

Can't Hide the Sun's Rays with a Sieve

First of all, let me thank those who have supported *This Week in Palestine* through the newly installed “Donate” button on our website. It has been increasingly difficult to depend on the tourism and cultural sectors that have traditionally been our main source of income. How to support TWiP? Go to www.thisweekinpalestine.com, scroll midway down the page, and click on the small icon that says “Donate,” on the left, just above “Subscribe to TWiP.” It’s straightforward after that. You can pay via PayPal or credit card.

Irrespective of the pretext given, Palestinians, and all lovers of freedom, fully realize that the recent raids on Yabous Cultural Center and the Jerusalem branch of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in East Jerusalem were attacks on the efforts of these two cultural centers to enhance and solidify Palestinian identity and Palestinian culture. Everything else is a detail. One can only conclude that their efforts have indeed been successful, otherwise, no such raids would have been necessary. Any attempt to erase the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem is simply futile. As the Arabic proverb goes: You can’t hide the sun’s rays with a sieve!

As rightfully predicted, the negative effects of COVID-19 on the local economy have not only started to show but have already damaged practically all sectors. The tourism and cultural sectors are on life support, and scores of people have lost their jobs. It is only natural that economic pressure would lead to social violence and unrest. Unfortunately, we have already started to witness such incidents where fights between neighbors or even within a family erupt for the most trivial reasons. Our government is scrambling to do whatever it can to salvage the situation amid increasing voices of discontent. In my opinion, however, there is much that needs to be done in a country under occupation that has limited resources and whose donors have withheld funding mainly for political reasons. Let me take this opportunity to remind our European friends of the motto of the French revolution – “*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*” (liberty, equality, fraternity) – and call on them to release the funds earmarked for our civil society institutions and cultural centers without any preconditions.

Tough as it is, rest assured that no concessions will be extracted from Palestinians, even though our backs are to the wall. You can shut this institution or that; you can withhold your funding till we sign a certain document; and you can freeze your aid and pressure other countries not to contribute. But if you think that the Palestinians will succumb to your demands, you have not learned a single thing from your engagement (or lack of it) with Palestinians or from history.

Long live Palestine!

Sani Meo
Publisher

