

# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The economic situation in Palestine is dire amid the pandemic. No tourists have entered the country for five months. Businesses are struggling or have closed down. Daily new cases of COVID-19 have been in the hundreds for weeks, as few heed social distancing guidelines or wear masks. We are growing increasingly numb to the numbers. Unless we or our loved ones are affected, reality seems easy to ignore. Or hard to grasp? Should we close up our emotions in a cocoon and hope that humanity will reemerge changed for the better? Our collective consciousness is challenged as local and global issues that have moved to the background remain: movement restrictions, house demolitions, extrajudicial killings, the destruction of olive trees, the conditioning of aid to bolster one-sided political demands, global warming, the list is long. Physical self-isolation serves survival, but we must unite emotionally and intellectually to use our creativity to create a better future.

In this issue, you will find articles that highlight ongoing efforts to salvage the Palestinian tourism sector. Palestine's touristic assets are unique and invaluable not only for pilgrims but also for nature lovers, adventurers, experiential tourists, and culture enthusiasts. The hope is that until visitors return, we can hold out and adapt, only to reemerge in new splendor to provide tourists with the spiritual renewal, emotional restoration, and cultural stimulation they seek.

Our thanks go to our authors: Hani Abu Dayyeh, president of NET Tours and NET Transport; HE Minister of National Economy Khaled al-Osaily; Tony Khashram, founder and managing director of Aeolus Tours; political scientist Xavier Abu Eid; Raed Saadeh, co-founder and chairman of the Jerusalem Tourism Cluster; Michel Awad, executive director of Siraj Center; journalist Amira Gabarin; UNDP's former deputy special representative in the occupied Palestinian territory Geoffrey D. Prewitt; self-taught winemaker Sari Khoury; development practitioner Ahmed Yasin; former secretary general of the Council of Ministers Salah Elayan; and CARE Palestine West Bank/Gaza. *This Week in Palestine* apologizes to the authors whose articles could not be included in this issue due to lack of space. Rest assured, they will be saved for future publication. Our Personality of the Month is Jamal Al-Nimer, and Artist of the Month is Mohamed Najem. We encourage you to read our Book of the Month, *Mornings in Jenin*, by Susan Abulhawa, or listen to the CD of the Month, *Kazdara*, while preparing an easy version of stuffed zucchini, as presented by TWiP Kitchen. Enjoy the listed online events from the safety and comfort of your home.

From the entire team at TWiP, we wish a happy and healthy Eid al-Adha to those who are celebrating and to all of you a healthy, safe summer!

**Tina Basem**

