

## BITING OUR TONGUES

As of 3:23 p.m. CEST (Central European Summer Time), on June 26, 2020, the World Health Organization reports a global total of 9,472,473 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 484,236 deaths. Regional distribution of the confirmed cases are as follows: the Americas: 4,709,927; Europe: 2,619,753; Eastern Mediterranean (that's us!): 987,534; Southeast Asia: 686,192; Africa: 258,752; and the Western Pacific: 210,315. Even with serious concern that a new wave of infections is at the door, the world has clearly decided that, with precautionary measures put in place, it is time to move on with our lives and live with the virus. As many have put it: we'll either die of the virus or die of hunger.

At the economic level, I can't even think where to start! Surely the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease itself and efforts to quarantine it. Analysts predict that the pandemic will cause the largest global recession in history. It has also been a significant factor in the most pervasive and worst civil unrest in US history since Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968. Stock markets around the world have seen steep selloffs, while the monetary impact on the travel and trade industry is yet to be estimated but likely to be at least in the billions. According to a report by the International Monetary Fund, global growth is projected at -4.9 percent in 2020. World governments are giving trillions of dollars in stimulus packages to help prop up their economies, but the world economy is facing an economic downturn worse than that of the Great Depression.

Sadly, no trillions are being given out in Palestine; hardly anything in fact. Darwin has been proven right yet again, and this is a classic case of survival of the fittest. Yes, I'm afraid the picture is that gloomy, at least for the majority of people who have been affected by COVID-19. Somehow, the fact that others all over the globe suffer too does not make Palestinians feel any better. Even people's sense of pride cannot hide the fact that, beneath the surface, the agony is real and continues. In order for people to make ends meet while waiting for the storm to pass, in Palestine and most probably in many other parts of the world, property is being sold, checks are bouncing, bank and personal loans are being taken out, anything except the absolutely essential is being deferred, and people are biting their tongues.

No space to go into the advantages of COVID-19, but at least the environment took a short-lived dose of oxygen! Finally, although the world has seen worse disasters, the difference today is that, rather than reading about this disaster, we're living it! Courage, it'll pass.

Long live Palestine!

**Sani Meo**  
Publisher



©PLO-NAD