



My Jerusalem

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Jerusalem that looks to be more as if it is the ownership of the Israelis and the internationals, either living in it, or talking about it from outside. What it is represent for me as a Palestinian Jerusalemite?. Why I am also excluded not only when it comes to my rights to the city, and my rights in the city, but also excluded from my right of representing it.

In the ground as many Palestinian Jerusalemites, I have a demolition order to my house since 2002, and as many others a new road that links between two settlements in East Jerusalem started to be created passing exactly at the entrance of my house in Shuafat.

This is just a minor example of the deprivation of the Palestinian Jerusalemites rights in the city.

But also I have no right to the city, I am not allowed to make a political claim that East Jerusalem is mine, something that the international community organizations in the city is adapting with, by avoiding to take actions that make Israel angry of them in the city.

Thirdly I have no right to represent my self politically. In the legal level I am obliged to be defined as "A Jordanian Citizen residing Permanently in Israel", as the Israeli authorities define my status, then I am an alien in my city, cannot claim it, and as a "Jordanian" living in Israel as the say, I have to respect the generosity of the Israel of allowing me to live in an "Israeli "

territory that was annexed to Israel in 1967.

Therefore also I have no right to represent my self administratively, and also in the community level. In this level my Arab Municipality was dissolved by the Israeli Authorities in 1967, then I was obliged to deal with an Israeli municipality that do not represent me. Such a municipality imposed on me its community centers that it established inside my communities, and made it the address for providing services to me.

These are just examples, and there are many others, while my presence in my city faces several complex challenges, that are: first: Jewdization of the land, the place, the space, and the landscape. Second: Israelization of the Institutions by obliging me to deal only with Israeli organizations for the services, while closing the Palestinian organizations and delegitimize any link between those existing and the Palestinian authority. Third: Ethnic cleansing by using different methods of evacuating me to out of my city. Fourth: Isolation of those who will stay in the city after all of this by disconnecting the Palestinian neighborhoods in the city from each other, therefore I will need to pass through a Jewish"neighborhood", when I need to move from one Palestinian neighborhood to another. In addition to that the isolation of houses in each Palestinian neighborhood by creating Jewish enclaves inside these neighborhoods such as in the Old City and Silwan. Fifth and last: The closure started in 1993 by checkpoints and permits system, and ended with the creation of a separation wall, aiming to disconnect between the Palestinian Jerusalemites themselves and not only between the Jerusalemites and West Bank Palestinians. Needless to say that the Jerusalemites are also not allowed to travel to Gaza.

These policies were not possible to pass without resistance from the Jerusalemites. In this regard Jerusalem continued to be the Center of the Palestinian national leadership from 1967 till 1994. Then the period 1994 to 2001 witnessed a division of leadership between Jerusalem and Ramallah. After the death of Faisal Hussein in 2001, the leadership moved fully to Ramallah.

Nowadays one can see in the city new grassroots leadership that replaced the old leadership of notables that came to its end after the death of the last notable leader Faisal Al Hussein in the year 2001. None of the existing personalities was able to fill the vacuum created after Faisal Hussein death, also Ramallah leadership did not want that to happen, and more importantly the Israeli iron hand against any Palestinian leadership in the city prevented a new central leadership to emerge after Faisal passed away, but since life cannot live with a vacuum, the absence of Faisal was replaced by a new type of collective leadership if you like to call it represented by local community leaders who acquired legitimacy in their communities through their accumulative actions for the benefit of their communities.

During Faisal Al Hussein period there were a central institution of leadership that gathered around a charismatic leader. After Faisal Al Hussein we started to see the

dispersement of the leadership to the communities, in one hand this means that we came to a situation of more participation, but in other hand the leadership was localized, and the Central Jerusalem leadership was lost. The Jerusalemite other personalities failed to replace Faisal Hussein after his death, therefore they lost legitimacy, or at least they have less and less legitimacy than the communities new emerging leaders, but they still in the other hand have a wealth of knowledge and experience that it is very important that they present it to the communities leaders. These old version leaders are still also those of loud voice with the international community and with the donors while their local basis of legitimacy is diminishing. The conclusion about them is then that they are not any more the personalities that can develop a new leadership to Jerusalem (this task already went to the community leaders), but certainly these still can play the role of the advisors by their knowledge and experience to the community leaders.

The community new leaders are (the Building track) for any new central Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem, while the personalities and the NGO,s are the Supporting Track , and we should not confuse between them, their roles, and the level of importance of each one of them.

While the first track of the community leaders is ready to launch, the second of personalities is in disarray, is fully fragmented, full of competitions, parallel work and other diseases beyond their high knowledge and expertise. The international donors policies help to develop and sustain these aspects of behavior, something to be clarified in another article

Another important part of the issue of legitimacy and leadership in the city of Jerusalem, has to do with other two components: the first represented by the children of Jerusalem of 7 to 12 years old, who found themselves with the continuous ongoing humiliation and with insecurity, mainly after the kidnapping and the cruel killing of their mate Mohammed Abu Khdeir and other events that followed. These children are the main actors in the nights clashes that goes on every day in the East Jerusalem communities since the brutal killing of Mohammed Abu Khdeir.

The other component to be taken in consideration there is the Islamic component, as it express itself by the intensive involvement of the Northern part of the Islamic movement inside Israel in defending Al Aqsa against the Israeli right wing extreme groups against it , something that will lead to a religious war, starting with reaction of anger like those three of killing Israelis by running over them in the last month. These events and others alike might grow if the attacks on Al Aqsa mosque continue.

The explanation above , can provide you with the basic analysis that can help you (and also help us), to understand the situation in Jerusalem these days. Since 2000 Intifada the situation in the city started to become bigger than the capabilities of the individual charismatic leaders to control. New local leaders start to emerge, now with the accumulation of oppression some of them started already to move to violence. Therefore it is essential to find them YESTERDAY non violent methods and representative bodies to express themselves, and therefore containing the move to violent methods of expressing themselves. We should started this yesterday, but the lack of enough well in

our side, and the hesitations in the international community resulted from the political hesitation , or from the inability to understand.

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