Keen to study…

Palestinian young people see their main hope for the future in education and they work very hard to go to University. Education is important for women as well as men - 60% of the students at Al Quds are women, which may also point to the particular problems boys have during their adolescence with the pressures of occupation and the threat of harassment and imprisonment by the Israeli army..

Al Quds University like other universities in Palestine suffers badly from the Israeli occupation which affects every aspect of the daily life of students and regularly blocks them from studying through the Separation Wall, checkpoints, arrests...

More information on the occupation in general can be found at www.camdenabudis.net/students

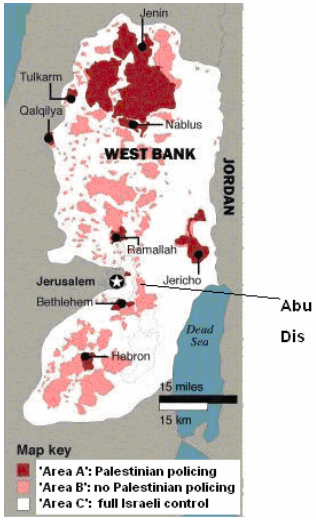
Prevented from studying…

Just two examples from 2008 …

The student with the highest marks in the Abu Dis Boys' School was given a scholarship to Al Quds University – but before he could go, he was beaten up badly in the street by the Israeli army and imprisoned just before he could take up his place.

The President of the Student Union at Al Quds University was arrested and imprisoned for three weeks. He was just one of about seventy students in prison at that time ….

Camden Abu Dis Student Links



Camden Abu Dis Friendship Association promotes awareness of the human rights situation in Abu Dis and works to change it.

Students' unions across Camden are joining this work.

So far (up to 2008), students have

- organised exhibitions about the Right to Education in Palestine
- joined visits to Palestine,
- welcomed students from Al Quds to Britain
- adopted Abu Dis student prisoners
- SOAS and UCL students' unions have twinned with the students' unions of Al Quds University

There is much more activity planned. Please join us

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Student Links
PO Box 34265
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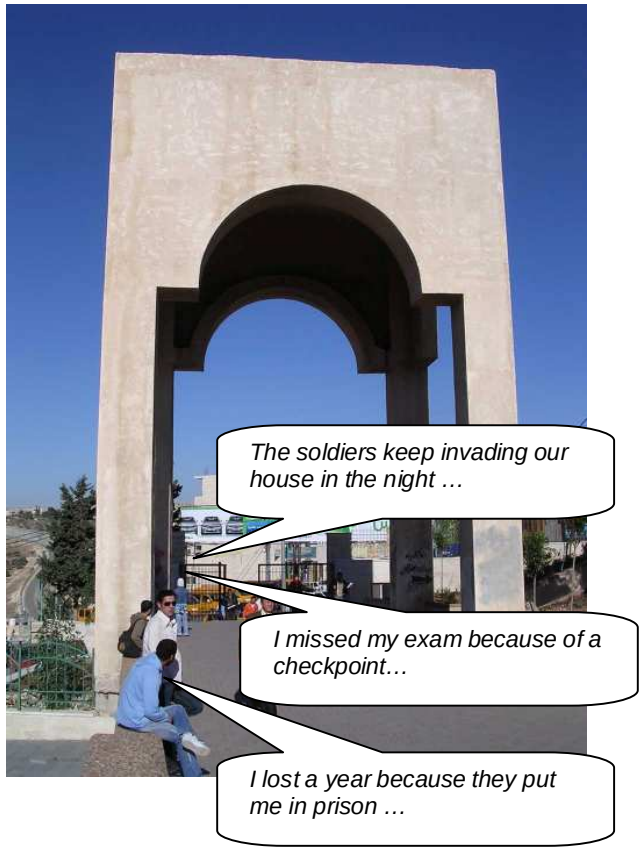
CHARITY NUMBER 112717

SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

Camden Abu Dis student links
with the students of the
Al Quds University, Abu Dis



Al Quds University

Al Quds University (the Arabic university of Jerusalem) was built from the1960s on several sites in East Jerusalem, with its main site in Abu Dis. It has nine thousand students in a broad range of faculties studying on BA, BSc and Masters programmes.

The university has a number of specialist centres – importantly the first Palestinian medical school, dental faculty, Centre for International Humanitarian Law and a law clinic which deals in particular with human rights.

It houses centres that are unique in Palestine: the

Abu Jihad Political Prisoner Museum, Science and Maths Museums, Insaan Gender Centre. The university a is very important to Abu Dis itself not only as a major employer, but the University also has the only public garden and sports field in Abu Dis.

Students at the Abu Dis campus used to come from all over the West Bank and Gaza. However because of the pressures on travel under the Israeli occupation, the majority of students at Al Quds are now local, or move to live in Abu Dis because it is difficult and unreliable to travel regularly even from local places ten or twelve miles away, the other side of checkpoints. It is now completely impossible for Gaza students to attend the university.

The context of Occupation

The Al Quds University is in an area dominated by the Israeli military camps in the middle of Abu Dis, and students encounter Israeli soldiers every day. Students have been involved in the struggle against the Occupation from the beginning, and there have been a number of students killed and wounded, particularly during the first and second Intifadas (Palestinian uprisings against the Occupation). There has been consistent pressure on the university and student body. During the first Intifada, the Israeli authorities closed the University for four years from 1987 to 1991 and there have been many number of military invasions of the university and student accommodation.

Cut off behind the Wall

From 2002 on, the Israelis have been building a high Separation Wall surrounding the Palestinian areas and cutting them away from land that is being taken for Israeli settlements within Palestine. In 2004, the highest world court in the Hague found that the Wall is illegal under International Law and breaches human rights and international humanitarian law – but Israel has continued to build and extend it.

In Abu Dis, University staff and students have been very active in the struggle against the Wall which is a major cause of suffering and obstacle to study. The Separation Wall cuts right into the Abu Dis University campus itself and has forced the University to build a new entrance – as its previous entrance was blocked by the Wall. The Israelis took over one of the main college faculties and a central college administrative building, declared this a military area and built the Wall across it.

Combined with a system of different-coloured passes, the Wall cuts students away from Jerusalem and the other parts of the University.

Blocking students from studying

The Israeli occupation authorities have been

constructing an increasingly difficult system of checkpoints slowing movement across the whole of the West Bank. Al Quds students have to deal with the big checkpoints in the Wall, the fixed checkpoints at Container (on the way to Bethlehem) and at Jabaa (on the way to Ramallah) and also very often with “flying” (temporary) checkpoints on the road to the University in Abu Dis itself.

Students are often stopped, and often held up, sometimes for hours, at these checkpoints. These are a real problem for students trying to get to lectures in time, and students report even more checkpoints at the time of exams, sometimes making them miss their exams.

Arrests and imprisonment

An average of about 70 students from Al Quds University have been imprisoned in Israeli jails at any one time in recent years. Many more students have had experience of imprisonments. Student houses in Abu Dis are prone to midnight invasions by the army. It can take some time for families to discover that their young people have been arrested. Some arrested students have no trial, others are beaten till they sign confessions.