



TESTIMONIES  
FROM THE  
NONVIOLENT  
RESISTANCE

# LIVE FROM *Palestine*

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUP  
VOLUME 1 • NO. 2 WINTER 2021

## International volunteers to return to Palestine: Olive harvest under attack

ISM-NorCal | November 2021



Olive orchard in Qaryut, where farmers were chased from their land Credit: ISM-Palestine

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**I**SM Palestine is looking forward to welcoming volunteers back to Palestine to support grassroots Palestinian nonviolent resistance to Israeli occupation. On November 1, 2021, the Israeli occupation authorities announced that international visitors and tourists would once again be allowed to enter the area; of course, this does not mean that the occupation authorities will cease their ongoing attempts to block international human rights advocates, observers and solidarity activists from coming to Palestine to join the ISM and other grassroots organizations.

For nearly two years, ISM Palestine has been forced to function with almost no international support inside Palestine. Once again, in the fall of 2021, the olive harvest was conducted without international observers and participants, despite the

ongoing spate of settler attacks and apartheid soldiers separating Palestinian farmers from their land and crops.

As ISM activists in Palestine noted, “This is a significant development because of the exceptionally high levels of violence by the illegal settlers and the occupation military since the recent uprising, which leaves us in no doubt that harvesting olives in Palestine this year will be much more dangerous than before.”

“The absence of internationals and their protective presence and documenting work in the time of such an extreme need, will be felt very strongly by the Palestinian society.”

Indeed, on November 6, ISM activists documented Israeli occupation forces expelling Palestinian farmers from Qaryut, in Area B, preventing them from picking

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Olive harvest in Qaryut

Credit: ISM-Palestine

their olives, detaining them, confiscating their agricultural equipment and throwing the olives they had harvested on the ground, sabotaging them and preventing their further use. Through the Fazaa campaign, Palestinian ISM activists have been supporting Palestinian farmers and helping them to protect their crops, despite the lack of an international presence.

Palestinian ISM activists accompanied

villagers in Atara to reach their land and pick their olives near the “bypass road” for illegal settlers, in order to protect them from the frequent harassment they encounter due to settlers and IOF soldiers.

On the same day, south of Burin, ISM activists documented 48 Palestinian olive trees belonging to the Zaben family were cut down by soldiers or settlers, further targeting Palestinian agriculture. In Al-

***Palestinian ISM activists have been supporting Palestinian farmers and helping them to protect their crops, despite the lack of an international presence.***

Credit: ISM-Palestine



Mazraa Al-Qibiliya, 240 olive trees were chopped down by illegal settlers.

In villages throughout the occupied West Bank of Palestine, the Fazaa campaign accompanied farmers, especially those close to illegal settlements. Farmers like those in Qaryut were repeatedly chased from their own land by occupation soldiers on the pretext of a “lack of coordination,” in an attempt to prevent them from completing the olive harvest, so vital to Palestinian agriculture and economy.

Therefore, ISM Palestine and their allies in the Fazaa campaign coordinated groups of Palestinian volunteers to provide broader



Olive harvest in Qaryut

Credit: ISM-Palestine

support and accompaniment to assist farmers in their steadfast act of resistance: remaining present on their beloved land.

As the borders once again open, ISM Palestine anticipates rebuilding its teams of international volunteers to better provide support to Palestinian farmers, students, workers and citizens of all backgrounds seeking justice, freedom and an end to occupation. ISM NorCal looks forward to working with ISM Palestine and ISMers around the world to train new volunteers and return a strong international presence to defend Palestinian rights and work hand in hand with those most directly affected by the occupation.

ISM Palestine's efforts are monumental, but they are operating on the most minimal of budgets. Your support for ISM NorCal helps us to directly support ISM Palestine activists to accompany Palestinian olive farmers and to prepare for the return of international volunteers. To make a donation, please visit <http://www.ism-norcal.org/donate/>.

We are an all volunteer organization that has no paid staff. ISM-NorCal is a project of the Association for Investment in Popular Action Committees,

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, tax ID no. 20-5516191, which provides our fiscal sponsorship. Your contribution to ISM-NorCal is fully tax-deductible. ■

*Farmers like those in Qaryut were repeatedly chased from their own land by occupation soldiers.*

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# Olive Oil: Sustaining Palestinian Farmers

ISM-NorCal | November 2021

**A**l'Ard (The Land), is a Palestinian company started to support impoverished and small Palestinian farmers who were struggling to sell their olive oil at a fair price by providing them with state-of-the-art facilities and helping them into the global market.

Today, Al-Ard is the largest Palestinian exporter of olive oil, working with family farmers and agricultural cooperatives to support the Palestinian agricultural economy and confront institutional Israeli occupation sabotage aimed at separating farmers from their land.

ISM NorCal offers Palestinian olive oil to our community in Northern California and across the United States, both to support Palestinian farmers and to raise funds to support the work of the International Solidarity Movement inside occupied Palestine. We are proud to feature the organic, fair trade Al'Ard oil in our online shop.

Palbox, a subscription box for Palestinian products whose proceeds benefit the work of the ISM, also features a bottle of Al'Ard organic Palestinian olive oil in every box under our own ISM brand, Hurriya Olive Oil.

For this issue of Live from Palestine, ISM NorCal interviewed **Ziad Anabtawi**, the CEO of Al'Ard Group in occupied Palestine about

**Question: Could you tell me more about Al'Ard?**

**A:** Ziad Anabtawi: Al'Ard is a social investment for our family group of companies. We exist to support the Palestinian farmers, when they called upon the private sector to support them by providing a door for their products to reach the world. We do not want to compete with small family farmers but to provide support, marketing and global reach for their world-class products. Today, we have a sizable basket of products that has grown over a decade and a half of operations. We offer high-quality products in terms of packaging, taste and quality.

We have created a new coalition, the Palestinian Fertile Land Coalition, to work directly with farmers and agricultural cooperatives, an important addition to our activities. We are very excited to put more efforts into reaching more markets in the international arena.

**Question: How is olive oil important to the Palestinian economy?**

**ZA:** When it comes to how important olive oil and olives are to the Palestinian economy, we estimate that over 100,000 Palestinian families are benefiting from the olive oil

## *Over 100,000 Palestinian families are benefiting from the olive oil business and handling*

the situation of Palestinian farmers and how olive oil remains so crucial to Palestinian identity, culture and economy.

### **HOW TO BUY**

To purchase delicious Palestinian olive oil, please visit our website at <https://shop.ism-norcal.org/>, and please visit <https://palbox.org> to start your subscription to Palbox or purchase a lovely holiday gift for those you care about.

business and handling. Olive oil in Palestine is not industrialized or commercialized; instead of the massive plantations with millions of trees, thousands of dunums of olive crops mechanically picked, as you see in Italy and Spain, what we have are small family farms and plots of land that are planted with ancient olive trees maintained through traditional methods over hundreds of years.

Families look after their trees and pick

olives when the harvest comes. They take what they need for personal use and sell the rest, but essentially we are talking about home, artisan production in Palestine. Certainly, there are wealthy families with more trees, but there is no industrial scale farming. Instead, each family is directly involved with harvesting their produce.

We do not irrigate our trees in Palestine; our olive trees are rain-fed, planted in mountains and managed sustainably. The trees are exposed to the sunshine and trees take what they need from the rain. The oil that comes from these olives is therefore rich, rather than becoming light with excess water. This is also an environmentally sustainable, indigenous form of production. In essence, Palestinian olive oil is almost like a concentrate of olive oil, with a delicious and rich flavor.

**Question: Why should supporters of Palestine buy Palestinian olive oil?**

**ZA:** In the first place, olive oil and the olive harvest is very central to the Palestinian economy and sustaining Palestinian farmers. Supporting Palestinian olive farmers also helps Palestinian farmers to maintain their ties to their land. This tightens the relationship between the Palestinian people and their land. This is very helpful. When you see the harvest these days, it is like a festival; all families take a holiday from their jobs, go to the fields together, work on the picking together and feel the excitement and



Ziad Anabtawi, the CEO of Al'Ard Group

Credit: Al Ard

These settlements are a very illegal activity carried out by the Israeli government, widely condemned by the international community.

When you buy olive oil and other Palestinian products like freekeh, and za'atar, you help Palestinian farmers remain on

***There is no industrial scale farming. Instead, each family is directly involved with harvesting their produce.***

joy. This makes the relationship of the people and the land quite warm.

We have also recently witnessed many young Palestinians going to work as laborers in occupied Palestine '48. These jobs offer money, but it can come at the expense of farming their land. At the same time, their land is being targeted by the settlements, and everybody knows what kind of harm the settlements are doing to the land, the Palestinian people and the hope of peace.

their land and opt to work in agriculture, protecting their land from settlement expansion.

**Question: What conditions do you face that hinder you from producing olive oil under occupation?**

**ZA:** As you know, under the Oslo agreements, Palestinian land was divided into three areas: Area A, which is the crowded areas, like the big cities; Area B,



Ziad Anabtawi with farmers in the West Bank

Credit: Al Ard

largely the outskirts of these big cities; and the remainder of the land, the majority of the land, especially the rural and agricultural areas, are classified as Area C, under complete Israeli control. This was supposed to be a temporary arrangement, but it has become seemingly permanent. We cannot build or do any construction in Area C, we cannot practice any kind of economic and social development.

This also enables the Israeli army and the settlers to have complete freedom to do what they like. So we see the settlers threatening Palestinian olive farmers. No harvesting happens at night, only during the day, and there is a constant atmosphere of fear and intimidation created by the settlers and sometimes by the Israeli army as well. The army protects the settlers, even when they are attacking the Palestinian farmers. Olive groves are burned or cut during the night, and farmers wake up to the damage. They set up closed military zones and cut trees to build settlements, killing the trees.

Of course, there is also the wall built throughout the West Bank, and farmers

have trees behind the wall. They face the impossible task of seeking permission from the army to visit, care for and harvest their own olive trees. Needless to mention, the checkpoints all over the area, questioning and hindering Palestinian farmers from reaching their land.

**Question: Is there anything else you would like to say to an audience of supporters of Palestine in the US about Palestinian olive oil?**

**ZA:** I'd like to say one more thing about Palestinian agriculture and products. Everything in Palestine has a unique taste and quality. If you taste the olive oil, there is a unique texture and richness, even in comparison to the olive oil in Jordan and in occupied Palestine '48.

The same is true of za'atar, tomatoes, cucumbers—we use ancient crops with their own taste and flavor, with tremendous richness. You can feel this tasting freekeh, maftoul, or any Palestinian products. Most Palestinian products are also traditionally managed, grown by hand, and handled organically. ■



# Logical Fallacies in the Argument for Maintaining Israeli Control Over Palestinian Lands

Katie Miranda and Charlotte Kates | October 2021

The Zionist arguments for maintaining control over Palestinian land and Palestinian self-determination have become so ubiquitous in media, politics and culture that they're rarely challenged outside of progressive circles.

Media and politics are driven by exaggerations, dishonesty and hyperbole. One of the common methods of driving home the Zionist arguments are logical fallacies.

Logical fallacies are exaggerations, deceptions or hyperbolic arguments that can be proven incorrect through reason.

This article will give show three examples of logical fallacies and how you can respond to them.

## THE SLIPPERY SLOPE FALLACY

A slippery slope argument presumes that a specific outcome will occur as a result of a certain chain of events. Often the outcomes are extreme, ridiculous and backed by no supporting evidence.

For example the argument:

*If Palestinians were granted full rights either as citizens of the state of Palestine or as citizens in a bi-national state, that would mean genocide for Israeli Jews.*

We know there is no evidence that suggests liberating Palestinians would result in genocide for Israeli Jews, yet this argument is emotionally laden and hearkens back to the Holocaust which makes it hard for people to respond to.

It's also important to note that there is a tremendous amount of transference and false attribution happening with this argument. The Holocaust was carried out

by European Nazis in Germany. Palestinians living under Israeli colonialism may not be held responsible for the crimes of European states. Instead, we can look at the history of decolonization for examples—it is the colonized people who have been subjected to massacres and have much to fear, not their colonizers.

## THE AD HOMINEM ATTACK

An *ad hominem* attack uses personal or immutable characteristics like ethnic background, physical appearance or a non-relevant trait instead of logic to fuel in an argument.

Example:

*You cannot allow Palestinians from Gaza to enter Israel because they're hellbent on murdering Jews.*

Or:

*The people who elected literal terrorists don't deserve self-governance.*

These arguments are based on dehumanizing Palestinians and deciding they don't have the right to self-determination. Zionist groups during and before the Nakba engaged in terrorist actions to secure their colonization of Palestine—just look at the history of Israel's top politicians. On the other hand, Palestinians are fighting for their freedom. And within that context, each Palestinian denied their rights and freedom is an individual with loves, hopes, dreams and goals being frustrated by occupation, siege, apartheid and exile. In addition, the



designation of who is a terrorist and who isn't is arbitrary and changes depending on American political interests; take Nelson Mandela for example.

## THE STRAW MAN

A straw man argument attacks the opponent with an unrelated subject as an attempt at redirection. The intention is to put the opponent on the defensive.

The reality is that Palestinians were the ones pushed into the sea -- for example, in Haifa during the Nakba. Palestinians' right to return has been recognized by the UN year after year in resolution 194, and the right to return is embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Right now, there are millions of Palestinians living in forced exile from their homes and lands, and their suffering is the subject we need to focus on. ■

Katie and Charlotte are organizers with NorCal ISM.

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For more information or to register: [www.ism-norcal.org](http://www.ism-norcal.org)

## Call for Volunteers

**T**he International Solidarity Movement (ISM) needs nonviolent resistance volunteers to stand with Palestinians against the theft and colonization of Palestinian land. You will witness and report human rights violations, participate in nonviolent demonstrations, resist home demolitions and land confiscations, accompany children and patients to school and hospital, remove roadblocks, or just share time with Palestinians, listen to them, and help ensure that their voices are heard. When you return to your community you will be better equipped to advocate for the freedom and self-determination of the Palestinian people.

More info: [solidarity@ism-norcal.org](mailto:solidarity@ism-norcal.org), 510-236-4250, [www.ism-norcal.org](http://www.ism-norcal.org) or [www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org) ■



## SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

ISM volunteers who have recently returned from Palestine are available to make presentations to high school and college campuses, churches, organizations and house parties.