

Experts on Palestinian Refugees & IDPs

The following English-speaking contacts have been selected from a long list of experts in the Palestinian refugee problem. Don't hesitate to contact Badil (Email: medi-aenglish@badil.org, Phone: +972(0)2-2747346) for references who speak other languages. Our staff is also well-prepared to answer your questions on refugee law, politics and advocacy.

Hussein Abu Husein

Advocate, expert on Palestinian land rights and war crimes claims
Location: Umm al-Fahm
Phone: +972(0)54-5428860
Email: abuhusein@gmail.com

Salman Abu Sitta

Research authority on the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem
Location: Kuwait
Phone: +96-2444650
Email: omranco@kems.net or info@plands.org

Susan Akram

International law expert with an emphasis on Palestinian refugees
Location: Boston, USA
Email: sakram@gbls.org

Usama Halabi

Advocate, expert on Palestinian land and housing rights; Israeli land and

citizenship law
Location: Jerusalem
Phone: +972(0)505-525959

Email: usamahalabi@hotmail.com

Isabelle Humphries

Researcher, specialist on Palestinian internal displacement in Israel
Location: Cambridge, UK
Phone: +44(0)7792-497835

Email: isabellebh@hotmail.co.uk

Mustafa Khawaja

Expert in statistics and demography, including displacement in the OPT
Location: Ramallah
Phone: +972(0)599-365699

Email: khawajam@gmail.com

Illan Pappé

Historian, focus on the Nakba and Israeli transfer policies
Location: Exeter, U.K.
Email: pappe@poli.haifa.ac.il or pappe@mailing.hevra.haifa.co.il

Rosemary Sayigh

Anthropologist, focus on refugees in Lebanon and outside historic Palestine
Location: Beirut, Lebanon
Email: rsayigh@cyberia.net.lb

Jaber Suleiman

Specialist in Palestinian politics and refugee studies
Location: Saida, Lebanon
Phone: +961(0)3-856607
Email: jsleiman@inco.com.lb

Negotiations Support Unit of the PLO

Location: Ramallah
Phone: +972(0)2-2963741

-Xavier Abueid

Public relations, Nakba 60
Email: xabueid@nsu-pal.org

-Ziyad Clot

Refugee portfolio
Email: zclot@nsu-pal.org

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Phone: +972(0)2-5829962
Email: ochaopt@un.org
Website: www.ochaopt.org

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Sami Mshasha, spokesperson (HQ) and Acting Deputy Director of UNRWA Operations/West Bank
Phone: +972(0)2-5890408
Email: s.mshasha@unrwa.org

Related Organizations & Resources

Al-Awda – Palestine Right to Return Coalition

Grassroots coalition cam-

aigning for refugee rights and return
Al-awda.org (US) or al-awda.org.uk (UK)

Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced

Civil Society Organization for IDPs in Israel
Tel: +972(0)4600-1765;
Fax: +972(0)4646-8241;
adrid@palnet.com

Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (CAIA)

Global civil society coalition raising awareness of Israel's Apartheid-like policies and campaigning for boycott, divestment and sanctions
www.caiaweb.org

National Committee for the Commemoration of Nakba-60 in Palestine

Coordinating body for Nakba commemoration
Tel: +972(0)599-255584;
uyac@uyac.org

Palestineremembered.com

Dedicated to gathering oral histories, maps and photos of refugee villages in Israel

US Campaign to End The Israeli Occupation

Advocating US policy change on Palestine to respect international law
www.endtheoccupation.org

Zochrot

Israeli organization working to raise awareness of the Nakba and Palestinian refugee rights among Jewish Israelis
www.zochrot.org or www.nakbainhebrew.org

large urban Jewish settlement of Gilo had been constructed in its vicinity. Israeli municipal authorities have asked Ein Juweiza residents, who comprise about half of Wallajeh, to sign a document recognizing that their homes are in eastern Jerusalem, and that they, holders of West Bank IDs, are residing illegally in Jerusalem.

In the meantime, Israeli soldiers commonly arrest and fine Wallajeh residents in their homes for entering Jerusalem without the proper papers.

In 2004, Israeli city officials announced a new plan to construct Giv'at Yael, a settlement planned to house more than 55,000 Jewish residents, on the lands of Wallajeh and nearby Palestinian communities. This settlement will complete the ring of settlements forming a physical barrier between Palestinians in the southern West Bank and the city of Jerusalem. Plans for the controversial construction are frozen until 2009.

Seemingly sounding the final death knell for Wallajeh, the Wall (a series of cement walls, fences and guard towers that Israel is constructing in the West Bank) will entirely encircle the village's houses, leaving only one exit. Built mostly on land in the occupied West Bank, the Wall was declared illegal in the advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice, which called for a halt to construction and reparations.

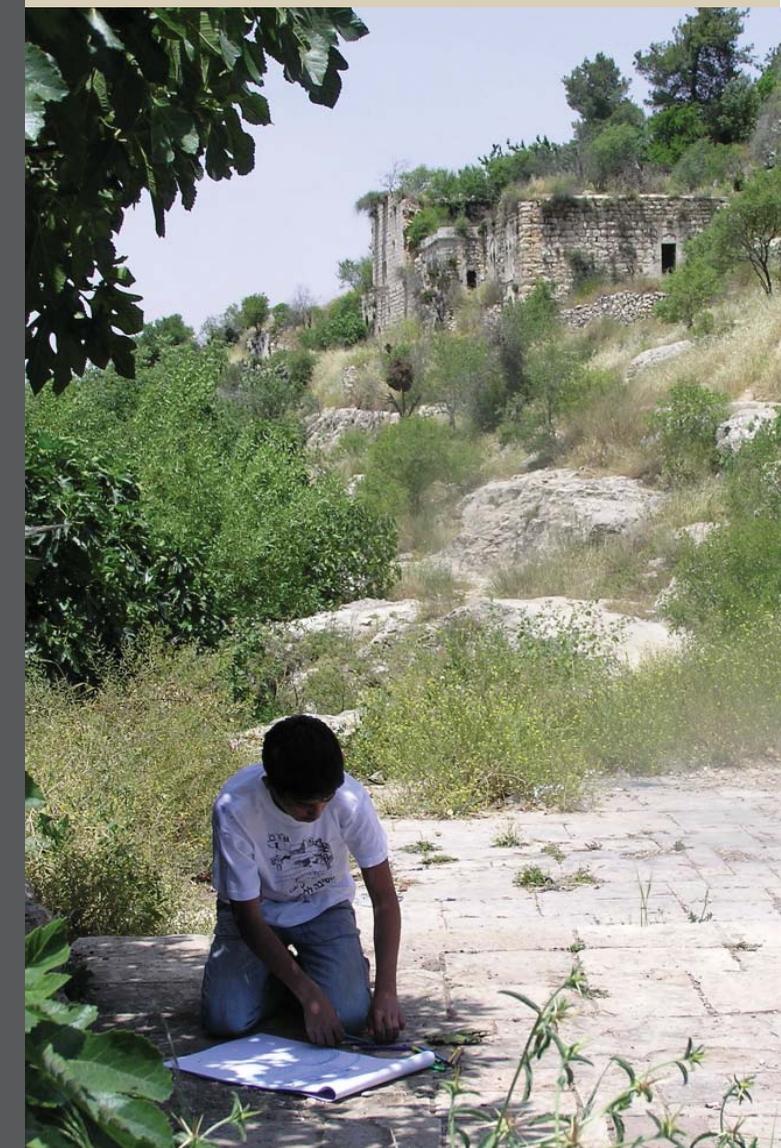
As early as 2003, UN Special Rapporteur John Dugard warned that the Wall and its associated regime were likely to "lead to a new generation of refugees or internally displaced persons". A 2006 pilot study by Badil found that 54% of involuntary residence changes made by Jerusalem Palestinians had occurred since 2002, and 17.3% of surveyed Palestinians who changed their previous place of residence did so because of the Wall.

Resources for Journalists

on Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons



Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights



Case Studies in Displacement

► Kafr Bir'im - 1948

On 29 October, 1948, Israel began a new military campaign code-named 'Hiram' intended to occupy Arab villages in the Upper Galilee. According to estimates of the Zionist forces, there were 50,000 to 60,000 Palestinians in this area before the operation – and only 12,000 to 15,000 remaining afterwards.

The 1,050 villagers of Kafr Bir'im were among those forced out of their homes, two weeks after the Zionist occupation of the village. Officer Emmanuel Friedman told the villagers on 13 November that they were "in danger" and must leave. He told them that their evacuation was temporary, only to last two weeks, and asked for the keys to their homes.

Most of the villagers took refuge in nearby caves and fields rather than moving across the border to Lebanon as they had been instructed. When the two-week period was over, Israeli officials

The displaced families of Kafr Bir'im return to the village to celebrate Easter in 2005 as a way of maintaining their connection to the land. *Photo by Zaha Hassan/Badil*



continued to promise the villagers that they would be allowed to return.

Contacts

Father Elias Chacour, native of Kafr Bir'im and archbishop of the Melkite Church in the Galilee, Phone: +972(0)4-9866848 (Mar Elias Educational Institutions)

Committee for the Uprooted of Kafar Birem, Haifa, Israel, Phone: +972(0)4- 8665276, Email: committee@birem.org

"We used to keep the keys to our homes in our pockets," said Ibrahim Issa, whose family had moved to nearby Jish. "My mother would send me to our home in Kafr Bir'im to bring the necessary supplies – you know, the farmer's house is like a

grocery. Our chickens remained in Kafr Bir'im for about a month, and we fed them regularly."

Three months after the villagers were moved out, Israeli patrols arrested 65 people working in the area, despite their valid permits, and deported them into the West Bank, which was under Jordanian control.

Then, in June 1949, a group of Israeli settlers occupied homes in Kafr Bir'im, heralding the establishment of Kibbutz Bar'am. Village leaders wrote to Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, but were told, "it is not currently possible to permit the return of the people of Kafr Bir'im to their village." Finally, in 1953, the Israeli air force bombed the village, destroying it entirely, save its church and school.

In 1965, the site was converted into an Israeli national park, nature reserve and tourist center marking an ancient Jewish village, with no mention of the later Palestinian Christian village



The Israeli settlement of Har Gilo overlooks old Wallajeh in the Ein Jweizeh area, which is now off-limits to most Wallajeh residents. Cover image: Return march to the Jerusalem village of Lifta, May 2006. *Photos by Anne Paq*

whose ruins remain visible. Today, more than 2,000 displaced inhabitants of Kafr Bir'im live in Israel. Hundreds of others live in a Beirut refugee camp and in southern Lebanon. The villagers have waged a protracted legal and political battle to return to their land, taking their case to the Israeli Supreme Court, which in a January 1952 decision recognized their right to return to their village with the permission of the military governor. This permission has never been granted.

► Wallajeh - Ongoing Displacement

Few communities illustrate as well as the village of Wallajeh the myriad ways that Israel has used to pressure Palestinians to leave their land.

On 21 October 1948, nearly all of the homes of Wallajeh (then sitting on a vast 17,704 dunums or 4,426 acres) were demolished by the Israeli army. Most of the residents were forced to flee

to refugee camps in Jordan, where they number 12,500 today.

After the 1948 war until 1967, the lands of Wallajeh were divided between Israeli and Jordanian control. Initially living in caves or makeshift housing, some of the people of Wallajeh eventually rebuilt homes in the village in areas under Jordanian control.

But in 1967 – after Israel occupied the West Bank, including Wallajeh and nearby Bethlehem – Wallajeh's residents began to realize that they may never be allowed to officially return. It became very difficult for residents of the new Wallajeh to obtain building permits. Homes built after 1967 without permits were subject to Israeli demolition proceedings.

Contacts

Wallajeh Committee via Badil, Email: mediaenglish@badil.org, Phone: +972(0)2-2747346

Further, in a bizarre twist, Israeli government surveyors annexing areas of the occupied West Bank to Jerusalem unwittingly included the Ein Juweiza neighborhood of Wallajeh within the new city borders. The move was not made

public until 1981, when the Jerusalem municipality was 'correctly' placed in charge of demolishing 'illegally-built' Wallajeh homes.

For over 14 years, these residents with West Bank identity cards had no idea that they were living in the city of Jerusalem. The municipality had provided no new schools, utilities or services to the growing population.

Meanwhile, Wallajeh's land was coveted. Its springs, fields and olive trees had been eaten up by the Biblical Zoo and the Jewish settlement of Har Gilo, and Teddy Kolleck stadium and the