

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

As I write this message, the overall number of COVID-19 cases and casualties remains relatively low in Palestine. But yesterday, the number of new cases jumped, most of them affecting those who work in Israel and their relatives. The lockdown, in place since early March, has been partially eased for some businesses, whereas day workers, taxi drivers, restaurant owners, and freelancers are among the many suffering from the economic impact of the pandemic. Many people's worries center not only on bringing food to the tables of their families that are celebrating Ramadan while more or less adhering to social distancing rules but also on loans and debts that eventually have to be paid in the midst of a slowing economy. UN experts call on Israel to release Palestinian prisoners in Israel who remain at risk. As many European countries begin to ease restrictions, we must remain cautiously optimistic. There seems to be light at the end of the tunnel, but our future remains uncertain and will require concerted and joint efforts to bring all back onto their feet.

In this month's issue, you will find many aspects and details regarding the Palestinian economy. Our special thanks go to the Palestine Investment Fund for its silver sponsorship and to The National Bank for their support of this issue. Thanks go also to the authors: H.E. Khaled Osaily, Minister of National Economy; Dr. Mohammad Mustafa, chairman of the PIF board of directors; H.E. Azzam Shawwa, governor of the Palestine Monetary Authority; Ahmed ElFarra, UNIDO's Senior National Programme Officer; Bishara Dabbah, a certified financial controller; the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; journalist Amira Gabarin; well-known Palestinian businessman Talal Nasereddin; the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute-MAS; Tony Khashram, founder and managing director of Aeolus Tours; Honaida Ghanim, general director of The Palestinian Forum for Israeli Studies (MADAR); and Morgan Cooper, an urban farmer, lacto-fermenter, and designer.

Dispersed throughout the issue you will find personal testimonies by Thaer Ayasi, Louis Salem, Wajed Afaneh, Mahmoud Khweis, Naseer R. Arafat, Imad Abu Tair, and Simon Kouba. Our Personality of the Month is Governor of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Laila Ghannam, the Book of the Month is *Life in a Country Album* by Nathalie Handal, our Artist of the Month is Bashar Khalaf.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish a blessed month of Ramadan and happy Eid al-Fitr to all who are celebrating.

Sincerely,

Tina Basem

