



# haringey justice for palestinians

## HJFP Briefing 02

### “Palestine is the barometer of Western integrity”

Don't call me a Palestinian of the Palestinian Territories because it is called Palestine.  
Don't give me a fraction of my homeland and call it a solution.  
Don't give me oppression and call it peace.  
Don't give me a Bantustan and call it a home.  
Don't give me a prison and call it freedom.  
Don't draw the borders of my existence according to your whims and interests and call it a state.  
My Palestine is the home that is mine since the dawn of history till the end of history.

#### 1. Emergency International Conference - Importance of Jerusalem

We would like invite you to our upcoming **Emergency International Conference: Importance of Jerusalem**, which will take place on the **26th of January 2018** from **6:30pm - 9:30-pm**, at **The Atrium, 124 Cheshire St, London E2 6EJ**.

The event will focus on the Political and Religious importance of Jerusalem for Muslims. Due to the current political scrutiny Jerusalem has been under, we believe it's extremely important to host an event on this topic and show our support. The recent news of Trump's decision to move the Israeli embassy to Jerusalem and therefore recognise the Holy City as Israel's Capital, as well as the approval of a bill by Israel that makes it more difficult to divide Jerusalem and consequently difficult for the Palestinians to retain East Jerusalem.

With the heightened threat to Masjid Al-Aqsa and the strengthening of occupation in East Jerusalem, there has never been a more desperate time to learn about the significance Jerusalem holds. Join us for this thought-provoking event with a number of acclaimed speakers from around the world:

**Shaykh Zahir Mahmoud** - As Suffa Institute (UK)  
**Moulana Mehmood Madani** - Head of Jamiat Ulama (India)  
**Shaykh Ebrahim Bham** - Gen. Secretary Jamiat Ulama (South Africa)  
**Salma Yaqoob** - Activist (UK)  
**Mufti Mustafa Cerić** - Former Grand Mufti of Bosnia  
**Imam Ajmal Masroor** - Broadcaster (UK)  
**Ustadh Abubakar Muhammad** - Chair of One Ummah (Nigeria)  
**Ismail Patel** - Chair Friends of Al Aqsa (UK)  
**A speaker from Diyanet** (Religious Affair) (Turkey)

Seats are free but limited. Please register your interest, **RSVP [Hawa@foa.org.uk](mailto:Hawa@foa.org.uk) by 23rd January**. We thank you in advance for your support and look forward to meeting you on the day.

**[Register Your Interest!](#)**

**Source: Ismail Patel, Chair of Friends of Al Aqsa, 17.01.2018**

#### 2. Abbas lifts Gaza tax exemption, threatening further economic woes

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — President Mahmoud Abbas issued a [presidential decree](#) dated Jan. 3 to reinstate the [collection of taxes](#) on the Gaza Strip. This decree abolished two previous decrees — one [issued in 2007](#) and [another from 2017](#) — exempting all citizens in the governorates of the Gaza Strip from paying taxes and fees. [Article 3](#) of Abbas' freshly issued decree states that the decree shall be

submitted to the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah and put to a vote in order to be endorsed at a future session.

The [taxes](#) to be reimposed in the Gaza Strip [include](#) the 17% Value Added Tax (VAT) on imports, the 20% income tax imposed on companies, the income tax on citizens, and other local taxes and levies such as the property tax and the tax on cigarettes. This is in addition to the increase in customs duty.

When Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in 2007, the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Ramallah exempted Palestinians in Gaza from paying taxes on government transactions, income tax and VAT to limit local revenues to the Hamas-led government in Gaza. Now, after the [PA took administrative control](#) of the Gaza Strip under the [Palestinian reconciliation](#) agreement, the abolition of the tax exemption would increase its revenues to balance its expenses. All taxes paid by the Palestinian citizens will be transferred to the consensus government. The PA relies on [local taxes](#) as a source of funding of its expenses, including income tax, VAT and property tax. The proceeds collected from these taxes account for 25% of the PA's total revenues and are estimated at \$1.1 billion annually.

In a related context, Palestinian economists agreed that the decision to reapply taxes will worsen the economic situation in Gaza amid a [total collapse](#) of the economic system. Raising fiscal revenues in light of a [severe unemployment crisis](#) will push the political and economic situation toward a precipice. Economic expert Mohammed Abu Jiyab is the editor-in-chief of local Al-Iqtisady newspaper, which was the first to [report the news](#) of the reimposition of taxes on Gaza. He told Al-Monitor, "The decision to raise fiscal revenues was taken according to the legal rules set by the Ministry of Finance in Ramallah without taking into consideration the collapsing economy in the Gaza Strip. This decision will be directly reflected in all types of goods and services provided by private sector institutions, especially telecommunications and electricity companies. It will also increase the income tax."

Abu Jiyab explained that the decision comes amid a sharp decline in public spending and an [acute cash crisis](#) in the Gaza Strip. "The Rami Hamdallah government is seeking to provide spending allocations for the Gaza Strip from revenues collected in Gaza by raising the fiscal revenues without relying on any funds received from outside the besieged enclave. This is a recipe for bankruptcy," he added. "Abbas is well-aware that this will not increase the revenues of the PA and its Ministry of Finance as much as it will worsen the economic and psychological burden on Gaza's citizens."

After the signing of the reconciliation agreement on Oct. 12, 2017, the Palestinian government in Ramallah took several measures to increase its fiscal revenues at intermittent intervals. The PA had improved its [tax collection](#) on goods entering Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing in the southern Gaza Strip. It also increased the price of [Egyptian fuel](#) and [cigarettes](#). Mohammad al-Ashi, a professor of finance at the Islamic University in Gaza, told Al-Monitor, "Ever since the government of consensus took administrative control over the crossings of the Gaza Strip, customs tariffs increased threefold compared to the tariffs applied by Hamas. This slashed by more than half the number of trucks making the crossings daily to the Gaza Strip, falling from a daily average of 700 to 300 trucks." He added, "As of Nov. 14, 2018, customs adjustments agreed upon with Israel will apply. These include an increase in customs duty on clothing items from 6% to 15%, on furniture from 12% to 20%, on footwear from 12% to 27% and on aluminum products from 8% to 16%."

Although the customs duty rates to be applied in the Gaza Strip are the same as those applied in the West Bank, Ashi argued that there are economic differences between Gaza and the West Bank that were not taken into consideration. He explained that "about 70,000 Palestinians in the West Bank work on the Israeli side with an average of 500 shekels [\$142] a day, not to mention the uninterrupted electricity service in the West Bank ensuring continuity of production. The salaries of PA employees in the West Bank were not subject to the [deductions](#) made on the PA employees' salaries in Gaza. Reimposing taxes would be catastrophic in Gaza."

Ashi pointed out that farmers would suffer the most from the reimposition of taxes, which will increase the price of chemical and agricultural products and thus the cost of production. "The decision will increase by 16% the bill paid by citizens to phone and internet companies," he said. It should be noted that the [decision](#) that was taken by the consensus government on Nov. 6, 2017, to [unify the license fees](#) for owning a new diesel car between Gaza and the West Bank has yet to be applied. The license fee is still 2,100 shekels (\$614) in Gaza compared to 660 shekels (\$193) in the West Bank. Speaking about Fatah's position on the reimposition of the tax on the Gaza Strip, Fatah spokesman in the Gaza Strip Fayez Abu Eita said the PA is going through a severe financial crisis and the reimposition of the tax would empower the government of consensus in the Gaza Strip and the West

Bank. He told Al-Monitor, "Despite the bad economic situation in Gaza, we trust the Palestinian leadership to take steps to support the economy of Gaza in the next phase."

In an earlier statement for [Arabi21 website](#) on Jan. 10, Osama Nofal, the director general of Studies and Planning at the National Economy Ministry in Gaza, said, "The PA collected \$720 million in clearance revenues from the Gaza Strip last year while the exemption was still applied. When taxes are reimposed in Gaza, the PA's revenues will rise by 35% to about \$1 billion a year, excluding the excise tax on industrial diesel whose revenues are annually allocated to the Gaza power plant."

Meanwhile, Riyadh Halasan, an economic researcher at the PLO's [Palestinian Planning Center](#), said, "Taxation is generally in the citizens' best interest, but the Gaza Strip lacks a stable environment allowing the state to use fiscal revenues to finance citizens' services." He told Al-Monitor, "The alternative is to revive the Gaza Strip economically by adopting government policies aimed to increase employment rates, break the siege on the freedom of movement of individuals and goods, ensure an investment-friendly environment and give citizens their financial rights without any deductions." It seems that the national unity government is imposing new fiscal policies on the Gaza Strip after the Palestinian reconciliation agreement. This, however, is not coupled with any measures to improve the economic situation in the enclave. The sanctions imposed by Abbas against Gaza have yet to be lifted. This is likely to fuel protests and popular strikes threatening the Palestinian reconciliation.

**Source: Moath al-Amoudi, Al Monitor, 16.01.2018**

Moath al-Amoudi is a Palestinian writer who has been working as a journalist for eight years, specializing in public issues. He holds a master's degree from the Islamic University and worked for several Palestinian and foreign media outlets. He participated in researching a book called "The Palestinian Prisoners," which was published in several languages, by preparing a range of interviews and documentaries with a number of Palestinian decision-makers and leaders, and conducted a series of investigative journalism surveys.

### **3. Campaigns**

Ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 798 after a report from B'Tselem alleged that Israeli waste is being dumped in the West Bank: [www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/798](http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/798).

The recent arrest of 16 year old Ahed Tamimi has shone a spotlight on Israel's systematic abuse of minors through the process of military detention, but her situation is far from unique. [Write to Boris Johnson about child prisoners and urge him to take action](#) and join [Amnesty International to call for her release](#).

Right now, our MPs have the power to influence the rules that will shape the UK's trade after we leave the EU. It's an opportunity to change trade so it works for people in poorer countries. [Take action with Traidcraft](#).

### **4. Exiled (?) Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei's film : Human Flow**

"This is an urgent, deep soak in the current refugee crisis. There has been no dearth of documentaries about this topic, but this one comes closest to understanding the totality of the issue." <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/aug/31/human-flow-review-ai-weiwei-refugee-crisis>  
Showing at Doc house at the Renoir / Curzon Russell Square. - limited showings. <https://www.view.co.uk/london/films/human-flow>

#### **Could you sign?**

- *International Association of Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (IARPP) plans to hold its 2019 annual conference in Israel. The link below contains the petition and our initial letter of protest to IARPP dates December 27, 2017.

[https://secure.everyaction.com/hllcCM7s106Wu9RFAS0D\\_A2](https://secure.everyaction.com/hllcCM7s106Wu9RFAS0D_A2)

- 2. Social Worker, protesting detention of Children, arrested.

<https://www.change.org/p/unconditional-release-of-palestinian-social-worker-munther-amira>

#### **Media Group**

**Haringey Justice for Palestinians**

**24.01.2018**

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