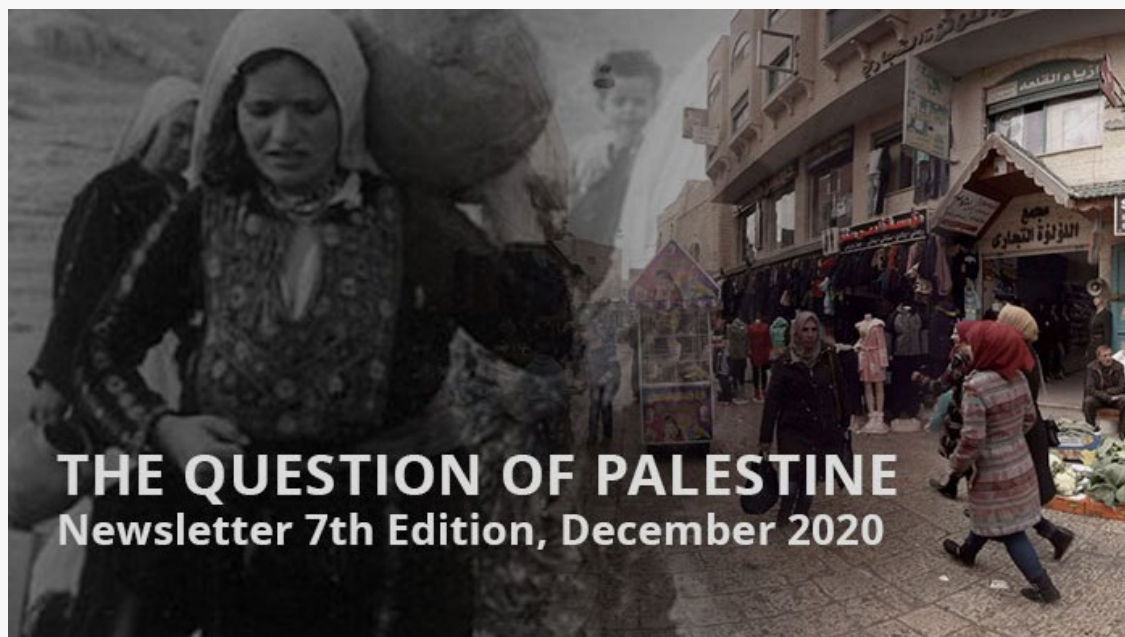


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Forward

The Question of Palestine Newsletter 7th Edition, December 2020

The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) launched, in October 2018, its three-year initiative on “The Question of Palestine 70 Years On: Priorities for Action”, which aims to foster new and innovative thinking into the discourse around the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Global Network of Experts on the Question of Palestine (GNQP), established by ARDD as part of the three-year initiative, employs various avenues of coordination to serve as a platform for enhancing and expanding substantial dialogue on the question of Palestine from a human rights-based approach.

In this edition

Following the official start of *de facto* annexation of the West Bank by Israel, Palestinians

witnessed a series of events that affect their lives and compound their suffering. Even though the Israeli government appears to have suspended the intended annexation due to internal tensions, 389 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank were demolished or appropriated between March and August 2020. This number, at an average of 65 structures per month, constitutes the **highest average destruction rate in four years**.

With COVID-19 cases rising in the region, including in the West Bank, the fear of an uncontrollable spread in besieged Gaza became a reality. The sudden **spike in the number of infections outside quarantine facilities** in Gaza indicates community transmission, and comes at a time of increased hostilities between Hamas and the Israeli military. In response to the escalation between Hamas and Israel, the Israeli authorities reduced the size of the fishing zone and halted the entry of most goods into Gaza, including of fuel, which led to shutting down the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) and triggered power cuts for up to 20 hours a day. The **25,592 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Gaza** by 7 December 2020 and the already dire living conditions of its population indicate quickly deteriorating circumstances, in particular with regards to the healthcare facilities; added to that are polluted water and limited availability of electricity, which are all reasons for grave concern for the besieged population. Furthermore, **Israel announced that its vaccination campaign** will cover Jewish settlers living in the West Bank but excludes millions of Palestinians under its occupation.

In Lebanon, the Port of Beirut blast of 4 August 2020 caused serious destruction of large parts of Beirut and is responsible for a lasting collective trauma. While the explosion did not have a major physical impact on Palestinian refugee camps, its overall effect on the country is bound to cascade down to **the vulnerable communities**, compounding their already dire economic situation, which preceded this tragedy.

Amidst the global pandemic, deepening economic crises and heightened tensions across the region, the governments of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain Morocco have agreed to normalize ties with Israel, **with Sudan and other Gulf states possibly following suit**. The establishment of full diplomatic ties between the above Arab governments and the Israeli government was brokered by US President Trump and formalized as the **Abraham Accords**. The normalization agreements sparked dismay and are largely perceived by Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority as a **betrayal and abandonment of the Palestinian cause**. Another contentious, more recent, development during the Trump Administration was having Mike Pompeo as the **first US secretary of state to visit the illegal Israeli settlements** in the West Bank and the Golan Heights. US President-elect Joe Biden will shortly take office, a transition which is expected to bring the **pre-Trump normal of the Oslo paradigm** to Israeli-Palestinian relations.

The 7th edition of ARDD's quarterly newsletter on the Question of Palestine brings, through a selection of articles, reports and testimonials, information and news from experts, relevant institutions and reporters on Palestinian issues. The edition aims to raise awareness about the latest developments regarding the Question of Palestine to conduct a meaningful dialogue about the current situation and the future of relevant policy may be conducted.

GNQP Efforts

Last October marked the third year since the establishment of the GNQP. In view of the ongoing restrictions on international travel and meetings, the yearly GNQP conference took the format of a series of roundtables sessions organized by GNQP Steering Committee member Lex Takkenberg online; **two sessions** already took place. The first, under the heading "Beyond the Covid-19 Emergency: What is Happening to Palestinian Refugees and the Question of Palestine", took place on 3 November 2020. On 7 December 2020, the network reconvened for a second roundtable on "The US Election Results: Impact on Palestinian Refugees and the Broader Question of Palestine". The two are part of a series of six planned for the upcoming months under ARDD's Question of Palestine program.

GNQP Members Coverage



Despite the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the GNQP members continued to actively shed light on the Question of Palestine. We congratulate Dr. Anne Irfan whose paper "**Petitioning for Palestine: refugee appeals to international authorities**" received the Contemporary Levant's Best Paper Award for 2020. Below are

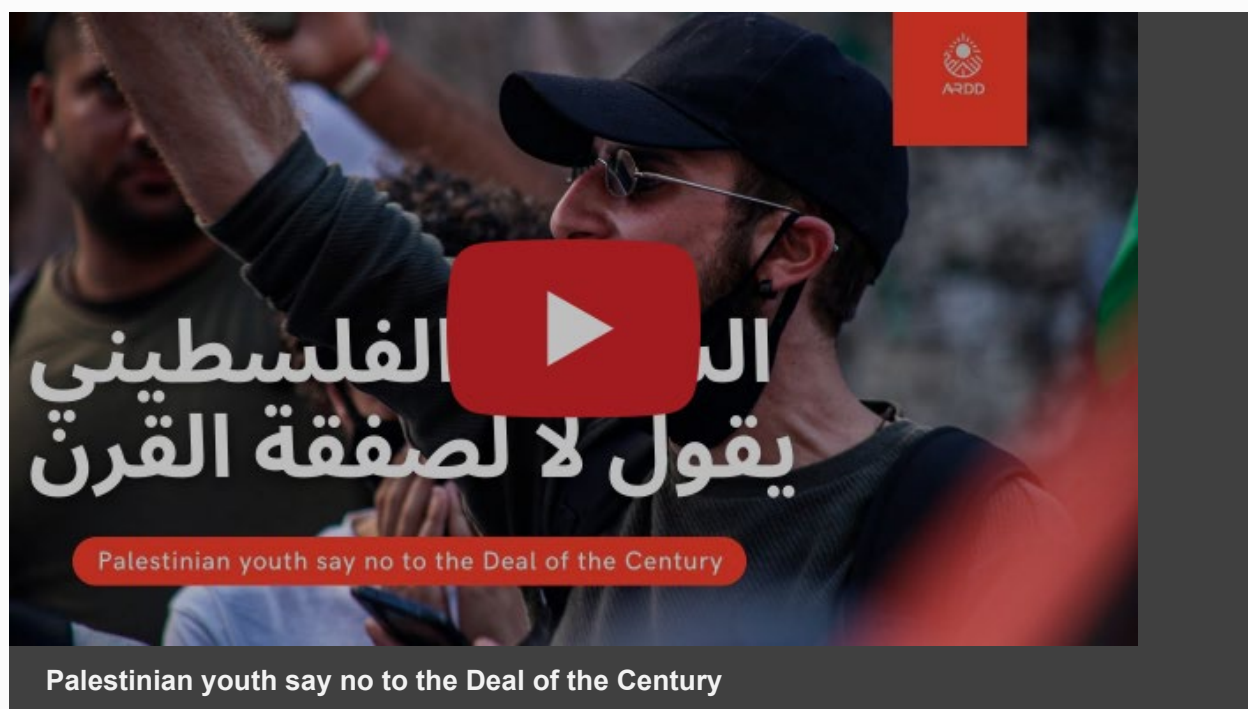
the latest contributions by various GNQP members.

- The [Palestine Forum](#) published Jaber Suleiman’s intervention during the “Palestinian Refugees: Reality and Challenges” workshop (Arabic).
- Asem Khalil published two articles, “Palestinian Constitutionalism: A Stalled Project” and “International Human Rights Law within the Palestinian Legal System” in the *Journal of Constitutional Law in the Middle East and North Africa*, issue 1, pp. 4-26 and pp. 27-46 (2020) respectively. 01.12.2020
- Anne Irfan authored the blog “Surrogate states: Palestinian refugees, the PLO, and UNRWA in history” for the [Council for British Research in the Levant](#). 02.11.2020
- Anne Irfan published “Palestinian petitions: activism in exile” on [Refugee History](#). 29.10.2020
- Jaber Suleiman published an article on the [Palestinian Policy Network Al-Shabaka](#) entitled “Palestinian Refugees and Lebanon’s Multilayered Crisis.” 29.09.2020
- For a round-table organized by the [Palestinian Economic Policy Institute \(MAS\)](#), Michael Dumper presented an analysis on “UNRWA's Future in the Face of Financing Challenges and Political Pressure.” 23.09.2020
- Karen Abu Zayd, Francesca Albanese, Sari Hanafi, Anne Irfan and Terry Rempel contributed to a booklet published by the London-based [Palestine Return Centre](#) titled “UNRWA at 70: Palestinian Refugees in Context.” 15.09.2020
- Another article by Anne Irfan appeared in the [Durham Middle East Paper](#) titled “An Unusual Revolution: The Palestinian thawra in Lebanon, c. 1969-82.” September 2020
- Francesca Albanese and Lex Takkenberg presented their recently published book “Palestinian Refugees in International Law,” with a recording of the event at the [National University of Singapore](#) available online. All upcoming events and information related to the book are shared on the [Palestinian Refugees in International Law Facebook page](#).
- Mouin Rabbani wrote a blog on annexation “Not Now, Not Never” for [London](#)

Review of Books. 21.07.2020

- In an article the [Arab Law Quarterly](#), Victor Kattan discusses “The Special Role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the Muslim Holy Shrines in Jerusalem.”
13.07.2020

Ardd efforts



Palestinian youth say no to the Deal of the Century

In September, ARDD published a policy brief titled “[Beyond Civic Engagement: Enabling Social and Political Participation of Palestinian Refugee Youth](#).” The brief calls for efforts to be exerted to enable the participation of Palestinian refugee youth in public governance within their communities, beyond traditional civic engagement approaches. Only by doing so can risks posed by general frustration, socio-political disengagement, and low levels of trust in institutions be avoided.

ARDD published a [video to remember the killing of the 12-year old Muhammed Al-Durrah in the Gaza Strip, 20 years ago on 30 September 2000](#). On the occasion of the International Day for Peace and in line with our mission to give more voice to youth, ARDD published a [video of Palestinian youth calling to be heard in their rejection of the so called “Deal of the Century”](#). Their message is to reaffirm the importance of proper

representation of the Palestinian people, especially the youth, in order to achieve peace. In this context, ARDD also published an [article on Arab youth voices on geopolitics in their region](#).



ARDD also announced four new opportunities related to the Question of Palestine:

1. **Educational crash course for Arab youth** “The Peculiarity of Palestinian Refugees’ Status in International Refugee Regime” two-day course on Thursday and Friday, 14 and 15 January 2021. Read the details [here](#).
2. **Internship opportunity** for young researchers on legal aid needs for Palestinian refugee youths in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine – Read the details [here](#)
3. **Call for papers** for an edited volume regarding networks on Palestine – find the call [here](#)
4. **Consultancy opportunity** to draft a bylaw for the GNQP – Read more [here](#)

Coverage on UNRWA



**UNRWA CALLS ON STATES TO
ACT ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO
THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

[Read more](#)
10.12.2020

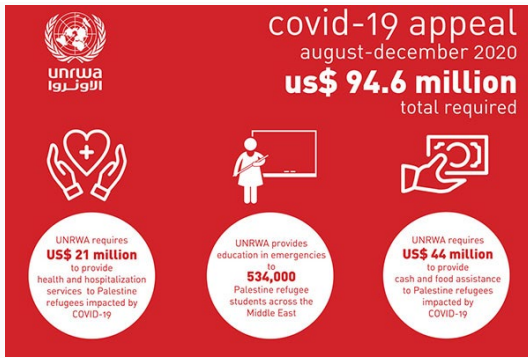


**STATEMENT OF THE UNRWA
COMMISSIONER-GENERAL
BEFORE THE SPECIAL
POLITICAL AND
DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE,
UNHQ**

[Read more](#)
12.10.2020

**UNRWA COVID-19 Appeal
August - December 2020.**

[Read more](#)



covid-19 appeal
august-december 2020
us\$ 94.6 million
total required

UNRWA requires **US\$ 21 million** to provide health and hospitalization services to Palestine refugees impacted by COVID-19

UNRWA provides education in emergencies to **534,000** Palestine refugee students across the Middle East

UNRWA requires **US\$ 44 million** to provide cash and food assistance to Palestine refugees impacted by COVID-19

02.09.2020



UNRWA highlights the needs of vulnerable Palestine refugee families in the wake of the Beirut explosion.

[Read more](#)

8.8.2020

For all information, press releases, and stories regarding UNRWA, visit the Newsroom @ UNRWA website

Palestine's latest news and updates overview



- UN experts alarmed by sixth Palestinian child killing by Israeli forces in

2020, call for accountability. [Read here](#) 17.12.2020

- The Israel-Morocco peace deal is roiling Western Sahara. [Read here](#) 16.12.2020
- Official: Palestine, Jordan, Egypt to setup peace conference. [Read more](#) 02.12.2020
- Cash-strapped PA accepts \$1 billion in tax revenues from Israel. [Read more](#) 02.12.2020
- In Syria, Yarmouk residents plan return to war-torn Palestinian camp. [Read more](#) 28.11.2020
- Israeli court orders eviction of 87 Palestinians from East Jerusalem neighborhood. [Read more](#) 26.11.2020
- For Israel, tens of thousands of Palestinian newborns don't exist. [Read more](#) 12.10.2020
- Pro-Palestine groups hold digital day of action to protest Facebook censorship. [Read mor](#) 23.09.2020
- COVID-19 in Palestine: A pandemic in the face of "settler colonial erasure." [Read more](#) 15.09.2020
- The Lebanese COVID-19 within crises and its refugees. [Read more](#) 26.08.2020
- Beyond failed frameworks: A re-imagined collective future. [Read more](#) 23.07.2020

Electronic Intifada's Palestine in Pictures Series

November 2020



October 2020



September 2020



August 2020



July 2020



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