



UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Democracy
An-Najah National University 2012

Education Denied

Accounts from An-Najah During the Second Intifada





The UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Democracy is one of the seven research centers within An-Najah National University. The Chair is dedicated to the promotion and development of human rights education, and engaging in human rights research and advocacy to provide support and resources for the local community.

The Chair was established in 1997 at An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine in coordination with UNESCO's UNITWIN and the UNESCO Chair program. UNESCO Chairs are established throughout the world aiming to advance research and program development in designated academic fields. The ultimate goal is to build connections not only with the local and global academic community, but also to foster links with the civil society, local communities, and decision-makers.

UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Democracy (UCHRD)
An-Najah National University
P.O. Box 7
Nablus, West Bank, Palestine
Scientific Centers Building - 2nd floor - Room 2040 + 2050
Telephone: +970 9 234 5113 - Ext.: 2202
unescochair@najah.edu

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



INTRODUCTION

During the Second Intifada, the Israeli Occupation imposed severe obstacles to the right to education in Palestine. Schools and universities were frequently the target of military attacks and raids, and on some occasions were completely closed through military order. To get to and from school, students and educators often crossed multiple military checkpoints, where they experienced long delays, harassment, humiliation and physical abuse at the hands of Israeli soldiers. Students and teachers faced arbitrary and prolonged arrest without charge or trial, often because of their political campus organizing or public criticism of Israel and the military occupation.

An-Najah National University, located in the West Bank city of Nablus, has consistently struggled for the right to education. Beginning in 2000, Nablus—one of the largest Palestinian cities and the center of economic activity in the West Bank—was effectively besieged by Israeli military checkpoints, blocking all access points to and from the city. For years, just getting to campus became a humiliating and exhausting ordeal that in far too many cases led to injury and death for students and professors alike. Nablus was additionally strangled by long military curfews, including one in 2002 that lasted over 150 days. Violent military incursions claimed the lives of 600 Nabulsi residents from 2000-2009.

During this period, professors, administrative staff, students and international volunteers worked to document violations of the right to education, as well as violations to other basic human rights. The testimonies that were taken, most through the An Najah Zajel Youth Exchange Program (<http://www.zajel.org>) as well as the ad hoc Right to Education (R2E) Campaign established at several Palestinian universities, were meant to raise awareness, especially within the international community about the extreme hardships facing Palestinian universities on a daily basis due to the Israeli political and military occupation regime.

Testimonies and reports were sent out through email alerts, published as periodic newsletters, posted on the university website and submitted to international human rights monitoring agencies and NGOs, such as the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.

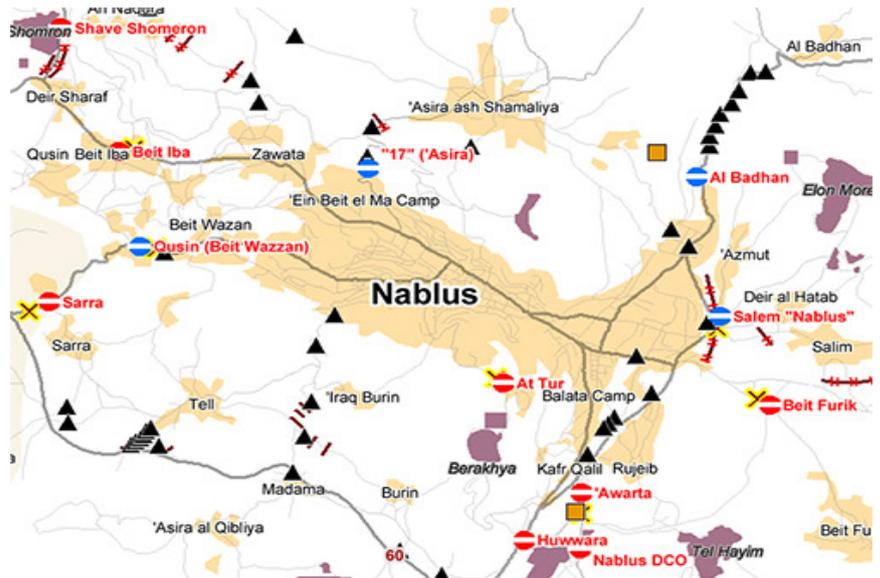
This compilation of testimonies is meant to bring together the efforts of the many people who have contributed to the R2E advocacy and awareness-raising throughout the years and to provide a small glimpse into the experiences of the students and staff of An-Najah National University during the Second Intifada.

The booklet is divided into the four sections: Checkpoint Abuse and Killings, Invasions and Incursions, Borders, and Arrests. The stories, which are often anonymous for security reasons, include first person and witness testimonies as well as short articles on specific incidents affecting university staff and students.



CHECKPOINT ABUSE AND KILLINGS

Most students and staff were forced to cross or find ways around the nine checkpoints that ringed the city of Nablus for almost a decade starting in 2000. From 2000-2003, the major arteries leading into the city were completely closed by Israeli military checkpoints. After 2003 a few of these checkpoints began to allow passage through the city for residents, as well as students and professors. However, the crossings were always subject to long delays and periodic closure, forcing students and staff to regularly arrive late to campus or miss days altogether. Additionally, checkpoints became infamous for physical abuse, arbitrary arrest and humiliation meted out by the Israeli soldiers against the Palestinians trying to cross.



2004 map of checkpoints surrounding Nablus. Red circles indicate permanent checkpoints and blue circles indicate partial checkpoint. United Nation OCHA oPt, March 2004

Because of these extreme restrictions on movement and fear of the violent and degrading treatment by the soldiers at the checkpoints, An-Najah students and staff tried to find ways around them in order to reach the university. These detours usually took several hours, even from villages right outside the city, and forced students and staff to hike for miles over the mountains that surround the city, in the rain and mud of winter and the searing heat of summer. The detours also had their risks, as Israeli military patrols would chase down, shoot at and arrest those that were found circumventing the checkpoints.

In this section, students and staff at An-Najah describe their experiences either at the checkpoints or in their journeys around them. The accounts bear witness to sexual humiliation, beatings, mutilation as well as just the sheer frustration of the endless waiting. This section also contains three stories of students who lost their lives at the checkpoints or on detours around the checkpoints, all while simply trying to get to or from their classes.



MUTILATION AT SURRAH CHECKPOINT

QASEM, 19 YEARS OLD

QALQILIYA

30TH APRIL 2003

Qasem used to leave the city of Nablus once every two weeks to visit his family in Qalqiliya for the weekend. On Wednesday April 30, 2003, he and a group of about 25 other students approached the Surrah checkpoint on their way home. Two Israeli soldiers, one a captain, stopped them.

One asked Qasem if he spoke Hebrew, and he answered that he could. The soldier then asked Qasem to tell all the students to go back, that they were not allowed to pass through the checkpoint. Qasem complied. The six male students obeyed the order, while the female students did not move. The soldier spoke again, this time ordering Qasem to make the women move too.



The Israeli soldier grew angry with Qasem. He started to question him. He searched his bags and frisked him. As he did this, he noticed a spot on his arm, a burn mark. Qasem explained that he and a friend were playing around with a cigarette and he got burnt. The soldier, laughing at his ability to bear pain, found a piece of glass, broke it and, grabbing Qasem's arm, began to cut a Star of David into his flesh.

Qasem started to struggle, but the other soldier, who was a captain, beat him on his legs, and held down Qasem's arm so the mutilation could continue.

When the soldiers stopped, Qasem was losing blood. The Captain told Qasem that that was enough, and he said, "Isn't this star more beautiful than the other mark? Right?" Qasem was then released, but was not allowed through the checkpoint and had to go via a detour on mountain tracks.

After the incident, Qasem attended classes again, but he only went home at the end of every semester, not every weekend like he used to. He still bears the scar.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

STUDENT DIES DUE TO CHECKPOINT REFUSAL ASEF ISSA, 19 YEARS OLD KAFR THULTH VILLAGE 2006

Asef Issa was leaving An-Najah National University on Monday 24th April 2006 to go home, close to Qalqiliya City. He attempted to pass through Beit Iba checkpoint, but he was refused passage.

Asef and a fellow traveller headed for home on side roads and tracks, avoiding the checkpoint. It was raining heavily and a flash flood pulled Asef into a drain as they were passing the Sal'ous stone, just past the checkpoint.

The fire brigade of Nablus Municipality managed to rescue Asef's companion, but Asef was found dead. The water had carried him all the way to Al-Madina Club on the Tulkarm road. Sources from the Fire Brigade explained that Asef was battered so badly that he died from his injuries. The water had stripped him of his ID.



EDUCATION STUDENT KILLED AT ROADBLOCK KAMLEH MUHAMMAD SHULI, 20 YEARS OLD KFAR ASIRAH 13TH DECEMBER 2003

Kamleh Muhammad Shuli was killed when Israeli soldiers opened fire on the taxi she was travelling in. She was on her way to Ramallah to take the younger of her two children to the doctor. She was with several other passengers at the Immatin roadblock near the Qedomim settlement.

Kamleh was shot twice in the chest and died instantly. Her body was briefly taken by Israeli soldiers. None in the taxi were armed and no warning had been given they were to come under live fire.

Kamleh is survived by her husband and two children.



Palestinian women mourn Kamleh and carry her infant son Nidal during her funeral.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

SOLDIERS PLACE TEAR GAS CANISTER IN STUDENT'S BAG
SUHBI RADWAY, 20 YEARS OLD
KAFR QUADDUM VILLAGE
2004

As a student of An-Najah National University, Suhbi left Nablus to go to his village, only 7km from Nablus. He was stopped by Israeli soldiers at a roadblock and ordered to raise his arms and stay in this position without moving for one and a half hours. The Israeli soldiers then checked I.D. cards and when they discovered that Subhi and his friends were students, they started to beat them. Subhi was beaten until he started to bleed.

Eventually, they told him that he was free to go once they had searched his bag, but they failed to return his I.D. card. Subhi was surprised that he was allowed to leave while the others were still detained. As he walked away a tear-gas canister exploded in his bag and knocked him unconscious.

He lay unconscious and untended, ignored by the Israeli soldiers until they eventually let his cousin take him to hospital. Subhi still has difficulty breathing, a result of his injuries.

STUDENTS SHOT AT AND BEATEN
OMAR BASHIR, 19 YEARS OLD
SALFIT VILLAGE
2004

I was using the road between Burin and the village of Iraq Burin when suddenly we were surprised by a big number of the Israeli soldiers who were closing the road. They started to shoot at us and we tried to escape. It is hard to run where there is nowhere to hide. The soldiers started to shoot tear gas at us while we were trying to escape from their gunfire. We were unable to breath, so we could no longer continue to run. We were caught and beaten, and those of us who could not run were arrested. They set fire to the old holy olive trees, which our people planted in ancient times.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

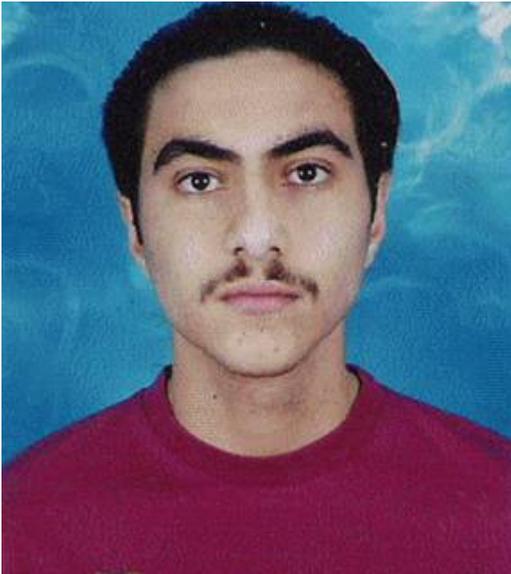
INTENSE SUN EXPOSURE AT CHECKPOINT LEADS TO DEATH

BASHAR FO'AD AL-QADERY, 22 YEARS OLD

SIR VILLAGE

2005

WRITTEN BY MALAK QAMHEYEH



The father of Bashar did not know what would happen to his son after he saw him leaving for the university on August 13, 2005. He was back for vacation from his work in the United Arab Emirates and he felt that his son was not in good health.

Bashar was a student at An-Najah Community College. He studied there with his twin brother in the Department of Financial and Administrative Business. Bashar had epilepsy and suffered from attacks from time to time. Bashar left his village, in the Qalqiliya region, to the university.

Bashar's cousin said that he arrived at the University and went to his classes. After he finished, Bashar called him and informed him that he would be late because he would attend a training course on computers in one of the academic institutions near the university. Bashar informed his cousin that he would hurry to the checkpoint when he finished the course in order to get home.

When Bashar left the city of Nablus, however, he was exhausted. He left at 3:30 p.m. At the checkpoint an Israeli soldier asked him for his ID card but instead Bashar gave him 20 Israeli shekels. The soldier considered it as an insult so he handcuffed him, put him in the separated zone of the checkpoint and went to check his record via computer to see whether he was wanted or not.

Bashar had to wait in the sun for hours. He started to lose consciousness. He remained in this horrible condition for up to an hour and half. The soldier came back to him and saw his condition. He took him out of the separated zone and released him. However, Bashar was suffering from an epileptic attack at this time. Bashar was in a confused state and went to the opposite side of the checkpoint instead of in the direction of his village. Soldiers put him in a taxi in order to take him to his village. The taxi driver recognized his condition took him to the hospital of Tulkarm.

The father of Bashar did not know what had happened to his son. He only knew that his son would be late for a while. He called his son's friends to see if he had visited any of them. Meanwhile, Bashar was falling in and out of consciousness, asking the taxi driver for a little water. Those were his last words.

At 10:00 PM, the phone rang in the house of Bashar's family. The caller was one of the relatives of Bashar. He said that there was breaking news on one of the local TV stations reporting that an unidentified unconscious man had been delivered at the hospital of Tulkarm. It was possible that this was Bashar. The family rushed to the hospital and recognized Bashar at once. Bashar remained in this condition for three days and was taken to the Nablus Specialty Hospital, where he passed away. The medical report emphasized that the intense sun exposure that Bashar was subjected to while being detained was the main reason for Bashar's death.



STUDENT STRIPPED, BEATEN AND HUMILIATED

ANONYMOUS

JENIN

2004

My friends and I decided to take the Badhan road to University but soldiers who were driving by in their vehicle stopped us.

The majority of the passengers in our car were female and as always the soldiers began to check our I.D. cards. One of the soldiers came back and ordered me to take off my shirt. I tried to refuse, and I told him that I had nothing on under my shirt but he still insisted. I took off my shirt, but that did not seem to be enough, so he told me to take off my trousers. I explained to him that there were many girls around and I was too embarrassed to take off my clothes. He told me that if I did not undress I would be killed.

He started to beat me with his gun with the assistance of another soldier. They both beat me all over my body. The beatings were unbearable, so I finally gave in and took off my clothes in front of everyone. They left me standing there for a while in my underwear before an Israeli soldier came to me and raised my hands up in the air and began to paint something on my body. I looked down to see what it was. It was the Star of David. The soldier told me to take off my underwear. He was hitting my head with his gun. I gave in and stood there naked for a long time. He ordered me to get in the taxi naked just before he mixed my clothes in the mud and threw them at me.

STUDENT SUFFERS PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS FROM CHECKPOINT TREATMENT

FADI AHMAD, 20 YEARS OLD

KAFR DEIK VILLAGE

2004

Fadi was leaving for a weekend trip to his village when he saw a group of Israeli soldiers following him and his friends. They were stopped and questioned and checked for ID cards. Fadi carried a martyr's picture in his wallet. The Israeli soldiers beat him and forced him to take off his trousers in front of the female students of his village who were with him. They continued to beat and curse him while he was blindfolded and left him on the ground for 5 hours.

He was forced to walk home at 10:00 p.m. putting Fadi's life in great danger. There were no cars at all because Palestinians don't travel at night for fear of settler attacks and soldiers. Fadi arrived at his village at 4am. His psychological suffering was immense, exacerbated by having to walk through the mountain range alone at night.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

STUDENT'S ARM BROKEN BY SOLDIER WHILE AVOIDING CHECKPOINT

YAZAN AHMAD MUHAMMAD SALEH

TULKARM

2008

On June 12, 2008, I left the University to head home. I live in a village called Anabta near Tulkarm and I have to go through Beit Iba Checkpoint on the way. Beit Iba lies at the west side of Nablus, controlling the flow of people to Tulkarm and Qalqiliya. When I got close to the checkpoint I could see it was crowded. I had arrived at the busiest time of the week – it was 12.30 on a Thursday, the day when everyone who stays in Nablus during the week goes home for the weekend.

I decided to take an alternate route because it was going to take too long to queue up at the checkpoint. There is a way to avoid the checkpoint by going up the hill and behind a quarry. There isn't a road though only a rough track. And on the way there is a gully with a piece of wood across it, like a bridge. I had cleared this bridge and was following behind two other students.

Suddenly an Israeli army jeep appeared and we started to run. By this time we were approaching an olive grove. The other two were much faster than me and managed to get away, but behind me an Israeli soldier was shouting at me and chasing me.

He shouted at me to put up my hands. I had to stop and put them up.

He yelled at me in Hebrew but I couldn't understand. He threatened me with his gun. I heard the English word 'shoot' and I thought he was going to shoot me. He was still running at me at full speed when he hit me on my left knee with his gun which made me collapse on the ground. He shouted at me to raise my arms and then he started to hit and kick me. His boots seemed to be made of steel.

I felt my right arm snap, and it started to wobble about of its own accord. The pain was intense. I was crying out with the pain but the soldier continued to hit and yell at me.

I told him my arm was broken but he said in English, "You have broken my foot."

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

Then he asked me to get up and walk towards one of the olive trees. He asked me to stay there. Even though my arm was broken he insisted I keep it up in the air. I was detained by the olive tree for almost 45 minutes during which time he interrogated me and asked me about the other guys who were with me.

This was the first time I had met them and hardly knew them. He kept yelling at me and threatening me with his gun to tell him who they were. During this time I felt my arm swell and I could not move it at all. The Israeli soldier did not offer me any first aid and he kept yelling at me.

I could tell from the soldier's features that he was young, hardly 20 years old. After 45 minutes he told me to go back to Beit Iba checkpoint. He took my ID. I had difficulty walking because of the injury to my left knee.

When I got there, five Israeli soldiers interrogated me about who had hit me. I told them that it was an Israeli soldier. One of them said, 'Why didn't you follow his orders? If you had he would not have hit you.' I explained, "Actually, I did I follow his orders but he still attacked me and beat me."

Amongst the soldiers there were two officers. I knew this by the badges on their shoulders. One of the soldiers talked to me and asked me what happened. I answered that the soldier hit me even though I followed his orders. Then, the soldier asked me to stand there and I heard them talk about first aid but it was in Hebrew and I could not understand all of it. One of the officers told me to go through the checkpoint without offering me first aid. Then one of the soldiers gave back my ID.

I headed to the Dr. Thabat Thabat Hospital in Tulkarm. I arrived at the hospital at about 3 p.m. The doctors at the hospital treated my injuries. They x-rayed my arm and put a plaster cast on it. Then I went home.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**SHOT AT A ROAD BLOCK
WASEF KHATIB, 19 YEARS OLD
2004**

I visit my family once a week. I used to go to Jenin with my friends and come back after the weekend. We used to go through the bypass roads of Asira village and we often climbed the mountains and crossed the street of Asira. This time though we were surprised by an Israeli military jeep. The Israeli soldiers ordered us to be checked one by one.

I was the first to be checked. He told me to collect everyone else's ID cards and bags which were checked by the Israeli occupation soldiers. We were told to sit beside one of the houses of Asira village. A soldier began shooting at us randomly without any reason, so we ran in order to escape. My foot was in agony and I became dizzy.

A soldier offered first aid to me. I was moved to Rafidiya Hospital in Nablus where I got medical treatment. A bullet was found in my foot, and luckily it was removed.

**SOLDIERS PLANT SOUND BOMB IN STUDENT'S BOOKBAG
ALA SHTAYEH, 22 YEARS OLD
KAFR QADDUM VILLAGE
2004**

Some students and I were leaving our village after we had visited our families on the weekend. On our way to the university in Nablus an Israeli soldier stopped us, ordered us to get out of the car, and told the taxi driver to drive away. The soldier checked all of our bags but one. They claimed that the bag was suspicious, so they took it to an electronic machine in a separate room to investigate what was inside the bag.

They finally returned with the bag and told us that we had to the count of three to disappear otherwise they would open fire on us. We carried our bags and started to run as fast as we could. After about 5 minutes of running an explosion came from the bag that the Israelis took from us. They had put a sound bomb in it, which caused us to have great psychological shock and hallucinations.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



**PROFESSOR BREAKS LEG WHILE RUNNING FROM SOLDIERS
DR.YOSUR AL-AZHARI
SEBASTIYA VILLAGE
2003**

Dr.Yosur Al-Azhari, a professor at the College of Economy and Business Administration, returned from his village to Nablus on a Friday. He had been home to spend some time with his wife and children after an extended absence, as the Israeli siege made it far too difficult to travel on a regular basis – even to see one’s family. This story about his trip back to Nablus is, unfortunately, all too common in Palestine, even for established and well respected professionals like Dr. Yosur.

Dr. Yosur explained:

I usually prefer to travel on Friday because the Israeli soldiers are sometimes easier to deal with on Friday than on Saturday. Before I left my village, Sabastiya to Ras Al-Nakorah, I asked people where the Israeli soldiers were, and was told they were very close. Therefore, I had to go by an alternate road from the one that I normally use.

After about an hour and a half I was almost at the village of Beit Iba, which is the final check point before reaching Nablus. I heard the sound of an approaching Israeli vehicle, which caused me to panic, for being caught means detention, abuse, and sometimes far worse. I started running, and as I jumped over a wall, I landed hard on my leg and fell down. I was in a lot of pain and unable to walk, but unable to stay in fear of being caught.

Luckily someone carried me away so that I could hide. After we felt it was safe to do so, two men carried me to the nearest shelter in the village, and called for medical assistance. Shortly after, a Red Crescent ambulance arrived and brought me to the Anglican Hospital. The doctors found that my leg was broken, and after treatment I had to spend three weeks at home recovering from my injuries. During this time, I was not able to do any teaching.

**SOLDIERS USE DOGS TO ATTACK UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE
HUSSEIN MUHAMMAD HUSSEIN, 54 YEARS OLD
BEIT FURIK VILLAGE
2004**

Hussein Muhammad Hussein, an employee at An-Najah National University left his home, about 2 kilometers from Nablus, at 5:30 a.m.

He reached the Israeli roadblock at 5:40 a.m. along with 15 other Palestinians heading to Nablus. The Israeli soldier at the roadblock started to call them one by one in order to check them. The soldiers first beat one of the men, and ordered their dog to attack him. Another man, Mazin Hannany, was forced to take off his clothes and was questioned while a soldier pointed a gun at his back.

After that he was beaten and attacked by the dog. Hussein received the same treatment, as he was forced to stand up against a wall while being questioned, and then was attacked by the dog. He suffered extensive injuries, including numerous bites on his legs. Finally, the soldiers let him pass as they mocked him for screaming, and bleeding.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

DIRECTOR OF UNESCO CHAIR IS HUMILIATED AT CHECKPOINT

DR. MUHAMMAD SHARAQ

ASIRA ASH SHAMALIYA VILLAGE

2004

Dr. Sharaqa lives in a village that should take seven minutes to get to the university. However, with the occupation and impending siege around Nablus and its surrounding villages the journey becomes a three-hour-long farce. Dr. Sharaqa has to endure four roadblocks on the short journey including one right in front of his apartment.

Dr. Sharaqa's account of the incident:

I became familiar to the Israeli soldiers and my face is well known to them as far as I am passing through the roadblocks twice a day in order to go to my work at the university and to send my children to school. However, they still search me and whatever I carry with me.

One day, at around eight in the evening whilst returning home from visiting family an Israeli jeep stopped me and the soldier and his captain ordered me from my car. There had been no incidents recently and I was the sole figure in the area. I was harassed and interrogated in the pouring rain I was forced at gunpoint to lay face down in the mud whilst they proceeded to trample on me. They broke my mobile and took my ID.

They asked what I taught at the university and I confirmed I was a professor of Law and Human Rights in the Faculty of Law. They accused me of lecturing on how to become a terrorist, to which I replied that I was an advocate of tolerance and peace and that is how I teach my students. I went on to explain how I was the Director of the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights for seven years and had never previously had problems with the Israeli soldiers. They increased their insults for a further forty minutes. After this, despite being but meters from my home, the soldiers ordered me back down the road I had come down. I pleaded to them to let me pass but I was rejected and forbidden to take my car with me.

Ever since I must get up early at six o'clock in order to get through the checkpoints, rush my children to school and then arrive at the university on time. It is incredibly ironic that I teach the principles of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention. It frustrates and depresses me that a "democratic" state can behave in such a way, allowing its soldiers to dehumanize the Palestinian civilians and insult them day and night. Life is so precious and a sacred right to everybody. Israelis should not cross the red line of human dignity; the freedom of movement is also a non-negotiable right to all humans. I have been in many workshops with Israeli activists to defend the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories. I believe that my own experiences spurs me onwards to continue to demand the implementation of the global community's laws and demand Israel to respect international agreements in regards to human rights and the Geneva Convention in particular.



SOLDIERS SHOOT AS PALESTINIANS ATTEMPT TO NAVIGATE ROADS
ISAM ESHTAYEH, 21 YEARS OLD
TUBAS
2004

I was in a taxi driving to school when we got a call from another taxi driver telling us that the roads were closed. This meant that we would have to try and travel along the back roads, which are very dangerous. When we arrived to Salim village we had to leave the taxi and walk by foot. I was surprised to see a large number of people who were walking on the same trail that we were. We were afraid of running into an Israeli sniper or Israeli soldier.

Suddenly, an old Palestinian man began to shout, "They are coming. Hurry, try to escape." We saw dust coming from up the road where some Israeli tanks were headed toward us. They started to shoot at the crowd, which horrified me, because I could not believe that they were shooting at innocent civilians. We had to lie down on the ground and try to get away while lying on our bellies. We tried to hide ourselves in between the rows of wheat that surrounded us. The problem was more difficult for the women. I never ever expected to see women laying on the ground trying to move from one place to another in such way. They had no other option or else they would have been killed.

After passing the wheat fields some of the guys stood up and started to run to the next road. Everybody started running behind them. We ran until we were far from the soldiers' gunfire. The sewage water tunnel is 3 meters wide, and we had to jump over it. I was one of the guys who volunteered to jump first to see if it was safe. When all the men had reached the other side we had to bridge the gap between both banks to enable women to pass it.

The most dangerous obstacle was a curve in the road, which was very difficult to pass, because you are unprotected and might be killed by an Israeli sniper at anytime. I ran quickly to past the curve. I was happy that I had made it to the other side until I realized that I would have to go through the same route on my way back.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**STUDENT FACES ECONOMIC BURDENS OF OCCUPATION
OSAMAH JABER, 20 YEARS OLD
AL FAR'A REFUGEE CAMP
2004**

I am student at An-Najah. I used to come to school one hour before my first lecture so that I could get some coffee and start the day off in a relaxed mood. The roads were normal then, but now they are very difficult to get through.

I live in Nablus City now, because the Israeli soldiers destroyed the main road to our refugee camp. We have to pass through smaller roads, which are very hard and dangerous. I made the decision to live in Nablus, because of the difficulties I had on the way to and from my University. I remember an instance in which some Israeli soldiers ordered all the males in our taxi to get out and take off our shirts. Then, he asked the taxi driver to leave with the girls and return to Nablus. He arrested us guys and tied up our hands and left us against the wall for 3 hours. These 3 hours were very long because they were full of cursing and insults. The soldiers finally told me that I could leave but he did not release my friend till midnight.

Transportation costs a lot more money now, because of the Intifada. I used to pay 3NIS for transportation, but now I have to pay 20 NIS as well as rent for the flat. I try to avoid visiting my family at the refugee camp in Al Fara'a, because my family cannot afford my 40NIS per day for transportation. My father died and my mother is an old woman, so my brother pays for my university expenses. I am looking for a job in addition to my studies, but there are no jobs at the moment.



NABLUS TO JENIN: THE LONG ROAD HOME
ANONYMOUS
JENIN
2004

I was forced to return to my home city of Jenin after a month of study, because I ran out of money. After finishing my lectures at 2 PM I caught the bus from the city to the only remaining road from Nablus to the village of Deir Sharaf. I reached there at 2:45PM. and found a lot of people who'd been waiting there since noon.

I was made to wait until 6:00 p.m. because of the difficulties on the roads and the checkpoints. Thereafter, at each of the three checkpoints on the road to Jenin the bus had to wait around two hours. The bus was overloaded: its capacity was 50, but there were around 100 people on our bus. After passing some villages we reached a checkpoint near the Shave Shomeron settlement, where we waited for two and a half hours so that the soldiers could check our bags and ID thoroughly.

They took six people off the bus because they said that they were wanted and after two hours they let us continue. Our journey continued until we arrived at Burqa where we faced another problem. It was the Special Forces. They took 25 students from our university and forced them to undress in front of us. It was a rainy and cold day, and they took three hours to check people's bags. Some kids on the bus started crying and asking for water.

The Israelis allow only three buses during the day to go from Jenin to Nablus. They also only allowed persons aged over 35 years to pass. We reached the village Qabatia but could not reach Jenin because of the holes dug up in the road by the army and the damage from tanks on the roads so we went to Birqin, a village near Jenin. We arrived around midnight to a destination 40 minutes away. I went to my home in the village and the others started calling their relatives to come and take them home.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

GEOGRAPHY LESSONS AT THE CHECKPOINT ANAS SALMAN, 19 YEARS OLD QUSIN VILLAGE 2005

There he was, a very typical Israeli soldier, as Anas was used to seeing all the time at the military checkpoint at the northern entrance of Nablus on his way to his home to Qusin village. It looked like the soldier was bored this time and was looking for something fun to do. Anas was carrying a Geography book with the Palestinian map (historical Palestine) on its cover. The soldier, who appeared to be 25 years old, asked Anas in English, "What is this?" But Anas, who was used to daily humiliations at checkpoints, didn't answer the question and pretended that he didn't even hear it. The soldier repeated the question three times until Anas replied carefully, "It's a map." The soldier asked, "What map?" to which Anas responded "Just a map." The soldier insisted, asking, "The map of what." Anas answered, "Palestine's map."

The soldier was shocked. He grabbed the book from Anas's arm and asked him for a pen. He then started to explain Palestine's geography according to what he had been taught. He said, "Listen, this is the West Bank and this is Gaza." He then drew a Star of David on the rest of the map and said, "This is Israel...and this is Jerusalem, you know it, this is where we the Jewish people live with some Arabs but we will kick them out one day."

Anas was drawn to the interesting political ideas that soldier was making with so much arrogance and asked, "What about Nablus?" The soldier answered with an ironic laughter: "Nablus too... we'll kick the Arabs from there," and he moved his leg as if he was kicking a ball. It seemed like the soldier hadn't had enough, so he added above the map "to the Professor: for consideration."

Another soldier who was watching the scene interfered and asked Anas, "What do you think about this soldier do you like him?" Anas answered, "Why should I like him? I pass through this checkpoint every day in the morning and in the evening and each day I see soldiers coming and going ...but the checkpoint is still here. We suffer each day while waiting on the checkpoint sometimes for hours, but these checkpoints exist nowhere ... only in this place."



**STUDENT HELD AT GUNPOINT TRYING TO RETURN HOME
ANONYMOUS
2007**

Because the roads to Nablus were closed, we went through mountains. This time, I was going home after finishing the first round of exams because I missed my family. I hadn't seen them for a month.

As two of my relatives and I got into a taxi Thursday morning, the driver told us that there were no open roads. If we chose to take any one of them, we would be at risk and would have to be wary of the soldiers. We decided on a road called Zeta as it was the closest to Nablus. Crossing the short distance of that street where Israeli soldiers monitor, we found ourselves surrounded by them.

Scared by the guns pointed at us, we obeyed the officer's command as he told us to hand over our IDs and get on our knees. After ten minutes, he ordered us to enter the van kept for prisoners, and while most of us agreed, my female relative refused. The day before, we had heard seven girls had been taken to prison as they were trying to cross a road in a similar situation.

However, the soldier said that if we didn't get into the van right away, he would kill her. As she entered the van, my female relative began to cry. All of us were sitting in the same place, some crying and some praying for God to help us.

Although we were not carrying any weapons, the soldiers kept the guns pointed in our directions and took us to a mountain and demanded that we climb to the top. Upon our arrival, the officer pointed to a rock and told us to sit on it. His men and he began questioning us one after another after three hours of waiting. He asked questions like, "What are you doing here?" and "Where is your University?" and "Are you terrorists?"

After all of this, he told us to go back through the mountain to Nablus. As we retreated, he watched to make sure we went in the direction that he asked. The day was so tiring that we complied by going to Nablus, and so we were not able to see our families that day.



INVASIONS AND INCURSIONS

Under the Oslo Accords, Israel agreed to transfer full security and administrative control of all major Palestinian cities (except for Jerusalem) to the Palestinian Authority as designated “Area A,” while continuing to maintain a military presence in all other areas of the West Bank. Despite these agreements, during the Second Intifada, the Israeli military carried out large-scale and almost daily incursions and invasions into all parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Area A cities.

Starting in late March 2002, the Israeli military instituted large scale and weeks-long military operations in Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah. Military curfews, including complete curfews which amount to house arrest, were imposed on Palestinian cities and enforced with shelling from mountaintops, shooting and other acts of violence from Israeli troops present in the area.

From 2002-2007, Nablus suffered almost daily Israeli military incursions and attacks, resulting in the killing of over 500 Nablus area residents and more than 1,300 others injured. While Israeli military invasions were often at night and involved massive destruction of the targeted areas accompanied by shooting and heavy use of tear gas, they also included frequent surprise incursions into the busy commercial center of town in the middle of the day.

The invasions into Nablus and other Palestinian cities made concentrating on university courses a near impossibility, as students and staff faced lethal danger whether at home or on the street and were left exhausted from the constant nightly military raids. The testimonies and stories in this section describe the experience of living with the terror of these constant military invasions.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



**UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE FACES SOLDIER HARASSMENT IN HOME
ANONYMOUS
2007**

On Sunday night, December 9, 2007, at about midnight, I was woken up by my father and told to come to the front door with my ID card. I had been fast asleep and was only half awake. There were four Israeli soldiers there dressed for combat. They wanted to see the ID cards of everyone in the apartment. My father, my sister and I gave them our cards. My father told them about my sister's two-year old son who was asleep. One of the soldiers said in Arabic that they were going to search the apartment and if they found anybody else they would shoot them. My father said "Shoot them, there is no one else here." The soldiers did not search the flat and left. They did not go to any of the other apartments in the building.

My father then went downstairs to see how the soldiers had got into the apartment block. There is a locked gate and the locked door to the building. Both locks had been picked, and the locks were broken and could not be shut again.

I have no idea why the soldiers came to our apartment. It makes me think nowhere is safe. We don't normally lock the front door to our apartment, but we did that night. Imagine if we hadn't—the soldiers could have walked right into our bedrooms.

**TROOPS BILLETED IN STUDENT FLAT
ANONYMOUS
2004**

Six girls of An Najah University recount an incident:

When the Israeli soldiers occupied Nablus during the invasion of April 4, 2002, all six of us were in our flat. We had no choice but to rent a flat because we are not allowed to travel freely between cities. Our flat is very close to the old city of Nablus so during the invasion we were not allowed to leave the city at all. The soldiers took over our flat and used it as a military point to observe the city. For one week we were all forced to stay in one room, while the soldiers were free to move around the rest of the house. We were not even allowed to use the bathroom without being accompanied by a soldier.

We felt suffocated and humiliated. We were not allowed to use our mobiles to call our families because there was an Israeli soldier who stayed in the room with us to observe what we were doing. The reason why they kept us in the flat the entire time instead of letting us go was because we were being used to protect the Israeli invaders from any attacks by local resistance. This traumatic experience has made us very tired not just physically but psychologically as well.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**STUDENT LOSES EYE BY AN ISRAELI SOLDIER
SHIREEN, 20 YEARS OLD AND RUBA, 21 YEARS OLD
NISF JUBELL VILLAGE AND BEIT IMRIN VILLAGE
APRIL 2006**

The two girls left the university towards the city center to buy some things before heading to their homes. Before even starting their shopping, news of Israeli military having invaded Faysal Street, east of the city was spreading. This made the girls hurry up in order to leave the city before the situation got critical.

On their way to the western garage where they were supposed to get on their bus, they passed through Falasteen Street, known for being a crowded, commercial street, where the presence of over eight army vehicles took them by surprise. They found themselves amidst the Israeli forces, which started to shoot randomly as a few kids threw stones at them. Without realizing what was happening, these bullets made the two girls new victims of the Israeli military's brutal and constant violations on Palestinian civilians. Shireen tells the story with her own words: "Suddenly I felt something hitting my hand. I don't know what happened to me after that, it wasn't a faint, it was just a deep pain in my hand. We were all close to a sport shop. They took me inside and then the shop owner drove me in his car to Rafidia Hospital. I didn't know that Ruba had been injured too, I just heard about her in the car, when the son of the shopkeeper told us that the girl who was wearing the gown got a bullet into her eye. There I realized that this girl was my friend Ruba."

Nevertheless, Shireen didn't realize what exactly had happened to Ruba until she started to wake up from the shock. She received treatment for her injured hand and started to feel better but her mind was with Ruba, since she knew that Ruba's injury was much more serious than hers. "I cared about her more than anybody else, even more than for myself," explained Ruba. "I was allowed to see her later at the hospital. She was taken to the emergencies section." Ruba's family was called, although telling them the whole truth was not easy. At the beginning the family was only informed that the injury was located close to her right eye, while her papers were ready to be transferred to Saint John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

The same day in the evening Shireen called her friend's family to check on her condition, but till that time they didn't know their daughter had lost her right eye forever. Ruba left the hospital a couple of days afterwards. As Shireen sadly comments, "I can't believe that this ambitious girl has lost her eye, but I believe that Ruba has strong moral values and will accept destiny and God's will".



SOLDIERS' BEHAVIOUR CAUSES PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS
ANONYMOUS
2007

As per my usual routine, I woke up at 6:30 a.m. to prepare for University and took a fleeting look out of my window and caught sight of the half dozen Israeli tanks outside of my house. I live beside Al 'Ein refugee camp in Nablus, which is a constant target for Israeli attacks and curfews, just as any other refugee camp. I thought that they would be gone by the time I left for University and so I woke the rest of the family and dressed.

It was 8 a.m. and none of the tanks were moving. I had to make it to my classes because I had mid-term exams in one week. My uncle, who lives in the apartment above of ours, dressed his three daughters in their school uniforms and tried to leave the house thinking that because we weren't a part of the refugee camp we were not under the curfew. However, as they walked out of their home, the soldiers pointed their guns at them and began screaming. His daughters, who are between the ages of 8 and 12, became frightened and started to cry. They had to go back into the house.

This particular military campaign lasted four days. Four days in which we were prisoners in our own home with no food supplies or even electricity because the main electricity line was cut off during one of the bombings. Due to the curfew, no one was allowed to repair the electricity until 36 hours after the shut down.

During those days, we had heard only shooting, bombing, screaming, and yelling. The military campaign ended with a bombing of a three-story building in the refugee camp.

We were not able to concentrate on work, study, or sleep because we all were terrified and were constantly thinking that at anytime the soldiers might break in our house, just as they did to many other houses in our neighborhood.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

STUDENTS LIVING IN FEAR ALA KHALID, 20 YEARS OLD 2004

Ala lives in a good neighborhood called the popular housing project. This site was calm and perfect for studying. Ala believed that there was no better place than his neighborhood. It was great for his calm and relaxed life until the invasion of Israeli forces. Ala's neighborhood is closest to the borders of Nablus city.

The neighborhood had been changed into a station for Israeli tanks. Tanks and bulldozers are parked there. The area is never quite, because the tanks and bulldozers are constantly traveling in and out of the area.

Every day and night the soldiers would fire their weapons whenever they wanted. It did not matter to them that the students were studying for exams. The soldiers did not seem to care about how the students felt, and they did not care that they were terrorizing them every day and night. Because the Israeli soldiers stayed in their neighborhood for such a long time the students tried to return to their normal lives, but whenever they would hear the sound of the Israeli bullets people would lock themselves in their homes.

On one night Ala was studying for an exam when he heard the sound of a big explosion in front of his house. He moved quickly to check if anybody was injured, but before he could see anything, another missile fell into the garden of his home. He was shocked and did not know what to do or where to escape. All the glass in the building had been broken from the pressure of the bomb. Everyone was thrown off their feet and onto the ground, and everything inside had fallen over.

Ala hates the nights more than days, because the nights that were once highly admired by all have turned into nights of horror. Ala, as well as many of his fellow students, suffers from mental strain as well as breathing difficulties. Their doctor told them that it was a result of worry and fear.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY**STUDENT FACES OCCUPATION IN HER OWN HOME
SHIRIN ATWAN
HEBRON
2004**

I am living in Hebron, in a neighborhood very close to the Israeli settlement Kiryat Arba, one of the biggest settlements in the West Bank. Our extended family lives throughout the five floors of our house.

Since the beginning of the Intifada against the illegal Israeli occupation, we have all lived on the 3rd floor, while the Israeli soldiers occupy the upper floors. They invaded our home and ordered my father and uncle to evacuate the upper floors.

They broke the furniture, the refrigerator, the television, and our computer. They tore down the pictures. They removed everything out of the rooms and filled them with guns and other weapons. It is so difficult to see our home occupied by strangers moving around freely while we are not allowed to even enter them.

Soldiers were going up and down the stairs, they were throwing their garbage on our floor, they did not allow us to turn on our electricity during the nights, and they did not allow anybody to visit us. The soldiers were shooting from our rooms at the Palestinian houses around us. The kids were terrified.

I will never forget the horrible nights we had. I will never forget how many times our home began shaking while they were shooting their missiles and rockets. It was difficult for us to leave or to get back into our home when we left it to go to the city when the curfew was lifted. We were not allowed to go to school, nor buy food. I myself was not permitted to leave home for Nablus.

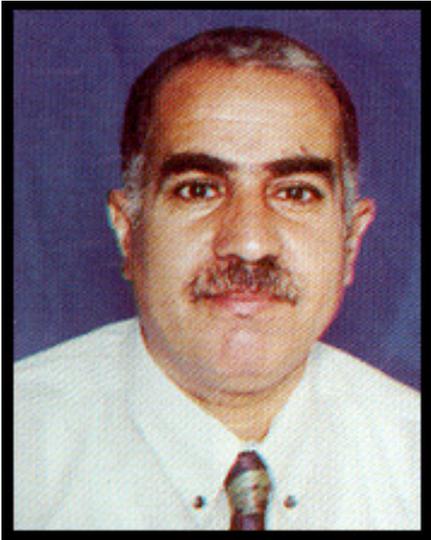
I finally went back to Nablus while the Israeli occupation soldiers stayed in my home in Hebron. I went back to Hebron after a while to see that my home was still occupied. There was a lot more damage and blatant violations of our rights as civilians. We did not know exactly what they wanted - sometimes they would knock on the door of our flat and when my father opened it, they would start shooting inside. We still have evidence of where the bullets hit. One night they invaded our home in order to shoot on the city. Our windows and balconies were used to shoot on the city of Hebron. We were screaming out of fear and horror.

One of my uncles invited us to stay with him - he lives somewhere else, where we can be far away from the Israeli soldiers. But my little brother Eyad, who is 13 years old, insisted on staying at home saying, "I will not leave our home to the Israelis." My family continues to tell me many more stories of fear that they have as I am going to college in Nablus. How can I study while I am worried about them? I was shocked to hear that Israeli flags are flying from our building and that Hebrew music is often played.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**PALESTINIAN-AMERICAN CALLS FOR US INVESTIGATION
BY GENEVIEVE CORA FRASER
PUBLISHED IN 2005**



Amr Salah, a United States citizen living in Massachusetts asks for your help in demanding a formal investigation into the deaths of his father and brother at the hands of 1,000 Israeli troops. Dr. Khalid Salah, age 51, and his 16 year old son, Mohammed were shot and killed by Israeli Forces on July 6, 2004 in their home in the city of Nablus in the Israeli Occupied West Bank. Throughout the hours of assault the Salahs were huddled together in a corner of the apartment, contacting relatives on a mobile phone for help. Despite an urgent call to the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, Consul General David Pearce nor anyone else at the consulate intervened.

Dr. Salah received his doctorate in engineering at the University of California, Davis in 1988 and was a member of the Palestine-Israeli Peace Association at An Najah University in Nablus, where he was a Professor of Electrical Engineering. Both Dr. Salah and his wife Salam had permanent US resident status and had reluctantly made the decision to leave Nablus. They were preparing to move to the United States at the time of the assault. Their daughter Diana and son Amr were born in California and are US citizens. The Salahs returned to Nablus in 1989.

According to Amr, "My dad was a very gentle man who loved his family, his work and his community. Despite living with war for many years he remained a man of peace and often told me that Israelis were his cousins and that he prayed that Israelis and Palestinians could live together in harmony." Amr Salah attends Middlesex College in Lowell, MA where he studies computer science. He plans to become an computer engineer like his father.

"My Dad had turned down a good job offer in Silicon Valley. He wanted to teach in his home town and help those who did not have the educational opportunities that he had," Amr continued. "Despite the curfews, closings and almost constant military action in Nablus during the last 15 years, my Dad managed to stimulate young minds with his love of science and, more importantly, with his love of peace. My Dad hated violent words and acts and he would not tolerate hateful words, even against the Israelis who occupied our city."

Amr alleges that his father and brother were innocent victims of aggressive and reckless Israeli action. Shortly after the attack, his mother and sister phoned to describe the circumstances of the deaths of his father and brother. Amr was told that in the early hours of July 6, his mother and father and sister Diana (22), and brothers, Mohammed (16) and Ali (11) were asleep in their home when they became trapped during an Israeli military pursuit of two armed men. Their apartment building was attacked with rockets and machine guns during the first hours of the Israeli action, he said.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



My family somehow survived this initial attack without injury and following an Israeli command to evacuate the building, my father spoke to the soldiers in English to tell them that their damaged door could not be opened,” Amr explained.

“The soldiers then fired through a window in the top part of the front door and my father, and then my brother Mohammed were both shot. My Dad died instantly from a chest wound and Mohammed was wounded by a bullet in the mouth when he came to help my Dad,” he continued.

“The Israeli forces then entered the apartment and forcibly removed my mother, Diana and Ali and, despite my Mom’s pleading not to abandon him, my brother Mohammed was left by the Israelis and he subsequently bled to death.” His mother further reported that there was no attempt to gain medical help for Mohammed or to allow local ambulances access to the area, and that the Israeli soldiers ridiculed and verbally assaulted her.

“The Israelis attacked an apartment building full of innocent people with tanks, helicopters and rockets and then killed my father and brother after they had caught the two men that they were chasing,” Amr said.

According to eye-witness accounts, the militants were isolated and killed in a courtyard and grounds area near the apartment building occupied by the Salah family. Israeli sharpshooters were stationed on rooftops and balconies throughout the neighborhood, and residents of the apartment building had been evacuated, except for the Salahs. The full military assault continued on the family’s apartment even after the militants had been killed.

“Newspaper reports of the incident made it quite clear that the Israeli military were actively evacuating their wounded at the time of the shooting,” Amr stated. “When my mother returned to our home three days later the building was damaged further from Israeli attempts at demolition and my family home had been extensively machine-gunned to destroy the contents.”

I was first contacted by Diana Salah shortly after a memorial poem I wrote, “Palestinian-American Family Ensnared in Israeli Death Trap,” was published. When they learned that I planned to visit Palestine to attend a conference held by the Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the family was determined that I visit.

In January, on the six-month anniversary of the attack, I met the Salah family in Nablus. Salam now lives with her mother and sister Fatema, in her childhood home and where she lived during her courtship, situated on the South Mountain directly across from Khalid’s family home on the North Mountain. Accompanied by her daughter Diana, Salam drove us in her deceased husband’s car to the site of the attack, up high on Saka Street along the south side overlooking the city. It was her first venture outside her mother’s home since her husband and son were brutally and willfully murdered, I



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

was told. Salam has since lost over 40 pounds and her features have become gaunt. Though the front door and windows were replaced, bullet and mortar holes are still visible on the porch and throughout the apartment. Blood stained rugs are rolled and Khalid's and Mohammed's blood has soaked deep into tiles. She stated that Israeli tanks fired from vantage points on Saka Street as well as from the streets of the city below.

Salam and Diana led me into the kitchen where all the pots and pans are riddled by bullets as well as the cupboards, refrigerator, floor and ceiling. In the bathroom, I saw beautiful, hand-painted floral tiles shattered along with the bathroom fixtures. The parent's and children's bedrooms are riddled by bullet holes and their clothes pock marked and shredded. The computer in the boy's room is also shot-up as well as posters along the wall. Salam continues to pay rent on the apartment and intends to keep it as a memorial to the deaths of her beloved husband and son. She also confided she cannot bear to have their blood further desecrated by tossing away the tiles and discarding the rugs.

Salam said neighbors informed her that prior to the attack, the Israelis had checked out the neighborhood and knew the names and backgrounds of the residents and the exact location of the Salahs, including the fact that Khalid was a well known peace activist. Two physicians who also lived in the apartment building were evacuated during the attack but prevented from treating Dr. Salah and his son, despite pleas from Salam.

"Not once has anyone from the US Consulate's office in Jerusalem contacted me to help or send someone to witness what was done, despite the fact that Khalid had permanent US resident status, and two of my children are American citizens with US passports," she said. "No one from the Nablus Municipality or police has examined the apartment nor has any effort been made to investigate the deaths, despite that fact that the assault was widely reported by the media." Salam finds unbearable the knowledge that one of their relatives had successfully placed a call to the US Consulate during the attack. They could have stopped the assault but they chose to do nothing. They are partly to blame for the deaths of her husband and son, she believes.

The Israeli paper Ha'aretz published an article in their weekly magazine section, "Death in a Cemetery" by Gideon Levy that described the military assault in vivid and gruesome detail. Salam and I sat on her mother's living room couch as we leafed through the article and others written in Arabic plus keepsakes from the memorials and many tributes to her husband and son. Glossy posters of the Salah martyrs are posted in the hallway, living room and dining room as well as the bedrooms of the home. Salam dresses in widows' black and wears a leather strap around her neck with photos of Khalid and Mohammed. It is a struggle for her to focus on anything but her loss though she is concerned that her surviving children not be permanently scarred by the tragedy.

Though her grief is obvious, Diana is a bright, vivacious and attractive young woman, quite popular with many friends. She appears to be adjusting, but Ali is 11 years old and remains deeply affected and somewhat withdrawn since the loss of his father and brother. He too has many cousins and friends who shower him with attention and seem to understand, for the children of Nablus are no

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

stranger to death and live with nightly assaults and rampages by the Israeli armed forces. These assaults have continued since the election of Abbas and the so-called truce, despite Israeli claims to the contrary.

In the evening Salam and I watched a video that had been dropped off by a friend of TV footage of the attack, scenes in the hospital where the bodies of Khalid and Mohammed and the militants had been brought, the separate funerals, and graveside observances. She is determined that those responsible for the deaths of her loved ones will someday be brought to justice.

Two years earlier, Dr. Salah and his son Mohammed had been visited by the Israeli Channel 2 sports commentator, Itai Engel during the Mondial, the World Cup of soccer. Engel's task was to report on reactions from a Palestinian family on the game between Brazil and Turkey. In the Ha'aretz article following their deaths, Gideon Levy reported, "They talked about peace and about soccer."



BORDERS

Since 1967, Israel has controlled all borders and crossing points surrounding Palestine. Before the Israeli occupation began, young Palestinians could freely cross into neighboring Arab states to attend other Arab universities. After 1967, Israeli restrictions on crossing the borders made it risky and sometimes impossible for Palestinians to leave or re-enter once outside. In response to these Israeli policies, in the 1970s the first Palestinian universities began to be established—including An Najah in 1977—in order to offer a higher education alternative within the occupied territories.

Israeli control over all of the international borders, however, has continued to create important violations to the right to education. Students and professors who must travel abroad to visit family, participate in academic conferences or attend foreign universities in many cases because specialized degree programs are not offered at Palestinian universities, have been denied permission at the border to leave or have been subjected to interrogation, arrest and abuse by border guards. Although checkpoints between the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel are not considered international borders under international law, the Israeli military imposes harsh restrictions on passage through these, which in addition to creating a serious violation to academic freedom, makes it increasingly difficult for Palestinian students living in Israel to attend universities in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The following stories come from An-Najah professors and students, providing personal accounts of how the Israeli borders encircling Palestine impact the right to education.



CROSSING THE GREEN LINE
AMNEH JABARIN, 20 YEARS OLD
OM AL FAHIM
2004

I am one of the Palestinians who live on the land of 1948, which Israel declared as their state. We used to travel freely to the University in Nablus before September 28, 2000. Still, the trip from our homes through 'The Green Line' is full of stories of suffering and insults. Now we have to use the alternative bypass roads – so we sink in mud in winter and in dust in summer. When you arrive to the University, everybody that sees you thinks that you are back from a construction building site, and not from a trip between two cities.

Last week I decided not to leave my university to visit my family until the end of the semester. This decision came after a journey in the company of some guys and girls from our town called Om Al Fahim.

We arrived at the Israeli checkpoint where many Israeli soldiers touted all kinds of weapons. We were ordered through one by one. The first one was my friend. They asked her some questions and investigated her while they checked her bag. As each of us went through we were put in a line. They were walking in between us, looking at us in the eye and insulting us the entire time.

They asked us, "Why do you go to study in Nablus when we have universities in Israel?" They did not mention that Israel discriminates against Palestinians in Israeli universities.

They ordered one of the guys to take off his shirt to clean their accommodation, but he refused, so they beat him and cursed at all of us. They ordered us to go back home and never think of going to Nablus. We went back and then went instead through the terrible narrow roads. We had to do this, because we want to finish our studies and we have no other options. The situation remains the same but we have to graduate.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

ARRESTED AT THE BORDER ANONYMOUS 2007

Fatima (not her real name) is a lecturer at An-Najah, and she spent some of her summer vacation last year trying to secure a place on a master degree programme at Damascus University in Syria. Her subject is not offered in the West Bank and it is futile to attempt to obtain permission to study in Israel. So Syria was the next best option for her.

After spending a few days in Damascus, she returned via Jordan arriving at the Allenby Bridge Crossing at 12.30pm on a Tuesday. It was to be another 14 days before she could reach her destination.

Fatima had to wait until all the other passengers had been processed and at 4pm she was taken to a room and was stripped to her underwear. No explanation was given, and initially Fatima thought it was funny that they should suspect her. All of her belongings were examined, belts she had bought as presents were slit open, her cigarettes were cut open. What were they going to find, she wondered?

All of her belongings, including her papers and documents were taken off her before she was taken to the Intelligence Officer. By then she was worried that her family would be wondering why she had not called them, but she was not allowed a phone call.

Still she felt confident in her knowledge that she had done nothing to arouse suspicion and she answered the questions with composure. She even asked for a cup of coffee and some water. She explained her reasons for travelling to Syria. The skeptical look from the Officer did not bother her. Then she was left for half an hour. The door opened, a head appeared, it nodded in her direction and disappeared. Again she was questioned. Again she was left alone. A doctor came to examine her. Then fear and bewilderment settled on her. She knew that a medical check-up was a requirement before being sent to prison. Her composure melted and she broke down into tears. She asked why she was being checked and the answer came that she was going to prison. It was the worst thing she had ever heard.

Her belongings except for her SIM card, flash stick and documents were returned to her and she was told a car was coming to take her away at 9pm. The car took her some distance and then she was taken in a jeep to another car. She had no idea of where she was going. She was let out of the car, handcuffed and shackled at her feet and made to sit on her suitcase.

She was outdoors. She knew she was near a settlement because she saw the guards at its entrance. She was left sitting there in the darkness until one of the female soldiers guarding the entrance to the settlement came and took off her blindfold. A group of men she suspected of being drunk appeared



from the settlement. They approached her and started to tease and touch her. She could not move or protest and

felt like a tethered animal. Eventually the drunkards left, but still she was made to sit in the same position. At 2am another car came to pick her up and it took her to Petach Tikva prison in Israel.

This was the start of 14 days imprisonment. She was taken to court the next day to a hearing that allowed her to be incarcerated for 15 days – it was in Hebrew, she was appointed a court lawyer. She heard the words, 'She is known to us and we know she was in Syria on a mission, but state security does not allow us to say what the mission was.' Then she was taken back to her cell and then to the interrogation room.

She was repeatedly interrogated, yelled at, intimidated and given a lie detection test three times. She was allowed to call her Mum, but was told that if her mother did not answer the phone, she would be cut off. Her sister answered and she managed to say she had been arrested before she was cut off, so at least she knew her family knew.

During the interrogations she was told she was a bad Muslim and a bad woman. A cellmate was brought to her cell who she suspected of being a spy. Her email was opened and her messages were read.

After 14 days she was released and left at a checkpoint with some soldiers. She received back her ID, but not her other documents. She had no idea where she was nor why she had been incarcerated. Once the soldiers released her, she spoke to some Palestinians from Jerusalem who drove her to Huwwara checkpoint and she could go home to her family.

Later on she heard that the International Committee of the Red Cross had visited the prison twice while she was there but they were not allowed to see her.

So now she is back at work and teaching her normal hours, but she knows she can never go to Syria to study. She should be there now starting her second semester. But she is afraid to cross the border into Jordan again fearing re-arrest for something which she still has not done.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**PEACE DELEGATE JAILED ON RETURN TO WEST BANK
MOEIN MASOD, LECTURER IN JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT
2004**

I attended several conferences about peace and stability in the Middle East in the United States, invited by the A.B.L.E. International "Association for Better Living and Education" and "Association for Peace and Understanding in the Middle East." These conferences, meetings, and sessions were attended by Muslims, Christians, and Jews from all over the world, and focused on building peace, stability and understanding between nations, with particular focus placed upon the conflict between Palestine and Israel.

During my return trip from the States, I was arrested by the Israelis on April 3, 2003 at the Allenby Bridge. Without any investigation, I was placed in administrative detention for a period of 6 months, and was given no chance to defend myself.

My time in detention was an awful experience. I was first kept at the Huwwara Military Camp where I spent 75 days surrounded by hostile guards, being beaten, and deprived of food. After this, I was moved to the Kitseot Detention Camp in the Negev desert to serve out the rest of my detention time. I was in a bad state of health when I arrived there, which only continued to deteriorate during the rest of my imprisonment. Consequently, I am still receiving medical treatment to deal with the health problems caused by my detention.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY



**STUDENTS FORCED BY SOLDIERS TO WALK THROUGH SEWAGE
MAIS ELEYAN, 22 YEARS OLD
TULKAREM
2004**

I am a student at An-Najah University majoring in pharmacy. I live with my grandparents in the city of Tulkarm, because my parents live in Saudi Arabia. I came to study here in my homeland, because as a Palestinian I don't have the right to have higher education at Saudi Arabian Universities.

I have been living with my grandparents for the last four years, and they have come to depend on me to take care of them and help them around the house. I used to leave my home every day to get to school, but now the situation in Palestine has become worse. I have to rent a flat in the city of Nablus, because it is very difficult to get in and out of the city. Last summer vacation I wanted to visit my parents in Saudi Arabia. I went to the border near Jericho but the Israeli checkpoints did not allow us to pass. The soldiers told us we had to go back or we would be killed, forcing us to walk between the trees and climb the mountains on the dangerous roads until we reached another checkpoint.

Having got a lift along a road to this checkpoint, we were ordered to stay inside the car and not to leave it at all, so we waited from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. We were not allowed to make any calls with our mobiles. There was a woman with a little child who was crying. She opened the car door and let her kid leave to get some fresh air, but the Israeli soldier came quickly and put his gun to her head. He was shouting, "Who allowed you to open the door?" She explained to him the conditions inside the car where they were waiting. The region we were in is well below sea level and very hot. The soldier replied, "Give me your kid and I will kill him in such an atmosphere." I began to regret that I wanted to visit my family in Saudi Arabia. At last they allowed us to pass, but they had stolen the pleasure of the visit.

Another time, we were forced to pass through the sewage water fall without our shoes. The guys were forced to go back to Tulkarm City, so only girls were present. The soldiers were laughing at us and cursing. It was as if they were watching a comedy movie on TV. They were very pleased with themselves when my friend fell down into the sewage water. I wanted to help her to stand up, but the soldiers raised their guns in front of my head and shouted, "Go away or you will be a dead body here." They continued their laughs.



ARRESTS

Arbitrary and prolonged arrest by the Israeli authorities has become a staple of the occupation policies. Palestinians are routinely detained, interrogated and if lucky, brought before a military court that does not provide even the minimal due process guarantees owed to the detainees under international law and which boasts a conviction rate of over 99%. Additionally, many Palestinians are subjected to administrative detention, during which they are held for up to six-month periods that can be renewed indefinitely without charge or trial.

From 2000 to 2005, approximately 35,000 Palestinians had been arrested by the Israeli military and at the height of the Second Intifada more than 1,000 Palestinians were held under administrative detention. During this period, the Israeli policy of targeting student leaders through arrest and detention was made patent after three consecutive Birzeit University Student Council presidents were arrested between 2004-2008.

For university students and staff, an arrest for any period of time can be extraordinarily disruptive to the academic process, often resulting in significantly delayed graduation dates. Additionally, the traumatic effect of arrests cannot be understated. In the following testimonies, students describe the frustration, fear and disorientation they are left with after their arrest and its impact on their continued pursuit of their education.



STUDENT SERVES A YEAR IN PRISON WITH NO CHARGES PRESSED 2004

I got a call from my brother telling me that some Israeli jeeps were on the way to arrest me and that they had taken two of my brothers as hostages in order to ensure that I did not try to escape.

I was shocked and did not know what to do. I was afraid of being put into detention, and surprised by this unexpected turn of events but I could not put my family at risk. So I stayed where I was in my village Huwwara. The Israeli soldiers arrived, searched me, and put me into a jeep. The soldiers released one of my brothers but detained the other for one week.

I tried to discuss the matter with the Israeli commander who arrested me. He defended his government's policy and furthermore claimed that Palestinians don't want peace - that we are bringing trouble down upon ourselves. All I could do was wonder how anyone could think - could say - that a whole society does not want peace and stability.

As is usually the case with detained Palestinians, we were taken to the questioning center in the Qedumim settlement. Once there, the commander tried to blackmail me and threatened to place me under administrative detention for one year without charge or trial. From the Qedumim settlement I was taken to the Huwwara military camp, and then sent back again to the Qedumim settlement where I ended up staying for four days in a small room under bad conditions with little food.

After that, we were taken to the Ofer settlement, which is being used temporarily as a detention center. I stayed there for one and a half months until I was moved to the Ansar desert detention camp, where I spent almost a year.

That detention camp is so horrible it does not even deserve to be called a prison. It is completely isolated and during the summer extremely hot. It is infested with rats, mosquitoes and flies. At first I did not think that I would be able to survive under such conditions, but I, like all the other prisoners, learned to adapt with their help and support.

When this all happened, I was in my final year of university, a year that was very important to me and the completion of my course. I had to spend that year in that awful detention camp without any charges ever being brought against me.

I tried to find out why I was there but was only told that the case was top secret and that I was a threat to security. I was taken to court five times without any charges being pressed, and without being given any information about my case. Sadly, this is a common tactic that is employed by the Israelis as part of their ongoing military occupation.



UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**FOUR MONTHS IN AN-NAQAB DETENTION CAMP
ALA' JABRRAREEN, 22 YEARS OLD
2004**

On the night of May 15, 2004, Israeli soldiers entered the apartment building where Ala' and his friends lived in the West Bank city of Nablus. Yelling through loudspeakers, the soldiers ordered all inhabitants to leave the building. Pointing their guns at them, they checked their IDs and picked Ala' out and took him to their jeep.

In the jeep, the soldiers hit him on the head and about his body. Ala' was bewildered by their action because he could not think of anything he had done. He was then taken to Shave Shomeron settlement and then to Huwwara military camp. He was detained for 35 days during which time he was tortured.

Ala' was then taken to the An-Naqab detention camp in the desert where he was detained for a further four months. He was accused of being a member of the Fatah Movement, which he denies.

Ala's detention took him past his graduation date, and in protest he went on a hunger strike for three days.

UNESCO CHAIR ON HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

**NOWHERE IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS
ANONYMOUS
2007**



Every moment of my life was on the map except when I was arrested two years ago.

I came back from classes, ate something, and then went to my room to study. A friend of mine came to the dormitory, and another friend prepared a meal for him. The visiting friend had brought a gun with him, but I did not know this until I was arrested later that night.

Before falling asleep at 3AM, I had the suspicion that something was about to happen. Just as I had drifted off, a friend in another apartment knocked on my door and announced that the Israeli Army demanded that the dormitory be evacuated.

Of those arrested and left out in the cold weather, seven of us were taken to Aljneed Military Camp. After three hours in the camp, I found out that I was about to be killed because I was the spokesman for the others. The officer was annoyed that I had spoken so much and told me to shut up. Afterwards, we were taken to the Shave Shomeron Settlement for further interrogation about the friend that had come to our dorm with a gun. Each one of us was questioned one by one, and when it was my turn, I told them that I had no affiliation with any clubs or organizations, even at the University. They did not believe me.

They knew my brother's, my father's and my phone number and asked about the aforementioned friend's affiliation. I told them that he was affiliated to X party. After an onslaught of long and boring questions they released me, but the head of the interrogators told me that they would keep their eyes on me because I did not tell them what they wanted to hear.

I was left near the Beit Iba checkpoint without anything, but I thanked God that I had enough money to take a service taxi to my dormitory and pack up my things. I left my dormitory without feeling sorry that I had left it. I commuted during the summer semester, but had to walk long distances, climb mountains, and had to go into the heart of darkness in order to reach my University.

That episode of my life went with the wind and has been forgotten, but the Special Forces captured me and that was another story. The first episode affected my life in terms of the fact that I don't trust people any more, and I expect betrayal from any person—even my friends and family.

