always catch my attention. In Jordan, where I have lived for more than fifteen years, almost every structure—from the private family dwelling to the large government building—has a surrounding wall. The only houses without walls are built in refugee camps to house exiled Palestinian families and those escaping the war. As I enter the West Bank, the wall is no longer a simple fence surrounding a building's parameters; the wall is a concrete structure—sometimes reaching a height of eight meters—that surrounds entire towns, cities, villages, and separates them from neighboring areas.

Since the wall separated our buildings, I need an Israeli permission to visit my brother. We live just a couple of meters apart. You can see his building, but you have to go through the checkpoint to get there!

A Palestinian man  
Al Ram  
May 16, 2017



Israel began the construction of the West Bank wall in the year 2002<sup>4</sup> in order to separate the West Bank from Israel. From the Israeli authorities' perspective, the wall is a mere reaction to the second Palestinian Intifada—the second Palestinian uprising against Israel. Israelis view and refer to the wall as a 'security fence' that functions to keep Palestinians and suicide bombers out of Israel.

Palestinians, on the other hand, view the wall as an Apartheid wall (جدار الفصل العنصري). It is an architectural instrument dividing and separating the two ethnic groups. In their perspective, the wall includes the more powerful group of people—the Israelis—while allowing for a total control of the excluded, less-powerful group—the West Bank Palestinians. Based on the history of the land, and on the current reality of the region, the West Bank wall achieves more than a separation of the two peoples.

The wall is a complex, politically-derived barrier used by Israelis to expand into Palestinian Territories.<sup>5</sup> In his book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Ilan Pappé presents the wall as another method serving the core policy of Zionism—the hitkansut—which aims to “take over as much of Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians as possible.”<sup>6</sup> Currently, the wall spans a distance of 670-kilometers. This distance is almost twice the length of the Green line, which initially served as the border between the two states.

The route of the West Bank wall continuously shifts, creating chaos in the spatial organization of the Occupied Territories. Eyal Weizman, in his book, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, describes the wall as a shifting frontier—a deep, fragmented, and unstable territory.<sup>7</sup> Many sources of power operate within this frontier—the Israeli military, political activists, settlers, and humanitarian experts—an overall instability in the geography of the Wall.<sup>8</sup> The wall “seeks to appear as a heavily fortified border.”<sup>9</sup> However, due to the continuous shifting in the Wall's route—the fragmentation of the Wall itself—this fortified concrete barrier is unable to create the political border between Palestine and Israel. “The result of the Wall's fragmented route is a mutual extraterritoriality, a condition of double enclosure.”<sup>10</sup> The

4 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 164.  
5 Ibid.  
6 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 251.  
7 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 4.  
8 Ibid., 5.  
9 Ibid., 179.  
10 Ibid., 178.



24 Food cart close to Qalandia Checkpoint. The West Bank. May 2017



folding of the Wall's path allows for the enclosure of Israeli settlements in the West Bank—a 'fence' to protect them from their immediate surroundings.<sup>11</sup> The wall, while enclosing the Israeli settlements, moves further into the Palestinian region creating a series of discontinuous depth barriers.<sup>12</sup> It occupies larger sections of the land while fragmenting its urban fabric.

The travel distance between any two cities in Palestine does not exceed an hour and a half. But, of course, if anyone was to drive the same distance it would take anywhere from three to four hours because of road blocks and checkpoints—that is, if they were allowed to go there in the first place.

On the other hand, Israeli settlers in the West Bank have their own roads that take them straight into the settlement from the other side of the wall. Palestinians are not allowed to use these roads even though they are built on our lands. When Israeli authorities plan to construct these roads for the settlers, they confiscate Palestinian-owned lands in the West Bank. They also confiscate additional pieces of lands to serve as "safety zones" to surround these roads.

The Israeli roads and settlements in the West Bank serve a purpose equal to that of the apartheid wall.

A Palestinian man  
Al Walaja  
May 22, 2017

11 Dolphin, *The West Bank Wall*, 38.  
12 Weizman, 174.



[4]

The various borders of the conflict—the three-dimensional matrix of walls, highways, and tunnels—divide the land between the Palestinians and Israelis. At the same time, this three-dimensional matrix of spaces connects Israeli territories to one another. For example, Israeli settlements in the West Bank—enclosed by the folds of the wall—are woven back together by a network of highways going through the Palestinian villages and privately owned Palestinian lands. “Continuity for them, the dominant population; discontinuity for us, the dispossessed and dispersed.”<sup>13</sup>

Along its route, the wall cuts through private Palestinian lands, crop fields, and Palestinian homes. It creates a no-man’s land rupturing the continuity of every-day life. Palestinian communities in the northern West Bank, whose living depends on farming and agriculture, were the most affected by this barrier as it separated them from their land and water resources.<sup>14</sup> People could not reach their farm fields without a special permit from the Israeli control. Because of this separation from the land “thousands of families were surviving on social assistance, and the pressure was taking its toll on civil life with families split, divorces and criminality rising, and children showing symptoms of psychological trauma.”<sup>15</sup> The devastating impacts of this implanted architecture on the psychological, social, and economic life of Palestinian communities are undeniable.

I had forty olive trees but they cut them all down to build the wall. Now I have no olives nor olive oil that I could sell to support my family. I remember when we used to cry for one olive tree being cut by Israelis; we have lost so much since then. This is not an occupation, this is a violent rape of the land.

A Palestinian man  
Al Walaja  
May 22, 2017

During my visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, I become familiar with the human experience at this implemented border. I pass through the wall, from one side to the other, I observe, experience, and feel the

13 Said, *After the last sky*, 20  
14 Dolphin, *The West Bank Wall*, 72  
15 Dolphin, *The West Bank Wall*, 73

### *At the Checkpoint*

The West Bank.  
A large prison,  
On one side of the Wall.

A Passage, an interface, a checkpoint  
I stand,  
I wait.

On the cold floor,  
Children sleep.

Checkpoint time  
5am  
Hundreds wait  
Half an hour, an hour  
I stand,  
I wait.

Four metal cages,  
A one-way mirror stares at me.  
An officer in a uniform.  
I stand,  
I wait.  
I need a permit to pass,  
To see my mother,  
To go to a friend's funeral.

I stand,  
I wait.  
To see the Dome of the rock,  
To pray.  
To see my mother,  
To go to a friend's funeral.

daily struggle of Palestinians. I pass through at least one checkpoint every day. Israeli soldiers search my belongings. They humiliate me, and other Palestinians passing through. Every day, the checkpoints are nothing but dehumanizing points of control for any person passing through from the West Bank—the 'other side'.

## Fluctuations

With each shift in the border line  
I see people  
Carry their bags  
Move into a new land  
I see settlements built.  
Nuclei,  
Expanding.

I see people  
Carry what is left of their things  
Some clothes, some bread, and, maybe, some plants  
Wrapped in a cloth  
Tied in knots  
I see them carry their children  
With tired faces  
They move.  
Nomads.  
Refugees.  
Without a destination.  
1949,  
A Green Line  
900,000 Palestinians<sup>1</sup>  
1967  
A six-day War  
400,000 more<sup>2</sup>

People  
More People  
An ethnic split  
An intifada  
A border on Gaza  
A border on the West Bank  
Oslo  
An electronic fence  
Eight camps <sup>3</sup>  
People in tents  
People in the streets

1 Towell, *Then Palestine*, 107  
2 Toowell, *Then Palestine*, 109  
3 Dolphin, *The West Bank Wall*, 11





Children  
Old people  
A small pot with a white jasmine plant  
A hope that grows  
A white dream

A second intifada  
A concrete wall  
A field is broken in two  
A house,  
Demolished  
A school on one side of the barrier.  
A life,  
Shattered  
Checkpoints.  
A Conflict.  
A Wall.





26 Boy at Qalandia Checkpoint. Qalandia Checkpoint, The West Bank. May 2017









### ***Division of Two Entwined Populations***

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Israelis don't know that Palestinians exist, but the closer they are to the West Bank the more they interact with us. They live by ignoring our existence. The land—they claim that it is their land now. They do whatever they want. No one can say anything. They are changing it, dividing it, making it fit their life.

I want to see my old house, my olive grove, even if it were for a minute. But I don't know if I will recognize them anymore. An Israeli who took someone else's home, probably feels entitled to someone else's life.

A Palestinian man  
Ramallah  
May 15, 2017

The architecture of the Wall is a result of complex political matters. This politically-derived architecture creates an increased tension between the two ethnic groups: Palestinians and Israelis. The Wall fragments the life of people in the region and affects the existing social structure. At checkpoints, the space created by the architecture of the Wall forces people to take on different roles—the Palestinian individual passing through—the controlled—and the Israeli soldier in the uniform—the one in control of Palestinian movement. The Wall not only creates a physical border spatially dividing the land; it creates a deeper separation between people of the land.

The Israeli government does not want people to interact, one human to another. They do everything to keep us separate. Israeli men are required to serve about three years in the Israeli Defense Forces, women have to serve two years. They serve in the same position for three months and then rotate with other soldiers; this way the authorities prevent them from forming any bonds with the Palestinian population.

A Palestinian man  
Ramallah  
May 15, 2017

*In Jerusalem*

I came to this land thinking that there is one wall  
—one concrete wall.  
As it turns out,  
here, there are walls within walls  
within other walls.  
Then, there is the concrete wall.

Here,  
what you wear is a wall.  
What you think is a wall.  
The hat you put on your head is a wall.  
The scarf I put on mine is a wall.  
You are “one”  
and I am “the other.”

Our wound will not heal.  
It gets deeper,  
Wider,  
Ripping more layers apart.

When I cross to ‘the other side’  
There, in the old city of Jerusalem—  
I become aware of who I am to you.  
I become aware of a million more walls.

This wound is in us.  
It is drenched in our blood.



The Wall forms two identities—Palestinian and Israeli—each continuously growing in isolation from the other. The two zones always operate far from equilibrium; their individual layers continuously shift, form, and re-form within the land they occupy. Wendy Brown in her book, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, describes the Palestinian-Israeli Wall as a tool for spatially dividing two entwined populations—an instrument of political domination through separation.<sup>1</sup> Throughout my visit to the West Bank, I discover this to be true.

When I got my Jerusalem ID I had to sell my West Bank car and buy a car from inside the green line. I am working to get a nice car like the one I had. The colour of my license plate changed from white to yellow—which means I am allowed to travel more freely from one side to the other. However, since I got this car I am not allowed to get it repaired in ‘Palestinian lands.’ According to the Israeli law, if you have a car from inside the green line you are not allowed to take it to any car shop in the West Bank.

A Palestinian man  
Samiramis  
May 16, 2017

The architecture of walls, as described by Brown, increases tension—a larger political problem between the two nations it attempts to separate.<sup>2</sup> These physical boundaries create many implicit boundaries between people in the region. Most children on both sides of the wall are exposed to this political tension on a daily basis.

Israeli soldiers do not trust anyone. I was walking home from school and there was a riot in the street. The Israeli soldiers arrested some people. They wanted to arrest me. They searched my hands and clothes for dirt. They wanted to know if I was throwing rocks.

A Palestinian child  
Al Walaja  
May 21, 2017

<sup>1</sup> Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 26-28.  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 8.



In the West Bank, dust becomes a sign of a young political rebel. The many borders of the conflict affirm the division between people of the land. In Malkit Shoshan's book, *Atlas of the Conflict: Israel-Palestine*, she writes,

[B]orders, walls, patterns of settlements, typologies of settlements, demography, water, landscaping ... are, inevitably, all interlinked, not just with each other, but with reality, with personal stories, traumas, myths, beauty, tragedies, popular tales, defeats and victories.<sup>3</sup>

A Palestinian man tells me:

Israeli children are taught how to carry a gun and protect themselves from Palestinians. The Israeli authorities teach children—especially those in settlements—that Palestinians are a threat. They plant these ideas in their heads from childhood: 'Palestinians are dangerous and they should be killed.' People in settlements have guns...all we have is rocks.

A Palestinian man  
Qalandia Refugee Camp  
May 30, 2017

The West Bank wall, like any other walled border, is "a symptom of a larger failure of conciliation and justice."<sup>4</sup> This physical boundary makes legitimate the differences between people living on either side. The identity created by the Wall becomes the dominant form of identification. This is nothing but the role each individual takes on in the conflict. The occupied and the occupier, the landowner and settler, the Palestinian child, the Israeli child, the soldier in the uniform, the woman in a traditional Palestinian dress. These differences become personal walls built in the minds of both peoples; they become walls that one generation passes down to the next. These personal walls will remain to outlast the West Bank wall.

3 Shoshan, *Atlas of the Conflict: Israel-Palestine*, 11  
4 Sorkin, *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace*, xx.



29 Girl Plays Near The West Bank Wall. Al Walaja Village, The West Bank. May 2017



30 Two Girls Walk Beside the West Bank Wall. Shuafat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017





31 Boy Holds a Rock. Shuafat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017









34 Man Stands Close to Qalandia Checkpoint. Qalandia Checkpoint, The West Bank. May 2017



35 A Sign Warns Israeli Citizens from Entering the West Bank. Checkpoint. The West Bank May 2017







36 The West Bank Wall in the Area Close to Hizma. Hizma. The West Bank. May 2017





37 A Watchtower, The West Bank Wall. Beithlehem, The West bank. May 2017



## Hebron— *Al-Khalil*, الخليل

Today I visit Hebron—my father's birth place.

The old city of Hebron is a violent zone. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is at its most intense in the core of the city. The apartheid is at its most complex.

The old city of Hebron is home of the Cave of the Patriarchs or the Sanctuary of Abraham—the Ibrahimi Mosque as known by Muslims and Palestinians or the Me'arat HaMachpelah as known by Jews and Israelis—a sacred site to Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Followers of all three religions believe that the Sanctuary of Abraham encloses below it the burial caves of Abraham and his wife Sarah, their sons: Isaac and Jacob, as well as both their wives: Rebecca and Leah. In 1967—the year my father left the city with his family—Israeli forces entered Hebron and the city fell under the Israeli occupation. Since the first day of the occupation, Israeli soldiers entered the Sanctuary of Abraham—the Ibrahimi Mosque—preventing Palestinians from performing their prayers in the mosque.<sup>1</sup> Since then, violence escalated between Palestinians and Israelis around the rights of entrance and the freedom to perform religious prayers and rituals inside the sanctuary. In many incidences, Israeli settlers stormed in the mosque after verbally and physically abusing the Palestinian guards of the sanctuary, and carried out outrageous acts of violence towards worshippers inside the mosque. The massacre of the Ibrahimi Mosque, on 25 February 1994, stands out as one of the most appalling incidents in the history of the city.

The massacre began when Baruch Goldstein and a group of Kiryat Arba settlers entered the Ibrahimi Mosque at dawn. Goldstein stood behind one of the pillars of the mosque and waited until the worshipers prayed and opened fire on the worshipers while they were prostrating. ... The fragments of bombs and bullets penetrated the heads, shoulders and backs of the worshipers.<sup>2</sup>

Baruch Goldstein killed twenty-nine worshippers inside the mosque; he was then beaten to death by survivors of the shooting.<sup>3</sup>

1 "The Israeli attacks on the Ibrahimi Mosque in 1967-1993." Palestinian National Information Center

2 Dawood, "The Israeli massacres in Palestine." Al Jazeera Media Network

3 "Massacre of the Ibrahimi Mosque" Al Jazeera Encyclopedia.

*Al Hajez –The border*

We travel through borders,  
Eighty one checkpoints  
We travel from one to the next  
We carry all that we could  
We carry an old map of the land  
We carry a family picture  
An old coin,  
And a key to a door that no longer exists.

We wake up to closure orders,  
To forbidden roads.  
To destruction.

We convince ourselves,  
“This is normal”

Against the Wall,  
A market grows.  
It lives on the edge of the border.  
An old man stands there,  
He smokes a cigarette and  
Sells ka'ek<sup>1</sup> and za'atar.<sup>2</sup>

We convince ourselves,  
“This is normal”

Women give birth here,  
They die here,  
At every checkpoint,  
Along the border.

We read about it,  
And we  
Convince ourselves,  
“This is normal”

1        *Ka'ek* : Bread, usually covered with sesame seeds  
2        *Za'atar*: Thyme

After the execution the Israeli occupation soldiers in the mosque closed the doors to prevent worshipers from escaping, they also prevented those coming from outside the mosque from entering the site and saving the wounded<sup>4</sup>

The 1994 massacre changed the way in which the city of Hebron operates. Israeli authorities divided the Sanctuary of Abraham into two sections—a mosque taking up forty percent of the sanctuary, and a synagogue occupying the other sixty percent.<sup>5</sup> They placed a strict security zone around the sanctuary with cameras and electronic gates located on all the entrances leading to it.

Since the massacre, the attacks continued on the Ibrahimi Mosque causing the old Hebron municipality located in its vicinity to close. Israel also closed Al Shuhada Street, which is considered the main artery of the Palestinians' life in Hebron; this led to the closure of 1800 shops in the old city.<sup>6</sup>

Al Shuhada Street is located near a Jewish settlement. "Israel closed the street to protect the settlers. They only allow Jews and Israelis to use the street." A young Palestinian man tells me. I stand at the entrance of Al Shuhada Street. Four layers of separation lay before me. A metal gate. A barbed wire. A concrete wall—mimicking the appearance and purpose of the apartheid wall. A second barbed wire. Old shop signs—written in Arabic—hang on empty street buildings to indicate what was once there.

In 1997 Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Hebron Protocol. The protocol divided the city of Hebron into Area H1—under the Palestinian Authority control, and area H2—under the Israeli control.

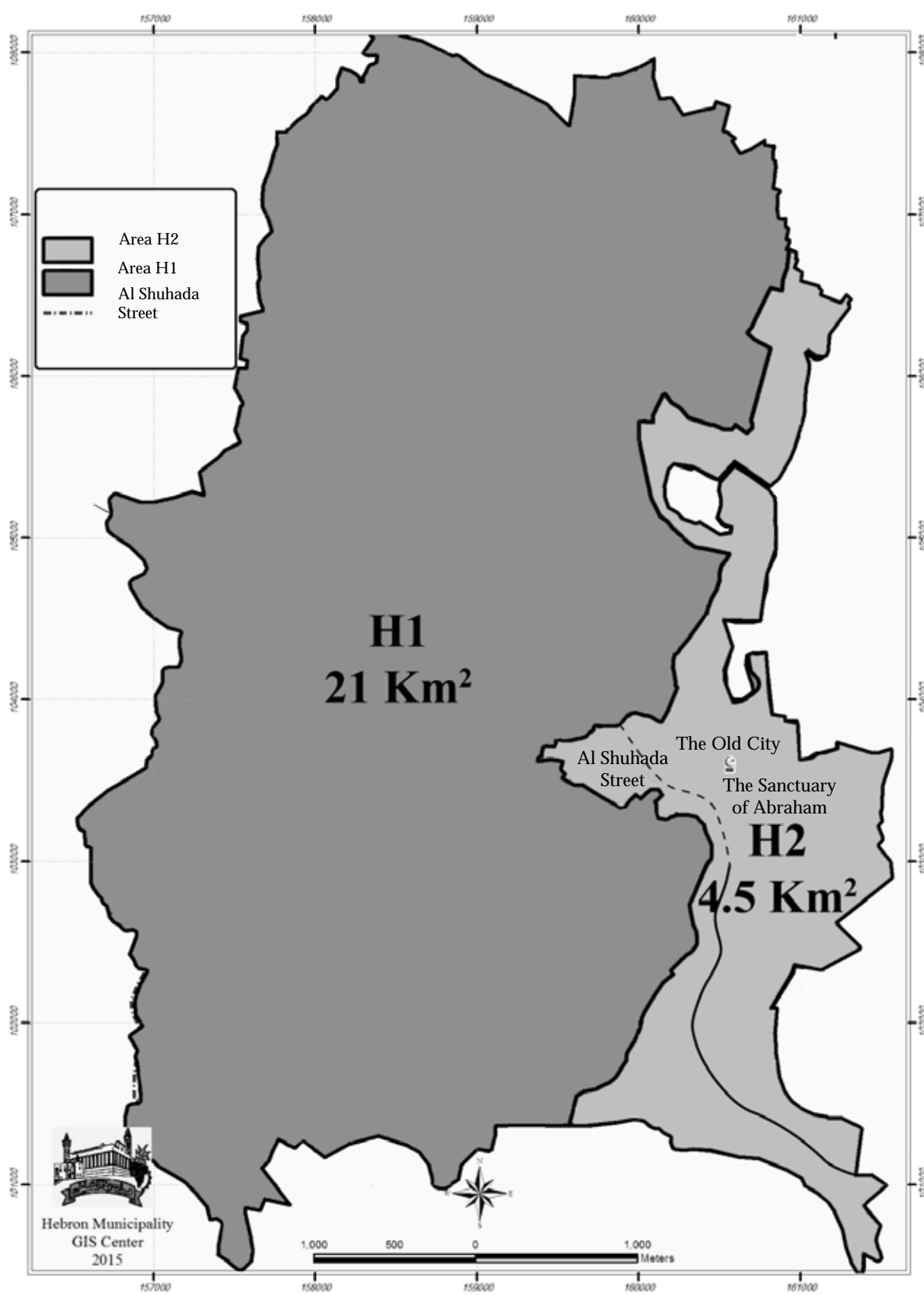
Israel controls the old city since it is part of Area H2. Israeli settlers continue to carry out acts of violence towards us. Stabbing, shooting, verbal insults happen here on a daily basis.

A Palestinian woman  
Hebron  
May 25, 2017

4 "Massacre of the Ibrahimi Mosque" Al Jazeera Encyclopedia.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid



38 Hebron Map Shows Areas H1 and H2. Map Source: Hebron Municipality, Hebron







39 Al-Shuhada Street, closed for Palestinians. Hebron Old City. The West Bank. May 2017

Since the Israeli army controls the old city of Hebron, the Israeli laws enforced on the area treat Palestinian residents as second-class citizens. The Israeli laws in the city lack strict law enforcement on extremist Israeli settlers carrying out threats and acts of violence against Palestinian civilians in area H2.

Settler's violence, restrictions of movement on Palestinians, as well as ongoing curfews enforced on Palestinian residents, transformed the old city of Hebron from a vibrant commercial center to an empty town. The Israeli strategy of controlling Palestinians and gradually leading them to flee their homes has transformed the old city of Hebron. A Palestinian man tells me about his neighbour in Hebron saying:

Israelis wanted to take over this home. But if they do, they'll take over the entire market. That's how they start, they take one small area and expand. It is the same technique the use with their settlements.

They want to take over this home. They killed three of his kids. They shot him in the leg. They kicked the wife while she was seven-months pregnant. The baby died. They are very violent. They are very difficult. We put up these wires because they throw rocks at us, especially during Ramadan. Our markets here were so busy and full of life before they came. Now the old city looks sad—as if it had lost a child of hers. Its streets are empty. We even call it the 'ghost town.'

A Palestinian man  
Hebron Old City  
May 25, 2017

I walk through this 'ghost town'. I visit the Sanctuary of Abraham. I pray. I walk back towards the car. I recall my father's last memories of the place—the day he fled the city. I leave Hebron with many memories; an old Palestinian man stands behind the metal fence. A few women and men slowly move through the checkpoint. A young boy rides his bicycle in the empty alleyways. Beside the metal fence, two Israeli soldiers laugh together.





40 Wire grids cover the alleyways of the Market and protect Palestinians passing by from trash thrown down by Jewish settlers living in the upper storeys. Hebron Old City. The West Bank. May 2017



**At the Gate**

I walk the streets of the old city,  
Towards the Sanctuary of Abraham.  
It is time for Al Duhur prayer.

12:15 PM  
I arrive.  
Two revolving metal doors.  
Two young Israeli soldiers.  
Two black rifles.  
Cameras.

I stand in line.  
I empty my bag.  
They search my camera.  
I pass.  
An electronic gate.  
Another soldier.  
A Checkpoint.  
Another electronic gate.  
12:49 I am inside  
To worship  
To pray.



41 Palestinian Entrance to the Sanctuary of Abraham. Hebron Old City. The West Bank. May 2017



42 Gate at The Sanctuary of Abraham. Hebron Old City. The West Bank. May 2017









43 Loudspeakers Mounted on A Mosque's Minaret. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017







44 Men Walking in Hebron Old City. Hebron Old City, The West Bank. May 2017



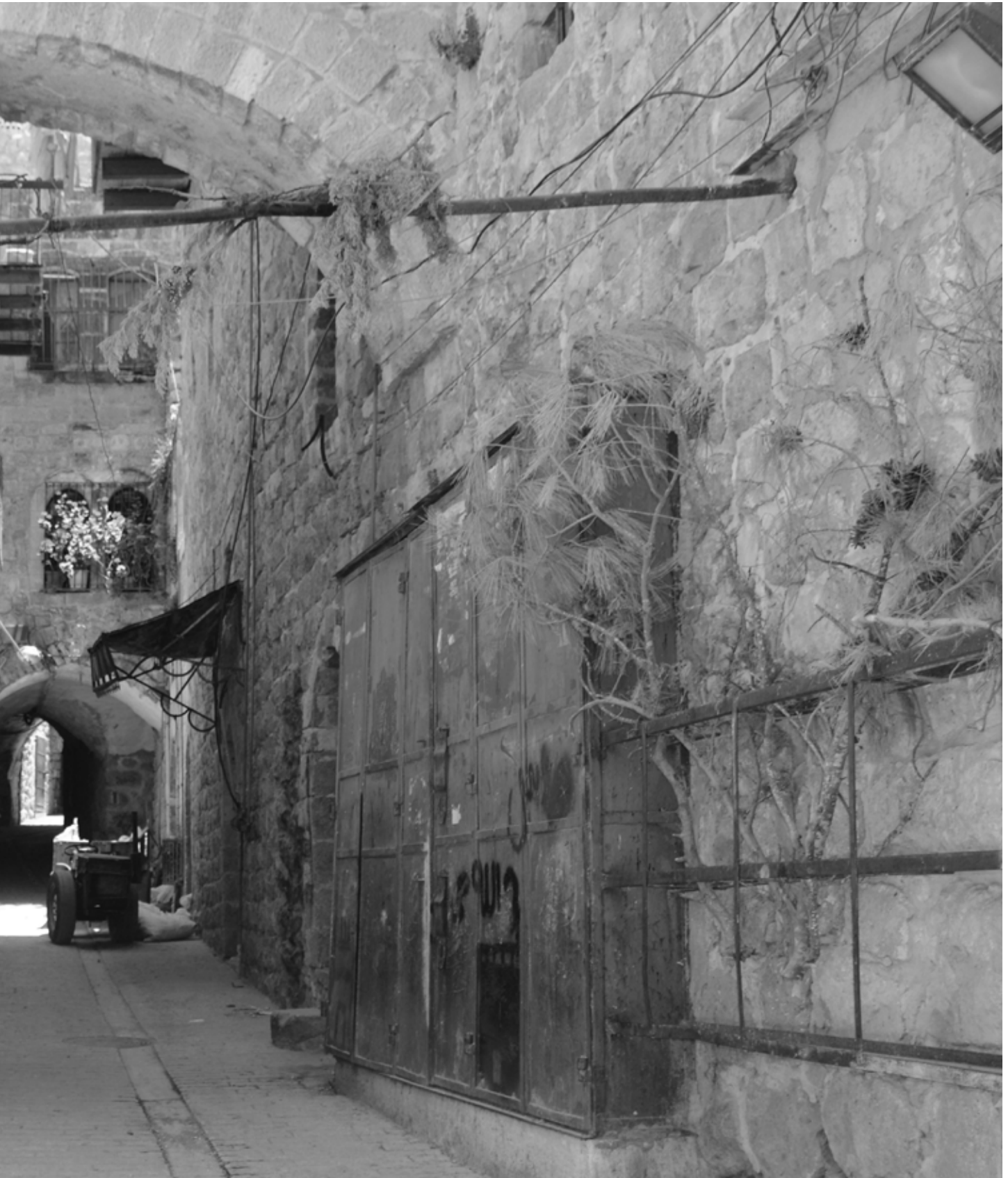




45 Closed Shops. Hebron Old City, The West Bank. May 2017







46 A street in the old city. Hebron Old City, The West Bank. May 2017



**LOSS**  
*Three*



Identity—who we are, where we come from, what we are—is difficult to maintain in exile. Most other people take their identity for granted. Not the Palestinian, who is required to show proofs of identity more or less constantly. It is not only that we are regarded as terrorists, but that our existence as native Arab inhabitants of Palestine, with primordial rights there (and not elsewhere), is either denied or challenged. And there is more. Such as it is, our existence is linked negatively to encomiums about Israel's democracy, achievements, excitement; in much Western rhetoric we have slipped into the place occupied by Nazis and anti-Semites; collectively we can aspire to little except political anonymity and resettlement; we are known for no actual achievement, no characteristic worthy of esteem, except the effrontery of disrupting Middle East peace. ... We have known no Einstein, no Chagall, no Freud or Rubinstein to protect us with the world's compassion. We are "other," and opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement and exodus. Silence and discretion veil the hurt, slow the body searches, soothe the sting of loss.<sup>1</sup>

1 Said, *After the last sky*, 16-17









47 Two Girls. Shu'fat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017

## Noise

I am in the West Bank, the most hostile region in the world. I live in a war zone. I sleep in a house close to Qalandia checkpoint. I hear the sounds of gunshots three nights in a row. They stop. Everyday is chaotic. I lose track of time. I disconnect from the world around me. The existence of other places is no longer relevant. I live here now. I could die here any moment. The value of my life has taken a downward spiral. Death is so close. Every day I see it. I hear about it. I photograph it.

Sometimes the noise of war breaks into our home. Gunshots. Loud screams. Ambulance sirens. War. Our home is not safe. No home here is safe. If it is safe today, there is no guarantee that it will be tomorrow. Nothing here is guaranteed. Everyday I go up these fourteen concrete steps to open the black metal door and to enter the chaos of war. Life in this region limits your capacity to live, to dream, to plan for tomorrow. There is no point in planning for a future where you, or the person you plan it with, will no longer exist. There is no purpose in planning for tomorrow because you are no longer in control of your time or any other aspect of your day. We open our eyes and the land is no longer ours. Nothing belongs to us, neither our past nor our future. They are powerful. And with that power they can change anything. Each day we wake up and we make an effort to live. And we do live. Our existence is the only way we can resist the occupation. We can't plan anything, but each day we wake up and we make an effort to, simply, live.

A Palestinian man  
Qalandia Refugee camp  
May 30, 2017

I travel from the West Bank to the other side. I go through checkpoints, soldiers, and long hours of waiting. I travel between both sides too quickly, unable to understand everything that goes on around me. I move from one side to the other, I observe the land in fragments. I understand it in fragmented images and noises—an inharmonious experience. Tension. A force rips me in half and then tries to weave what is left of me back together.



## A Refugee Camp in East Jerusalem

Saturday,  
1:45 pm

Today, I visit Shu'fat refugee camp; a Palestinian refugee camp located in East Jerusalem. The West Bank Wall separates the camp, as is the case with Kafr 'Aqab area, from the rest of Jerusalem.

We drive through the congested, narrow residential streets of Kafr 'Aqab. We are stuck in the usual traffic jam on the street leading to Qalandia checkpoint. The loud honking of cars does not stop. Fortunately, I am accustomed to this noise by now—unlike the sound of gunshots and the angry barking of security dogs during the night. Nonetheless, my body still absorbs all this noise from the outside world—the honking, the random yelling of street vendors, the roaring of car engines, the loud noises of news and music simultaneously playing from adjacent car radios—all of it. This chaos of life is an inseparable part of our daily routine.

The car maneuvers around random obstacles; garbage bags, rocks, concrete blocks, children walking home from school. Five minutes later, we reach Qalandia checkpoint. Cars line up to cross to the other side. We do not need to go through the checkpoint to get to Shu'fat refugee camp; the cab driver takes an alternative route to get us there. He drives past the checkpoint. The traffic dies.

We pass two circles and drive towards the camp. The Wall disappears after we travel some distance from Qalandia Checkpoint. We see the mountains on one side of the road, and the trash piled up on the other side. Minutes later, the Wall appears again. This time it encircles a watching tower and extends to the mountains on the right side of the road. We pass through four empty checkpoints—no soldiers and no traffic—four vacant concrete structures. “These are *temporary* checkpoints—multiple points of added control if needed,” the driver explains. Through these checkpoints, Israel is able to cut off any town in the West Bank from other adjacent towns. In extreme conflicts, or for certain *security* purposes, Israeli forces use the checkpoints to ensure that Palestinians do not pass freely from one area in the West Bank to another.

I was not familiar with the concept of a checkpoint. It was a concrete block back then, with soldiers standing and people lining up to go through. I wanted to get home after school.



49 A Bus Stop. Shuafat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017



I didn't line up. I kept walking. A soldier grabbed me from the back, and yelled at me in Hebrew—a language I did not understand at the time. He took my school bag and threw it to the ground; it was my most valuable possession at the time. After that day, I understood the Israeli checkpoint.

A Palestinian girl  
Kafr 'Aqab  
May 19, 2017

We drive for almost an hour inside the West Bank. On both sides of the road, scattered Palestinian houses appear. Some houses are as small as a single concrete room built on one side of the road. Palestinians built these 'houses' without any setbacks from the main street. The driver explains that these small homes belong to Palestinian families who refuse to sell their land—as small as it may be—to Israel. They fight back the Israeli occupation, the expansion of settlements, and the panning of Israeli roads by holding on to the land they own. According to our driver, most of these families have experienced harassment in one form or another. Israeli soldiers and settlers use verbal and physical violence towards these Palestinian families in an attempt to force them to leave their homes. Yet, the Palestinian's will to stay is stronger than any Israeli violence forced upon them; they stay on their land and challenge Israeli plans for further expansion and occupation.

We continue to see more Palestinian houses scattered on the mountains as we drive towards the camp. The West Bank Wall appears again on the edge of road—this time the Wall is open on one end indicating a plan for a continued construction. Behind the Wall, Israeli settlements appear at a distance. Folds of the wall extend to enclose the settlements. The red, triangular roofs, the new construction, the large setback from the road, the location on the high hilltops, and the distance from other adjacent areas distinguish the settlement from the Palestinian neighbourhoods in the West Bank. Israeli settlements, as I understand from Palestinians in the West Bank, are a dangerous territory.

I am scared for my wife to go to her college. Many people have been shot for no reason.

There was a man once coming home from his work late at night, he was passing through an Israeli settlement.





50 A Temporary Checkpoint on the way from Kafir 'Aqab to Shu'fat Refugee Camp. The West Bank. May 2017

Settlers accused him of carrying a knife. They gathered around him. They shot him. They killed the man, just like that.

A Palestinian man  
Kafr 'Akab  
May 15, 2017

Since the Israeli occupation has damaged economy in the West Bank, most Palestinians began working for Israelis living in settlements. With the restrictions of movement placed on Palestinians, the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian lands, and the high Israeli taxes placed on Palestinian shop owners—especially in Jerusalem—most Palestinians lost their main source of income. Working in Israeli settlements became the only way to support a family for many of the West Bank Palestinians. Going through Israeli settlements on a daily basis is essential to make a living.

I am a driver. It was hard for me to get a job because my address is in Kafr 'Aqab. They are scared of any Palestinian living here. I work with Israelis; four drivers. They do not want to know what happens here, behind the Wall. We do not talk about politics. I do not want to, they do not want to either.

A Palestinian man  
Kafr 'Akab  
May 16, 2017

New jobs in the West Bank are rare now. Many educated Palestinians cannot work due to this protracted political conflict.

I'm a certified doctor; but if I were in an ambulance heading to one of the 1948-Occupied Palestinian Territories and one of the Israeli soldiers stopped me, he has the right to kick me out of the ambulance and send me back to where I came from. They say it is because my brother is in their jail. It is their reasoning for many things. My brother had a page on Facebook. People liked it and reacted to what he posted. He was not posting anything about politics; he was a social activist who let others know what was going on inside the country—the truth. When he was a child, he was wounded



51 A Segment of the West Bank Wall on the way from Kafr 'Aqab to Shu'fat Refugee Camp. The West Bank. May 2017

during the first Intifada. He was first imprisoned when he was only sixteen years old. They let him out of prison, and after a couple of months, they started looking for him again. He spent a chunk of his life hiding away in a spot in Ramallah where no one knew about him. Not even us. He wanted to finish his education, so he was hiding away from Israeli authorities. They caught him in the street one day and held him in administrative detention.

Not only those in prisons are prisoners, we are all prisoners as well. We are all sentenced for life.

Palestinian man  
Ramallah  
May 15, 2017

We pass by Hizma checkpoint. We do not cross to the other side. We drive for two more minutes and then take a right. Random parts of the wall appear again; very fragmented and incomplete. We are close to Shu'fat camp. The mountains disappear. The road closes on us with many buildings closely constructed to one another. Children bike alongside the cars. The traffic and the honking are back. Noise.

The main street is too narrow for two cars to drive in opposite directions at once. One car stops on the side of the road for the other cars to pass. We park on the edge of the street for seven minutes. We wait for a chance to continue driving. Sewage and overloaded garbage bins pile on one side of the street. Crowded. Noisy. Polluted. This is not a place for people to *live*.



52 A Door. Shu'fat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017







53 Houses. Shu'fat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017







54 An Alleyway in Shu'fat Refugee Camp. Shu'fat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017

### *A Concrete Enclosure*

I stay in Shu'fat refugee camp for four days. I live there in a small apartment on the second floor of an old building. In the morning, I walk the narrow streets of the camp to the West Bank Wall. The concrete slabs surround the camp. An awkward metal door punctures one of the concrete slabs; "The Israeli army uses this door to enter the camp when they want to arrest someone. Other times they just come because they feel like it." A young Palestinian boy tells me this. I ask him if Israeli soldiers come to Shu'fat often, "Only when we are sleeping."

During my stay, I learn that Shu'fat camp—as is the case in Kafr 'Akab—is an area ignored by both Palestinian and Israeli authorities. The lack of proper services and the absence of any police presence transforms the camp into an uninhabitable area. Concrete buildings cluster the camp, leaving barely any space for movement. Children play in the narrow alleys and on the rooftops of buildings.

We have water for four days a week. The other three days we do not. If they asked me to choose between electricity and water, I'd pick water!

A Palestinian woman  
Shu'fat Refugee Camp  
May 20, 2017

7:15PM, our neighbour comes to visit. She shares the news. Israeli soldiers shoot a young man earlier today. His family buries his body later this afternoon. Life disappears. Quickly.

Soldiers were arresting our men. They killed them, one by one. That night, we were all sitting in one room. My father was smoking his cigarette beside the window; it was the light of his cigarette that killed him.

A Palestinian woman  
Qalandia Refugee Camp  
May 30, 2017

Most people in the West Bank do not read newspapers. We do not watch news channels. We avoid looking for traumatic events. Any death, road closure, or violent clash is shared, one man to another.

West Bank Palestinians remain relatively calm during the daily chaos. They manage to live as normal a life as they can during



this spiteful conflict. They seem to have developed a resistance to their emotions. “People here are flexible. If there is war, they adapt. They live. If there is no war, they adapt. They live.” A Palestinian man tells me this. His words remind me of Suzan Abulhawa’s novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, where she writes,

For us, fear comes where terror comes to others because we are anesthetized to the guns constantly pointed at us. .... Israeli occupation exposes us very young to the extremes of our emotions, until we cannot feel except in the extreme.<sup>1</sup>

The sense of exile has stretched to the Palestinian’s own body—to his/her emotions. This exile, as Mahmoud Darwish describes it is “more than a geographical concept. You can be an exile in your homeland, in your own house, in a room.”<sup>2</sup> In the presence of the Israeli occupation, every Palestinian lives a constant state of exile.

They tell me that I should be brave, that I should fight for my rights. They tell me that dying for your country is an honour, but I’m not as brave as they are. I do get scared.

A Palestinian woman  
Abu Dis  
May 20, 2017

1 Abulhawa, *Mornings in Jenin*, 193

2 Shatz, A. (2001, December 21). A Poet’s Palestine as a Metaphor.



## Rhythms

A child  
A stranger  
And I.  
And two countries  
Overlapping  
And dancing  
To the music  
Of bullets  
And wars.

Nine gates  
And wall.  
And a holy city  
Crying  
On the shoulders  
of her children.

Fifty gunshots  
And a prayer.

A cross  
A dome  
A temple  
And three young men  
Mourning their father.

A child  
A stranger  
And I.  
And a holy city  
Crying  
On the shoulders  
of her children.

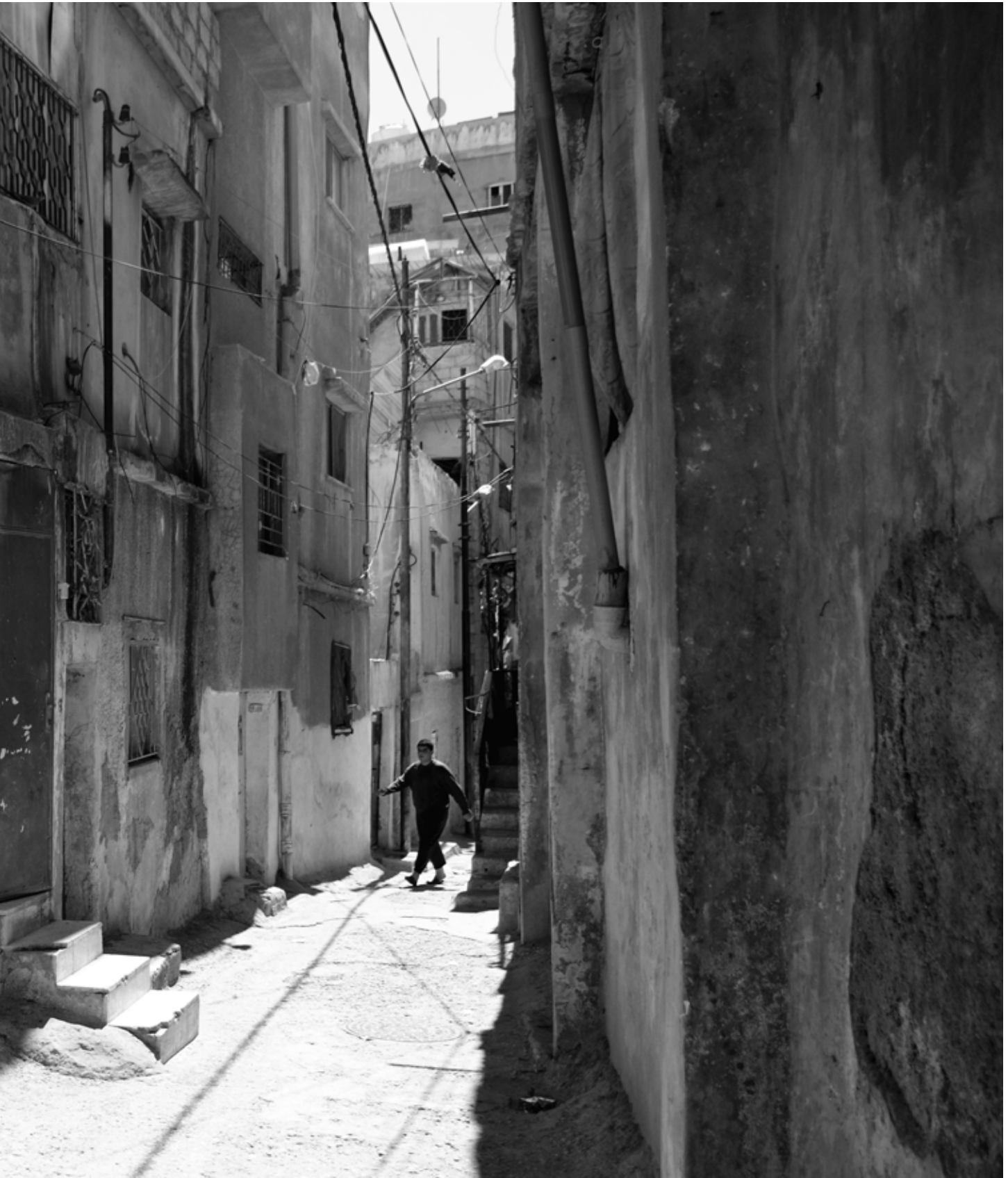




56 A Woman. Al Baqa'a Refugee Camp. Amman, Jordan. June 2017

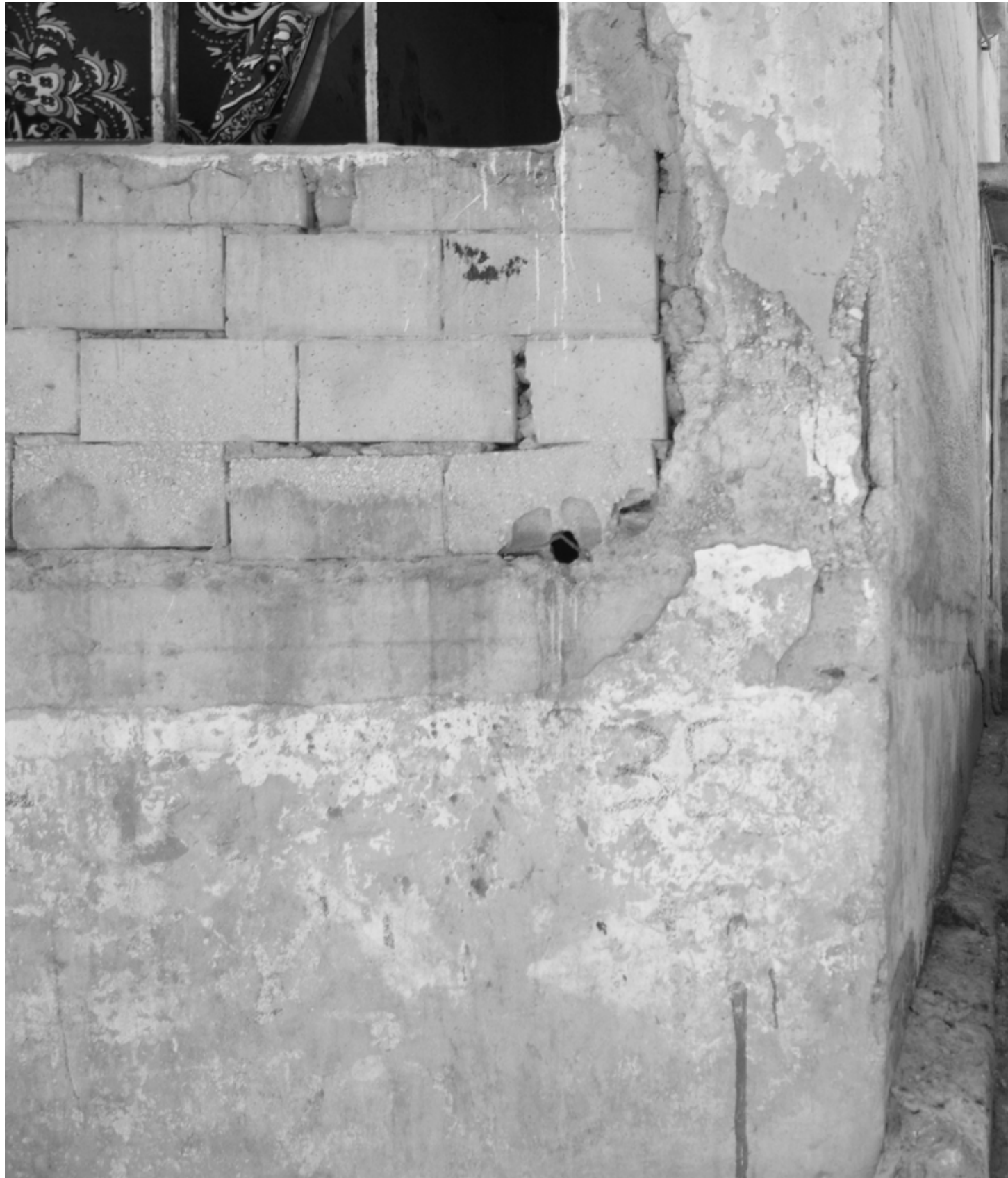






57 A Man Walking in Al Hussein Refugee Camp. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017













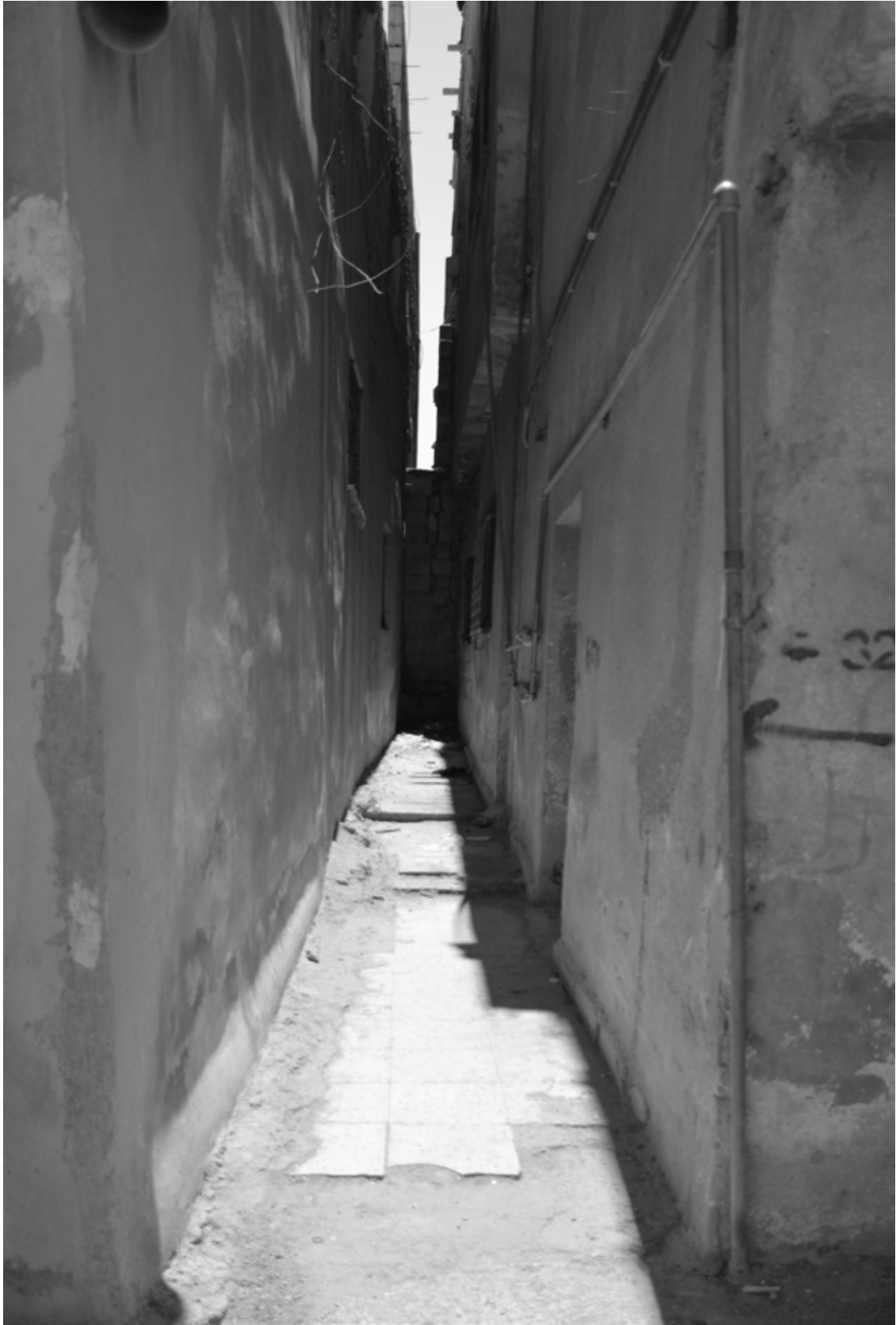
59 A Family walking through Qalandia Refugee Camp. Qalandia Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017





60 A Woman in an Alley of Al Wehdad Refugee Camp. Al Wehdad Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017





61 An Alley. Al Baqa'a Refugee Camp. Amman, Jordan. June 2017







### *Al Walaja - An Enclave in the Seam Zone*

Each Palestinian structure presents itself as a potential ruin.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Said

On the 21st of May 2017, I visit Al Walaja village—the village from which the Haganah forces exiled my great grandfather during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

A family member drives us from Kafr 'Akab to the village. The closer we get to our destination, the wider the streets become. Green hills and valleys surround the streets on both sides. We drive by a group of Israeli female cyclists. A few minutes later, we pass by a small playground; two children play on the swings, while their mother sits on the side to watch them. “Israelis are planning to create many more parks in the area on the lands they confiscate from villagers. They are constructing a large Israeli national park, a new aquarium, restaurants, and more playgrounds for their children.” the driver tells us this.

Al Walaja village is home of beautiful landscapes, water wells, and fresh water springs. After the occupation, Israel confiscated most of the village’s fertile agricultural lands along with its water sources. Palestinian villagers and shepherds can no longer find access to many of these natural sources. They can no longer sustain the quality and way of life they had before the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

We drive up one of hills to get to our destination. The West Bank Wall appears on one side of the road cutting through agricultural lands and encircling Har Gilo—another illegal Israeli settlement built on Palestinian lands. A few minutes later, we arrive to a spacious house built on one of the hilltops in the village. We meet our hosting family—an extended relative on my father’s side, his wife, and his four children.

Later that afternoon, we all go for a drive through the winding roads of Al Walaja village. We drive for a few minutes and then stop to climb a very steep hill. When we get to the top, the man points at the opposite hill across the deep valley and says, “That is where the old village used to be.” He tells us that during the 1948 war, Israeli forces destroyed the old village of Al Walaja, demolishing it to the ground after ethnically cleansing it of its Palestinian residents. Israeli forces dumped the building pieces in the valley; only a few partially destroyed structures remain as evidence that the old village of Al Walaja once existed.



1 Said, *After the last sky*, 38





When Israelis confiscated the old village, they forced all the families out of their homes. My grandparents went back to their house one day to get what was left of their belongings. When they saw Israeli soldiers, they ran out of fear; my grandmother started running and hid in the outside storage unit—that they built out of mud back then. Before my grandpa could run away, they shot him.

A Palestinian woman  
Al Walaja  
May 21, 2017

Most villagers who still live in Al Walaja left their homes during the 1948 war to settle on the other side of the valley. They now live on the hill opposite their old village— an area they refer to as the *new Al Walaja*. Others, like my great grandfather, fled the old village in 1948 to settle in a refugee camp in Jerusalem. He then moved to live in Hebron until the six-day war in 1967.

Over the past seventy years of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Israel divides Al Walaja village multiple times. In 1949, the Armistice agreements signed between the armies of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, recognizes a formal line—the Green Line—as the border for the State of Israel. This initial border divides Al Walaja village into two parts. It incorporated almost seventy percent of the Palestinian village lands into the new State of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

The Green Line separates the Palestinian State from the Israeli State until the 1967 six-day war. After the war, Israel annexes more Palestinian lands to build and expand Israeli settlements. In addition, Israel expands the boundaries of the Jerusalem Municipality to include more of Al Walaja lands. During this Israeli expansion, Israel does not include Palestinian villagers already living on Al Walaja lands. Villagers do not get Jerusalem ID cards. After expanding the Jerusalem Municipality to include more of Al Walaja lands, Israeli authorities consider villagers and native residents of the village as illegal residents of the area.

The Israeli expansion and the shift in municipal boundaries affect the lives of Al Walaja villagers. Israel denies Palestinian villagers living within the Jerusalem Municipality the right to obtain a building permit.<sup>3</sup> In 1985, Israeli authorities begin to demolish Palestinian houses

<sup>2</sup> Palestinians on statehood, Harriet Sherwood, The Guardian, 14 September 2011

<sup>3</sup> "Al Walaja Miniprofile." UNRWA. January 01, 2010.



built without an Israeli building permit.<sup>4</sup> Israel continues to demolish Palestinian houses until this day. More Palestinian families become homeless refugees.

Israel continues to divide Al Walaja village, as well as the rest of the West Bank, into fragmented zones. In 1995, by the end of the Oslo process, the Oslo Accords classifies the lands of Al Walaja village into Area B lands and Area C lands. Lands located in Area B fall under Palestinian civic rule and Israeli security control while those located in Area C fall under Israeli civic and security control.

Israelis tell us that we are free to build a house, then, they put too many restrictions on the process. We cannot get a building permit. They make it almost impossible for a Palestinian to build on a land that he already owns. They re-zone the land if they have to; everything becomes 'Area C'. We build, nonetheless. Then the Israelis come with their bulldozers and demolish our buildings. Freedom to us is an illusion.

A Palestinian man  
Al Walaja  
May 21, 2017

Today, Israel continues to annex the Palestinian lands of Al Walaja and destroy Palestinian homes, forcing residents out of the area. In 2006, Israel confirms its plans to build the Wall around Al Walaja village. The wall—this new border between the two states—diverges greatly from the initial path of the Green Line. It moves further into the West Bank, confiscating more of the Palestinian land.

The Wall separates villagers from their agricultural lands. It deprives them of their only source of income. "Every time I see a helicopter I wonder what land they are planning to confiscate next." A Palestinian woman tells me this. Israeli bulldozers prepare the land for the construction of the Wall. They uproot trees and destroy houses along the way. Israel continues to destroy the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank in order to expand its illegal State of Israel.

4 Ibid



65 An Old Structure. Al Walaja Village, The West Bank. May 2017

After the construction of the Wall, Al Walaja village becomes an enclave in the seam zone—a territory located between the initial Green Line and the continuously expanding West Bank wall. I walk through the village. I see destroyed homes and abandoned agricultural lands fenced with barbed wires. I learn about the Israeli strategies to, slowly, take over more of the village lands. I see evidence of the hitkansut—the strategy to “take over as much of Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians as possible.”<sup>5</sup>

Israel makes it difficult for villagers to build on, to have access to, or to farm their lands. Most landowners only get a strict permit to reach their lands individually and on a seasonal basis. According to the 1858 Ottoman Land Law, which Israeli authorities still use, after three years of non-cultivation, any uncultivated land becomes a state land. By controlling the level at which agricultural lands are cultivated and maintained in Palestinian villages, Israel is able to confiscate more lands in the West Bank. Any Palestinian taking a stand in the face of this Israeli occupation—by holding on to his land and home—is at risk of losing everything else that he owns.

Where we live, or, actually, where we are allowed to live is determined by politics. Our entire life is determined by politics. They drag you into the political conflict when they take your land, when they take away your rights, when they humiliate you; they force you to become part of the politics.

The wall was planned to pass through my land; so they came here and gave us three choices: either we sell the land, or they rent it for ninety-nine years, or we form a partnership with them. We refused all of their options. I cannot contribute to this apartheid project. I cannot be part of building a prison for my people. They arrested me multiple times. They hit my son on the head when he was only eight years old; he had to get sixteen stitches for that wound. My wife was eight-months pregnant with a boy. They dragged her to the top of the hill and beat her until she lost the baby.

They did not weaken us. We stayed here, and they had to change the path of that wall. Now, we are technically living in ‘their’ zone, and, of course, we are not allowed to

5 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 251.





66 A Tunnel Separating a Villager's House from the Rest of the Village. Al Walaja, The West Bank. May 2017

do so. They are always watching us. They made us sign an agreement of about eighteen rules we should follow. For example, we cannot have any visitors past 12 AM. They want us to submit a list of our visitor's names forty-eight hours before their visit.

We have to pay the price for insisting on staying in our home and on our land.

A Palestinian man  
Al Walaja  
May 22, 2017

### Territories

A territory is a shadow of a lemon tree  
A smell of bread made in the morning  
A sound of a familiar melody  
A song by *Fairuz* from an old radio  
A wooden table where four men sit in peace

A territory expands with time  
It diminishes with time  
Like the fragrance of a jasmine plant  
As it fills up the cold night air  
I move further as dawn breaks over the city  
Little by little  
The fragrance disappears

The tree grows  
Its shadow moves  
It repeats  
A rhythm

The tree is cut  
A territory is lost





67 The West Bank Wall. Abu Dis, The West Bank May 2017













### ***Destruction and Dispossession***

---

Do you see this building in front of you; Israel is going to knock it down. My brother lives there with his family and my elderly mother; but they have a permission to knock it down.

A Palestinian man  
Jerusalem  
May 16, 2017

During the seven decades of Israeli occupation, Israel has committed many war crimes, violated international humanitarian laws, and denied Palestinians many of their human rights. I read the list of Universal Declaration of Human Rights with my sisters during our stay in Al Walaja. Israel has repeatedly denied Palestinians almost every single right on the list.

We sat outside. There were so many of us, plus our teacher. It was really cold and we had no benches. They destroyed our school and took everything! They said it was built *illegally*. Our teacher says, that means our school was not supposed to be there! She says they think we are a threat.

A Palestinian girl  
Jerusalem  
May 16, 2017

When Palestinians protest against the Israeli occupation of the land, when they stand to fight for their rights, they become either victims or prisoners of the Israeli state. The first weeks of my stay in the West Bank coincided with the hunger strike of Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons. In Ramallah, I visit families of prisoners. I sit with former Palestinian detainees previously held in Israeli prisons. I learn about life behind Israeli prison bars.

The environment in Israeli prisons is inhumane. Palestinian prisoners have no rights, not even the basic human rights. Israeli authorities are allowed to take away any of our rights if they feel the need to do so. They take away our family visits. On rare occurrences, when they do let our families visit, the Israeli soldiers disgrace our mothers, wives, sisters. This is how they torture us—the prisoners. They do anything to break us down. To break our strength, our souls, and to make us suffer.





Most prisoners are held for months, sometimes even for years, in administrative detention. For forty days, prisoners have been on a strike. They ate nothing. For forty days, all they had was water and salt—to keep their intestines from rotting. They did not go on strike to get out of prison. They only wanted to get some of their basic human rights.

A Palestinian man  
Ramallah  
May 15, 2017

Israeli soldiers humiliate not only those in Israeli prisons, but their families as well. Another Palestinian man tells me:

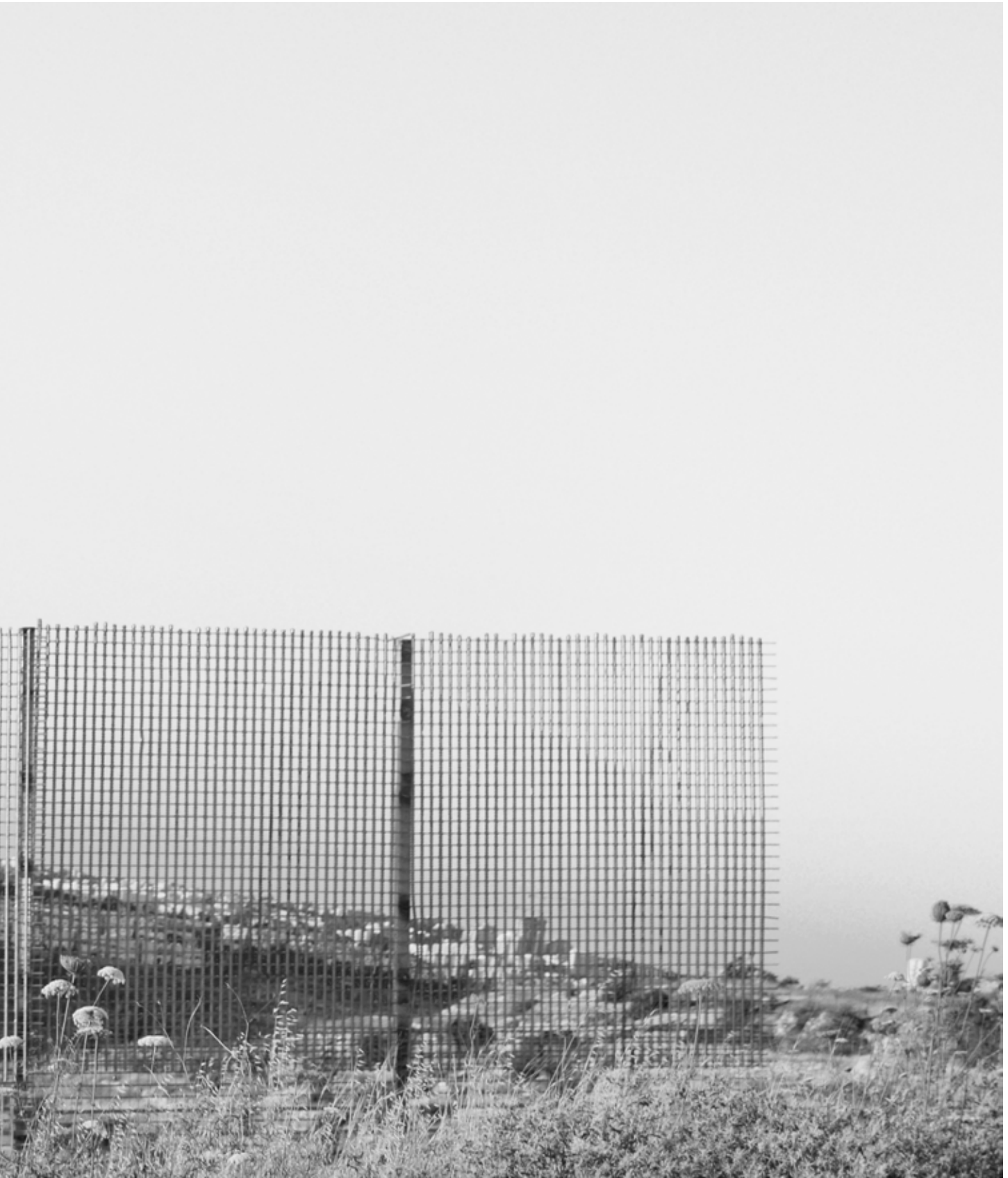
Families of Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons have to be strip searched before Israeli soldiers allow them to visit. The soldiers can deny the mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of prisoners their family visits if they refuse to be strip-searched. We cannot agree to that. They know Palestinians refuse to be strip-searched, so they deny our visits and force us to go back to our homes.

In prison, Palestinian detainees live on their own expense. Our families have to send us money so that we could buy food. Israelis do not give us—the prisoners—anything. If we ask for something as simple as a glass of water, they humiliate and degrade us before they bring it. When families send us money, we buy food from inside the prison. This means that Israelis profit from any food we buy. Even in prison, they try to make a profit.

A Palestinian man  
Ramallah  
May 15, 2017













73 A Chair. Al Walaja Village, The West Bank. May 2017

### *Places of Refuge*

Refugee camps exist only in the West Bank because people fled their homes in 1948 when their lands were occupied by Israel. We left our homes to seek refuge in the West Bank. Almost every Palestinian city here contains two or three refugee camps. People in the camps have built a community based on many shared memories. They will not leave and go live somewhere else. Every now and then Israeli soldiers invade our neighbourhood. They storm into our houses to keep us living in a state of fear. I have three sons; the youngest is six years old. I think he got used to this life by now. It would be much easier for us to live in a nearby country; but we chose this life. We cannot leave Palestine.

A Palestinian woman  
Qalandia Refugee Camp  
May 30, 2017

The older generation of Palestinians lost their lands at some point during the conflict. Some continue to lose their homes to the occupation. Others have lost their mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, and children to the violence of Israeli attacks on Palestinian properties.

If this window had lips, it would tell you about its past. It would tell you how we all slept in this small room, nine children, my mother and my father. We had nothing but a blanket covering us from the chaos outside. It was a day in 1967 when we left Jerusalem to come to this place. I remember how empty the area was. We came here leaving everything behind us. We had a house close to the dome of the rock. My father had a small shop in the old city. We had a tree that my mother planted. We had friends and neighbors there. We had good memories. We left everything behind. We left the house we were born in, and came here to escape the war.

A Palestinian Woman  
Kafr 'Aqab  
May 15, 2017

Palestinians hold on to the memories of their past. They narrate them repeatedly in an attempt to prove that they were once there—in a land that they can no longer enter.





74 Old Window in Qalandia Refugee Camp. Qalandia Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017

It was pitch dark. Four hundred people in an underground shelter. We stayed six days with no light. It was a prison. We were terrified. Women, men, and many children. I was very young then.

It was my turn to go upstairs this time. We ran out of food. I was told to get anything left in the fridge so we could survive a little longer. We did not know how long the war would last. No one knew.

I left the shelter and ran upstairs to our house. I was at the top of the stairs when a bomb fell in the middle of the house. I held onto the wall for dear life.

I ran back to the shelter. It was pitch dark.

That day, Israeli soldiers came to our shelter. They knocked viciously on the door. They wanted to take our young men, unless we all surrender and raise a white flag. We had nothing. We were all civilians.

My father placed his *Kofeyye*<sup>1</sup> on a wooden stick to make a white flag. He slowly opened the shelter door and placed the flag outside.

The war was over. We lost everything. We were four hundred people. We stayed for six days with no light.

We could not open our eyes after we got out.

I saw my house get blown into pieces.

These are six days we would never forget.

A Palestinian man  
Jerusalem  
May 16, 2017

As the Israeli occupation of Palestine continues, Palestinian children begin to form memories of loss and humiliation caused by Israeli soldiers before they can comprehend the politics of the Israeli occupation. “If they wanted peace, they would try to make the Palestinian child happy,” a Palestinian man tells me; but how could Israelis do that when they consider every Palestinian child a threat to their nation. How could they “make the Palestinian child happy?”

1 Traditional Arab scarf worn by men. The Palestinian *Kofeyye* is usually white in colour with a black pattern.





All Israeli soldiers want to do is humiliate us. It was teacher's day. My little brother—who was in grade three back then—bought a flower and a small present for his teacher. We had to cross the checkpoint every day on our way to school. When we got there, they let me pass but they stopped my brother because they *felt like it*. They told him that he cannot pass through the checkpoint above ground, but if he wants to go to school, he can use the underground sewage system to get to the other side.

A Palestinian girl  
Kafr 'Akab  
May 18, 2017

***22 May 1948 – Memories of a Massacre at Tantura<sup>1</sup>***

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“I wanted to forget what happened here  
But I could not.”

He said to me

“We did not agree to surrender  
We slept like we do every night,  
In peace.  
There were no drums of war  
There was no sound of an attack  
But they came.”

They came.

“The executed men,  
Husbands, brothers, sons  
In front of their families  
In front of their children  
All of their children.  
They shot them in the head  
Seven men, twelve, ninety  
Stood against the wall  
Facing the wall  
They shot them in the head  
In front of their children  
All of their children.”

“The village fell  
Their dead bodies lay on the beach  
In the narrow streets  
In the houses

They resisted the troops  
But they were shot  
In the head  
In front of their children  
All of their children.”

“Two of us stood here  
To dig their grave

1 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 133



230 dead men,  
One by one  
We buried them.”

“The scent of their bodies  
Was that of the land  
As if they prepared themselves to reunite with it  
As if they longed for that day to come  
As if their wounds were blossoms of spring  
As if they were the life of this land”

In this grave  
A thirteen-year old boy sleeps beside his father  
He had dreams of flying his kite in the morning  
He had dreams  
Simple dreams.”

“But the troops came  
That night  
They came.  
They burned the dream  
And buried it here  
In silence.”







76 Bedroom Window. Shuafat Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017



**LOVE**  
*Four*





We have on this earth what makes life worth living:  
April's hesitation,  
the aroma of bread at dawn,  
a woman's opinion of men,  
the works of Aeschylus,  
the beginning of love,  
grass on a stone,  
mothers living on a flute's sigh  
and the invaders' fears of memories.

Mahmoud Darwish  
On This Earth







**The Violins Weep<sup>1</sup>**

They took him away from me. Two days before our wedding,  
they killed him.

A Palestinian woman  
Kufur Akab  
May 17, 2017

I sit on the rocks of Al Walaja village. It is quiet. A very quiet afternoon in the West Bank. I gaze at the blue sky. My grandmother makes tea in the kitchen inside. My sisters play soccer with the neighbour's children. Time passes, slowly.

A bird flies close to the house. It stands on a black electricity wire hanging above the side street. The bird screams, disrupting the afternoon's silence. The bird flies back and forth between her nest and the wire. It screams. The children stop playing. They come to look at the bird. "I saw the cat eat a baby bird a few minutes ago. I tried to save it. The bird fell from the nest to the floor. I couldn't save it." One of the children explains. The mother bird, still screams, searches, flies back and forth between her nest and the wire looking for her offspring.

I stay in the village for two more days. I meet with Palestinian mothers who, also, lost their sons to a violent predator—the Israeli army.

I prayed my morning prayers. Took a shower. The TV was on. I felt a strange heaviness in my heart; I did not know the news yet. His name was mentioned in the headlines later on, and then we got a call. My son was killed.

There was heavy knocking on the door. I didn't get up from my bed. The knocking continued.

—She reaches her arms out the window screaming—  
he was killed—

The military surrounded our house. I started walking back and forth, and then again. I didn't know what I was doing. They say that they regret killing him. What good is that?

A Palestinian woman  
Al Walaja  
May 21, 2017

<sup>1</sup> An excerpt from Mahmoud Darwish's poem, *The Violins*





I live in the West Bank for a month. Every day I grow closer to the land, closer to the people of the land. Every day, they welcome me into a new house, a new family. Every day, Palestinians surround me with their love, their generosity, and their compassion. In their struggle and in their pain, every day, Palestinians, teach me life.

Every day, a Palestinian mother wakes up before sunrise to pray for her only son. She prays for his road to be smooth. She prays for him to return home. She prays for God to protect him.

These days we congratulate our sons for coming home safe every day. When our sons leave the house in the morning, we consider them gone forever. We expect that anything could happen. When they return home, they are reborn. They are given another chance to live.

We know that here, tombstones stand to carry the names of our children.

A Palestinian woman  
Qalandia Refugee Camp  
May 30, 2017

Walls in the West Bank are collages of painted portraits, names, and lines of poetry. Walls are reminders of every Palestinian martyr killed by Israeli forces. In Aida camp, a Palestinian refugee camp located to the north of Bethlehem, I stand before a wall painted in black. I read the names of over two hundred and fifty children killed by Israel in July 2014. Over two hundred and fifty Palestinian children killed. Civilians. A war crime. I read the names. I photograph the wall.





# WHEN OUR CHILDREN ARE KILLED

Children killed during Israeli massacre in Palestine July 2014

- 231- أنس بكافي
- 232- راسي فديح
- 233- محمد البشيتي
- 234- محمد ابو مهيبة
- 235- هسيق رشوان
- 236- روان بنو يدان
- 237- هاني ياسفر
- 238- دعاء ابو
- 239- مريم البنت
- 240- سيري مهيبة
- 241- احمد الكفارت
- 242- عبد الشنباري
- 243- نبيل الاستيل
- 244- سليمان الاستيل
- 245- عبد الهادي
- 246- محمد صادق البر
- 247- انسن قدسي
- 248- ثامر مشالي
- 249- عادل عامر
- 250- تامر الكيل
- 251- وليد
- 252- نور
- 253- احمد
- 254- ميسرة درازين
- 255- محمد درازين
- 256- احمد
- 257- طاهر
- 260- محمد
- 261- محمد
- 262- محمد
- 263- محمد
- 264- محمد

عالم الدم يدهي







عندما ليس الطفل

- |     |                   |     |                  |    |                |    |                   |
|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------|----|----------------|----|-------------------|
| 136 | ياسين الزواوي     | 100 | عاصم عمار        | 31 | ساهر أبو ناموس | 1  | محمد أبو نصير     |
| 137 | معاذ حيدر         | 101 | سامية خليل       | 32 | بندقي أبو سلوة | 2  | أحمد مهدي         |
| 170 | فاطمة الحاج       | 102 | إيمان عمار       | 66 | ريثون أبو جامع | 3  | أحمد حبيب         |
| 138 | عبد قوارع         | 103 | أبراهيم عمار     | 67 | فاطمة أبو جامع | 4  | محمد المصري       |
| 171 | عبد قوارع         | 104 | محمد هزيم        | 68 | سهيلة أبو جامع | 5  | دينيا أحمد        |
| 140 | أحمد عزام         | 105 | عبد الله الدراجة | 69 | مهينا أبو جامع | 6  | محمد عريف         |
| 172 | محمود أبو النضال  | 106 | تالة العنطوة     | 70 | توفيق أبو جامع | 7  | محمد مالك         |
| 173 | حسام أبو قنيس     | 107 | لمحمد عكرمة      | 71 | جودت أبو جامع  | 8  | محمد عيسى         |
| 174 | عبد الله أبو حنين | 108 | شهرين عيار       | 72 | فؤاد أبو جامع  | 9  | قاسم عزده         |
| 175 | دلال صيام         | 109 | محمد عيار        | 73 | محمد الخلاق    | 10 | محمد عاشور        |
| 176 | غيداء صيام        | 110 | غاده عيار        | 74 | سراج الخلاق    | 11 | أحمد ياسين        |
| 177 | مصطفى صيام        | 111 | محمد عيار        | 75 | سراج الخلاق    | 12 | حسين كوارع        |
| 178 | أحمد صيام         | 112 | محمد عيار        | 76 | كنعان الخلاق   | 13 | محمد كوارع        |
| 179 | عبد الرحمن صيام   | 113 | دينا حمادة       | 77 | سراج الخلاق    | 14 | باسم كوارع        |
| 180 | دينا صيام         | 114 | خديجة صيام       | 78 | سراج الخلاق    | 15 | محمد التواصرة     |
| 181 | دينا صيام         | 115 | خديجة صيام       | 79 | سراج الخلاق    | 16 | نضال الزواهره     |
| 182 | دينا صيام         | 116 | خديجة صيام       | 80 | سراج الخلاق    | 17 | رينيه القفر       |
| 183 | دينا صيام         | 117 | خديجة صيام       | 81 | سراج الخلاق    | 18 | أسيل المصري       |
| 184 | دينا صيام         | 118 | خديجة صيام       | 82 | سراج الخلاق    | 19 | مريم الخليل       |
| 185 | دينا صيام         | 119 | خديجة صيام       | 83 | سراج الخلاق    | 20 | طارق الخليل       |
| 186 | دينا صيام         | 120 | خديجة صيام       | 84 | سراج الخلاق    | 21 | سعد الخليل        |
| 187 | دينا صيام         | 121 | خديجة صيام       | 85 | سراج الخلاق    | 22 | سعد الخليل        |
| 188 | دينا صيام         | 122 | خديجة صيام       | 86 | سراج الخلاق    | 23 | أحمد الخليل       |
| 189 | دينا صيام         | 123 | خديجة صيام       | 87 | سراج الخلاق    | 24 | مؤيد الأسطل       |
| 190 | دينا صيام         | 124 | خديجة صيام       | 88 | سراج الخلاق    | 25 | اسماعيل جامع      |
| 191 | دينا صيام         | 125 | خديجة صيام       | 89 | سراج الخلاق    | 26 | عبد الله أبو غزال |
| 192 | دينا صيام         | 126 | خديجة صيام       | 90 | سراج الخلاق    | 27 | محمد فراونه       |
| 193 | دينا صيام         | 127 | خديجة صيام       | 91 | سراج الخلاق    | 28 | ياسين الهاطوق     |
| 194 | دينا صيام         | 128 | خديجة صيام       | 92 | سراج الخلاق    | 29 | عبد الرحمن خفان   |
| 195 | دينا صيام         | 129 | خديجة صيام       | 93 | سراج الخلاق    | 30 | نور النعدي        |
| 196 | دينا صيام         | 130 | خديجة صيام       | 94 | سراج الخلاق    |    |                   |
| 197 | دينا صيام         | 131 | خديجة صيام       | 95 | سراج الخلاق    |    |                   |
| 198 | دينا صيام         | 132 | خديجة صيام       | 96 | سراج الخلاق    |    |                   |
| 199 | دينا صيام         | 133 | خديجة صيام       | 97 | سراج الخلاق    |    |                   |
|     |                   | 134 | خديجة صيام       | 98 | سراج الخلاق    |    |                   |
|     |                   | 135 | خديجة صيام       | 99 | سراج الخلاق    |    |                   |

80 Names of Palestinian children killed by Israel, July 2014. Aida Refugee Camp, The West Bank. May 2017

They invaded our home every night looking for him. He was young, and educated. He wrote articles. He wrote poetry. They did not want him to write. They invaded our home every night looking for him. We haven't seen him in so many years. His father and I missed him.

They found him about two months ago. They invaded his room. They shot him. His body was full of holes. We buried him here. At night, Israeli soldiers went to his grave. They were scared that his family would take his body out. Could they have been scared of the corpse!

A Palestinian woman  
The West Bank  
May 22, 2017

During our stay in Kufur 'Aqab, neighbours in the adjacent building celebrate their daughter's engagement. The music fills the neighbourhood. It is a small house engagement party; the women dance and sing until 2:00 AM. Shortly after midnight, violent clashes take place near Qalandia checkpoint. The sound of gunshots, as loud as the music, continues for half an hour past midnight. The noise of war becomes a backdrop to Palestinian activities. The clashes stop. The celebration continues.

My wedding was two months after the 1967 war. Many girls were kidnapped after the war. Some say it was Israeli soldiers that kidnapped them. My father was scared that his girls would be kidnapped as well, so he married us off. On my wedding day, I was in the car, crossing to Jerusalem. Dead bodies were on the street. We had no wedding party. I was not wearing a fancy white dress. The soldiers were very strict with us. They controlled who came in and out of Jerusalem. They did not believe I was a bride; I did not look like one. After many questions, they let me in. Now it has been fifty years, and I still long to wear a fancy white wedding dress.

A Palestinian Woman  
Kafr 'Aqab  
May 15, 2017





Before my trip to the West Bank, I was not aware of how difficult it is to live, and to protect those we love, in the *homeland*.

On a hot summer afternoon during my stay in Al Walaja village, the Palestinian children of the area walk me to see one of the oldest olive trees in the world—al Badawi's olive tree. Al Badawi, which—when translated from Arabic—means the nomad, is a well-known name in the village. We walk for fifteen minutes to get to the site. We enter through a small gate into a terraced land of olive and fruit trees. A few minutes later, we meet with the Palestinian farmer who maintains and protects this land on a daily basis. We walk together through the sloped site to the get to the ancient olive tree.

This tree, the Palestinian farmer tells me, is about 4000 years old. He begins to talk about the roots of the tree, its olives, its original trunk—the mother as he refers to it—the branches, the generations of Palestinians who maintained this tree, and the history of the land.

We want to limit the damage of the occupation; we are willing to live in a tent on our land. It is a matter of principle. We have music, cuisine, culture. If you go back to old history books, you will see Palestine. We have always been here. It is easier for them to leave. For them, this is just a piece of land.

A Palestinian man  
Al Walaja  
May 21, 2017

We sit in the shade of the olive tree while some European tourists walk around it. They photograph its details—the tree trunk, the leaves. Some Palestinian children climb the tree trunks; after a while, they begin to play hide-and-peek with one another. Life begins to take place in the generous shade of the olive tree. The tree stands tall. Its roots fixed deep in the land.

They watch us everyday. They record our every move. They torture us. They make us question every bit of our existence, our identity. They hurt our children—scars, broken bones. They leave them with enough nightmares to haunt them for a lifetime. They shower us with tear gas bombs and turn our homes into crumbled concrete. They leave nothing unharmed.



It is hard to stay strong—to stand firm when they shake the ground beneath our feet; but do not listen to them when they say stop sacrificing. How do they expect you to let go of everything you are! Whatever they do, do not let them strip you of your identity.

A Palestinian man

Al Walaja

May 21, 2017

**Listen to Your Body**

Listen to your body  
It will tell you  
How many more  
wars  
It can take.

It will tell you  
how many more bullets  
can go through it  
How many more missiles  
can be planted  
in it  
how many more aches  
can cut through it  
It will tell you...







83 An Alleyway. Al Baqa'a Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017







84 Children Playing. Al Wehdat Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017









86 Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017



87 Children Playing. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017







88 A Doorstep. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman. Jordan. June 2017



### Our Women

My husband is a prisoner in the Israeli prison. He is serving a twenty-year sentence. Two years ago, we decided to have a child. The only way to do that was to smuggle his sperm out of prison. I got pregnant that way. Many of us, the wives of Palestinian prisoners, try to get pregnant by smuggling our husband's sperm samples out of prison. After our children are born, Israel does not recognize them as having any identity. To them, these children are illegitimate. My husband cannot see his child because Israel does not give our newborn the right to visit his father. We want to break the Israeli prison. We will continue to reproduce; it is how we resist the Israeli occupation.

A Palestinian Woman  
Ramallah  
May 15, 2017

Palestinian women are the storytellers. They are the narrators of the past and the most trusted connection to our forbidden history. Our grandmothers, our mothers, and our daughters hold the history of Palestine on their shoulders. They make it their responsibility to connect the Palestinian history to every generation.

Every Palestinian woman resists the Israeli occupation by continuing to live. She carries life. She refuses to let the occupation destroy her will to exist.

Whatever they do, they cannot occupy our language. They cannot occupy our will to wake up in the morning, nor the Palestinian blood that runs in our veins. These things are beyond their reach.

A Palestinian woman  
Al Walaja  
May 22, 2017

Palestinian women teach strength, courage, love. And, like poetry, love is a way to resist the Israeli occupation.

Israeli soldiers were arresting our men. Every man was a threat to them—a threat to their existence. Some men jumped from roof to roof and ran away. Others hid in-between two mattresses, or some folded covers, and asked their mothers and

***A Letter from A Palestinian Woman, Hizma, The West Bank***

---

You build a wall  
We dig a tunnel.  
You build a highway  
Above our village  
We dig a tunnel  
Under yours.

You kill one of our children  
My womb will carry a child  
Every year.

I will bring my children to live  
Here,  
On this land  
Under this roof.

We will build the roof  
After you destroy it.  
We will carry it with our bare hands  
And pass it on to our grandchildren.

You invade our homes  
You force us out.  
You take our land.  
But, like an ancient olive tree,  
Our roots are anchored here.  
Wait for us  
When we come.

And,  
Every time  
you build a wall,  
We  
will  
dig a tunnel!

children to sit on top of them so that Israeli soldiers do not see them. When soldiers found our men, they shot them. I cannot live without my husband. I would do anything to protect him.

A Palestinian woman  
Jerusalem  
May 16, 2017

During times of escalated conflicts in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian women become the safe haven for their families. The women become the shelter. Their bodies replace the destroyed homes. Their words defend against Israeli violent attacks.

I lived during all the Israeli wars on Gaza. The most vivid war was that during Ramadan, 2014. Israeli helicopters were bombing the city. The bombing moved closer to our house. My mother asked all of us to move to the corridor of our house. She closed all the bedroom doors. It was very dark. The only light we had was the very faint light of a candle. The F-16 fighters were so loud, as if they were right above our building. The bombs destroyed the mosque right beside our house. The bombing continued. My father blew out the candle and told us to sleep. My younger sister was the most scared out of all of us. My mother held her through the night. We were praying to stay safe.

A Palestinian Woman  
Hamilton, Ontario  
September 17, 2017

Palestinian women are the smiles against the sound of gunshots. They protect life. They teach life. Palestinian women are the celebrations, the joyful rhythms, the blissful melodies of the *homeland*.

We cannot spend our entire life being sad. We love living in Palestine. We love to party, sing, and dance. Our children love to play. We love to celebrate, especially during Eid. Israeli authorities make it easier for us to get permits during Eid, so most of us go to pray at the Dome of the Rock. I go with my

**Here, on this Land**

Here, a mother sits.  
She sings a mawwal,  
She believes that her words  
Could build a safe home  
For a night.

She has nothing left,  
But this night  
Because here,  
On this land,  
Tomorrow is uncertain.

Here,  
Women run barefoot  
Through camps  
They search for their little ones  
Under the rubble.

On this land,  
Old men mourn their sons.  
The shadows of the city  
Dance  
On our flesh.

Here,  
We live.  
Here,  
We search for life,  
In the sunlight falling  
Upon the concrete wall.

Here,  
We weave a life  
Today.  
Because on this land,  
Tomorrow is uncertain.

son and his three children. We take big candy jars and start handing out candy to people after Eid prayer. The kids love it.

A Palestinian woman  
Kafr 'Aqab  
May 14, 2017

Each day I spend with Palestinians affirms the strength and solidarity of the Palestinian communities—weather they are in the West Bank or scattered in refugee camps across the neighbouring countries. Out of their suffering, the Palestinians' love for life, for the land, and for each other, grows deeper.

One evening in Al Walaja village, my grandmother receives a call from a relative in Amman. After the two women exchange greetings, my grandmother asks, as every Palestinian woman usually asks, about the kids.

How are your kids? My grandmother asks.  
They kiss your hand. They miss you, and they miss the land. Same old.  
The woman answers.

Al Walaja  
May 22, 2017

For the first time during these conversations to the homeland, I am on this side of the phone call—in Palestine. All my life I saw Palestine as a mother, and *us*, the Palestinians, as her exiled children. We are bound to come back one day.



**On Exile**

In our exile  
We learn to dance upon disappointments  
We teach ourselves to walk alone  
We try not to long for the land.

In our exile  
We walk at our own pace  
We let our eyes gaze at the walls  
At the streets,  
At the trees,  
And we try not to long for the land.

In our exile  
We try not to sing old songs  
Not to read newspapers  
Not to memorize poems.  
We try to live  
We struggle to live  
In our exile  
We try not to long for the land.



89 Window. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman. Jordan. June 2017

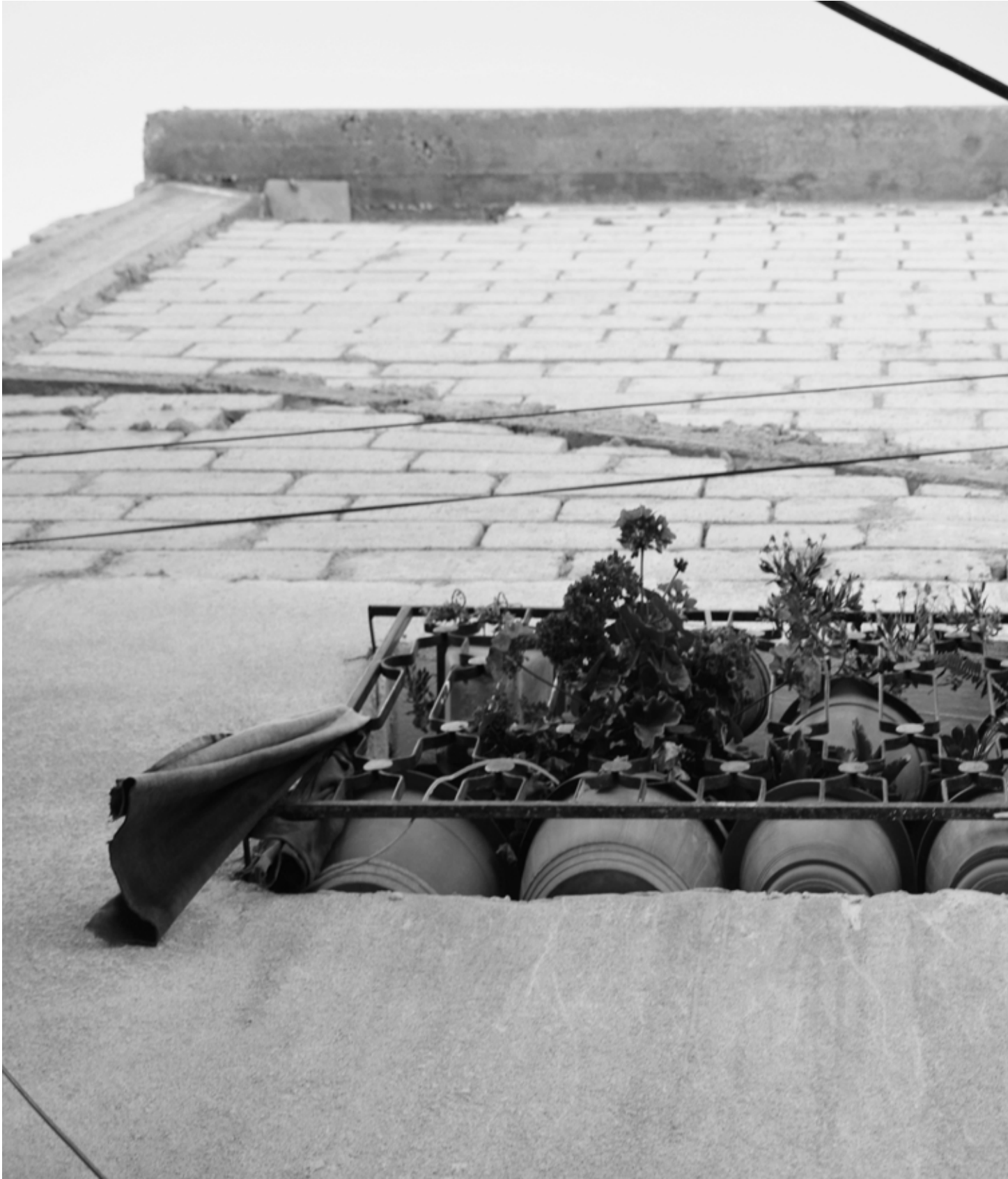
































95 An Empty Bread Cart. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman. Jordan. June 2017



**DEPARTURE**  
*Five*





Here on the slopes of hills,  
Facing the dusk and the cannon of time,  
Close to the gardens of broken shadows,  
We do what prisoners do,  
And what the jobless do:  
We cultivate hope.

Mahmoud Darwish  
Under Siege













### *The Almond Blossoms*<sup>1</sup>

I sit at home with some family and friends, some of whom live in Canada while others visit from the United States. Three different conversations go on at the same time. After a while, we all begin to talk about the real-estate market. Some of us own a home, while others are aiming to buy one. During the discussion, one of my friends says,

Maybe this is part of who we are now. We try to buy a house wherever we settle. We try to own something because we fantasize about permanently living in a place. The house becomes our territory. The moment we get to a new place we try to put our foot down.

A Palestinian Woman  
Hamilton, Ontario  
April, 29 2017

Her words accurately describe the lives of many exiled Palestinians. After living as refugees for many generations, we begin to settle in various places around the world. We buy a property, we create a Palestinian community, and we build a small home in our exile. We try to become permanent residents of a place rather than continuously moving nomads. Edward Said explains this as a desire to 'attain' some sort of a 'national fulfilment'. In his book, *After the Last Sky*, Said writes:

Dispossession and dispersion have meant a fundamental discrepancy between 'us' and wherever each one of us no happens to be. Each of us bears the loss of place and of history acutely, the given we share at the root of our various lives. There is no way for us to feel the accumulations of our past except as a gap, an apparently unchanging abyss separating us from the national fulfilment we have not yet been able to attain.<sup>2</sup>

In two weeks, I leave to visit Palestine for the first time. I leave to visit the home that I only know through poems, stories, and photographs. I leave to become part of *my* Palestinian land, *my* Palestinian heritage, and *my* Palestinian people.

1 A group of paintings by Vincent van Gogh. A reference Mahmoud Darwish's book, *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*. In many cultures, almond blossoms represent hope.

2 Said, *After the Last Sky*, 149

***Palestinian Greetings***

One kiss on the right cheek,  
Another on the left,  
And one more to the right.

## About Coffee

May 14, 2017  
4:43 Pm,

I enter the West Bank through the Allenby Bridge Terminal. Divisions are clear. Borders are visible.

In the evening, I leave the house to drive around the West Bank. After sunset, divisions in the land start to become obscure. Time passes. The dark veil of the night covers the West Bank. The lights of houses are on. From a distance, I cannot distinguish the houses in refugee camps from those in settlements. Layers of history overlap, layers of memory, layers of truth.

We stand on the same ground, a holy ground to both. We occupy a common space. We breathe the same air. We aim to live. We exist. “We are not taught to hate, we are taught to fight for our rights, until our last breath.”<sup>1</sup> A Palestinian boy tells me.

Most Palestinian and Israeli people live as strangers to one another. Prior to the Israeli occupation, people of the land stood as one—people of the Holy Land. However, after the Zionist movement, most people began to identify with the extreme parties on either side. Others, on the other hand, still try to bridge the gap caused by the political conflict in the area.

I work with Israelis. No politics involved. We use each other as mediators. We see the other side through one another. My co-worker is scared to go purchase coffee from the old city. Whenever I go there, I bring him back some coffee.

A Palestinian man  
Samiramis  
May 16, 2017

A bag of Arabic coffee is enough to bring two people from the opposing sides together. In the Middle East, coffee is associated with celebrations, hospitality, and generosity. To Palestinians living in the West Bank, the aroma of coffee is a sign of life, it is a refuge from the war—an escape from the daily hardships. When a Palestinian brews coffee in the morning, this fresh aroma of life fills the room; it occupies it. Coffee is the taste of peace during wars and conflicts—it is the taste of security and refuge.

1 A Palestinian boy, Al Walaja, May 22, 2017





Many Palestinians consider the mere act of making coffee during war as an act of resistance. In his book, *Memory for Forgetfulness*, Mahmoud Darwish writes,

They can aim sea, sky, and earth at me, but they cannot root the aroma of coffee out of me. I shall make my coffee now. I will drink the coffee now. Right now, I will be sated with the aroma of coffee, that I may at least distinguish myself from a sheep and live one more day, or die, with the aroma of coffee all around me.<sup>2</sup>

In another passage, Darwish uses coffee as an invitation to start a dialogue with the other—the soldiers outside his doorway. In his poem, *Under Siege*, he writes,

You who stand in the doorway, come in,  
Drink Arabic coffee with us  
And you will sense that you are men like us  
You who stand in the doorways of houses  
Come out of our morningtimes,  
We shall feel reassured to be  
Men like you!  
...  
[To a killer] If you had contemplated the victim's face  
And thought it through, ...  
you would have been freed from the reason for the rifle  
And you would have changed your mind: this is not the way  
to find one's identity again.  
...  
[To another killer:] If you left the fetus thirty days  
in its mother's womb, things might have been different.  
The occupation might be over and this suckling infant  
would forget the time of the siege  
and grow up a healthy child  
reading at school, with one of your daughters  
the ancient history of Asia.  
They might even fall in love  
and give birth to a daughter [she would be Jewish by birth].  
What, then, have you done now?

2 Darwish, *Memory for Forgetfulness*. 17



Your daughter is now a widow  
and your granddaughter an orphan.  
What have you done with your scattered family?  
And how have you slain three pigeons in one shot?<sup>3</sup>

Coffee and poetry become mediators between both sides of the conflict. Through poetry, Palestinian and Israeli poets are able to communicate messages across the existing political boundaries. In the words of Darwish, “Against barbarity, poetry can resist only by confirming its attachment to human fragility like a blade of grass growing on a wall while armies march by.” The dialogue of poetry is particularly important in Palestine. By recognizing the other, poets begin to break down the walls in the mind of both peoples. In her book, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Julia Kristeva writes, “By recognizing him [the foreigner] within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself”. Through this ‘recognition’ of the other, poets begin to weave the human connections on both sides of the divided land. Sami Shalom Chetrit—an Israeli-born poet—responds to Darwish’s poem, *Under Siege*, in his book, *Jews*. Chetrit writes,

It’s been a while that I’ve wanted to write to you, not about  
you,  
And even now I don’t know where to start, from where  
...  
I have no such homeland, neither in writing nor on earth  
But do not pity me – that’s not it. When it comes down to it, I  
am the murderer  
And a thousand petitions against the occupation won’t help  
me, I am the soldier  
Who kills three pigeons again and again with a single shot  
And it is a matter of habit –  
...  
I read your poems as indictments and plea guilty to every  
single charge,  
Each time anew, and my thousands of protests will not help  
here, against the elders of Zionism,  
Nor the youngest, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, white and black  
– I am one of them  
Because I am not one of you, that is the miserable bottom line;

3 Excerpt from *Under Siege*, poem by Mahmoud Darwish



I – who steals in and out of your thresholds as if it were my  
own –  
Sipping from the Arab coffee,  
Kicking at the jug and shouting ‘dirty Arab!’  
Smashing each and every mirror so that I will not see in them  
The face of my grandfather, puzzling back at me, in Arabic.  
What do you mean Arabic? I am a Hebrew poet!  
I am a jailor-poet, do not believe a word I say,  
I am the jailor of myself and of my words  
Whose wings are clipped, and of my sleep that wanders,  
With no exact address to rest within,  
And you were so right – the homeland is not a suitcase;  
And you were so right – the homeland is a suitcase,  
As the Jews can explain at the airport, you there!  
What are you flying with the whole homeland in your  
suspicious suitcase?  
That’s the most basic irresponsibility, step aside please, I  
The security screener dressed up as a Middle Eastern  
intellectual  
Desperately seeking his homeland inside an Arab suitcase,  
And me, all the words of love and agony that I have written  
and that I have yet to write and also all those  
That beat against my temples, that I will never write,  
Even they will never be salvation for me and for you  
As in my life I embody your death,  
You are suffocated because I breathe,  
You are hungry because I eat,  
You are bound because I am unfettered,  
Write it down,  
Your shackles are my wings  
And how am I to write you words of peace, of coexistence,  
...  
And so, dear Arab poet, I write to you in Hebrew,  
And so, painter of eternal words, I paint for you in Jewish,  
A mural I have no wall for, nor will I ever,  
As I have come to detest your land and my land has always  
cast me out,  
And I live in exile on motes of air, not here nor there,  
Closing my eyes, touching, not touching...





101 An Old Man. Al Wehdat Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017

Look,  
How you fall asleep and the Jew inside me creeps up with  
words  
To make you feel guilty, to wheedle compassion out of you,  
And Ecclesiastes and all of his vanity of vanities will not help  
you here,  
Nor will the Song of Songs nor the poetry of poetries,  
Even the Messiah himself will not save you from me and me  
from you,  
Because I have killed him this morning,  
I rise every day to kill him anew,  
To put off the end of everything,  
For on this day atonement shall be made for you...  
For on this day he shall rise above the fear of heights and  
depths  
And he will come a-running to me on the waves of the roiling  
bog,  
On this day the worlds will be upturned and then I will stand  
Before my grandfather and my son and look them in the eye  
and say Enough!  
The tapestry of my life is Jewish lies in Arabic embroidery,  
And it is not that I took your life and made it mine,  
But rather your life was once your life until King David came  
from Poland  
And knocked us both down with just one sling shot,  
As if we were the eyes of that same Goliath,  
A single Polish shot did us both in,  
As we were busy with prayers and storytelling, baking bread  
and cracking olives,  
And other time-consuming, mind-sweetening, Arab activities  
of the heart,  
But the King desired me and raised me up  
To life, like Elisha, with a single vodka-filled blow, and sent  
me upon you,  
Sent me free and cried: The Arab is dead! The Arab is dead!  
Long live the new Jew!  
Write it down,  
I was born Jewish out of your death, the death of the Arab in  
me,

### *Contradictions*<sup>1</sup>

Because we share this sky,  
The same sky,  
We can smile at the brutal simplicity  
of lights against the darkness of night.

We can forget what we became  
And what you became,  
And smile  
So that we can wake up in the morning  
And continue to live  
As the forgotten people of the land.

<sup>1</sup> A Poem written as a reflection to the Israeli Celebrations of the Israeli Independence day, which, for Palestinians, marks Al Nakba day—the Palestinian Catastrophe. Israelis celebrate with fireworks—which can be seen by Palestinians in the surrounding areas.

And then we danced a bracing Hora and the Polack waives my  
grandfather's beard  
And points at my dark skin and sings: Here is where I came  
from, this is where I hail from,  
this is my home!  
And I was filled with new Jewish pride and sharp wolves' teeth  
and you – rooh min houn!<sup>5</sup>  
Go away!  
You refused to remove yourself from my eyes, watching to the  
Western horizon...  
You became my enemy, who peeks anew at me from the  
mirror every morning,  
And I spit and curse and kill you and kill you again,  
To rebirth myself a renovated Jew,  
And do not mistake me, I am not here to replace you,  
I am not an Orientalist, I am Oriental, ya'ani a Mizrahi Jew,  
There is no atonement or redemption for me, not in this  
lifetime,  
Perhaps on the day that your three companions overcome their  
fear of heights,  
Lo', those inquirers into the secret of life –  
Gilgamesh, Solomon, and Yeshua<sup>6</sup> (Jesus, King of the Jews) –  
And descend from the top branches of the tree of life down to  
the land of the end of all,  
On that day, which will nevermore come,  
I will tear the mask off my face,  
Benevolent of countenance and soul,  
And be who I am,  
Whoever I am I will be,  
A Jew with no Jews,  
An Arab with no Arabs,  
A suitcase with no homeland,  
A homeland with no suitcase,  
A painter with no words,  
A poet with no paint,  
A wall with no mural,  
A mural with no wall.<sup>4</sup>

***Rocks, concrete, and a Refugee Camp***

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“Can you throw a rock to the other side?  
Look how high mine can go  
I’m almost there;  
If only I were a bit taller.  
But I do practice,  
It’s fun.

I try to throw rocks to the other side  
But they never make it over the wall.  
Maybe when I’m older  
These rocks will make it there.  
And these pieces of my land  
will take over places  
on the other side.”

I watched him throw it  
Not quite over  
to the other side  
It was higher  
The second time.  
“I’m almost there”  
He said  
to the other side.





***The Wall is a Canvas—Ramallah***

---

On a concrete Wall  
Eight-meters high  
A ten-year old with a white chalk,  
Draws a window and a sky.  
He writes in a language  
Other than his own:

“THIS WALL WILL FALL”

The boy draws a soldier  
And writes his name.  
He draws a girl  
He draws a kite.

The ten-year old changed the Wall.  
With a white chalk  
And a rhythm singing  
For the Wall to fall.







102 Children Walking Home. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman. Jordan. June 2017



















***Farid Esack: Open Letter 2009***<sup>1</sup>

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This is a letter by Farid Esack written on the West Bank Wall in Al-Ram area. The letter is reproduced here in its entirety.

My dear Palestinian brothers and sisters,

I have come to your land and I have recognized shades of my own. My land was once one where some people imagined that they could build their security on the insecurity of others. They claimed that their lighter skin and European origins gave them the right to dispossess those of a darker skin who lived in the land for thousands of years. I come from a land where a group of people, the Afrikaners, were genuinely hurt by the British. The British despised them and placed many of them into concentration camps. Nearly a sixth of their population perished.

Then the Afrikaners said, "Never again!" And they meant that never again will harm come unto them with no regard to how their own humanity was tied to that of others. In their hurt they developed an understanding of being God's chosen people destined to inhabit a Promised Land. And thus they occupied the land, other people's land, and they built their security on the insecurity of black people. Later they united with the children of their former enemies — now called "the English." The new allies, known simply as "whites," pitted themselves against the blacks who were forced to pay the terrible price of dispossession, exploitation and marginalization as a result of a combination of white racism, Afrikaner fears and ideas of chosen-ness. And, of course, there was the ancient crime of simple greed.

I come from apartheid South Africa.

Arriving in your land, the land of Palestine, the sense of *deja vu* is inescapable. I am struck by the similarities. In some ways, all of us are the children of our histories. Yet, we may also choose to be struck by the stories of others. Perhaps this ability is what is called morality. We cannot always act upon what we see but we always have the freedom to see and to be moved.

I come from a land where people braved onslaughts of bulldozers, bullets, machine guns and tear gas for the sake of freedom. We resisted at a time when it was not fashionable.

1 Murphy, Maureen Clare. "An Injury to One ..." *The Electronic Intifada*. February 12, 2017.



And now that we have been liberated everyone declares that they were always on our side. It's a bit like Europe after the Second World War. During the war only a few people resisted. After the war not a single supporter of the Nazis could be found and the vast majority claimed that they always supported the resistance to the Nazis.

I am astonished at how ordinarily decent people whose hearts are otherwise "in the right place" beat about the bush when it comes to Israel and the dispossession and suffering of the Palestinians. And now I wonder about the nature of "decency." Do "objectivity," "moderation," and seeing "both sides" not have limits? Is moderation in matters of clear injustice really a virtue? Do both parties deserve an "equal hearing" in a situation of domestic violence — wherein a woman is beaten up by a male who was abused by his father some time ago — because he, too, is a "victim?"

We call upon the world to act now against the dispossession of the Palestinians. We must end the daily humiliation at checkpoints, the disgrace of an Apartheid Wall that cuts people off from their land, livelihood and history, and act against the torture, detention without trial and targeted killings of those who dare to resist. Our humanity demands that we who recognize evil in its own time act against it even when it is "unsexy" to do so. Such recognition and action truly benefits our higher selves. We act in the face of oppression, dispossession, or occupation so that our own humanity may not be diminished by our silence when some part of the human family is being demeaned. If something lessens your worth as a human being, then it lessens mine as well. To act in your defense is really to act in defense of my "self" — whether my higher present self or my vulnerable future self.

Morality is about the capacity to be moved by interests beyond one's own ethnic group, religious community, or nation. When one's view of the world and dealings with others are entirely shaped by self-centeredness — whether in the name of religion, survival, security, or ethnicity — then it is really only a matter of time before one also becomes a victim. While invoking "real life" or realpolitik as values themselves, human beings mostly act in their own self-interest even as they seek to deploy



a more ethically-based logic in doing so. Thus, while it is oil or strategic advantage that you are after, you may invoke the principle of spreading democracy, or you may justify your exploitation of slavery with the comforting rationalization that the black victims of the system might have died of starvation if they had been left in Africa. Being truly human — a mensch — is something different. It is about the capacity to transcend narrow interests and to understand how a deepening of humanness is linked to the good of others. When apartness is elevated to dogma and ideology, when apartness is enforced through the law and its agencies, this is called apartheid. When certain people are privileged simply because they are born to a certain ethnic group and use these privileges to dispossess and discriminate against others then this is called apartheid. Regardless of how genuine the trauma that gave birth to it and regardless of the religious depth of the exclusivist beliefs underpinning it all, it is called apartheid. How we respond to our own trauma and to the indifference or culpability of the world never justifies traumatizing others or an indifference to theirs. Apartness then not only becomes a foundation for ignorance of the other with whom one shares a common space. It also becomes a basis for denying the suffering and humiliation that the other undergoes.

We do not deny the trauma that the oppressors experienced at any stage in their individual or collective lives; we simply reject the notion that others should become victims as a result of it. We reject the manipulation of that suffering for expansionist political and territorial purposes. We resent having to pay the price of dispossession because an imperialist power requires a reliable ally in this part of the world.

As South Africans, speaking up about the life or death for the Palestinian people is also about salvaging our own dream of a moral society that will not be complicit in the suffering of other people. There are, of course, other instances of oppression, dispossession and marginalization in the world. Yet, none of these are as immediately recognizable to us who lived under, survived and overcame apartheid. Indeed, for those of us who lived under South African apartheid and fought for liberation from it and everything that it represented, Palestine reflects in many ways the unfinished business of our own struggle.





Thus, I and numerous others who were involved in the struggle against apartheid have come here and we have witnessed a place that in some ways reminds us of what we have suffered through. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is of course correct when he speaks about how witnessing the conditions of the Palestinians “reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa ... I say why are our memories so short? Have our Jewish sisters and brothers forgotten their humiliation?” But yet in more ways than one, here in your land, we are seeing something far more brutal, relentless and inhuman than what we have ever seen under apartheid. In some ways, my brothers and sisters, I am embarrassed that you have to resort to using a word that was earlier on used specifically for our situation, in order to draw attention to yours.

White South Africa did of course seek to control blacks. However it never tried to deny black people their very existences or to wish them away completely as we see here. We have not experienced military occupation without any rights for the occupied. We were spared the barbaric and diverse forms of collective punishment in the forms of house demolitions, the destruction of orchards belonging to relatives of suspected freedom fighters, or the physical transfer of these relatives themselves. South Africa’s apartheid courts never legitimized torture. White South Africans were never given a carte blanche to humiliate black South Africans as the settlers here seem to have. The craziest apartheid zealots would never have dreamed of something as macabre as this wall. The apartheid police never used kids as shields in any of their operations. Nor did the apartheid army ever use gunships and bombs against largely civilian targets. In South Africa the whites were a stable community and after centuries simply had to come to terms with black people. (Even if it were only because of their economic dependence on black people.) The Zionist idea of Israel as the place for the ingathering for all the Jews — old and new, converts, reverts and reborn — is a deeply problematic one. In such a case there is no sense of compulsion to reach out to your neighbor. The idea seems to



109 A Boy. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017

be to get rid of the old neighbors — ethnic cleansing — and to bring in new ones all the time.

We as South Africans resisting apartheid understood the invaluable role of international solidarity in ending centuries of oppression. Today we have no choice but to make our contribution to the struggle of the Palestinians for freedom. We do so with the full awareness that your freedom will also contribute to the freedom of many Jews to be fully human in the same way that the end of apartheid also signaled the liberation of white people in South Africa. At the height of our own liberation struggle, we never ceased to remind our people that our struggle for liberation is also for the liberation of white people. Apartheid diminished the humanity of white people in the same way that gender injustice diminishes the humanity of males. The humanity of the oppressor is reclaimed through liberation and Israel is no exception in this regard. At public rallies during the South African liberation struggle the public speaker of the occasion would often call out: “An injury to one!” and the crowd would respond: “Is an injury to all!” We understood that in a rather limited way at that time. Perhaps we are destined to always understand this in a limited way. What we do know is that an injury to the Palestinian people is an injury to all. An injury inflicted on others invariably comes back to haunt the aggressors; it is not possible to tear at another’s skin and not to have one’s own humanity simultaneously diminished in the process. In the face of this monstrosity, the Apartheid Wall, we offer an alternative: solidarity with the people of Palestine. We pledge our determination to walk with you in your struggle to overcome separation, to conquer injustice and to put end to greed, division and exploitation.

We have seen that our yesterday’s oppressed — both in apartheid South Africa and in Israel today — can become today’s oppressors. Thus we stand by you in your vision to create a society wherein everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, or religion, shall be equal and live in freedom.

We continue to draw strength from the words of Nelson Mandela, the father of our nation and hero of the Palestinian people. In 1964 he was found guilty on charges of treason





and faced the death penalty. He turned to the judges and said:  
“I have fought against white domination, and I have fought  
against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a  
democratic and free society in which all persons live together  
in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I  
hope to live for and to achieve. But if need be, it is an ideal for  
which I am prepared to die.”



111 Israeli Settlement Built on a Hilltop in Al Walaja Village. Al Walaja, The West Bank. May 2017





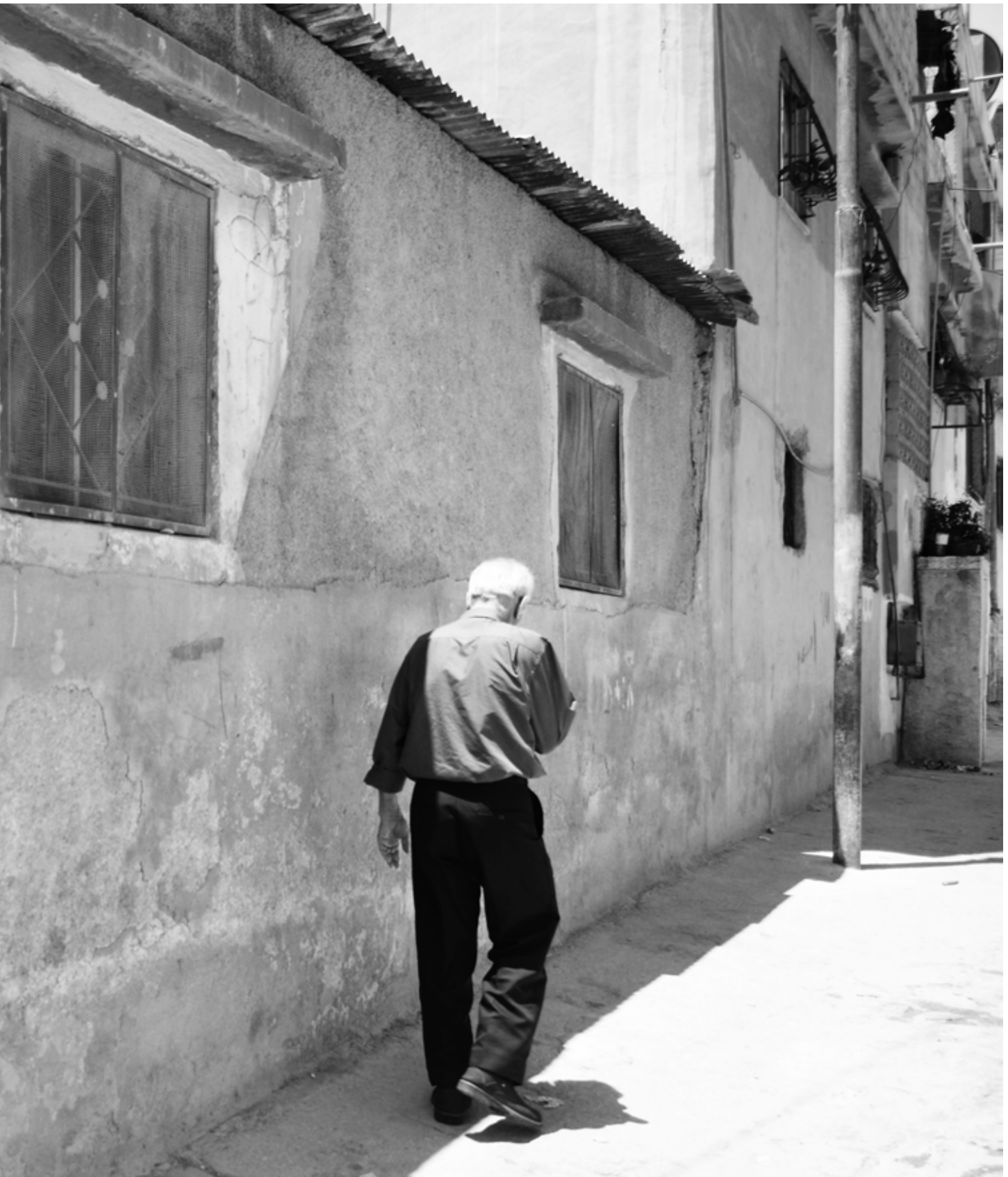












114 A Man. Marka (Hittin) Refugee Camp, Amman. Jordan. June 2017







115 Houses. Al Baqa'a Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017





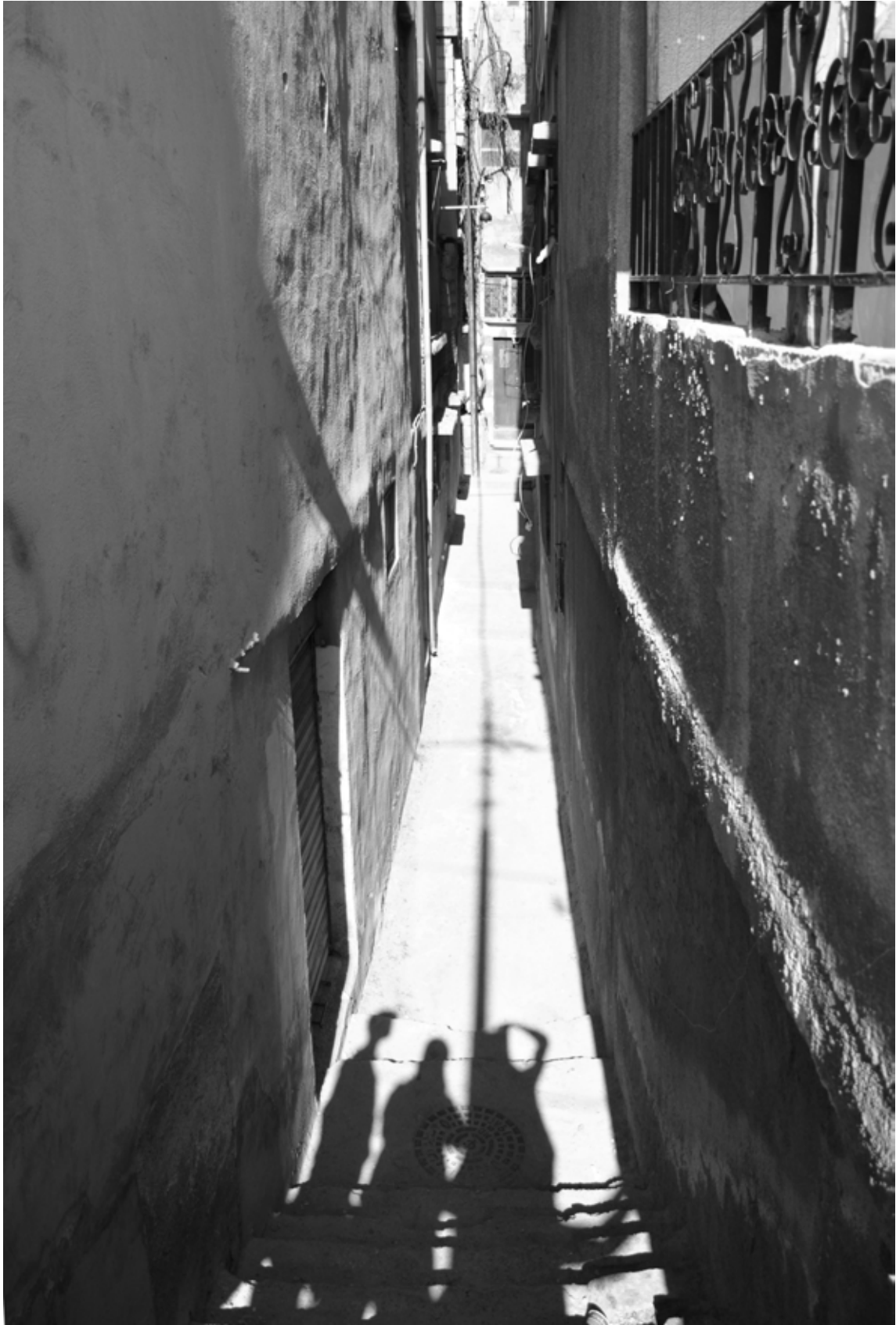
116 A Boy Walking in Al Hussein Refugee Camp. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman. Jordan. June 2017



117 An Alleyway. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017

The earth is closing on us, pushing us through the last passage, and we tear off our limbs to pass through.  
The earth is squeezing us. I wish we were its wheat so we could die and live again. I wish the earth was our mother  
So she'd be kind to us. I wish we were pictures on the rocks for our dreams to carry  
As mirrors. We saw the faces of those to be killed by the last of us in the last defence of the soul.  
We cried over their children's feast. We saw the faces of those who'll throw our children  
Out of the windows of this last space. Our star will hang up mirrors.  
Where should we go after the last frontiers? Where should the birds fly after the last sky?  
Where should the plants sleep after the last breath of air? We will write our names with scarlet steam.  
We will cut off the hand of the song to be finished by our flesh.  
We will die here, here in the last passage. Here and here, our blood will plant its olive tree<sup>1</sup>

Mahmoud Darwish



118 Our Shadows. Al Hussein Refugee Camp, Amman, Jordan. June 2017















## CONTEXT



## CONTEXT

### LATE 1880s

Zionism—a national revival movement of the Jewish people—emerges in central and eastern Europe as a reaction to waves of antisemitism.<sup>1</sup>

### BEGINNING OF THE 20th CENTURY

Leaders of the Zionist movement associate the establishment of a Jewish homeland with the colonization of Palestine.

### 1905-1910

The Zionist movement aims to purchase land, assets and power in Palestine. Palestinian leaders do not realize the destructive potential of Zionism.<sup>2</sup>

### 1916, MAY 16

The secret Sykes–Picot Agreement between Britain and France takes place. The agreement is to divide lands of the Ottoman Empire into British-administrated and French-administrated lands by the conclusion of World War I.

### 1917, NOVEMBER 2nd

The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, gave the Zionist movement his declaration. It reads,

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

### 1920

The Haganah organization is established to defend and protect Jewish colonies in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> In the Early 1920's, Palestinians make up eighty-nine percent of the total population of the land.<sup>4</sup> More Jewish immigrants enter Palestine.

1 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 10

2 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 11

3 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 16

4 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 14

**1929, AUGUST 23<sup>RD</sup>**

The Buraq Uprising takes place; 133 Jews and 116 Palestinians are killed due to escalated violence over access to the Western Wall (the Wailing Wall) in Jerusalem.

**1936, APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup>**

The Second Palestinian uprising occurs.

British officer Orde Wingate is assigned to Palestine. He helps the Zionists achieve their dream by training their troops and teaching them effective strategies to combat the Palestinian local population.<sup>5</sup>

The Haganah becomes the main military force of the Zionist movement rather than just a defence organization for Jewish colonies in Palestine. Zionist leaders develop plans for occupying Palestine and ethnically cleansing the Palestinians from the land.<sup>6</sup>

**1937**

The British Royal Peel commission recommends to partition Palestine into two states. The Zionist leadership—Ben-Gurion at the time—agrees to the British offer and accepts a small portion of the Palestinian land.<sup>7</sup>

**1942**

The Zionist leadership attempts to demand all of Palestine for itself.<sup>8</sup> Jewish immigration continues. Palestinians make up seventy-five percent of the total population.<sup>9</sup>

**1946**

After the Holocaust, more Jews immigrate to Palestine.

**1947, FEBRUARY**

The British government withdraws from Palestine and hands it over to the United Nations.

5 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 16

6 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 16

7 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 15

8 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 15

9 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 23

**1947, NOVEMBER 29**

The United Nations Special Committee for Palestine (UNSCOP) recommends to partition Palestine into two states with the city of Jerusalem under an international control.<sup>10</sup> Palestinian leaders reject the plan for partition while Zionist leaders accept it. The United Nations ignores the Palestinian refusal for dividing the land. Plans for partition give the Zionist movement fifty-six percent of the Palestinian land.<sup>11</sup>

**1947, DECEMBER**

Palestinians protest against the decision of the United Nations. Zionist attacks on Palestinian villages begins and the ethnic cleansing of Palestine starts.

**1948, MARCH-APRIL**

Zionist forces attack Palestinian villages and kill their resident. Several massacres take place including Deir Yassin massacre. Most Palestinian villagers are scared and begin to leave their lands.

**1948, MAY 14**

The British Mandate in Palestine ends at midnight on May 14, 1948. The Jewish Agency declares the establishment of the State of Israel, a Jewish state in Palestine.

**1948, MAY 15**

*Al-Nakba* day; the Day of the Catastrophe. The first Arab-Israeli war starts.

**1948, MAY 26**

Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Ben-Gurion issues an order to form the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)

**1948, JUNE 11**

the Israeli forces wipe out ninety Palestinian villages between May 15 and June 11, 1948.<sup>12</sup>

10 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 31

11 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 31-32

12 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. 104

**1948, JUNE - 1949, JANUARY**

The Israeli ethnic cleansing of Palestinians continues. The State of Israel expands its territory.

**1949, MARCH 23**

The Armistice Agreements are signed between the armies of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. The agreements recognize a formal line—also known as the Green Line—as the border for the State of Israel. More Palestinians flee to Gaza strip, the West Bank, and to neighbouring countries.

**1950**

The establishment of the United Nation Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees.<sup>13</sup> The organization aims to support Palestinian refugees by building refugee camps, medical centers, and schools for these Palestinians after Israeli forces expelled them from Palestine.

**1967, JUNE 5**

*Al-Naksah*, The Setback. A six-day Arab-Israeli war starts on June 5th, and ends with Israel's victory on June 10, 1967. Following the six-day war Israel expands its territory into Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. More Palestinians flee from Palestine.

**1984, MAY**

There are 102 Israeli settlements in the West Bank with 35,000 Israeli settlers.<sup>14</sup>

**1987, OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 8**

Incidents of Israeli forces killing Palestinian residents in Gaza lead to several Palestinian demonstrations and Israeli retaliations. On October 1st, 1987 Israeli forces shoot two men from Gaza by *accident* as they pass through a roadblock.<sup>15</sup> On October 6th, an Israeli shootout in a residential area in Gaza kills four Palestinians.<sup>16</sup> On December 7th, Palestinians stab and kill an Israeli merchant in Gaza; the next day, four Palestinian workers are killed when an Israeli army tank drives into their

13 Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 236

14 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 125

15 Lockman and Beinin, *Intifada*, 45

16 Lockman and Beinin, *Intifada*, 45

cars.<sup>17</sup> On December 8th, Palestinian demonstrations start and the First Palestinian *Intifada* (the first uprising) begins.

**1993, SEPTEMBER 13**

The Palestinian political leader, Yasser Arafat, and Israel's Defence Minister, Yitzhak Rabin sign the Oslo I Accords in the White House, Washington, D.C. The Oslo Agreement states that Israel is to withdraw its forces from Gaza strip, Jericho, and the West Bank area, and Palestinians will have the right of self-government in those areas. The Oslo Accords does not include issues regarding Jerusalem nor Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Israeli settlements become more densely populated.

The interface between Palestinian and Israeli territories becomes more clearly defined. This *interface* later becomes the checkpoint which allows Israel to control Palestinian movements through different territories.<sup>18</sup>

**1994, FEBRUARY 25**

The massacre of the Ibrahimi Mosque takes place when Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli settler, and a group of Kiryat Arba settlers enter the Mosque and open fire killing twenty-nine worshippers.<sup>19</sup>

**1995, SEPTEMBER 24**

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization sign Oslo II Accords. The agreement divides the West Bank into Area A, B, and C. Lands in A fall under Palestinian civic and security control, lands in area B fall under Palestinian civic rule and Israeli security control, while those located in area C fall under Israeli civic and security control.

**1999**

Ehud Barak, Israel's Prime Minister, and Haim Ramon, Israel's Minister of Internal Affairs, propose the idea of a separation barrier between the West Bank and Israel. This barrier later becomes the West Bank Wall.<sup>20</sup>

**2000, SEPTEMBER 28**

Palestinian riots take place after Ariel Sharon visits Al-Aqsa Mosque—A holy site to Palestinian Muslims. Conflicts between Palestinians and Israelis escalate leading to the second Palestinian *Intifada*.

17 Lockman and Beinin, *Intifada*, 45

18 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 139

19 Dawood, "The Israeli massacres in Palestine." Al Jazeera Media Network

20 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 164



**2002, APRIL**

Israel bulldozers begin carving the path for the construction of the West Bank Wall through Jenin refugee camp.<sup>21</sup> The path of the Wall does not follow the initial path of the Green Line; it moves further into the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank.

**2008, DECEMBER 27 - 2009, JANUARY 18**

Operation Cast Lead. Israel's war on Gaza Strip kills over 1,400 Palestinians most of whom are civilians.<sup>22</sup>

**2012, NOVEMBER 14 - NOVEMBER 21**

Operation Pillar of Defence, another Israel's war on Gaza Strip.

**2014, JULY 8 - AUGUST 26**

Operation Protective Edge. Israeli war on Gaza Strip kills 1,881 Palestinians. On the Israeli side, 67 Israelis are killed.<sup>23</sup>

**2017, DECEMBER 6**

Donald Trump, the President of the United States, announces Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and plans to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Palestinians, along with many groups around the world, reject Trump's decision and protest against it.

**2018, MAY 14**

The day marks seventy years since the Establishment of the State of Israel. The U.S. Embassy officially opens in Jerusalem. Palestinians in Gaza protest the opening of the U.S. Embassy; Israeli forces kill fifty-nine Palestinians. More than 2,400 Palestinians are injured. The day is the bloodiest day in Gaza since Operation Protective Edge—the 2014 Israeli war on Gaza Strip.

**2018, MAY 15**

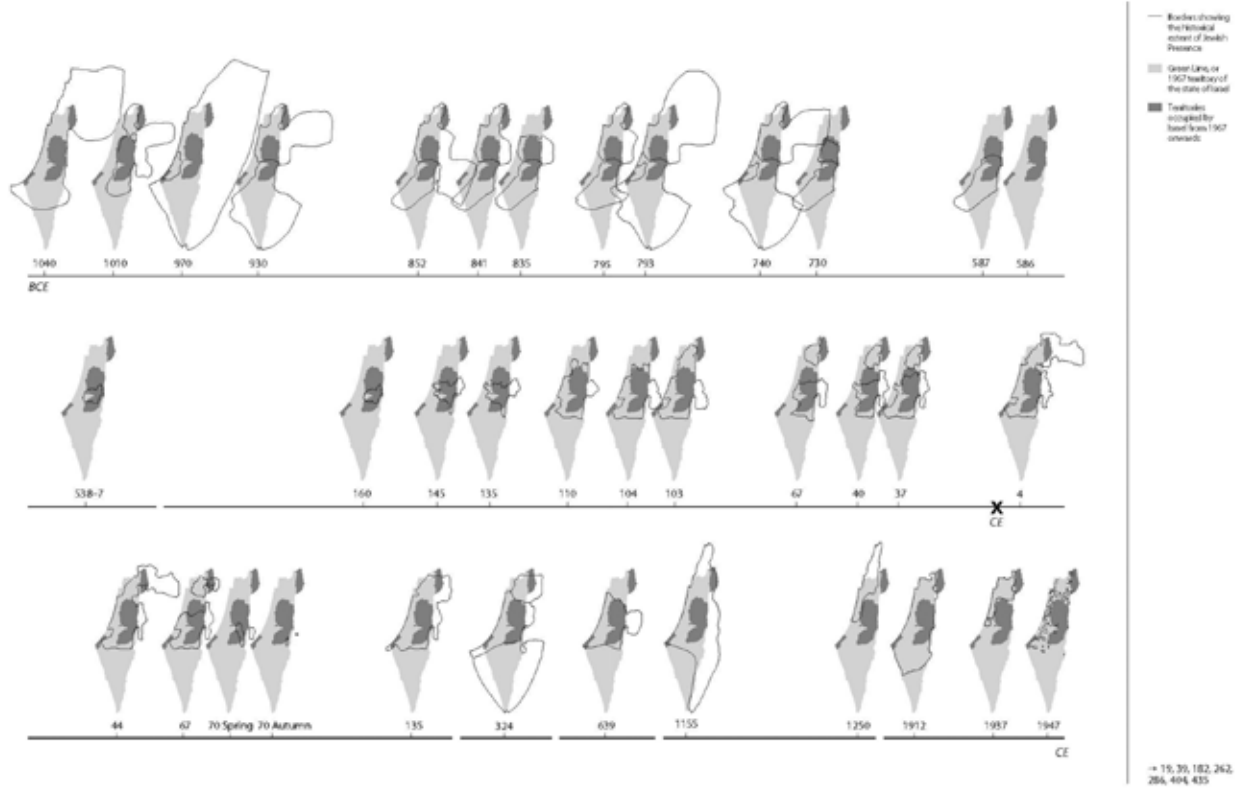
Palestinians mark seventy years since Al-Nakba day. The number of Palestinians killed in Gaza by Israeli forces reaches sixty-two people including youth and children.

21 Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 163

22 Sourani, Raji. "Operation Cast Lead Five Years on." Al Jazeera

23 Yourish and Keller. "The Toll in Gaza and Israel, Day by Day." The New York Times.

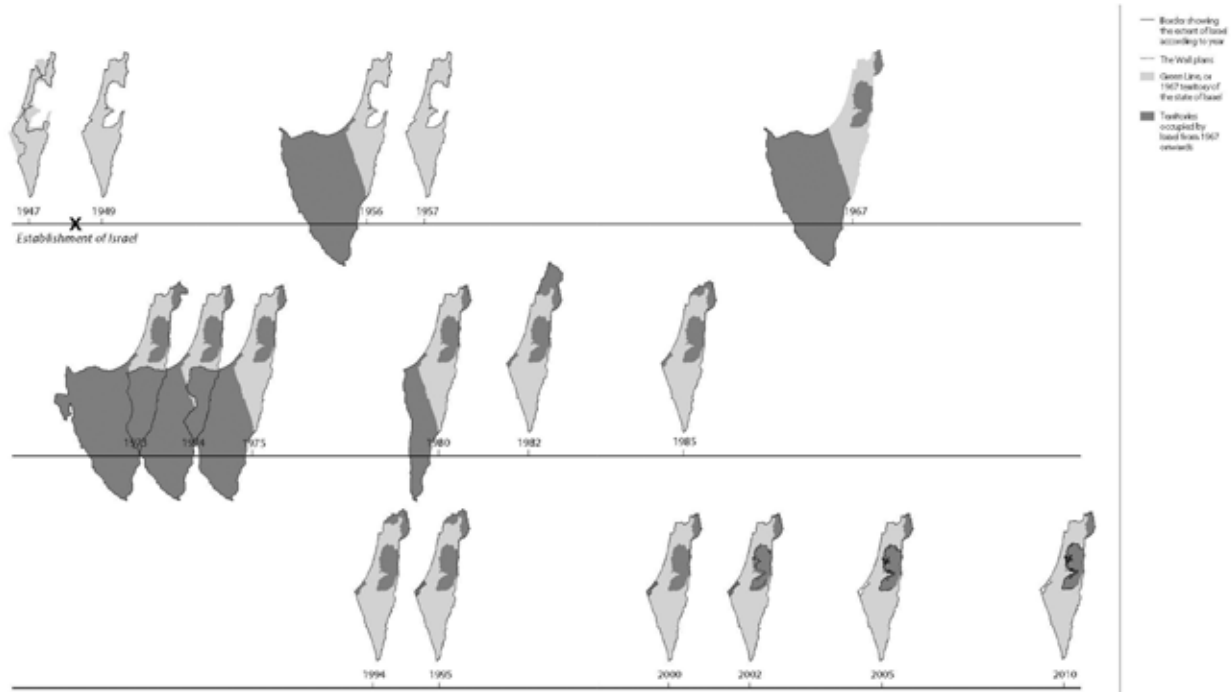
**BORDER DYNAMICS 1040 BCE - 1947 CE**  
Timeline



18

19

**BORDER DYNAMICS 1947 - 2010**  
Timeline



**BORDERS**

- Border showing the extent of Israel according to year
- The 1949 armistice
- ..... Green Line, or 1949 armistice of the state of Israel
- Territories occupied by Israel since 1967 onwards

→ 19, 21, 42, 182, 263, 286, 404, 437



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