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**Editorial: A Summit for the People**

There is nothing to look forward to from the Arab Summit being held in Beirut at the moment. There is no need to demand, propose or hope for change on the part of the Arab leaders, when we all know the case is hopeless. Arab governments have proposed one peace initiative after the other -- which are typically ignored or rejected -- yet have never taken practical steps to pressure Israel, such as freezing their diplomatic relationships with Israel. However, what is becoming increasingly apparent is the strength of the voice of the Arab people and various nations demanding an end to the misery and suffering of the Palestinian people. The people's voices must not be marginalized this time, as has always happened in the past. Their demands must be paid attention to and treated with respect, and they must have a part in determining the results of any summit.

**Mother of Martyr 'Ammar Al-Shakhsheer: This was my son's Mother's Day gift  
Mirvat Sadeq, Palestinian Women Journalists Office**

Um 'Ata sits with great dignity in the center of Al-Shakhsheer Quarter, in the Old City of Nablus. She is surrounded by women. Some are arriving, others are leaving. As they talk together, they try to encourage each other and raising each other's spirits. They have come to mourn with Um Ata, and she receives them with strength and faith in her bearig. Her youngest son, 'Ammar, has been martyred in a military operation -- a "suicide" attack -- which he performed in Kufr Saba. Um 'Ata recalls, "'Ammar always cared deeply for me and his sick father. He would insist on helping me with the housework, and would urge me to sit down and relax. He was a gentle and caring person.'" What made him decide to commit an act which would cost him his life, we ask Um 'Ata? She answers, "He couldn't bear witnessing the atrocities committed against our Palestinian children. Israeli occupying forces have been killing young, innocent children on a daily basis, tearing their bodies apart. How can anyone bear to witness such crimes? There is a moment when one explodes. A few days ago a

Palestinian mother and her children were all killed in Gaza by Israeli soldiers, an incident instilling great hostility and anger in many of us. ‘Ammar was deeply moved by what happened – and also, outraged. He loved children enormously.’ This is evident from the large number of children surrounding his home and quarter. These children were the close to ‘Ammar, sharing trust and true friendship with each other. “This year’s gift for Mother’s Day,” Im ‘Ata tell us, “was my son’s permanent farewell.”

**Blood was splattering all over me: A little boy survives an Israeli attack**  
**Rasha Misleh, Ramallah**

Here, on the road to Al-Am’ary Refugee Camp in Ramallah, six Palestinians – including five children -- have been brutally killed, torn into a million pieces. The Israeli tank shells and bullets fired from the nearby Israeli Psagot settlement needed only a few seconds to finish committing their crime, obliterating forever the innocence and happy childhood that had existed only seconds before. Bushra Abu Kweik (37), was killed with her three children ‘Azeezeh (14), Bara’a (13) and Muhammad (8) while driving them home from school. Their bodies were dismembered and scattered in all directions. ‘Imad Al-Masri (36) was driving behind them, with nine school children -- his sons, daughters, nieces and nephews – in the car. Among them, Shaima’ (5) and ‘Arafat (16) were also killed. Shaima’s head was blown off by shell-fragments and ‘Arafat was killed by seven bullets, leaving deep holes in his body.

The Israeli attack was apparently intended to kill Husein Abu-Kweik, Bushra’s husband, considered by Israel to be a leader of Hamas in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Districts. That day, Husein wasn’t feeling well, and so while he usually fetched the children from school, he asked his wife to get them. He had no idea that this would cost him the lives of his wife and three children. He is left with his eldest daughter, Sundus (16), and his youngest son, Hafez (6).

Sundus is having difficulty coming to terms with the loss, and her eyes continually roamed the room as she spoke to us. “Everything in this house reminds me of them -- their movements, their whispers, their naughtiness -- everything. How can I forget them?” Shaima’s brother, Shadi (7) displayed his innocence and inability to fully comprehend what had happened, telling us, “Look at this scratch on my cheek. I was also injured by the tank shells. I hid under the seat of the car when the shelling started. Blood was splattering all over my head and clothes.”

This is just one of hundreds of tragedies taking place daily as part of Sharon’s Colorful Journey, which he has been referring to lately. It is a journey full of children’s torn flesh and schoolbooks drenched in blood. The memories and the sprinkled blood will be everlasting proof of the atrocities committed against a nation of innocent civilians whose only wish is to remain in their land and live in dignity.

**Slaughter of families overlooked by the media: 25 cases of relatives killed together**  
**Amin Abu Wardeh, Nablus**

Since the outbreak of the current Intifada, tragic stories about members of the same family being killed, whether in the same or separate incident, have been overshadowing the lives of

Palestinians. Cases in which siblings, mothers and children, fathers and sons were killed as a result of Israeli tank fire, missiles or land mines, have been occurring continually, with surviving relatives and neighbors reporting the terrible details. One of the many tragic events of this kind happened in Al-Bureij Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, in which five members of the Al-'Awawdeh family were instantly killed. Their bodies were torn into pieces, scattered in all directions, when the car they were riding in suddenly exploded when it hit an Israeli landmine. Similar tragedies have happened to several other families from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, such as the Kheirallah family, the Dabaya family, the Al-Sabbagh family, the 'Izaddin family and the Al-Malalha family. In all of their cases, women, men, children, and elderly people from the same family were killed in inhuman acts of this kind committed by the Israeli occupying forces.

According to a report issued by the Palestinian human rights organization, Al Haq (Law):

1. There have been 25 cases in which several relatives of first-degree relation have been killed since September 2000, out of which 24 of the victims are children, and 12 females.
2. There have been 15 cases in which siblings were killed.
3. There has been 1 case in which a mother and a daughter were killed.
4. There has been 1 case in which a father and his two children were killed.

**There where no humanity remains, be human**  
**Widad Al-Barghuthi**

"There where no human exists, be human" says a proverb often quoted by philosophers and leaders in Israeli society. A soldier in the Duvdovan unit of the Israeli special forces described his feelings and experiences while stationed in the Palestinian occupied territories, in an interview published in Rosky Israelteyaneen Newspaper. "Our military commander was killed one day, leaving me and colleagues filled with a constant desire for revenge. One day my colleagues and I stopped two Palestinian taxis, forced the passengers out on the street, where we humiliated, demeaned and made fun of them for long hours. We feel ashamed now whenever we remember what we did. I believe we would never have done this was it not for the ideological conditioning Israeli soldiers and children are put through throughout their lives. In regards to the proverb about being human, there are both positive and negative interpretations for it. You could take it to mean that you must maintain your humanity in all situations, even if there is no other human being there to watch you or judge you. Or you could take it to mean that Israelis must only act with humanity if there are no other humans around. In all other cases they should act with inhumanity. What is happening on the ground is rather a manifestation of the second interpretation."

Another Israeli newspaper reported recently that thousands of Israelis will be allowed to obtain personal weapons as soon as the Israeli police, in coordination with the Israeli Interior Ministry, begins issuing licenses for personal weapons to Israeli citizens. The number of applications to own a weapon has tripled recently. At a time where Israel is demanding the Palestinian side to hand in all weapons, including those granted to the Palestinian Authority as part of the peace accords, Israeli citizens are increasingly their own supply of weapons, sending the ironic message that it is through their modern weapons that peace will prevail.

**Center for Democracy and Non-Violence:**

## **Implementing new projects to empower women and the next generation Center for Democracy and Non-Violence**

The Center for Democracy and Non-Violence is an independent Palestinian NGO that was established in 1998 to promote the ideas of equality, non-violence, democracy and human rights among all sectors of the Palestinian society, especially schoolchildren. Believing in women's rights as human rights, implying the right of women to dignity and equality, the Center has implemented several projects targeting Palestinian women leaders and young female schoolchildren. "Choosing the Future" is the name of one project implemented in cooperation with the UN, UNRWA, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and funded by the Japanese Government. It targets seven governmental and UNRWA schools in Ramallah and Jericho aiming to empower 150 female schoolchildren aged fourteen to sixteen through a counseling and training. This program covers the following topics: human rights, gender, public health, conflict resolution, computer, Internet and videotaping skills. "Empowering Palestinian Women to Defy Violence against Women through Videotaping" is the name of another project implemented in Bethlehem, targeting 25 Palestinian women leaders. They are trained in similar skills, but the primary focus of the program is to record video footage and make a short film tackling the issue of violence against women. Several other projects are being implemented by the Center, such as promoting non-violence in Schools, establishing libraries in schools and cultural centers and running an international summer camp for children.

### **Tha'ira and the prison guard Issa Qaraq, Palestinian Detainees Club**

Tha'ira is the daughter of the freed political prisoner Sameeha Hamdan. She is one of the many children born within Israeli jails, and she spent first two years of her life with her mother in prison. She was forced to bear the darkness of the dim cells, witness inhuman beatings by the Israeli guards, and endure exposure to teargas in the confinement of the prison. She left her mother's womb to begin her innocent childhood behind bars, day after day learning how to support her mother and other imprisoned women. She learned to use her teeth as a weapon. She would knock with her tiny hand on the cell's door, demanding it to be opened by Lorein, the Israeli woman prison guard. When Lorein told her to be quiet and pushed her back into the cell, Tha'ira bit Lorein's leg. Two years have passed and Tha'ira has finally tasted freedom for the first time in her life. According to Israeli prison laws, any child born in jail can stay with the mother for a maximum period of two years. As unusual and terrible Tha'ira's childhood has been within jail, it has been as difficult and sad for her to now be taken away from her mother's care.

Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails have undergone tremendous violations of their human rights, including beatings, harassment, isolation and exposure to teargas in closed spaces, something which has increased during the past months of the Intifada. Most severely affected are child prisoners, such as Su'ad Ghazal (16) and Sawsan Abu-Turky (13) who have been treated brutally. Sawsan described her experience: "They confined me with Israeli criminal prisoners. They had no respect for my childhood or my young age. They hung me in the sun for long hours with my arms tied. I suffered sunstroke. The interrogator hit me brutally and screamed in my face. Then another interrogator tied me to an iron bed until my legs were swollen and then threw me into a dark isolated cell."

On another occasion, when Israeli Authorities agreed to release all but five women prisoners, Palestinian women political prisoners were the first Palestinians ever to refuse their freedom unless all women prisoners were released. They succeeded in their attempt despite their terrible conditions and the increased mistreatment they experienced as a result of their decision. After 16 months of protest and struggling, 29 women political prisoners were set free to go home, except for Lamia Ma'ruf who was deported outside of Palestine.

**Israeli soldiers prevent water tanks from passing:  
Women from Nablus District seek water in the mountains  
Lubna Al-Ashqar, Palestinian Women Journalists Office, Nablus**

Palestinian women have always managed to find new alternatives as they face the everyday challenges resulting from the Israeli occupation of their villages and towns. For months now, Israeli forces have been imposing a tight siege around each and every Palestinian village, town and city prohibiting people and goods from moving out or into the area. The village of Beit Dajan, near Nablus, is one of the villages lacking a public water network, which has forced villagers for years to buy water tanks from Nablus City. However, due to the Israeli closure around this village and its neighboring villages, this alternative has become impossible. Israeli soldiers have constantly prevented water tanks from passing the blockades, and humiliated the truck drivers. In several instances soldiers intentionally released the water on the streets or on the drivers' heads as a means of causing pain and humiliation to those in desperate need of a drop of water.

This reality has forced women, who carry the responsibility for their households, to find new ways of coping, which in fact turn out to be alternatives used long ago. They have begun walking long distances through the valleys and mountains to reach ancient water cisterns which were dug long ago by their ancestors. To solve the problem of needing to walk to find water, while the washing waits at home, women began walking in groups carrying their family's clothes, carpets, blankets and washing supplies, trying to continue their routines as smoothly as possible. Many women regard this as their only alternative. Some try to find something positive in the midst of this dangerous and humiliating situation by paying attention to the beauty of nature that blends with the perseverance and strength of the women amidst the mountains, olives and almond trees.