



THE LAST WORD

Nineteen Years

Some people born in December 1998 are already married, and some possibly have children. This month, those people will celebrate their 19th birthday ... and we will, too! That's right; 19 years of *This Week in Palestine* with around 250 issues and heaps of articles and features on Palestine and Palestinians. This December issue is number 236, though we should remember that during the first year, the magazine was published twice a month.

TWiP's thematic approach has resulted in literally thousands of professionally edited articles on various topics vis-à-vis Palestine. In fact, there is hardly any significant topic that we have not tackled during these 19 years. Among many others, we have addressed themes on health, education, children, women, Jerusalem, Gaza (and every single Palestinian city), economy, cultural heritage, tourism, environment, 1948 Palestine, information technology, music, poetry, wildlife, and flora and fauna. We have also featured scores of Palestinian personalities who have impacted their society and beyond, in addition to a multitude of talented Palestinian artists and noteworthy publications on Palestine. In addition, we have taken our readers on trips to visit fascinating Palestinian sites and shrines, and have shed light on hundreds of cultural events and exhibitions, compiling and promoting these activities after having contacted tens of cultural institutions every month. *In fact, TWiP has become a national archive in English.*

The challenges have been many; chief among them, however, is the impact of advertising through social media, which costs less than advertising in a print magazine, although I hasten to add that it is not necessarily as effective. We have always distributed free of charge thousands of monthly copies of TWiP, and our initial business model was based solely on the concept that fees for advertisements and promotional material would cover the cost of free distribution. In order to compensate for the drop in income from advertising, we have made our online version of non-sponsored issues subscription-only, and have also sought sponsorships. The year 2017 broke the record for full sponsorships, and we are very grateful to the UNDP/PAPP, UN WOMEN, SAWASYA, the Negotiations Affairs Department, the Ministry of Culture, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for sponsoring entire issues this year. The UNDP/PAPP has, in fact, sponsored two issues in 2017. Another heartfelt thank you goes to the institutions that have consistently placed advertisements in TWiP year after year, such as the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem, the Bank of Palestine, and Jericho Resort Village.

We have been true and faithful to our self-imposed mandate to promote and document Palestine the best way we know how. I have often said that we are extremely fortunate to be in the business of publishing mostly good and positive material that, in turn, gives us the impetus to keep going and do our very best. In all humility, I must admit that *This Week in Palestine* is a Palestinian success story by any standard – a success that needs your ongoing support.

I would like to end with thanking the amazing team of *This Week in Palestine*, without whose expertise and commitment this project would surely not have earned the credibility and popularity it has achieved.



Merry Christmas! I wish all of you a brilliant 2018.

Sani Meo
Publisher