

9

Am I Not a Human?

Edited by

Dr. Mohsen M. Saleh

Rana Sa'adah

Translated by

Salma al-Houry

The Suffering of **The Palestinian Student** *under the Israeli Occupation*



By

Hayat Dada



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

Am I not a Human?
(9)

Book series discussing
the sufferance of the
Palestinian people
under the Israeli
occupation

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Rana Sa'adah

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Hayat Dada

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Foreword

Al-Zaytouna Centre presents the ninth book in its series *Am I not a Human?* through which it sheds light on the various aspects of the Palestinian people's suffering.

This book deals with the suffering of the Palestinian student under Israeli occupation. It reviews the most prominent international legislation relative to the right to education in peace and war, the effect of Israeli policies of enforced ignorance on Palestinians, the impact of daily attacks, the siege, and the Separation Wall on the Palestinian student.

The Palestinian education sector is considered one of the most important sectors to be subjected to repressive Israeli practices, given the influential role the sector has played in the history of the Palestinian people and its current role in fulfilling their aspiration to independence and statehood on the soil of their homeland.

This book follows the same approach of *Am I not a Human?* series, conveying the suffering in a style that addresses the mind and the heart, within a scientific, systematic and documented framework; utilizing numerous stories and photos that enable the reader have a clearer view of the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

Al-Zaytouna Centre would like to extend its deepest gratitude to Israa Institution in the UK, for its generous sponsorship of the publication of this book.



Introduction

The Israeli authorities have endeavored to tighten their grip on the Palestinian education sector by controlling the comprehensive concept and elements of the educational process. This includes the curriculum, educational institutions, the teacher and the student. Their objective is to provide outputs in line with the Israeli vision for the future of the occupied territories.

The students, as well as the teachers, suffer from the spread of checkpoints on their way to school. That is where they are subjected to humiliating inspections and denial of access to the school. Furthermore, schools, students and teachers have not escaped direct attacks, including bombing, killing and arrests, as well as beatings and preventing students from taking their exams. Then there is the siege, in all its forms, meaning Palestinian education occurs in a big prison without any breathing space.



In Jerusalem, Israel changed the Arab curriculums to suit Israeli requirements. It introduced the matriculation “Bagrut” certificate in place of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) “al-tawjihi,” which is not recognized by Hebrew universities. It froze the construction of school buildings and put various obstacles in the way of schools obtaining building permits, not taking into consideration the natural population increase, causing severe overcrowding in classrooms.

Palestinian education has made a great leap forward since the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education took over responsibility for education in 1994. This development is felt in the steady rise in enrollment rates of school-aged children, especially in compulsory basic education stage. Education became available to new groups of students; those who are part of natural population increase and those belonging to the thousands of Palestinians who had returned from the Diaspora due to the peace process. The Ministry has adopted the slogan “Education for All”; having provided the entire school-aged population with access to education. It has also worked to reduce school dropout rates to the lowest levels, especially in the basic education stage.

Owing to the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and to the Palestinian people’s determination to thwart Israeli attempts to spread ignorance among their ranks, Palestinian education constitutes one of the shining achievements and reflects the enormous potential of the Palestinian people and their commitment to excellence. Thus, they have become representatives of the most advanced standard of education in the Arab and Muslim world; in spite of their suffering under the occupation.

The author of this book extends his sincerest thanks to Ms. Leila al-Haj for her efforts and assistance in compiling the material for this book.





In a symbolic move to vent their frustrations over the violation of their rights by Israel, and in a sit-in in front of Fakhura School in the Jabalia refugee camp, tens of Palestinian students burned copies of the scholastic book “Human Rights” in front of crowds of students, parents and journalists. This move comes as a message from the GS students, which says that human rights and international covenants have become wasted in the midst of the sound of bullets and impact of Israeli bombs that have destroyed mosques and other human development centers.

➤ *Addustour* newspaper, Amman, 27/1/2009.





Chapter 1: The Student in Palestinian Society

The Palestinians in the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS) represent one of the most advanced cases in the Arab world, both in terms of the proportion of the population that is literate and in terms of wiping out illiteracy. In 2012 and 2013, the ratio of illiterates was 4.1% and 3.7% respectively. While during the same period, the ratio of literates who can read and write, added to those who had attained higher education levels, was 95.9% and 96.3% respectively. In the Arab world, only Qatar competes with this Palestinian achievement¹; as school enrollment rate for children 6–11 years of age of both sexes was 98.9% in 2013.²

1. Basic and Secondary Education

Three authorities share in the responsibility to accommodate school-aged students, and in various stages. These are: public schools,





schools affiliated to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and private schools. The size of accommodation varies from one supervisory authority to the next. The public sector absorbs the largest portion of students, followed by UNRWA's schools, then the private sector schools.

In the academic year 2013/2014, the total number of schools that provided basic education (primary and preparatory stages) and secondary stage was 2,784; divided between 2,094 schools in the WB and 690 in the GS; which means that 75.2% of these schools are in the WB, and 24.8% are in the GS. It is noted that most public schools are in the WB, a total of 1,668 schools, representing 80.9%; while those in the GS total 395 schools, representing a percentage of only 19.1%.

The deficiency in the number of schools in GS is, to a certain extent, compensated by the presence of UNRWA schools that total 245, compared to the agency's 97 schools in the WB. If we bear in mind that the WB has a population of 2.755 million, while the GS has a population of 1.731 million (i.e., 61.4% in WB to 38.6% in GS), we realize that the number of schools in the WB compared to the total number of citizens is higher than that in GS. Perhaps this is due in part to the distribution of the WB population over a wider range of land, villages and towns, which requires the existence of more schools. On the other hand, the state of poverty and destitution suffered by a higher percentage of the GS citizens explains the presence of a higher proportion of UNRWA schools.³

In the academic year 2013/2014, the number of students in basic and secondary education totaled 1.152 million, divided between 571,908 males and 579,794 females. In the same year, the number of teachers in



these schools was 63,017 teachers; 25,756 males and 37,261 females. Also in the same school year, there were almost an equal number of classes for male and female students, about 15 thousand each; while the total number of co-ed classes for the same year was 7,756 (see table (1)).

Table (1): Number of Schools, Students, Teachers and sections in PA Territories by Sex 2013/2014⁴

Sex	Schools	Students	Teachers*	Sections
Males	992	571,908	25,756	15,053
Females	933	579,794	37,261	15,355
Mixed**	859			7,756
Total	2,784	1,151,702	63,017	38,164

*Teachers: All teaching and non-teaching staff in school except employees and janitors.

**The number of students and teachers in mixed schools is added to the males and females numbers.



2. University Education

Many of the Palestinian universities in the WB and GS provide traditional university education for their students. An-Najah National University in Nablus is the largest of these universities; in the academic year 2012/2013 it had 21,327 students, followed by the Islamic University of Gaza with 19,938 students, then al-Aqsa University in GS with 17,094 students. The total number of university students for the same academic year in the WB and GS was 123,484 students; 68,548 of them in the WB and 54,936 in GS. This means that university students in GS represent around 44.5% of the total number of students in the WB and GS, with GS citizens making up 38.6% of the combined WB-GS population.

The number of female university students exceeds that of their male counterparts; as the total number of female students in universities that offer traditional education was 71,909, compared to 51,575 for male students in the academic year 2012/2013. That is, of the total number of university students, the percentage of female students was 58.2% versus 41.8% for male students (see table (2)). This is quite a common phenomenon in the Arab world; and in a way, it is indicative of the success of the Palestinian girl and woman in taking a distinguished academic position side by side with her male compatriot. Moreover, this phenomenon indicates the availability of relatively more favorable circumstances to a Palestinian female to complete her university education when compared to Palestinian young men who, in many cases, are forced to quit school and find a job to help support their families. Furthermore, male students receive more opportunities to study abroad.



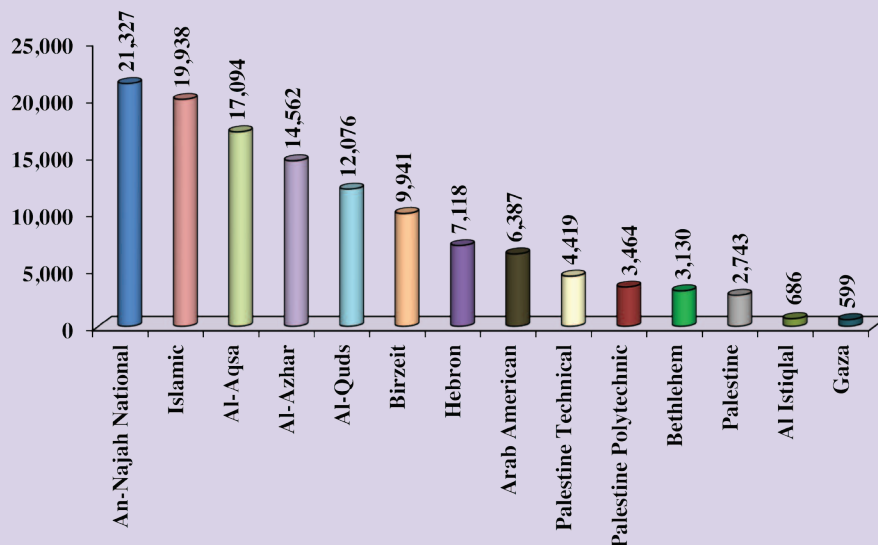
Table (2): The Number of Students in Traditional Universities in PA Territories by Sex 2012/2013⁵

University	Enrolled students		
	Males	Females	Total
An-Najah National	9,116	12,211	21,327
Al-Quds	5,972	6,104	12,076
Birzeit	3,618	6,323	9,941
Hebron	1,831	5,287	7,118
Arab American	3,285	3,102	6,387
Palestine Technical-Kadoorie	2,239	2,180	4,419
Palestine Polytechnic	1,897	1,567	3,464
Bethlehem	766	2,364	3,130
Al Istiqlal (The Palestinian Academy for Security Sciences)	546	140	686
Islamic-Gaza	7,774	12,164	19,938
Al-Aqsa-Gaza	4,966	12,128	17,094
Al Azhar-Gaza	7,089	7,473	14,562
Palestine-Gaza	2,200	543	2,743
Gaza	276	323	599
Total	51,575	71,909	123,484





Number of Students in Traditional Universities in PA Territories 2012/2013



Al-Quds Open University provided open university education to 61,592 students in the academic year 2012/2013, of whom 21,811 were males and 39,781 were females (see table (3)). This university has 17 branches in the WB and 5 branches in GS.⁶

Table (3): Number of Students Seeking Open Education in PA Territories by Sex 2012/2013⁷

University	Enrolled students		
	Males	Females	Total
Al-Quds Open University	21,811	39,781	61,592



3. University and Community Colleges

There exists in the WB and GS 38 university and community colleges (18 university colleges and 20 community colleges). According to the figures of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, there were 38 university and community colleges with a student population of 28,505 students in the academic year 2012/2013. Among them, there are 15 university colleges that have a total of 16,232 students and offer a Bachelors degree, and 19 community colleges that have a total of 12,273 students and offer diplomas (see table (4)).⁸

Table (4): Number of Students in University and Community Colleges in PA Territories by Sex 2012/2013⁹

Colleges	Number	Enrolled students		
		Males	Females	Total
University	15	7,666	8,566	16,232
Community	19	6,391	5,882	12,273
Total	34	14,057	14,448	28,505





4. Dropping Out of School

Dropping out of school is a phenomenon that worries societies in general and Palestinian society in particular. As education is almost the Palestinian's only weapon in facing the occupation and its effects under which it has been living for six decades. Additionally, dropping out of school is an educational waste that increases unemployment, compels Palestinian youth to seek employment in the Israeli labor market, and drives them toward vice and corruption. Dropout is a phenomenon found to various degrees in all levels of education, and among all social and economic classes.¹⁰

A study was conducted by the Palestinian General Administration of Public Education, in cooperation with the General Administration of Educational Planning and the School Health and Educational Guidance Center, and with funding from United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), on all dropout students (male and female) from all of the Ministry of Education, UNRWA and the private sector schools, and on the parents of dropouts in the period one year preceding the *Intifadah*, i.e., the academic year 1999/2000 and until the academic year 2004/2005. It showed that, from the point of view of dropouts and their parents, some of the causes for dropping out related to security issues are the following:¹¹

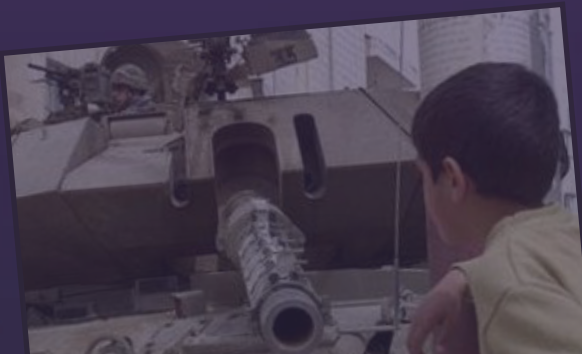
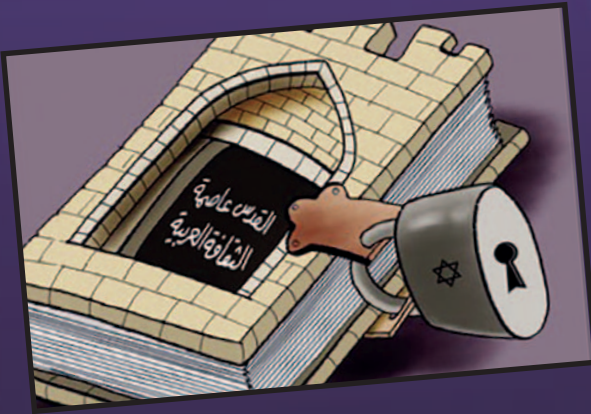
- a. Absenteeism among teachers due to Israeli barriers.
- b. The family's fear lest the army and the settlers should harm their children.
- c. Sustaining injury by the army or the settlers.



- d. Harassment by the army and the settlers of students on their way to school.
- e. The large number of military checkpoints on the roads.
- f. Getting arrested.
- g. The school is located in an unsafe area.
- h. Frequent storming of schools by the army.
- i. Frequent closure of schools by the army.

The dropout rate in the basic education level for the scholastic year 2010/2011, in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, was 1.3% for males (1.2% in the WB and 1.4% in GS) and 0.6% for females (0.5% in WB and 0.7% in GS). In the secondary level, the rate was 3.2% for males (3.6% in the WB and 2.6% in GS) and 3.3% for females (3.4% in the WB and 3.1% in GS).¹²





Chapter 2: Israel's General Policies of Enforcing Ignorance on Palestinians

The right to education is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by all international and regional conventions and treaties on human rights in times of peace and war.¹³ The right to education is mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁴ issued by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10/12/1948, Article 26, which states:

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.





- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

It is also stated in the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, dated 12/8/1949,¹⁵ Article 24 that:

The Parties to the conflict shall take the necessary measures to ensure that children under fifteen, who are orphaned or are separated from their families as a result of the war, are not left to their own resources, and that their maintenance, the exercise of their religion and their education are facilitated in all circumstances. Their education shall, as far as possible, be entrusted to persons of a similar cultural tradition.

In Article 50, it is stated:

The Occupying Power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children.

Should the local institutions be inadequate for the purpose, the Occupying Power shall make arrangements for the maintenance and education, if possible by persons of their own nationality,



language and religion, of children who are orphaned or separated from their parents as a result of the war and who cannot be adequately cared for by a near relative or friend.

In Article 94, it is stated:

The Detaining Power shall encourage intellectual, educational and recreational pursuits, sports and games amongst internees, whilst leaving them free to take part in them or not. It shall take all practicable measures to ensure the exercise thereof, in particular by providing suitable premises.

All possible facilities shall be granted to internees to continue their studies or to take up new subjects. The education of children and young people shall be ensured; they shall be allowed to attend schools either within the place of internment or outside.

Despite Israel's ratification of the aforementioned rights, it evades their application, finding flimsy excuses for doing so. It seeks to enforce ignorance on Palestinians by spreading illiteracy among the new generations; thus making them less capable of defending their homeland and of confronting the occupation on scientific and academic levels. Israeli authorities work on tightening their grip on the education sector by controlling the educational process and rendering it ineffective.

1. Israeli Practices Regarding Curriculums

In the early days of the occupation, Israeli authorities tried to force the adoption of their curriculums in WB and GS schools. The teaching staff and the Palestinian people resisted this trend, forcing the





authorities to start using the greater part of the Jordanian curriculum in the WB, but not in Jerusalem and GS. They banned the printing and circulation of 59 books of an original 78. As for the remaining books, some parts of them were deleted or altered; two books were abolished, one of them the “Palestinian Issue”. In public schools in Jerusalem, the Israeli curriculum applied in Arab schools in Israel was introduced. Later there was a reversal of this decision.

The Arab's traits in the Israeli curriculums in Jerusalem

Dirty	Murderer	Criminal	Serial Killer
Impure	Traitor	Fickle	Coward
Liar	Usurper	Cruel	Thief
Ignoble	Hideous features	Has a crooked nose	Has yellow teeth

- Dima Samman, Education in Occupied Jerusalem.. A Challenge and Steadfastness: The Battle of Palestinian Curricula.. The Battle of History, Culture and Heritage..., PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Jerusalem Affairs Unit, April 2012, www.mohe.gov.ps (in Arabic)



Israeli delegates have visited the Palestinian schools in Jerusalem in order to promote the “Light Train,” the purpose of which is to link the settlements to each other and facilitate settlers’ movement, while at the same time, cutting off Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem from each other. They did so by presenting the train’s advantages from an Israeli point of view.

- Dima Samman, Education in Occupied Jerusalem.. A Challenge and Steadfastness: Problems of Teaching Citizenship in Jerusalem, PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Jerusalem Affairs Unit, January 2012. (in Arabic)





After decades of disunity, at the beginning of the new millennium, the Palestinians in the WB and GS had their own standardized curriculum. Israel disliked it, claiming it incites violence, does not contain principles of peace and reconciliation, and does not indicate the existence of Israel on the map. The GS adhered to the curriculums unified with the WB, especially since UNRWA schools teach the programs applied in the WB, and the diplomas certified in the WB are more acceptable internationally. Most governments in the Arab world have made a political decision to comply with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Ramallah when it comes to the acceptance of diplomas and degrees.

At the beginning of 2013, and in spite of the harsh blockade that Israel imposes on GS, the Caretaker Government's Ministry of Education and Higher Education in GS launched a program called "*al-Futuwwah*" or "The Youth who are courageous and help people," which had the objective of teaching secondary level students "basic military and field skills and weapons training." The implementation of this program has aroused great controversy regarding its possible adverse effects such as "engendering a wave of violence among students, and becoming material for media exploitation by the Israel that always incites against Hamas' rule in GS."

In an interview with al-Quds newspaper, Muhammad al-Nakhleh, a colonel in the National Security Forces and Director of al-Futuwwah field training program, said that the Palestinian people had suffered constantly from the occupation's measures and repeated aggressions; and GS had suffered two successive wars within a four year period.



al-Futuwwah program seeks to empty the hostility harbored by students and young generations, who have been living constantly with the painful reality of seeing the occupation's crimes and cruelty, its violation of the holy sites and usurping of Palestinian land. Al-Nakhleh explained that a student who sees his cousin killed and his brother made a captive, experiences a state of extreme tension and a need to release this energy within him.¹⁶

In addition, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in GS has developed and improved school curriculums. It has lightened some of the required course load for GCSEs, as a step in the reform of the public secondary school system and in the management of the annual GCSE exam with more professionalism. The ministry also designed new national education curriculums in the basic education stage, in which it introduced new terms and study units on "resistance and liberation of Palestine." This was met with rejection from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Ramallah, which considered it a solitary step.¹⁷ In a statement made to Aljazeera.net in November 2013, Mu'tasim Minawi, director of public relations and media department at the Ministry of Education in GS, said: "We know that the Israeli occupation exerts enormous pressures on the brothers in WB to change and modify the curriculums, unlike GS that enjoys more space and freedom in this regard."¹⁸ Also, in a statement made to Aljazeera.net in December 2013, Osama Muzaini, Minister of Education and Higher Education in the Palestinian government in GS, said that the Oslo Accords had denied the PA's Ministry of Education and Higher Education the right to use a national curriculum beyond the seventh grade.¹⁹





Deletion of the Palestinian Soldier's Image, as well as the Palestinian Flag Held by the Male and Female Students From an Oral Expression Exercise in a book of Basic Education Grade 3



- Dima Samman, Education in Occupied Jerusalem.. A Challenge and Steadfastness: The Battle of Palestinian Curricula.. The Battle of History, Culture and Heritage..., April 2012. (in Arabic)



Deletion of the *Intifadah* Song From Palestinian Books



- Dima Samman, Education in Occupied Jerusalem.. A Challenge and Steadfastness: The Battle of Palestinian Curricula.. The Battle of History, Culture and Heritage..., April 2012. (in Arabic)





The most important areas of modifications and deletions in the Palestinian territories' educational curriculums can be summarized as follows:

- a. Regarding the subjects of Islamic doctrine and history, deletions and modifications were made in all references to the jihadist dimension of the Islamic message, thus the Qur'anic verses and the hadiths (sayings) of Prophet Muhammad that speak about Jihad have been deleted.
- b. Deletion of all mention of Arab triumphs and heroic acts and the Arab people's struggle for liberation from colonialism.
- c. Deletion of all matters related to the people of Palestine, their literature, arts, values and culture, to Palestine's geography and history and to the Palestinian issue. The word "Israel" was placed where the word "Palestine" was, even on geographical maps; in addition, the map of Palestine and the names of Palestinian towns were deleted.
- d. Deletion of all matters that touch on Jewish history, ancient and modern, and on the Zionist movement, and everything related to the relationship between Muslims and Jews during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Regarding recent history, they deleted everything related to Zionist efforts to control and occupy Palestine and establish the Israeli state.

By deleting and modifying the curriculums in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Israeli authorities aim to instill ignorance in the Palestinian student of his history, in order to isolate his past from his present, and to blur his vision of his future. This distortion of Arab and Islamic history causes the student to lose confidence in his Ummah (nation), its history and civilization.



Deletion of the PA's Logo From Palestinian Books



Deletion of the Palestinian National Anthem from Palestinian Books



- Dima Samman, Education in Occupied Jerusalem.. A Challenge and Steadfastness: The Battle of Palestinian Curricula.. The Battle of History, Culture and Heritage..., April 2012. (in Arabic)





2. Israeli Practices Against Palestinian Schools

Following the Six-Day War in June 1967, Israeli authorities took control of public schools in WB and GS, which it ran and funded directly. As for UNRWA schools and private schools, they came under their indirect supervision. Schools were subjected to closure for days or even months and to a policy of mandatory closure on some occasions, fearing students' protests, such as on Land Day. The policy of school closures for long periods of time escalated during the *Intifadah* of 1987. Thus in the academic year 1987/1988, all schools in the WB were closed starting with the second semester, in an attempt by Israel to keep the situation under control after the outbreak of the *Intifadah*. Schools were reopened in phases, as study resumed in the elementary classes after a closure of 107 days, in the intermediate classes (middle school) after 118 days, and in the secondary classes after 121 days; schools were also closed in GS. Israel also imposed a tight siege on Palestinian schools during *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 2000, shutting down many schools and turning them into military barracks. It also lowered the Palestinian flag flying over them and raised the Israeli flag in its place.

3. Israeli Practices Against Palestinian Teachers

The Israeli policy toward Palestinian teachers is based on the principle that every teacher is their enemy. Therefore, they have used various means to reduce teachers' effectiveness to a minimum. Teachers have been subjected to repressive measures such as:



- a. Forced retirement without explanation or prior warning.
- b. Arbitrary dismissal for trivial reasons.
- c. Arbitrary transfer, used as a punitive measure against actively nationalistic teachers or for political reasons.
- d. Freeze of grades and bonuses.
- e. Exclusion of competent teachers with educational experience that resulted in lowering the level of education and teachers' performance.
- f. Imprisonment, detention, summons by intelligence services, house arrest, deportation and travel bans.

Talk About Israeli Independence in Palestinian Books

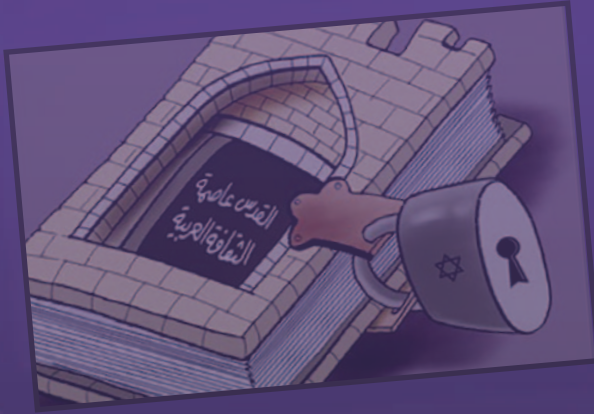
Dina: The state of Israel has built our Arab cities and villages and improved them a lot.

Ahmad: That is why schools and shops have been decorated with electricity.

Khalid: Also the elderly and children have benefited from the National Insurance.

All of them: Let us then sing the song of Independence Day.





Chapter 3: Israeli Attacks on Palestinian Students

At a time when students and teachers in the WB have to pass through more than 600 Israeli military checkpoints and roadblocks, students and teachers in GS are unable to reach their places of learning and teaching, due to a lack of fuel and adequate funds for schools caused by the oppressive blockade. In addition, Israeli wars waged against them were instrumental in the destruction and demolition of a number of schools and educational institutions.

The educational process was severely damaged during *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, due to the Israeli policy that has been applied since 28/9/2000. As many students, teachers and staff were subjected to arrest and humiliation; Israeli soldiers killed a large number of them, not to mention the many more that were wounded. This is in addition to





the problems and difficulties they suffered on their way to school and back; particularly, those Israeli measures taken at military checkpoints separating Palestinian towns and villages in various governorates.²⁰

**Table (5): Human Losses in the PA Schools During the Period
28/9/2000–15/4/2009**

Case	Total	
Killed	Teachers	37
	Students	662
	Staff	8
Detained	Teachers	197
	Students	828
	Staff	30
Injured	Teachers	55
	Students	3,620
	Staff	13

Since the outbreak of the *Intifadah* in 2000 and up to 15/4/2009, 297 schools were hit with rockets and tank shells. Even universities and colleges were not spared this barbaric and brutal Israeli aggression; a case in point is the storming by Israeli troops of Bethlehem University on 8/12/2002. They besieged it, threw tear gas bombs at the students, suspended classes, damaged furniture, doors, windows and computers, and destroyed 245 books. They remained in the university for five days.²¹



On Monday 1/9/2003, Saleh Qusini, a seventh grade student at “al-Ma‘arri School”, stood at the entrance of a building in the business district in the center of Nablus, his forehead sweating, as he waited for a tank that was blocking the road to his school to leave. In the early morning hours, tanks and military vehicles started streaming down the city streets, coinciding with the time students were heading to their schools on the first day of the new school year. “I will not go to school until the tank leaves,” Saleh said. “I know



that my friends, whom I have not seen all through the summer recess, are there waiting for me.” Witnesses recounted that a tank in the city center opened fire from a heavy machine gun, aiming in all the directions at stone-throwers. A live bullet hit the 15-year-old boy in the back of the head. The boy underwent surgery in which the bullet was removed.

- Arab Media Internet Network (AMIN), 1/9/2003, http://www.amin.org/news/mohammad_daraghmeh/2003/sept/sept01.html (in Arabic)





Palestinian universities have faced repeated closings; the one in 1973 was the first of 15 closings of Birzeit University ordered by the Israeli military. During the first *Intifadah*, the university was closed for 51 months, from January 1988 to April 1992. Prof. Gabi Baramki, who was Acting President of the University from 1974 to 1993, related how the university, in the course of its long closure, continued to hold classes secretly and in different places, such as private homes, fields, corporate offices, mosques and churches. “The soldiers used to comb the city in search for such classes,” and try to arrest those involved in them. Quite often, the Israeli army used to declare that it has found “illegal educational cells.” And often, academic staff and students were imprisoned.

➤ *Al-Hayat* newspaper, London, 10/1/2010.

Young Students Killed by Israeli Bullets



Name: Muhammad Ibrahim Hajjaj.

Date of birth: 5/8/1986.

Class: Third grade.

Place of residence: Gaza Strip, Shuja'iyyah.

Killed on: 1/11/2000.

Place of killing: Al-Muntar (Karni) Crossing.

Cause of death: a bullet in the head.



“To me, he was a special student, not because he was extraordinarily studious, as some may think, but because of his very harsh humanitarian situation. He was raised in difficult circumstances, and took the responsibility for earning his family’s livelihood at the age of eight, due to the unemployment of his father. He was very intelligent, but his harsh circumstances prevented him from being among the first in his class.” Mahmud Haniyyah, the principal of Muhammad Hajjaj’s school, speaking about Muhammad.

One of the students, Mahmud Khalaf, a friend of Muhammad who accompanied him from the moment he got out of the school until his killing, recounted the circumstances of his killing near al-Muntar Crossing. “The date was the first of November,” he said. “The classes were suspended in order to enable those wishing to participate in the funeral of the four martyrs who were killed the day before to do so.”

“We continued on our way until we reached the crossing, bullets were flying in every direction; Muhammad tried to hide behind a concrete wall; nevertheless, he was hit in the head the moment he raised it to explore what is going on behind the wall. I then saw the blood rushing out of his mouth, and he fell to the ground.”

Mahmud stressed that he did not hear the sound of bullets at the moment Muhammad was killed and that many young men who were there were hit. This proves that the soldiers were using weapons with silencers.

- Site of Palestinian Center for Human Rights, They Have No Mercy on Their Childhood, November 2001, <http://www.pchrgaza.org/arabic/studies/children.pdf> (in Arabic)





1. Attacks on GS Educational Sector

a. Attacks on GS Educational Sector During Operation Cast Lead Dubbed by the Palestinian Resistance “Battle of al-Furqan” (The Criterion) in the Period of 27/12/2008–18/1/2009

At 11:30 AM on Saturday 27/12/2008, Israel launched its fighter aircrafts, spanning the length and width of GS and striking security headquarters, and public and educational institutions. These strikes coincided with the time GS students were taking their end of the first semester exams, spreading fear and panic among them. This matter also led UNRWA and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to announce a suspension of examinations and closure of schools, declaring this war period the holiday period usually given to students following the end of these exams. After the cessation of the aggression, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and UNRWA made the decision to cancel all examinations and take into consideration only the monthly exams of the past period. This measure had a negative impact on the educational performance assessment in GS.²²

Israeli forces damaged, wholly or partially, 226 schools, 8 of which were totally demolished. They also partially damaged three universities, targeting specific buildings at these universities. UNRWA was compelled to convert 45 of its schools to shelters as Israel’s attacks targeted population centers. Five public schools were also turned into shelters. Yet these shelters were not spared targeting by Israeli forces.



In addition, 69 kindergartens came under direct or indirect Israeli shelling; 7 of them were completely destroyed and 62 were partially damaged. During Operation Cast Lead, 220 students, seven university students and 12 teachers were killed.²³

On 24/1/2009, immediately following the end of the Israeli offensive, the GS Ministry of Education and Higher Education and UNRWA decided to reopen the schools. According to 'Adnan Abu Hasna, UNRWA Media Advisor, some 200 thousand students who attend 221 UNRWA affiliated schools returned to their classrooms, after many of these schools were evacuated of civilians who had taken shelter there during the Israeli bombing and incursion. He stressed that the decision to resume the educational process was important and necessary despite the existence of social and psychological problems among students. According to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the caretaker government in GS, about 250 thousand students attending about 380 schools resumed their education in spite of the damage that the Israeli aggression had inflicted on them.²⁴

In the period between February 2009 and October 2011, the GS was subjected to 31 air strikes or military incursions that affected 72,391 students, who were either injured or were unable to attend school. UNICEF estimated the number of students in need of psychological support after the attacks to be between 14 and 18 thousand students.²⁵





Some Schools in GS During Operation Cast Lead



- Photos show the effects of the Israeli aggression against GS on the children and their schools during the period 27/12/2008–18/1/2009, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ramallah, Division of Educational Media, January 2009. (in Arabic)



b. Attacks on GS Educational Sector During the Pillar of Defense Operation, Dubbed by the Palestinian Resistance “Operation Stones of Baked Clay,” in the Period of 14–21/11/2012

Regarding the human and material losses in the education sector caused by the Israeli aggression on GS on 14–21/11/2012, a press release issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education stated that education was one of the sectors that were directly affected by the Israelis’ barbaric aggression, both in terms of loss of human life and material devastation. Thus during this war on GS, the education sector lost five of its outstanding employees, and suffered the deaths of ten school children and the injury of more than 200 others. Furthermore, the buildings of numerous educational institutions, schools, universities and colleges in various parts of GS, were severely or moderately damaged.

The Ministry added that damages varied in severity, especially in the areas bordering Israel, where there was a higher rate of destruction than in city centers. Thus in the east of Gaza City, the buildings of at least five schools suffered cracked walls and shattered windows in their classrooms; in addition, many doors and desks were ruined. In the west of Gaza City, 18 schools were also damaged. As for colleges, Israeli shells hit the walls of the Faculty of Science and Technology in Khan Yunis, and caused the destruction of a large part of the college’s furniture.²⁶

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education demanded that Israel abide by the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates that, in armed conflict, educational institutions should not





be made a target of attack. It called on all international organizations working in the field of human rights to condemn Israel's aggression against the GS educational establishments and its lack of concern for the lives of students.

c. Attacks on the GS Educational Sector During Operation Protective Edge Dubbed by the Palestinian Resistance “Operation the Eaten Straw (*al-‘Asf al-Ma’kul*)” in the Period of 7/7/2014–26/8/2014

On 7/7/2014, Israel waged a war on GS that affected all aspects of life: the economy, education, health, environment, infrastructure and others. It lasted 51 days and claimed the lives of 2,100 with more than 11 thousand wounded. Among the casualties were employees in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, which suffered 22 dead and tens injured; added to these there were hundreds dead and thousands injured among young children and students.

In a detailed report on the damage to the education sector caused by this aggression, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education estimated the cost of damage to public schools, UNRWA schools, kindergartens and public and private institutions of higher learning to be \$33.1* million. The report indicated that 187 public schools suffered \$14.4 million worth of damage; 91 UNRWA schools \$3.9 million in damages, 49 private schools \$2.6 million in damages and 199 kindergartens suffered damage totaling \$1.1 million. Three public institutions of higher learning endured damages totaling \$5 thousand, and nine private institutions of higher learning suffered \$10.6 million worth of damage.²⁷

* US Dollar.



Schools Destroyed by the Israeli Army During Operation Protective Edge



- See Palestinian Authority (PA), Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Gaza Strip (GS), <http://www.mohe.ps/>





After Her Burial ... She Came to Life Again

A powerful and terrifying explosion, heavy dust turns the light in the place to darkness... this is the last thing that the tenth grader in al-Musammiya school in Rafah, Asma' Bin Jarami, remembers. She was hit during the 2014 Israeli aggression on GS; she lost consciousness and was completely buried under the rubble and sand. Asma's father says: we pulled her out and gave her artificial respiration until the ambulance arrived. She suffered fractures to her back, and I thank Allah, she is fine now. Asma' hopes to recover quickly and return to school to learn and challenge the Israeli occupation.

- See PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, GS, "Asma'" Came Out From Under the Rubble; And "Hala" Recounts How She Lost Her Only Brother "Mahmud", 28/9/2014. (in Arabic)

In spite of the magnitude of the devastation that the education sector suffered in this war, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in GS endeavored to be ready for a normal academic year in record time; and so the new school year 2014/2015 began on 14/9/2014. In a press release on this occasion, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ziad Muhammad Thabet said:²⁸



Today, Sunday, 14 September 2014, about half a million students from GS public and private schools as well as UNRWA schools will head to their classrooms. In record time, we assessed the situation on the ground and we transferred the students of demolished schools and those currently used as shelters to school buildings that will now have an evening shift after they had previously a single day shift. In the framework of coordination and cooperation with UNRWA, 11 UNRWA schools were lodged in public school buildings. And in cooperation with many international and local institutions, we have cleaned up school buildings, sterilized them, removed the rubble from them, made sure they are free of the remnants of war and unexploded ordnance (UXO), and we readied them to receive the teachers and students. We have also redistributed school furniture after repairing what could be repaired and provided as much as we can of school supplies such as stationery and others.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in GS has trained 11 thousand male and female teachers on psychological and academic support for regular and injured students to mitigate the psychological trauma they suffered during and after Operation Protective Edge, by means of play, sport, music, active learning, cooperative learning, educational trips and others. Special training was given to school staff, teachers, principals and administrators, to lighten homework and not overburden students. The Ministry also reduced some of the subjects in the curriculums of several education stages to let them adhere to the time available for the semester caused by the Israeli aggression on GS. It made sure that this reduction conformed to scientific norms and bases, in a way that would not affect the students' understanding of sequential concepts and information.²⁹





Entertainment and Psychological Support for GS Students in the New Academic Year 2014/2015



➤ See PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, GS. (in Arabic)



➤ See PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, GS. (in Arabic)

2. Assaults on the WB Education Sector

A report issued by the Ministry of Education and High Education in WB about Israeli violations throughout 2012 against the education process and the people who are part of it showed that over 300 of teachers and students were subjected to direct attacks that killed and injured a number of them, while tens others were arrested. Furthermore, more than 30 schools sustained direct damage caused by more than hundred attacks by Israeli forces and settlers. These damages consisted of smashing and break-ins; they also took on a non-physical form such





as educational waste, which had a negative impact on the course of the educational process and children's right to education.

The report stated that the number of students killed in the WB in 2012 totaled 4, and the number of detainees 162, of whom 8 were teachers and 154 students; in addition, 56 students and 25 teachers were detained for several hours by Israeli soldiers. As for the 34 wounded, they consisted of 3 teachers, an usher and 30 students, who suffered varied injuries caused by live bullets, rubber bullets, and severe beatings; moreover, dozens of students inhaled tear gas.

As for the functioning of the educational process, the number of schools closed was 27, the number of days of complete closure totaled 32 teaching days. Additionally 9,981 students were denied access to their schools, and 638 teachers were prevented from reaching their workplace because the Israeli forces broke into their schools and prevented them from doing their job.³⁰

A monitoring and evaluation system in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education issued a report for the years 2011 and 2012 showing that 9% of students in Area C schools are liable to suffer from psychological and social problems associated with their presence in this security and geographical area established by Israel. 10% of schools are located in this area over which the Palestinian government has no control. Children there often face difficulty accessing health, education and social services and suffer violent acts at the hands of settlers and the Israeli army. The results of this monitoring and evaluation report showed a rise in the ratio of public school students in Area C who suffer from psychological and behavioral problems; in 2012, this ratio was 69.2% compared to 38% in 2011.³¹



3. Student Prisoners

The Palestinian child prisoners continue to be denied their right to education. Some of them receive this education from adult fellow inmates, but without the availability of Palestinian school curricula or textbooks, and with no regard to age and individual differences; this is in the case of adults being in the prison with them. As for the children isolated in Tel Mond Prison for minors (ages 10–14 years), they receive no education at all.³²

In an interview with the Elaph website in November 2008, the Assistant Deputy for the northern governorates in the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Jihad Zakarneh, confirmed that the Israel Prison Service (IPS) imposes control on the kind of questions given in the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Tawjihi) to student detainees in its prisons. He noted that it is holding a number of copybooks that contain their answers for unacceptable reasons. He stressed that the IPS prevents the scientific section students from presenting their physics, chemistry, and sometimes mathematics, exams for “security” reasons. He pointed out that the IPS imposes disciplinary sanctions that can reach the point of preventing student prisoners from presenting their exams, or it transfers them a day or two before the examination date in order to create a climate of chaos during the exams.³³





Chapter 4: Education in Jerusalem

The Israeli policy in Jerusalem amounts to robbing the new generation of its right to education up to university level. It wants the young generation to grow up uneducated and ignorant, culturally and scientifically, so that they give up their identity and roots. This policy also leads to a demographic composition consisting of an old and uneducated Arab minority, because the young people seeking an education are forced to emigrate away from Jerusalem, perhaps forever, in order to continue their university studies.³⁴

Thus, Israel changed the Arab curricula to suit the requirements of its occupation. It introduced the matriculation “Bagrut” certificate in place of the General Secondary Education Certificate (Tawjihi), which is unrecognized by Hebrew universities; this was followed by its refusal to recognize the certificate of (the Arab) al-Quds University. Even the Palestinian students who choose the Bagrut, aspiring to enter





one of the Hebrew universities, and are forced to memorize the Israeli “independence” document by heart, which distorts Palestinian history. Furthermore, they are not allowed to study some specialties offered in Israeli universities. Genetic engineering in the Faculty of Medicine is one of these specialties, in addition to aviation, which is considered “prohibited,” too.³⁵

After Israel annexed East Jerusalem to West Jerusalem in 1967, it closed the Education Office of the Jerusalem Governorate and arrested the education administrator. All public schools run under the administration of the Jordanian Ministry of Education came under the administration of the Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture.³⁶

Concerning private schools in Jerusalem, those owned by individuals or those belonging to charitable institutions or societies, the Israeli government has enacted a law enabling it to oversee these schools. This law was issued under no. 564 for the year 1968. Israel attached the Arab schools administratively and systematically to its institutions. Secondary education was placed under the direction of the Education Administration of the Jerusalem Municipality, while basic education became part of the Israeli education apparatus.

Israel proceeded to appoint administrators and teachers to Arab schools in Jerusalem who did not have academic or technical skills that allowed them to practice the teaching profession; many of them hold only the General Secondary Education Certificate. Furthermore, the Israeli authorities did not impose compulsory education and did not require parents to register their children in school; thus dropout rates rose steeply.³⁷ The ratio of dropouts in Jerusalem for the academic year 2011/2012 reached 50% of the city’s students. A significant Israeli aim that this fulfilled was to provide the Israeli labor market with cheap labor.³⁸



On 28/3/2012, the Jerusalem Municipality circulated a letter to Jerusalem schools to the effect that each school should make a list of the textbooks it needs, and the municipality will provide them to these schools. The message reads “we draw your attention that you should use only the books issued by the municipality, and it is forbidden to buy books from other sources.”

➤ See PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education,
<http://www.mohe.gov.ps/BrowseArticles.aspx?CatID=125> (in Arabic)



Israeli actions regarding education issues met with stiff resistance from the population and teaching staff, and complete rejection from school principals and teachers; Israel even arrested a number of teachers who resisted. A majority of teachers refused to work in Israeli Ministry of Education schools; they went instead to private and community schools that were still applying the Jordanian curricula. The teachers played a major role in encouraging parents to transfer their children to national schools, whether those belonging to the Islamic waqf (Endowments) or to Christian monasteries and churches, owned by associations or individuals.³⁹

Dr. Hasan Khater, Secretary-General of the Islamic-Christian Front for Defending Jerusalem, warned of threats that would cause the collapse of the education sector and other sectors in the occupied city. Khater explained that the situation was worsening day by day because Israel was denying about nine thousand students in Jerusalem their right to continue their education and progress to the General Secondary Education level. He said that there were not enough seats for all the students, while adequate health facilities were lacking in schools and educational institutions. He stressed that this problem represented a “national necessity that must be taken care of and given precedence in the government’s budget.” Khater stated that it has become common to see Jerusalemite children as young as 12 hanging around in the Old City’s alleys, collecting empty bottles from waste containers or tearing out copper wire and selling it to scrap metal merchants in order to make money and help their families. In a description of this case, Dr. Bernard Sabella, Professor of Sociology at Bethlehem University and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) representing Jerusalem, stated that poverty in Jerusalem “exists but is increasing due to the Separation Wall, the siege of Jerusalem and isolating it from its



surroundings and preventing the WB population from having access to it.” He added that these three factors had changed a status quo in which Jerusalem had been “a commercial and economic center that depends on its Palestinian and foreign visitors.”⁴⁰

Furthermore, Israel has frozen construction of school buildings and imposed various obstacles to issuing permits for school construction. It did not take into account natural population increase; thus causing a high degree of overcrowding in classrooms, which, in general, negatively affect the educational process. It is important to note that the annual rental of Awqaf schools alone amounts to approximately \$1 million a year; which constitutes a financial burden to the Directorate of Education in Jerusalem and gives a sense of instability to the school that becomes, from time to time, subject to the threat of eviction from some landlords.⁴¹



Due to lack of adequate sanitation facilities in the school, Prophet Samuel School in Jerusalem installed a latrine. An Israeli court responded by issuing an order to demolish the latrine.

- ‘Abdul Ra’uf Arna’ut, An Israeli War on Education in Jerusalem, Palestine Supplement, *Assafir* newspaper, Beirut, December 2013, <http://palestine.assafir.com/Article.aspx?ArticleID=2713> (in Arabic)





A picture of students at the Qalandiya checkpoint shows the daily suffering they go through on their way to and from school.

- See PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/ShowArticle.aspxID=696> (in Arabic)

By contrast, a comparison between the budget of the Arab schools in Jerusalem, and that of the Israeli schools, reveals that the latter is multiple times bigger than the former. Thus, we find Israeli schools equipped with various child-friendly educational facilities, having specifications and conditions of global standards. This endears the school to the child and encourages him to continue his education, by enabling him to implement various projects and programs.⁴²

Israel has denied the Palestinian student the right to express his identity, culture and heritage, and to practice his religion. Thus, it prevents him from holding various celebrations, and does not allow students to go in groups to *al-Aqsa* Mosque to worship, under the pretext of them not obtaining permission to do so.⁴³



Vocational Education in Jerusalem

The vocational education system in Jerusalem does not receive the adequate attention it deserves, and interest in this type of education is limited. The level of vocational education remains low and does not meet the requirements of the labor market. In contrast, the Israeli authorities are working on the establishment of vocational education centers and providing them with the facilities and material support to attract students to them. They publicize these centers in the academic schools in the city, using various advertising methods and media means, offering scholarships to those who agree to attend them. These centers are distinguished by their ability to meet the needs of the Israeli labor market; and that by turning students away from academic studies to becoming salaried workers in the labor market. These vocational centers accept the students who failed to complete the compulsory education stage, a fact that threatens them with alphabetical illiteracy, as these centers do not teach them the Arabic language.⁴⁴



A class in a Jerusalem school shows the extent of overcrowding in classrooms.

- See PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/ShowArticle.aspxID=697> (in Arabic)





Chapter 5: The Impact of the Blockade on Palestinian Student Achievements

The Israeli forces have planted military checkpoints at the entrances of Palestinian towns and villages, forcing the Palestinians to pass through them; otherwise, they will have to travel on bumpy roads to reach their destination. Moreover, the Israeli forces arbitrarily impose curfews for several consecutive days on the citizens of most Palestinian towns and villages. These measures, in addition to the construction of the wall in the WB and the economic and political blockade of GS, have led to a choking educational pursuit in all Palestinian cities.





In her hands, the examination paper trembles... the pen held between her fingers is about to fall... tears are crowding in her eyes... and a big lump is choking her voice. The 15 year old Amal was hurting not because she found the questions difficult or she forgot certain information, the source of her grief was the water streaming on her white paper, wiping off her letters and words. When the black ink drops started to color her seat, she found herself screaming, “we need a solution... we cannot remain so.” Then cries of discontent and indignation rose from all the girls in the class, their hands pointing to the rain pouring from the mangled roof. The teacher’s attempt to calm her students did not succeed; so seeing their tears, she decided to cancel the exam and set a new date for it on another day. This bitterly sad scene is the living reality of Mawasi Rafah joint school, located to the south of GS. No one can imagine that such a school exists in reality; classrooms are caravans (mobile homes) made of iron plagued by rust and corrosion. The summer heat burns those inside them; while in winter they drown in them.

➤ *Al-Aman* magazine, 7/11/2008, <http://www.al-aman.com/subpage.asp?cid=8086>



How Do Palestinian Students Excel in Palestine

She said: “I wish the people of the world would ask themselves how do Palestinian students excel in Palestine despite the occupation, the siege, an oppression whose reality surpasses fiction, abject poverty and discord.” The Ministry of Education and Higher Education announced the



good news to Hanan via a press conference, telling her that she had excelled and ranked first in the honor list, along with four colleagues, three females and one male, with an average of 99.3%. Hanan, the outstanding student, answers the question of *al-Ayyam* newspaper about the problems she had encountered during her studies and exams, by saying: “honestly, I conquered the siege and I adapted it to my will to the point that I began to enjoy and feel safe studying by the light of a candle.” This girl, whose words reflected pain and economic hardship, said that she wishes to study abroad, but, for now at least, her circumstances do not allow her to do so. She feels that there are institutions that would appreciate her distinction and achievements, and would embrace her dreams. And although she is aware that there are scholarships for high achievers, her anxiety about the siege and its continuation dispel her dream to be one of them.

➤ See *al-Ayyam* newspaper, Ramallah, 19/7/2008.

When the construction of the Israeli Separation Wall was completed, the education sector began heading towards real disaster; it was as if the head was severed from the Palestinian body. Palestinians who carried WB IDs were prevented from entering Jerusalem and teaching in its schools, and that led to an acute shortage of teachers with expertise and specialization.⁴⁵





The Wall = One Big Prison



- Reema Tahayneh – al-Ahmad, The Impact of the Separation Wall on the Educational Process, PA, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Public Administration of International and Public Relations, Educational Media Department, 2012, <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/Uploads/admin/jedar%20all.pdf> (in Arabic)

The teachers, residents of the WB who used to work in Jerusalem before the construction of the Separation Wall, complain that, most of the time, the Israeli authorities refuse to issue them permits that would enable them to cross Israeli checkpoints and reach Jerusalem. Even in cases of obtaining these permits, they have to leave their homes in the early hours of the morning to be able to reach their schools on time, after passing through the Israeli checkpoint. This suffering is not



confined to teachers, as hundreds of students who carry Jerusalem IDs and whose neighborhoods became isolated by the Separation Wall such as Kfar 'Aqab and Shu'fat Refugee Camp, are compelled to cross Israeli military checkpoints daily on their way to school and back, before they start this journey again the next day.⁴⁶

The Israeli authorities began building the Separation Wall in June 2002. It was considered a settlement project aimed at changing facts on the ground by confiscating a large part of Palestinian land and isolating Palestinians within closed and semi-closed communities. The wall has a winding path that surrounds most of the WB land, in certain places forming isolated communities, meaning a city or a group of towns surrounded from almost all sides with the wall, with the aim of disrupting the lives of the Palestinian population or annexing WB lands to Israel. There are now 53 of these isolated communities surrounded by a wall with a height of eight meters.⁴⁷ According to a report by B'Tselem–The Israeli Information Center of Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, the total length of the completed portion of the wall in the year 2011 was approximately 437.5 km, which is about 62% of its planned route.

Israel's Separation Wall, in addition to its policies regarding education, violates the following charters and laws:⁴⁸

1. Israel's own Compulsory Education Law, which requires the government to provide free and compulsory education for every child between the ages 5 and 15 years of age, regardless of whether this child is registered in the population registry of the Ministry of Interior, or even whether his parents are residing illegally.





2. Article 50/1 of the Fourth Geneva Convention provides that Israel as “the Occupying Power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children.”
3. The Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960, which explicitly prohibits “limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard.”

There are seven directorates of education in which 48 schools suffer from the Separation Wall, they are: Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Salfit, Jerusalem outskirts, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem.⁴⁹

Table (6): Schools in the WB Education Directorates Harmed by the Separation Wall, in Terms of Their Numbers and That of Their Students

Directorates	No. of schools harmed by the wall	No. of students
Tulkarem	4	896
Salfit	2	639
Qalqilya	3	802
Jerusalem outskirts	11	2,855
Bethlehem	4	1,073
Jerusalem	20	6,648
Jenin	4	653
Total	48	13,566



According to a report issued by the Directorate of Education in Jenin in 2010, the principal of al-Farouk Basic School, Jalal Jabr Kabha, gives a partial description of his daily suffering at the crossings where inspection takes place. The following story is representative of his daily suffering: “one rainy day, when I entered the inspection room in the morning, the electronic screening device rang as I was being searched. There were in the room two female conscripts, one of them screamed in my face, go back and take off your coat. And although I complied with her command and scream, the device kept on ringing even though I did not keep anything metal on me. The female conscript summoned a male colleague to force me to take off my clothes to be sure, as they claim. I refused and told them in their Hebrew language, “I am a school principal, and I have nothing on me.” That soldier began to scream, “Take off ...take off.” I refused to undress and took off only the coat. They hurled verbal abuse at me and detained me for more than two hours in that room. Then a military officer in charge arrived and asked me what had happened and I told him. He also insisted on searching me, he agreed to only make me raise my clothes above my waste in front of the crowd. The two female soldiers laughed, mocking me. On that day, I arrived to school at ten o’clock in a bad mental state, and that reflected negatively on my work and my dealings with students and teachers.”

➤ Reema Tahayneh – al-Ahmad, the Impact of the Separation Wall on the Educational Process.





Another example of suffering in the education sector is that of Dab'a – Ras Tira Secondary School, a mixed school from the first grade to the twelfth, which has 217 students. Electricity is available in the school from 9 to 12 o'clock daily, supplied by a motor in the village. In the morning, a car battery is used to run the school's public address system; while the teachers suffer from the following:⁵⁰

- Lining-up for hours before being allowed to pass through the Separation Wall's gates.
- Israel claiming that the electronic inspection machine is out of order, thus making the wait extend to several additional hours.
- Insults in Hebrew, in addition to beatings and humiliation while in the line-up.
- Asking female teachers wearing the hijab to unbutton their hijab and expose their legs and hands, as well as their neck and abdominal areas. After the inspection is completed, the female conscripts throw their ID cards on the ground.
- After passing all the phases of the electronic and physical inspection, and after the male or female teacher exits the examination rooms and starts heading to school, another phase of suffering and humiliation starts, when the soldier inside the control tower stops them for a certain period of time or orders them to go back and take their place in the queue once again.
- Daily morning delays with the first class starting promptly at nine instead of eight o'clock.
- Closure of the checkpoint under the pretext that the soldier was infuriated by the way the queue was lined-up.
- Sometimes teachers are given passes that expire a week or two before the end of the school year, thus depriving the teacher of access to the school during school exams, preparation of certificates and test grades.
- The transfer of supplies and furniture to schools is considered a big problem that needs coordination and arduous preparations before allowing them to pass. It is also costly and is limited to a certain day of the week.



Ashraf tried to look beyond the Separation Wall adjacent to the balcony of his family's home to see his school situated on the other side. Until the preceding year, he used to receive his education there. But today he cannot reach his school because the wall has besieged him and dozens other children in his village "Nazlat 'Issa" and deprived them of going to the only secondary school in the area. Ashraf, who is not yet 16 years of age, says that he and the other children of the village had no choice but to walk a long distance through a bypass road next to a settlement to get to school. He adds that there is another option, which is to wait until the only iron door opens, through which they can cross to the other side of the wall and risk losing at least half the school hours. In many cases, the soldiers used to beat them or throw tear gas at them. That is why his father decided to stop him going to school, and let him devote his time to helping him cultivate the remaining part of his land after the Israeli army had confiscated most of it.

➤ Site of the Media and Information Centre, 29/1/2004,
<http://www.mic-pal.info/reportdetails.asp?id=261>





As for ‘Azzun-Beit Amin Secondary school, it is a mixed school from the first grade to the twelfth, and has 270 students. It is adjacent to the Shaarei Tikvah settlement, built on the lands of Beit Amin village. This school suffers from the worst kinds of Israeli violations, in terms of polluting the school and turning it into a loathsome environment full of diseases that are prevalent among students. Once a month, the settlement floods the school with its sewage waters for a period of 7–10 days. Moreover, there are psychological effects on the students who see every day wastewater in their school grounds, especially as the sewer of the settlement is located inside the school, next to the playground.

Wastewater in Azzun–Beit Amin Secondary School



- Reema Tahayneh – al-Ahmad, the Impact of the Separation Wall on the Educational Process.



In another example, the students from the village of Barta'a suffer from the existence of a checkpoint at the entrance of their village. It deprives them of the ability to enjoy school trips because of their need to return before its closure. In the case that they do participate in a school trip, the children must carry identification papers, such as their birth certificate, a copy of the father's ID and another of the mother's before being allowed to participate in the trips. They also suffer from being deprived of being able to participate in sporting, cultural and scientific activities of their directorate. The checkpoint means they face difficulty in their entry and exit, in addition to paying a high price for travel.

As for university and college students, they often live in houses close to their universities and colleges; and thus most of them are not compelled to cross the wall.

1. The Impact of the Separation Wall on the Education Sector in Jerusalem

The Separation Wall led to Jerusalem's isolation from the rest of the country's cities; thus forcing a percentage of no less than 20% of students to pass through imposed checkpoints (fixed or flying) in the city's vicinity, causing some students to arrive late to their classes. Other students may be denied entry to the city entirely, dependent on the soldier's mood (without any exception made for high school students in the process of taking their exams.) In some cases, they are delayed and detained long enough to make them lose their school year.⁵¹





Table (7): The Attacks on Students During Their Passage Through the Wall's Gates or the Israeli's Checkpoints in the Jerusalem Directorate During 2009/2010⁵²

Name of school	Psychological and physical damage			
	Impeding access	Body search	Bag check	Physical and verbal abuse
Males Riyadh al-Aqsa	daily	daily	daily	daily
Mixed Riyadh al-Aqsa	daily	daily	daily	daily
Girls Abu Bakr al-Siddiq	weekly			
Males Sheikh Sa'd Secondary	daily	daily	daily	
Girls Basic/A	daily	daily	daily	monthly
Al-Nahdah al-Islamiyyah	daily	daily	daily	daily
Al-Ummah Secondary	daily	daily	daily	weekly
Males al-Bayrouni Basic	daily	daily	daily	monthly
Young Muslim Women Association Secondary	daily	daily	daily	daily
Husni al-Ashhab Basic	daily	daily	daily	weekly
Al-Fatat al-Laji'ah Basic	daily	daily	daily	daily
Al-Fatat (D)	daily	daily	daily	weekly
Al-Nithamiya Secondary	daily	daily	daily	weekly
Dar al-Aytam al-Islamiyyah Basic (B)	daily	daily	daily	weekly
Al-Dawha Basic	daily	daily	daily	daily
Al-Rawdah al-Hadithah al-Islamiyyah	monthly	monthly	monthly	monthly
Al-Nahdah al-Islamiyyah (A)	daily		daily	
Al-Aytam Basic (A)	daily	daily	daily	daily
Al-Fatat Comprehensive Secondary	daily	daily	daily	weekly
Al-Nahdah Basic (B)	daily	daily	daily	daily



Speaking in his colloquial language, the principal of 'Anata Secondary School describes the daily suffering in his school, which is located behind the Separation Wall:

During the morning, the private guards along the Wall play music at high volume and insult the students through the megaphones, provoking them and distracting them from their studies. How can they work in such an environment? Where are the minds of our teachers in such circumstances? How can they teach and children study? What can you say when the Soldiers attack the school and arrest the teachers and the



students from the class? The reason given by the soldiers is always that the kids have thrown stones?!! Even, when they are in their classes, the students are not safe. Five days ago, the occupation forces took pictures of one or two students and now they want to arrest them. They walk into the classrooms and take them out of the school. They use dogs and horses,

guns and tear gas to water jets against us, we have been attacked with everything but helicopters. When you have the soldiers standing in front of the windows of the classrooms, or in front of the bathroom door, this is not an atmosphere where children can study. In this school over half of the students have already been arrested by the occupation. Some have been held for months, others taken away from their families for several hours. They put the Wall in front of the bathrooms and moved the entrance for the bathrooms. The Soldiers go everywhere, intimidating and threatening the students. When the children go to the bathroom they often have to face the Soldiers. The small ones sometimes urinate in their own clothing [rather] than go alone to the bathrooms.

- From Palestine, Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, 10/4/2006, <http://www.stopthewall.org/abu-baha-headmaster-boys-high-school-anata-it-battle-every-day>





2. The Impact of the Blockade on Higher Education in GS

The blockade has had a negative impact in many ways on GS universities and colleges, specifically:

Buildings and Laboratories: The blockade has contributed to hindering the constructional development of universities and their infrastructure. It caused a lack of necessary construction materials as the Israeli authorities prevented their entry to GS. In light of that, the universities are making do with existing buildings in spite of the resulting overcrowding.

The Decline of Funding: The siege was a factor in the stoppage of the organizations' support for the higher education institutions of their infrastructure and construction projects, because of the difficulty of implementing them on the ground. That led to a significant decline in the development of the infrastructure and buildings in these universities.

Libraries: The blockade had a hand in the decline in furnishing the universities' libraries with current references, books and periodicals, which contribute towards enriching the cultural and cognitive life of students by providing various sources of knowledge such as printed materials, graphics and audio and video materials.

Hindrance in the Completion of Postgraduate Studies and Research Activities: Due to the siege, institutions of higher learning have faced difficulties in sending their members to complete their postgraduate studies abroad. This became a factor in the lack of adequate human resources in many disciplines. This siege has impeded the scientific research activities in higher education institutions, especially in the scientific disciplines that require laboratory materials that became scarce because of it.



Maybe the tears that rolled down the cheeks of Zain al-Qasim during her graduation ceremony best expressed her incomplete joy and her longing to see her family in GS that has stayed with her throughout her university years. Zain, who celebrated alone, was the last student from GS in Birzeit University. “I learned how to look happy like the rest of my colleagues,” she said. “But the sadness inside me is sometimes more than I can bear. I always remind myself that I am here for a specific purpose that I was able to achieve, which is to get my Bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Media. This always lightens my sorrows, my troubles and my worries.” She noted that she applied for a permission to study at Birzeit, but the Israeli authorities have refused to grant her that permission. So she applied for a permit to come for medical treatment in WB and was able to obtain one, but for only one day, and that was on 17/8/2001. She came for the sake of studying at the university; but since then “I did not see my parents or relatives again.”

➤ *Al-Hayat al-Jadidah* newspaper, Ramallah, 2/7/2005.





Chapter 6: The Impact of Economic Conditions on Palestinian Student Achievements

Since its occupation of Palestine began, Israel set about strangling the Palestinian economy and imposing many policies and restrictions that would, economically, make the Palestinians its subordinates. The blockade policy implemented by Israel created a state of extreme poverty in WB and GS, prompting many children and young people to drop out of school and join the workforce, no matter if their work did not provide them with a decent living or even their daily bread. This policy has deprived them of an education that would have made a future for them, and preoccupied them with feeding their families. All of this is caused by the arbitrary Israeli measures and the real absence of job opportunities.





Data issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2012 concerning the Palestinian workforce indicated that 2.2% of school children work; 3.4% in WB and 0.3% in GS (4% males and 0.5% females). It also revealed that 28.5% of children not enrolled in schools work; 34.3% in WB and 18.2% in GS (38.5% males and 2.8% females). Consequently, their earning continues to be low even in adulthood. In some cases, parents and children may share the notion that education is a waste of time; or the parents may be forced to “sacrifice” one or two of their children and leave them without education, in order to send them to work to help in providing the funding for their siblings’ education.⁵³

During a press conference regarding International Youth Day on 12/8/2013, the PCBS and Sharek Youth Forum declared that the ratio of youth (15–29 years) in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 amounted to 30% of the total population, i.e., 1.3 million young men and women. 43% of these young men and women are enrolled in educational institutions, and that only 0.7% of them are illiterate. The unemployment rate among the graduates amounted to 53% during the first quarter of 2013.

Palestinian university students in WB and GS suffer from a recurring problem that has become a burden on their shoulders, especially in light of the deteriorating economic conditions and the growing poverty in Palestinian society. This problem is the university tuition fees that have become, for many students, a major obstacle to the completion of their university studies or to starting them. No sooner registration for the new semester begins than the ordeal begins; for the overwhelming majority of students cannot afford to pay these fees.



Unemployment rates varied between the WB and GS, reaching 19% in WB and 31% in GS in 2012. The differences in these rates are wider when we take into consideration age, groups and sexes. They are very high among young males, especially college graduates, and higher still among young females. Moreover, women in GS are increasingly marginalized in the labor market; with young women affected the most despite their high education level.⁵⁴

Thus, we find that, despite the feelings of joy that prevails among students and parents during their children's graduation ceremony, their main concern remains their ability to find a job. This concern clouds the joy of graduation for the students, and puts them in a state of anxiety and fear for the future.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an article produced by UNICEF on 22/7/2009, told the following anecdote:

The sound of a lathe screams in the background as Nael Hasan al-Lada', 12, talks about his job in an auto body shop. He just started the job this summer, but already the young boy is helping to support his entire family of seven brothers and sisters. Despite long hours and the dangers of working around heavy machinery, Nael is considered lucky in the poverty-ridden Gaza Strip. If he does well at learning the trade, the seventh-grader will likely leave school to work full-time. 'I want to help my father,' he said, his few words drowned out by the noise in the shop.





Child labor is on the rise in Gaza and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. According to the 2004 Palestinian Child's Rights Law, children below the age of 15 are barred from working. Still, hunger and need drive families to allow their children to abandon schooling.⁵⁵

'I am good in school,' said Nael, who likes his religion class and wishes he could study at al-Azhar University in Cairo. He isn't afraid of the heavy machines at work, but is not anxious to enter the world of work. 'I wish that I had money so that I could stay in school,' he said.⁵⁶



Nael al-Lada' working in a car body repair shop.



Every day, in the center of Ramallah, Nasser (15 years) stands, still gazing at the store windows displaying school bags. He stares at them for few minutes, dreaming, and then he goes back to work as a street vendor selling mastic gum. This is the job he does during the summer vacation in order to help his family that suffers from difficult economic circumstances. Nasser, who was born in al-Am‘ari Refugee Camp in Ramallah, is well aware that he will not be able to buy any bag that he liked because of its high price, and because he is convinced of the importance of providing his family with “some food” instead of purchasing the bag that he dreams of.

➤ *Alghad* newspaper, Amman, 7/9/2005.





Palestinian Brain Drain

The emigration of Palestinian minds and brains is not a new subject. Israel has encouraged the migration abroad of any Palestinian, having the objective of emptying the land of its people and Judaizing it. Since the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 2000, the emigration phenomenon began to worsen among various segments of the Palestinian population, in particular academics and those with post-graduate degrees. Some of them wanted to look for work and some others were fleeing the tragic circumstances engendered by Israel. Upon investigation, the main reasons behind the wish to emigrate abroad are: the hope of improving living conditions; failure to find appropriate jobs in the 1967 Palestinian occupied territories, and the wish to enhance learning and studies. The results of the survey came as follows: 39.3% cited wanting to improve their living conditions; 15.2% mentioned lack of job opportunities, and 18.7% expressed wishing to further their learning and studies, according to figures issued by PCBS for the year 2010.⁵⁷

Some reports have indicated that since the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 2000, and over the last decade, the average number of Palestinian emigrants came to nearly 10 thousand a year. This is a grave indicator, as these reports showed that the majority of those emigrants are highly educated; persons with Masters' degrees and PhDs and financiers. Thus, we find foreign embassies expressing their willingness to accept and welcome such highly skilled people and wealthy individuals. According to data issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 45 thousand applications for emigration have been submitted to foreign diplomatic missions from mid-2006 until the beginning of 2007.⁵⁸ Salam Fayyad, head of the emergency government in Ramallah, said in 20/5/2008, that, from mid-2006 until the beginning of 2008, about 50 thousand Palestinians have emigrated from the Palestinian territories.⁵⁹



Jamil Daher, Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Palestinian Information Technology (IT) Association of Companies (PITA), emphasizes that the migration of human resources abroad poses a real threat to the future of the information technology sector in Palestine. He said that specializations in IT are in great global demand; that Palestinian brains have started to migrate abroad in light of the unprecedented deterioration of conditions in the Palestinian territories. Following the Oslo Accords of 1993 and the subsequent establishment of the National Authority, the WB and GS witnessed the return of many educated Palestinians, encouraged by the presence of a political horizon that resulted in the establishment of large companies and business establishments. Daher said that the return of these Palestinians to their homeland in that period was the most important reason for the quantum leap that took place in the IT sector. Furthermore, Dr. Samir ‘Abdallah, Director of the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute—MAS, considers that the brain drain threatens the future of the whole Palestinian economic sector, not just that of IT.⁶⁰





Conclusion

Israel continues to implement the policy of enforcing ignorance on the Palestinian people. Thus, in line with its occupation objectives, it omitted parts of the Palestinian curricula and amended others. It isolated students from their heroic tradition and tarnished their history.

Israel shut down schools and deployed tanks on their gates; it terrorized students and teachers, being its easy prey. It dealt with teachers as its enemies, detaining them and denying them their salaries that secure them a decent living. All of that led to low standards of education. Furthermore, Israel has waged a number of wars against GS that shook the educational process to its core; in addition to the strangulation caused by the blockade that it imposed on GS since 2007, when it prevented the entry of school supplies and denied the students access to their schools and universities.





Israel has planted the Separation Wall in WB, augmenting the suffering of the students, which included body searches, physical and verbal assaults, blocking the arrival of students and teachers to their schools and universities and impeding the arrival of school supplies. Student prisoners were deprived of their right to regular education and were prevented from taking their Tawjihi exams, except under whimsical conditions. These actions are contrary to all international agreements, notably the Fourth Geneva Convention that protects the prisoner's right to education under occupation.

Economic conditions worsened, forcing many students to drop out of their schools and universities and go to work. They have also led to the migration of educated Palestinians abroad, in search of a living, or to study a specialty forbidden by Israel.

These policies have not deterred Palestinian students from continuing their education; eradicating illiteracy, raising a nationalistic generation active in the resistance, realizing advanced scientific achievements and participating in the construction, development and liberation of their homeland.



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The Suffering of

The Palestinian Student

under the Israeli Occupation

معاناة الطالب الفلسطيني

تحت الاحتلال الإسرائيلي

9

Am I Not a Human?

This Book

The Israeli authorities have endeavored to tighten their grip on the Palestinian education sector, through controlling the educational process, in its comprehensive concept and all its elements. These include the curriculum, the school, the teacher and the student, with the aim to obtain outcomes that are in line with Israel's future plans for the occupied territories.

This book reviews the most important international legislation relative to the right to education in times of peace and war, the impact of Israeli policies that seek to impose ignorance on Palestinians, and the effect of daily attacks, the siege and the Separation Wall on the Palestinian student.

This book is the ninth in the series Am I not a Human? through which al-Zaytouna Centre seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation; in a style that addresses the mind and the heart, within a scientific, systematic and documented frame.



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