



Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association

جمعية صداقة
كامدن أبو ديس

*Promoting human rights and
respect for international humanitarian law*

CADFA update 5th June 2009

*42nd anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East
Jerusalem*

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**Remembering * Palestinian refugees *
and * young victims of the violence of
the Israeli occupation, specially, this
time, Hamam***



During Refugee Week 2009, we will be remembering Palestinian refugees, and holding many events at which their issue will be explored. Ask us for a copy of our refugee leaflet if you don't yet have one; come to one of the events. The youth ambassadors (see below) will also be talking about refugees to many young people in Camden.



During our fourth visit of young people from Abu Dis, we will of course be remembering many other young people, but this time, specially, one boy from Abu Dis Boys' School who was not able to come – Hamam Mohsen, who was shot in the back of the head by an Israeli soldier in December. He is a remarkable young man and though his life was at great risk, he is determinedly getting better.

His family are looking after him and all of them adapting to a great change in their lives - but it says a lot of the reality of life for Palestinians under Israeli occupation that they don't expect there to be any investigation into what happened, any reprimand even for the soldier or any special care provided for Hamam

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - CAMDEN

ON SUNDAY 7th June, the Camden Youth Ambassadors group will be holding a booksale to help raise money for the visit. Please come along or send a donation to support them – 1pm at Marchmont St Community Centre, Marchmont St WC1. There will be tea and cakes too.



Logo by one of the kids

Youth visit 13-22 June: Youth Ambassadors for Human Rights

Our fourth youth visit will be very exciting. It will build on all the work we have been doing in schools and youth clubs over the past few years, and it will go further, because as well as the eight young people from Abu Dis (with three group leaders) it will include young people from Camden who are being given time off school in order to take part.

They will be working together to explore human rights, learn about each other's countries, and find the most effective way to take the issue of human rights – and specifically the Palestinian experience, focusing on Abu Dis – to hundreds of young people in Camden's primary and secondary schools. Following the visit, some of their work will be put together in a booklet in both

languages – we hope to tell you about this soon.

Refugee week photo exhibition – TWIN IMPRESSIONS

Photos of Abu Dis from teachers in the four Camden twin schools
Will be on display in the entrance to **King's Place, York Way , NW1** (the building where the Guardian is now based)

Tuesday 17th June 6.30 pm Opening of the photo exhibition combined with (delayed) launch of the CADFA book "Voices from Abu Dis"

With teachers from the twinned schools
And editors of the Voices book

This will replace the usual CADFA open meeting*. Please come for refreshments and short talks by the teachers and by our friends from Abu Dis at 6..30 pm
This will also be a launch for our book "Voices of Abu Dis," which was produced last year and has received good feedback, but not yet had a proper launch

Friday 19th June Refugee Week Concert

The evening will also celebrate the twinning of South Camden School and Maria Fidelis Convent School with the UN refugee school in Abu Dis.

Compere Ivor Dembina
With **LOWKEY MC (rap)**
Saddaqa Trio (classical)
Velvet Glove (acapella)
Dar Assadaqa Youth Drama group (these are our young Palestinian guests)
Maria Fidelis Gospel Choir
South Camden Community School

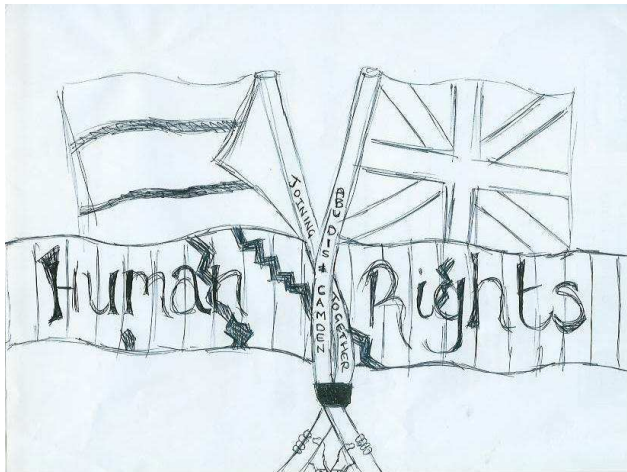
6pm – DELICIOUS FOOD (£5 for meal)

7pm – performance

Please ***book on the website*** if you can- this will give us an idea of numbers for catering!

**Saturday 20th June HUMAN RIOTOUS
Youth Human Rights Art Workshop at
SOAS**

To be opened by Jean Lambert MEP (tbc)
With presentations by the Camden and Abu
Dis Youth Ambassadors
And excellent workshops including art,
creative writing and writing on the wall...
Please book via the website.



logo by one of the Camden kids

Summer visit to Palestine

with CADFA – tell us by 20th June so we can
confirm numbers and prices please.
We will need a deposit of £200 with the
application form (attached) - Thanks

** Tour to north and south of the West Bank,
visiting towns, villages, refugee camps and
places and organisations that will tell you
what the situation is for people living under
Israeli occupation. A particular focus on
visiting twinning groups - and of course a
chance to see Abu Dis and what CADFA is
doing there. This is another of our visits
that are very well-received. (We have
excellent evaluations of our visits probably
partly because we try hard to communicate
carefully, supporting + listening to people
before, during and also with a feedback
meeting after each visit.) **

Dates: **Friday 24th /Saturday 25th July**
(arrive + programme starts Saturday

**lunchtime in Jerusalem) to Sunday 2nd
August (leave - or the option to stay on a
bit longer self-catering)**

Suggested programme (may vary following
your answers to our questionnaire, and/or
according to the situation at the time)

Saturday arrive, Jerusalem and Abu Dis
Sunday - Bethlehem
Monday – Ramallah
Tuesday - Hebron
Wednesday – Nablus
Thursday – Jenin
Friday- Toubas
Saturday – Jericho and Dead Sea
Sunday – tour ends

Prices: 6-9 people £530
10-13 people £490 each
14+people £450 each

(note, last year there were 14 on the visit)



Prices are based on shared rooms – if you
need a room of your own we will need to
organise this carefully and it will cost more.
Includes accommodation, breakfast and
main meal travel (from meeting-point in
Jerusalem) and all tours, guides etc.
Doesn't include air fares – if we have
enough people we may be able to organise
group tickets, but otherwise you buy your
own!

Other visits coming up:

**Women's visit in October – ask for
further information.**

NEWS

Headlines from Abu Dis

Human rights violations still continue on a daily basis. See our website for information on

- land expropriations
 - shot and injured children
 - settlement expansion
 - violence at checkpoints
 - imprisonment
 - denial of the right to travel
-

Abu Dis house demolished by Israel

On 18th April, the house of Ammar Salaam Ehdaidun – a father of five – was demolished by the Israeli military. Ammar's house was built on his own land on the Jerusalem side of the Separation Wall. His family are now living in a tent near to the house.

Israeli soldiers seized a knife from a kitchen to use as an excuse to arrest an Abu Dis man. During one of the recent house invasions by the Israeli army [this week], a young man was arrested on the pretext of keeping weapons in the house. Their proof was a knife taken from his kitchen.

Change to the procedures at the terminals in the Wall will make life EVEN harder for the Palestinians. The Israelis have announced that they will be putting time stamps on permits to Jerusalem, so that if someone has a reason to go to Jerusalem, and manages to get a permit (first obstacle) and is allowed through with the permit (next obstacle), there will be a time put on to return. This might be a matter of hours. So it will not be possible to, say, visit your mother on the same visit. And people will have to return through the same

terminal – rather than just return on the bus in the way they always have done.

Young children have been being injured in the machines involved in the horrible process of travelling through the terminals in the Wall. An Abu Dis doctor reports seeing several injuries of to children's fingers in the past month.

Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails resisting changes to their conditions including a new current decision to dress them in Guantanamo-style orange costumes. There have been demonstrations all over Palestine against this, and calling for the release of the 11,000 Palestinian prisoners. On 6th May, some of the children from Dar Assadaqa were among the speakers in a demonstration in Abu Dis.



More and more land acquisition for settlements

At the beginning of May, there was an announcement that a further 12,000 donums of land will be taken to connect the huge Maale Adumim settlement with Qidar

See below for one of the reports that we have recently been sent

News from Abu Dis

Beating at the Dead Sea – Thurs 28th May 2009

Ten young men from Abu Dis went in a Ford Transit to the Dead Sea on Thursday 28th May. They went to swim in the evening and travelled a long way from Abu Dis to an open beach, near Ein Geddi checkpoint : the checkpoint to Israel. (Nearer to Abu Dis the beach is taken over by a number of Israeli swimming resorts which are not open to them.)

They got there at about 11 at night. They parked their car 100 m from the checkpoint in a place where people often park their cars and all of them went down to the beach



(1) Atta's head showing where the soldier hit him with a gun

When they left their car, a soldier shouted at Ramzi and asked him to come to the checkpoint, and when he reached him, there were two soldiers. One of them asked Ramzi if they had any drugs, and asked him for marijuana, asked him to get a joint, told him to leave it on a chair near him and it would be safe for him. Ramzi told him that he didn't have any drugs. The soldier said he was giving him ten minutes to go to the beach and find some drugs for him. Ramzi and his friends didn't take this seriously, and they went down to the beach to enjoy themselves.

After half an hour, they noticed a light by their car and they thought someone might be trying to steal the car, so three of them – Ramzi, Atta and Hamzi returned running to the car to see what was going on. When they got there, Ramzi suggested they could bring the car

nearer to them, close to a shop that is 50 metres from the checkpoint. Atta drove the car and Ramzi and Hamzi just walked behind the car.

The same two soldiers came to them, and they ordered them to bring the car to the checkpoint. Atta and Ramzi said they weren't allowed to bring a West Bank car to the checkpoint to Israel – it wasn't legal and they didn't want to get into trouble. The soldier insisted and threw a sound bomb between their legs to make a serious situation. So Ramzi asked Atta to take the car into the checkpoint. The soldiers called Ramzi inside the checkpoint.

When they heard the sound bomb, all the friends came up from the beach to see what was happening. There were four soldiers at the checkpoint. They threw another sound bomb and refused to let the other young men come close.

Ramzi asked the soldiers what their problem was with them. A soldier said "I will tell you what the problem is." He took him and tied him to a steel post of a road sign. He didn't even ask for Ramzi's ID.

Atta saw what was happening and started to complain. One of the soldiers hit him with the back of his gun and hurt his head badly – see the picture. Another two soldiers took him and tied him to a lamppost. So two of them were now tied up.

The other Palestinian friends were being kept away by the soldiers. But what was happening to Ramzi and Atta was outside in the street and could be seen by the settlers and others who were coming and going.

At one point there was a settler who started shouting and wanted to beat Atta; but Atta kicked him; the man returned to his car and took a military teeshirt from the car and put it on to show he was a soldier. His wife called him back to the car.

When one of the soldiers saw Atta's head was bleeding, he brought a bandage and tied it round Atta's head and tied it to the post. Atta managed to remove this.

A jeep with six soldiers arrived, who got out angry, shouting "Where is he?" The soldiers pointed to Atta.

Atta tried to turn away as the soldiers came running towards him, one of them with a big stone in his hand. But the man threw the stone, which hit his shoulder. Then all six of them attacked Atta with their guns and kicking with their boots. One of them kicked him on the back of his head with the steel on his boot and his head hit the post – he couldn't control himself and became unconscious. He fell down but his hands were tied to the post.

They beat Atta hard, all of them at once, for about two minutes continuously, and then they started on Ramzi. Ramzi managed to break the plastic that was binding his hand and protect his head, but still as the photo shows, he was hit on his eye. They hurt his stomach and he started to shout.

The officer among the six shouldered stopped them, and they tied Ramzi on to a chair, left Atta on the steel post and left them then from about 1 in the morning (when they had finished) until 7 in the morning.



(2) Atta shows where he was hit by the soldiers. The wound above his eye is where a soldier kicked him with the steel of his boot



(3) Atta shows one of his teeth, broken by the soldiers' attack

Because of all the cuts, Atta was bleeding badly and asked for a doctor. The soldiers in a checkpoint called for an ambulance. Atta asked if he could have his hands freed but the soldiers refused, so he did not allow the doctor to see him – he said he should free his hands in order to see the cuts on his face and his shoulder. But the ambulance doctor and driver left without helping him.

Atta kept shouting for water to drink. The soldiers came with some water but they dropped it on his head and did not give it to him to drink.

All this time, the friends outside tried to get help. They rang the Israeli police in Maale Adumim, who asked them many questions about the checkpoint – is it a military checkpoint? Are they soldiers or border police? Etc. And they did not come.

At half past two in the morning, the Israeli soldiers put bands over their eyes and they slept until about six in the morning. The other friends were outside.

At this point the police came in a car from Maale Adumim police station and collected the IDs of all eight of them. They arrested two of them: Hamzeh Salah and Hesham Halabiyeh and took both of them in their police car to Maale Adumim, and they left Atta and Ramzi in the same position, with their hands tied. The one thing they did to help was that they noticed that Atta had lost a lot of blood and they gave him something to drink.

At seven in the morning, the soldiers in the checkpoint returned the six IDs of the friends who were left and asked them to leave the place. When they said they wanted to wait for their friends, they refused to allow them to stay – so they returned to Abu Dis.



(4) Atta's shoulder which was hit by a big stone thrown by a soldier from a distance of 3 or 4 metres

After half an hour, they released Atta and Ramzi. They started to walk, but Atta had to lie down in the street. Ramzi managed to get a message to the rest of the group asking them to return for them. It was Friday morning – the friends returned and took Atta to the Al Muqassed Health Centre in Abu Dis and they gave him the treatment that was needed. And two of his cousins who had Jerusalem IDs – so they could go through the checkpoint – took Atta to make a complaint against the police.

He discovered that the soldiers had made a charge against Atta, Ramzi, Hamzi and Hesham. The story that the soldiers gave was that the four of them attacked the checkpoint and started to meet the soldiers, that Atta and Ramzi managed to escape but Hamzi and Hesham were arrested in the night.

Atta managed to show from the blood on his clothes and the fact that he had gone voluntarily to the police station but they refused to release Hamzi and Hesham till each of them paid 1000 NIS (this money will not be returned) and they have been given a date to go military court.



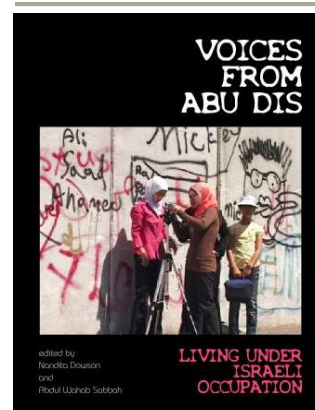
(5) Ramzi shows his eye where he was hit by the soldiers

They also took Atta and asked for 1000 NIS. He said he did not have it, but they would not let him through the checkpoint till he had paid 500 NIS as his cousin was able to pay 500 NIS.

He returned with Hamzi and Hesham at about 12 noon and the police rang asking Ramzi to go to pay 1000NIS. They threatened that if he did not come, they would come and arrest him.

They reported this to the CADFA co-ordinator in Abu Dis who called B'tselem, the Israeli human rights organisation. B'tselem have put in a complaint against the police, but they have advised the young men that they need a good lawyer or they will end up in jail.

[from the statements of the young men involved]



Our new book, Voices from Abu Dis, will be officially launched on Tuesday 16th at our photo exhibition opening. Copies

can be bought from CADFA at a reduced price of £8 for members

CADFA work in Abu Dis

We have recently organised a number of visits from Camden to Abu Dis – teachers, a general twinning visit, trade unionists.

Education links are going strong and we now have four twinings between schools in Abu Dis and Camden and lots of interesting work going on... We have been told that the recent magazine of one of the schools in Abu Dis (Arab Institute) talks a lot about our work and we are looking forward to seeing it!



Camden teacher reporting back on visit to Abu Dis (from the CADFA conference in April)

The Camden Clinic is continuing and we are trying to raise money to support a diabetic clinic there.

Volunteers We are pleased that during the past few years, we have consistently managed to provide volunteers to teach English as well as to do a number of other things in Abu Dis. We now have a new CADFA volunteer at Dar Assadaqa (the community centre we support in Abu Dis). She is a Camden teacher who has been doing some work in one of the Abu Dis

schools and is teaching English with women, students and children.

If anyone is interested in volunteering in Abu Dis, please let us know.



Dar Assadaqa is moving into its summer programme, which will include women's groups with computers and sewing, children's groups with English, drama, music, etc and in July, the youth summer camp will be starting.

There are lots of other things going on – Do come to one of our meetings to hear more. Please put the dates above in YOUR diary – We hope to see you.

CADFA work in Camden

We have had a very busy time this year with visits of musicians, women, a fantastic conference in April where we were able to discuss our many projects and links and plans. Our annual report will be available at around the time of the AGM. **Do join in (or keep going!) + many thanks to all of you who are involved.**

AGM – Tuesday 21st July – 7.30pm
Look out for info on our **fundraising meal** that will follow the AGM.

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