

Preface

By Leyla Shahid, General Delegate of Palestine for the European Union ,
Belgium and Luxemburg

Brussels, November 29, 2010

Dear readers

Today is November 29, Day of International Solidarity with the Palestinian People as decreed by the United Nations.

Why a special day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People? Because it is the last people on earth that has been living under military occupation for 43 years, despite all the resolutions that have been voted by the UN Counsel of Security and the General Assembly, which, since 1967 Resolution 242, command the Israeli army to withdraw from the territories it conquered through military force, i.e. the West Bank including East-Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan.

This inability to enforce Law in Palestine is not only Israel's responsibility but also that of the International Community which has failed its duty to make people respect the Law. That way, it has placed Israel beyond the Law.

This failure has caused the military occupation to continue and the violence it breed : the Israeli wars (more than five since 1967), the destruction of all the means of survival of the Palestinian society, the colonization of the Palestinian territories by 500,000 settlers, the imprisonment of more than 8,000 Palestinians, among them women and children. In front of such a tragedy, the States and governments of the world seem to be paralysed, too weak-kneed to get involved, favouring their own interest more than the respect of justice and law, and unable to lead their diplomatic initiatives to the end.

On the opposite, there are citizens of the world who refuse indifference, collusion and the application of a double standard when it comes to have Law be respected. These people have shown courage, demonstrate a humanist view, generosity, inventiveness and initiative. There are many of them in Europe. Among them, the Taayoush Group, a bunch of young Belgian citizens who, at their modest but symbolically so high scale, have decided to act. Their first gesture was to go and meet the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestine.

That is how the book you are now holding in your hands was born. Be the PAC editions be thanked for deciding to publish it. This direct, totally free and unrestricted contact, which the members of the group prepared thoroughly prepared before leaving to Palestine, testifies the seriousness of their project as well as their will to understand the reality of the life of ordinary Palestinian citizens, these men and women, young and old who are submitted to the daily humiliation of being military occupied for 43 years and who go on fighting for their freedom, their independence and the peaceful coexistence with their Israeli neighbour. The result is a true testimony, free of ideological speech but rich

with of little stories about the everyday life, with people who invent hope, « an incurable disease we suffer from” as the famous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish said one day in front of a delegation for the Nobel Prize in Ramallah.

This is « Beautiful Resistance”, the one that enables a society to keep faith into itself, into its own humanity as well as into its enemy’s. The Palestinians know that they have a lot of brothers and sisters peacefully fighting for them, many allies and supporters taking part in actions that are lead jointly with the Israeli Movement for Peace.

For « Taayoush », testifying is contributing to lifting the veil on a reality which, when it is not concealed by the media, is distorted by caricature as it is described as a war of religion or as terrorism.

Testifying is also refusing indifference in front of injustice and beyond the European borders, contributing to weaving links and solidarities that draw on the « Taayoush », the « living together » that is ultimately at stake in the conflict going on over there but also here, in Europe.

This book is a proof that each and everyone of us and of you can decide to contribute in a concrete even though modest way to feed hope, solidarity, faith in humanity, justice and law. Just as Anne-Claire, Bénédicte, Diane, Guirec, Julien, Laetitia, Louise, Marine, Sophie, Tanguy and Théodore have.

The citizens’ efforts are no substitutes to the States and governments’ duty to make Law be respected and to bring an end to occupation, but they contribute to give all the Palestinians who welcomed « Taayoush » so warmly, the feeling that they have partners, representatives who, beyond the walls and frontiers will keep at building a better world of peace, prosperity and « taayoush » with them.

May other people in Europe follow their example.