

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

More and more governments and human rights defenders are finally raising their voices to condemn the annexation of large parts of so-called Area C, including the Jordan Valley, announced for July 1, 2020. Many opponents in Israel and elsewhere cite its negative effect on Israel's reputation, its society, or regional peace – rather than the impact that the ongoing measures, illegal under international and human rights law, have on Palestinians. What effect these voices will have remains to be seen. But we have to ask why these voices have never protested the ongoing human rights abuses and violations of international law in the past. Or more importantly: If the de jure annexation can be prevented, will the critical voices fall silent, or will they continue to call for justice? Will they manage to make Israel live up to the stipulations of international law and human rights and act in accordance with its claim of being a democracy?

In this issue, you will find articles that provide the legal and historical background to the current situation and the threat of annexation. Authors explain the natural features of the Jordan Valley, highlight the dire circumstances under which its Palestinian residents have been living for years, and introduce or voice opinions and calls for action. Throughout the issue, you will find portraits of Jordan Valley residents, affected by both the current conditions and the repercussions of the impending measures. We would like to thank CARE and OXFAM for using *This Week in Palestine* as a communication tool, contributing to our sustainability. Gratitude also goes to our authors: Dr. Saeb Erakat, secretary general of the PLO's Executive Committee; Dr. Shaddad Attili, an adviser-ranking minister at the Negotiations Affairs Department; researcher Dr. Aziz Hamdi Al-Masri; hydrogeologist Clemens Messerschmid; Al-Shabaka policy member Nada Awad and advocacy officer with the Palestinian human rights organization Al-Haq, Rania Muhareb; legal, political, and ecumenical consultant Dr. Harry Hagopian; and lawyer Diana Buttu; as well as EcoPeace and Business Women Forum, which contributed the portraits of Jordan Valley residents. Our two personalities of the month are the activists and Jordan Valley-natives Salem Barahmeh and Abu Sakr Bisharat, our Artist of the Month is Nasr Aziz Eleyan, the Book of the Month is titled *The Double Lockdown*, and Where to Go presents a list of fun and interesting activities in Jericho and vicinity. Enjoy making truffles with a Palestinian twist, as presented in TWiP Kitchen, and check out the virtual events you can attend from the safety of your home – as the daily numbers of new COVID-19 cases in Palestine continue to rise at alarming levels.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish all of you a safe and healthy summer,

Sincerely, Tina Basem

Tina Basem

