

BRITAIN PALESTINE FRIENDSHIP AND TWINNING NETWORK



WELCOME to the BPFTN November Newsletter

I expect you will have been getting almost daily updates from your friends in Palestine about the ongoing tragedy and war crimes. How have you shared them? Please feel free to send me articles for inclusion in the next Newsletter – they can come direct to me at brecondeanery@btinternet.com. What we really need are articles from or about the Palestinian end of each our links – it is better to hear more about life - however awful - in Hebron (for example) and less about a sponsored walk in Derbyshire - however lovely.

Here you can read the BPFTN statement on the current situation

We have put together a resource for groups offering some suggestions for ways to continue to support your friends in Palestine at this particularly difficult time. This is based on things different groups have already told us they are doing, alongside our own ideas. You can find it on our 'resources' pages on our website and it will be shared in our private Facebook group. It is available [via this link](#) We also have a "Sumud: staying motivated" resource that you might find useful at this time - available [here](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Do you ever look at our **website**? Go to <https://www.twinningwithpalestine.net/>

Do you ever go to our **Facebook** GROUP?

Please remember we have a private Facebook group for all our members - this is a shared safe space for you all to share ideas, solidarity, events - anything to do with friendship and twinning with Palestine is welcome! Please do use it to let people know what you're up to, what is happening with your friends in Palestine and to ask any questions or seek ideas.

You can find the group here: <https://m.facebook.com/groups/655230248475223/>

AGM:

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 11th April at 7.30 pm by Zoom.

BPFTN ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

Our Annual Conference returns to London on Saturday 20th April 2024.

The NEU has generously invited us to use their premises, Hamilton House, near Kings Cross. Calling all London groups: please contact us if you would like to help co-host this event. Go to palestinetwining@gmail.com In replying, please put in the subject line "Co-Hosting". Replies please by the first week of January at the latest. Thank you.

OUR LETTER TO THE PALESTINIAN AMBASSADOR:



20th November 2023

Dear Dr Zomlot,

On behalf of everyone at the Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network and all our network groups and members, we are writing to express our continued and profound support and solidarity with you, everyone at the Palestinian Mission in London, and of course everyone in Palestine at this time.

We have seen the news of the increasing attacks against the Palestinian Mission to the UK, as the British Government continues to ignore requests for diplomatic protection.

We send you our strongest support and will inform our forty member groups of what is happening. They can add this to the many issues they are raising awareness about at the present time, including with their local communities and their political representatives.

It goes without saying, we continue to be horrified by the ongoing crimes of the Israeli state in Gaza and our groups continue to campaign for and support their friends in Palestine.

As ever, if there are things you think we could do to extend our support for the Palestinian people, we would be pleased to hear from you.

With warm wishes and solidarity always,

The BPFTN Committee:

Karen Howell

Tony Pearce

Annie Delahunty

Helena France

Jean Fitzpatrick

Geoffrey Marshall

Maggie Foye

SHEFFIELD LABOUR FRIENDS OF PALESTINE:



Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine raise funds for the Seeds Association for Development and Culture in Nablus:

Nablus is a major city in the West Bank, Occupied Palestine, and one of the oldest cities in the world. In recent times it has been subjected to constant invasions and attacks by the Israeli military and illegal settlers. SEEDS is a development charity working with the Muslim, Christian and Samaritan communities in the city to forge positive relationships and model peaceful co-existence while supporting young people to gain knowledge, skills and to realise their aspirations.

Many young people who are trying to create a living while under this violent occupation face enormous barriers and have little experience in democratic processes to achieve change. Young people experience high levels of unemployment and lack of opportunities.

SEEDS wants to fast forward the development of the Unity co-working space for young people in a Samaritan synagogue conveniently only 5 minutes away from the main University campus. This will be the only free space and include a permanent safe place for interacting, developing social democratic leadership skills and entrepreneurship development to empower the next generation of Nablus citizens.

The co-working space will offer high-speed internet, printing and scanning services and conference rooms. It will provide a platform for young entrepreneurs to network and collaborate, enabling them to share ideas, skills, and opportunities. There will be a studio for cultural productions and a podcasting corner to promote culture and develop creativity, thought and opinion. The availability of free resources and the opportunity to work alongside like-minded individuals will undoubtedly open up new paths and hope for the youth of Nablus.

Julie Pearn, Chair of Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine, writes: I would be very grateful if the BPFTN could get behind and promote this worthy cause. Fundraising is not limited to the concert we held in September. Palfest has also set up a Gofundme link:

<https://gofund.me/0733dcf2>



Dr Salim of Shu'fat Refugee Camp writes:

The Al-Quds Charitable Disabled Centre has been forced to close due to safety concerns for both staff and attendees. However, we have taken the initiative to organise Zoom meetings in order to keep in touch with people and alleviate feelings of tension, depression, and anxiety. These meetings also serve as an opportunity to assess the needs of individuals. To instil hope and resilience, we are currently developing a mental health care plan in collaboration with UK psychiatrists, social workers, and anyone willing to assist us co-ordinated through the Unite-Shu'fat twinning group in London.

As you may already be aware the UN health centre in Shu'fat experienced extensive damage, with the main gate being smashed. There have been instances where the Shu'fat Youth Centre was raided in the evenings, resulting in the arrest of numerous young people. During these arrests their mobile phones were searched, and some were even coerced into taking photos with the Israeli flag. As a result of these actions, the camp has been quiet due to the large number of people who have been arrested. Life is not easy.

The residents of Shufat are constantly subjected to the use of skunk water and tear gas, causing distress on a daily basis. Additionally, passing through the Shu'fat checkpoint is a challenging and time-consuming task, with the risk of receiving fines from the IDF for various aspects of their vehicles, which is an excuse to harass residents. This deliberate inconvenience has had a detrimental impact on the physical and mental well-being of the population.

From a dentist in Bethany / al-Eizariya:

The Editor received this note (English not corrected) from his dentist friend of 40 years in Bethany / al-Eizariya – the New Testament village of Martha, Mary and Lazarus:

“This video [which I will not share] is from my window the Jewish comes almost every morning four a'clock, the take us in front of our children all naked take all our clothes and hits us on the head with there guns antill we bleed. I hope my turn will never come.”

kenningtonbethlehem

Connecting London with Palestine, Kennington with Bethlehem

Pat Gaffney writes:

Dear friends and supporters

We would like to invite you to our short AGM on 1 December which will be followed by speakers from two excellent organisations, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel and the Olive Tree Harvest.

The focus of our work is in the West Bank and during these very tragic days we felt it important to look at the on-going work for peace and justice in the WB.

Please share this information and do come along on 1 December if you are available. We will also have a stall of Zaytoun goods.

The information is also on our website as is a brief report from Anar, a project we support in Bethlehem. We recently raised £400 towards their work

<https://kenningtonbethlehem.org.uk/>

Kennington Bethlehem Link

<https://www.facebook.com/kennington.bethlehem.790>



What can WE do to promote a just peace in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

Organised in cooperation with:

 Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

 The Olive Harvest Trust

Please join
THE KENNINGTON - BETHLEHEM LINK

TWINNING AND ACCOMPANIMENT

Lessons for Building Peace in the West Bank & Israel

Friday, 1 December, 7:30pm
(Speakers after the Kennington Bethlehem Link AGM)
St Anselm's Church, 286 Kennington Road, SE11 5DU

Come and hear first-hand from

David Cannon
from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme, who spent three months as a human rights monitor in Hebron

Maggie Foyer
from the Olive Harvest Trust, which is twinned with two villages in the West Bank near Nablus

For more information contact kennington.beth@gmail.com
www.kenningtonbethlehem.org.uk

From Hanwell Friends of Sabastiya:

The situation in Sabastiya is precarious. Traveling is becoming dangerous. Check points everywhere and settlers attacking. The people are scared. Letters have been distributed asking them to leave or be killed.

We are now thinking of helping them buy staple food in bulk for stocking, as going to town (Nablus, Tulkarem or Jenin) is becoming dangerous. So bags of flour, rice, lentils ... tinned food and oil. They are also going to stock tilly lights and candles in case the Israelis cut the electricity.

All very depressing really.

From West Wales Friends of Palestine:

On the first Saturday of November I was just getting out of my car on a rainy day in a small village in West Wales when the phone rang. "Where are you?" Sue asked. I told her. "Oh. Pat and I thought that we should be holding a vigil in Carmarthen for a ceasefire. But if you're there, you won't be able to" she said.

But she and Pat went alone, to the centre of town, in the pouring rain and held a two person vigil for a ceasefire and peace in Palestine.

We decided to do this weekly and shared the news with our supporters, choirs (honestly), friends etc and the following week there were over forty of us. Some with gentle drums, some with beautiful voices, at least one who had come by bus from Pembrokeshire. And beautiful, safe, children with home-made banners.



The following week there were at least twenty more – because that's how many more signed up to support Palestine via the West Wales Friends of Palestine. Despite it being the week when Christmas was launched in Carmarthen – so there was Santa, reindeer, elves – and Support for Palestine.