

## EDITORIAL

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung!

The summer of 2014 was largely overshadowed by the war on Gaza - the third one since Hamas had taken power in the Gaza Strip in 2007. The war was preceded by rising tensions between Abbas and Netanyahu's government after the failure of the Kerry initiative.

The kidnapping and killing of three Israelis close to Hebron, Israeli search-and-arrest operations in the West Bank, the spillover into a deadly and destructive 50-day military operation in the Gaza Strip has led to a deep crisis in Israeli-Palestinian relations. While the ceasefire agreement between the Palestinian factions and Israel remains fragile, fears about the Israeli intention to change the Status Quo on the Haram AlSharif have evoked regular and wide spread riots in East Jerusalem.

Seyasat Magazine, a quarterly product of the partnership between FES Palestine and the Institute of Public Policies (IPCC), tackles national, regional as well as international issues by providing analyses and viewpoints from across the spectrum of economic, social and political fields.

Seyasat's 29th Edition was written during the Gaza war, which has left its mark on the selection of contributions. The articles reflect on several aspects of the current crisis: What international legal mechanisms are available to Palestinians to bring about justice? With horrific pictures from Gaza during the war being shared by ordinary citizens with the outside world: Which role does citizen journalism play and what are the constraints?

The Gaza war leaves Palestinians in great despair. Especially the young population in the Gaza Strip is raising questions about their future. Voices from the March 15th movement are considering options for the young generation. Palestinian reconciliation continues to be of vital concern to Palestinians since the implementation of April's Beach Camp Agreement between Hamas and Fatah is stalling. The summary of Seyasat's 29th Edition is offering insight and analysis to the latest political developments in the Palestinian context.

The full access of Seyasat Magazine in Arabic and its summaries in English are available on [www.ipp-pal.org](http://www.ipp-pal.org) on [www.ipp-pal.ps](http://www.ipp-pal.ps)

Wishing you an enjoyable read!

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**and**

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## Seyasat Magazine Edition (29): English Summary

### Introduction:

The twenty-seventh issue of SEYASAT presents a variety of topics, at the core of which lie two We started working on the present issue of SEYASAT shortly before the Israeli aggression on Gaza. The aggression stunned us and significantly impacted the mechanisms and speed of our work, as well as the content of this issue. In spite of the enormous difficulties that the SEYASAT team was facing in terms of staying connected as a result of the aggression and the situation in Gaza, SEYASAT succeeded in responding to the developments and changes. By doing so, it presented itself as being "on top" and offering advice and guidance that help understand what happens and keep up with it. In the end, SEYASAT was released while fighter jets, battleships and tanks were pounding the Gaza Strip and while political activity was trying to pick up the remains of the political process.

This issue of SEYASAT contains a collection of studies on the reality of Gaza in the wake of the aggression, as well as theoretical and analytical studies on various issues pertaining to the role of youth in particular. It attempts to link this role to the major national cause, especially with regard to exposing the crimes of the occupation and embodying the national unity.

*Title of Article:* “**Citizen Journalism in Gaza: The Motives and the Constraints**”

*Author:* **Mr. Yousef Al-Hilu**

Researcher and media person Yousef Al-Hilu of Cambridge University wrote a study entitled "Citizen Journalism in Gaza: The Motives and the Constraints." In his study, Al-Hilu revealed and analyzed the ascent of citizen journalism in Gaza, focusing specifically on the motives of those citizens and the media they used to convey Gaza's message to the world.

Al-Hilu raised several questions such as: Who are the citizen journalists in Gaza? How is the information they provide different from that provided by mainstream press channels? What sort of challenges do they face? And how does the narrative they provide about Gaza compete with that

provided by mainstream press channels in influencing the consciousness of the West about this geographical spot?

The researcher examines the general framework of citizen journalism, whether it conducts journalism in support of a specific cause, how to train and prepare citizen journalists, and what internal and external institutions, if at all existent, support and strengthen their operation. The study contributes to deepening the modest understanding of citizen journalism, especially in a place like Gaza.

It reveals how access to the internet has enabled a new generation of Palestinians in the occupied territories, who were raised within specific political and social contexts and emerged with the outbreak of the Second Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000, through providing them the chance to challenge the narrative that has dominated the conflict. The emergence of contemporary media tools and channels such as Facebook and Twitter has caused a dynamic transformation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, leading to the advent of a new regiment of citizen journalists who considered social media a window through which they could present their own narrative and influence the general agenda.

Citizen journalists and disseminators of information are ordinary citizens. They are generally educated youth aged 18 to 35. They spread information or reveal them as soon as news break out. They post updates on social media channels, relying on their own sources.

Gaza has witnessed a rapid growth in the number of citizen journalists whose coverage has competed with that of the traditional press. It took Gaza a while to catch up with the rest of the world in this regard, but as the Israeli blockade intensified, Gaza found itself forced to catch up with this global trend. If activities on Twitter and Instagram have pushed for anything, they have opened a new front in the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis. More specifically, social media is poised to play an increasingly important role in one of the most important public relations wars in the volatile Middle East. (no need to compare it with conventional war in terms of the bloodshed)

Social networking channels have a great influence in general, but none of them had the same strength and influence as Twitter. This social media channel became a battlefield where tens of thousands of

ordinary citizens, championing different views, argued and challenged the views of others or sought to share the latest developments with the rest of the world.

Journalists are being held accountable for what they disseminate through social media sites more than what they write or broadcast. Their readers expect them to ensure credibility of their stories more than ever before. By the same token, readers have become less tolerant toward any bias or misinformation. While some journalists remain careless about criticism, others care and engage in discussions with their critics.

Social media has accorded citizen journalists in Gaza a mechanism through which they were able to express their narratives and present them to their readers. Today they feel that this kind of media is a tool for influencing the prevailing media and changing the predominant stereotypes they witness in covering the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In short, Palestinian citizen journalists were able through social media tools and channels to express themselves and influence the prevailing public opinion and viewpoints, as well as to present themselves as an important agent of change.

However, in the age of social media, balanced coverage and honest competition are at stake. Credibility is an important element of coverage and will remain one of the obstacles facing social media activists.

What sources of experience are available when it comes to ensuring credibility of media content originating from an ordinary user? Are there any tools or technologies that help in this regard? Furthermore, how can the word “ensure” be defined and against what criteria would something be rendered “accurate”?

Regardless of the approach you adopt, you will be criticized if you think about the measures and policies you will adopt before you find your big news story. Therefore, identifying best practices in a particular zone and searching for general rules to be applied in news making will be an urgent priority facing news gathering groups from social media activists, Al-Hilu concluded.

***Title of Article: “The Utilization of Social Networking Sites by Youth Activists to End the Palestinian Division”***

***Author: Mrs. Riham Odeh***

In another study, Gazan researcher Riham Odeh examined how youth used social networking sites in their activities to end the division, especially in Gaza. In her study entitled "The Utilization of Social Networking Sites by Youth Activists to End the Palestinian Division," Odeh conducted several interviews with male and female youth activists with the aim of identifying how they used social networking sites to push their causes forward, and particularly the main cause they championed, which is ending the division.

The study conducted by Odeh aimed at shedding light on the importance of social networking sites in influencing the public opinion and how those sites were utilized by Palestinian youth activists for the sake of creating social political mobility within the Palestinian society in support and for the sake of ending the Palestinian division.

The study discussed several major problems represented in the following questions:

- Have social networking sites been utilized effectively by youth activists in the quest for ending the Palestinian division?
- What sort of challenges have Palestinian youth faced while using social networking sites in the quest for ending the division?
- Have social networking sites had any influence in supporting the Palestinian reconciliation process?

The study reached several conclusions, the most important of which are:

- Social networking sites played an important, and even major, role in mobilizing Palestinian youth and calling on them to take part in the activities aimed at ending the division.
- Palestinian youth utilized social networking sites effectively in disseminating ideas in support of the Palestinian reconciliation and calling for holding new legislative and presidential elections.

- Palestinian youth that are active through social networking sites in the quest for ending the Palestinian division faced numerous challenges and difficulties including political arrests, power disconnections and lack of proper coordination between youth groups in disseminating calls for activities to end the division.
- Social networking sites have not contributed properly to emphasizing the importance of and supporting the Palestinian reconciliation. There were only shy attempts to support it due to the feeling of frustration among Palestinian youth as a result of the failure of previous youth efforts in the quest for ending the division.

The study recommends utilizing social networking sites in raising the awareness of Palestinian youth in the areas of conflict resolution, civil peace and democratic political participation. The study also recommends organizing awareness raising workshops on the ethics of social media and proper ways of expressing political issues so as to prevent exploiting the popularity of social sites to disseminate misinformation or disinformation and propagate tendentious rumors.

Moreover, the study recommends easing the electronic censorship imposed by the official authorities on social networking sites, giving youth enough space to express themselves and guaranteeing that they would not be subject to harassment or political arrests.

In addition, the study recommends establishing more electronic pages that promote civil peace and the national reconciliation through publishing and disseminating positive news about the Palestinian unity in order to give Palestinian youth hope.

Finally, the study recommends establishing a huge electronic body, similar to an electronic syndicate, to defend the rights of electronic activists and contribute to monitoring the violations against youth activists in the areas of intellectual property theft and restrictions on the freedoms of expression and opinion through social networking sites.



***Title of Article: “The Continuing Aggression on the Gaza Strip: The Crimes and Mechanisms of Legal Accountability: A Study in International Criminal Law”***

***Author: Prof. Abdullah Abu Eid***

International law professor and international humanitarian law expert Dr. Abdullah Abu Eid wrote a study entitled "The Continuing Aggression on the Gaza Strip: The Crimes and Mechanisms of Legal Accountability: A Study in International Criminal Law." Abu Eid examined in his study the violent measures and acts of aggression committed by the Israeli forces in the wake of their invasion of the Gaza Strip on July 8, 2014. The study focused in particular on the grave violations committed by the Israeli forces, which were considered by international charters and international legal norms as war crimes or crimes against humanity.

As such, the study did not address all Israeli aggressions and all Israeli allegations regarding terrorism and claims that Israel was in a position of legal defense of its security and the security of its citizens. Instead, the study focused on the following topics:

1. The legal status of the Gaza Strip.
2. The recent Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip from the standpoint of international law.
3. Israel’s violation of several customary international law principles and agreed upon conventions.
4. Mechanisms of legal accountability of the state of Israel and its officials for the grave violations of the principles of the law of war.

The expert posed the question: can we punish Israeli officials for the grave and dangerous crimes they committed? He answered by saying that there is no doubt that the only way to punish Israeli political and military officials is to go to the International Criminal Court (ICC) through one of the following two means:

1. Filing an application to join the Court.
2. Issuing a declaration by the State of Palestine and having it filed with the Court’s registrar in which the State of Palestine accepts the Court’s exercising of its jurisdiction vis-à-vis the

crime (or crimes) under discussion and vows to cooperate with the Court in this regard without delay.

Abu Eid pointed out that such claim requires taking all of the following measures and preparations:

1. Collecting all evidence, facts and accurate information on the committed crimes, and including a full file containing all documents and evidence collected under the supervision of a professional team enjoying extensive experience.
2. Adding every credible international or local report issued by the Commission of Inquiry formed by the Human Rights Council in Geneva on July 23, 2014, and every report by international legal organizations such as Amnesty International or local or regional legal organizations such as the Palestinian Center for Human Rights or B'Tselem.
3. Including every previous international report or reports issued by an international court such as the consultative opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the separation wall issued on July 9, 2004.
4. Forming a national committee comprised of renowned specialists in international humanitarian law, military affairs, media and international politics to ensure effective supervision and follow up of the Court's measures.
5. Seeking the help of top renowned and trusted international lawyers who have vast experience in these issues. The author nominated Professor Mahmoud Sharif Bassiouni, International Criminal Law Professor at De Paul University in Chicago and one of the most prominent authors of the Rome Statute of 1998, who hails from Egyptian origins, to lead those experts. He also nominated Professor John Dugard, an International Law professor from South Africa, and Professor Ian Scooby from Scotland, both of whom are international experts in this field who have published studies on the Israeli occupation and its arbitrary measures, as members of that team.
6. One of the most important elements in this quest is probably the existence of a political will to follow up this case (claim) until the end and not to succumb to pressure to be exercised by Israel and the countries allied with it, headed by the United States. It seems that without such

a firm will Palestinians will lose another golden opportunity that may be difficult to replicate in trying Israeli officials and deterring and preventing them from repeating their continuing crimes against the Palestinians people and against the Palestinian cause with its main components; headed by the right to self-determination as well as establishing an independent Palestinian state.

The recommendations made by Abu Eid included the following:

1. Despite numerous obstacles, Palestine must join the International Criminal Court in The Hague in accordance with a declaration to be filed with the Court Registrar in accordance with paragraph (3) of Article (12) of the Court's Statute. This path better serves Palestine than filing an application for membership to the Court because it allows Palestine to file to the Court a criminal complaint retroactively accusing the Israeli forces of committing dangerous crimes such as crimes against humanity and war crimes that must not go unpunished.
2. The strength of our legal position does not mean that we have won the legal battle. We have got a long struggle ahead of us, for which we must prepare. Our upcoming political and legal battle will be the mother of all battles. As such, it requires organizing our ranks and forming specialized experienced committees comprised of experts in International Humanitarian Law, media and propaganda and political affairs. We must seek the help of our friends in this bitter struggle because our adversary is one that has years of experience in this area, has organized technical legal, political and media cadres with years of respectable international experience under their belts, and is supported by Zionist lobbies in most major countries.
3. Our political leadership must be more aggressive in prosecuting Israel, especially since more than 80% of the people support going to the International Criminal Court in spite of the pressures and threats from several quarters.
4. Despite the importance of looking into the principles of international law and utilizing them to our advantage, we must not ignore the political struggle on the domestic and international levels. This requires educating the masses and organizing them, developing Palestinian media

and outreach, as well as paying attention to the international public opinion, especially to developing the boycott movement against Israel, not only against the settlements (BDS).

*Title of Article: “The Israeli Aggression on the Gaza Strip”*

*Author: Dr. Atef Abu Seif*

The articles corner of SEYASAT includes two articles that shed more light on the Palestinian reality in the wake of the aggression on Gaza. The Editor-in-Chief Dr. Atef Abu Seif resumed the discussion about the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip in the first of SEYASAT’s articles, in which he offered a number of deep observations, which reveal some aspects that have to be overcome in order to overcome the effects of the aggression. Dr. Abu Seif called for developing the Cairo negotiations to include demands that are more political than humanitarian and that concern the West Bank rather than remaining confined to Gaza because the basis is the occupation. Additionally, Abu Seif warned against returning to the division square and underscored the necessity of developing the reconciliation agreement that institutionalized the crises rather than resolving them. Abu Seif concluded by discussing the tasks awaiting the Palestinians in the wake of the aggression.

*Title of Article: “The Aggression on Gaza: Youth and the Making of the Future”*

*Author: Mr. Yousef An-Nouri*

SEYASAT expands the discussion about the ramifications of the aggression as youth activist Yousef An-Nouri wrote an article on behalf of the March 15 Coalition entitled "The Aggression on Gaza: Youth and the Making of the Future." He argued that clear tasks were awaiting youth, including their role in enforcing the institutional building process, especially those dealing with youth and serving them such as the Higher Council for Youth, the General Union of Palestine Students and the General Union of Palestinian Youth, as well as enforcing the role of youth in political parties and the process of construction and reconstruction, and paying attention to the social and economic problems facing youth.

*Roundtable title: “The Nature of the Crimes Committed by Israel in the Recent Attacks”*

In continuation of the same discussion, SEYASAT held a seminar in which it raised several legitimate questions about the nature of the crimes committed by Israel in the recent attacks and the mechanism of holding it accountable in accordance with international law in light of the elevation of Palestine’s international status in the United Nations following its accession as a non-member state in the United Nations at the end of November 2012. The seminar was run by legal expert and researcher Rashad Twam in the presence of Dr. Muhammad Shalalkeh from Al-Quds University, Dr. Yasser Al-Ammouri from Birzeit University, Dr. Mu'taz Qafisheh from Hebron University and Mr. Sha'wan Jabarin from Al-Haq Institute.

*Title of Article: “Notes in Light of the Aggression on Gaza: The Challenges and the Opportunities ... What is Required Diplomatically”*

*Author: Mr. Nabil Ramlawi*

At the international relations corner, Palestine’s former Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva Nabil Ramlawi presented a study entitled "Notes in Light of the Aggression on Gaza: The Challenges and the Opportunities ... What is Required Diplomatically." Ramlawi tried in his study to discuss two overlapping issues: the first issue touches upon the Palestinian experience in diplomatic work. It outlines the challenges facing Palestinian diplomats in their work due to the special nature of the Palestine Question and that of the tasks carried out by Palestinian diplomats who wear two hats as representatives of a liberation movement as well as representatives of an unaccomplished state. In doing so, they do not only contribute to establishment of the Palestinian state through their work, but they also continue to work as diplomats who have to carry out the normal tasks conducted by other countries’ representatives. Ramlawi’s experience of over thirty years in this field is rich; therefore, he offers the reader a rare opportunity to learn about an important part of the untold Palestinian political work and struggle.

The above constituted a prelude which Ramlawi used to set the floor for the second issue, which is the challenges facing Palestinian diplomacy in the way of Palestine’s quest to seek accession to international organizations. The idea of going to the International Criminal Court (ICC) has emerged strongly in the wake of the recent aggression on Gaza. Ramlawi used his experience as a

representative of Palestine in previous attempts to gain membership of international organizations to reveal the challenges that will face the Palestinians in this regard.

Whatever the situation is, Ramlawi stated that the Palestinians needed to address the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, the International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent and the International Criminal Court now and without hesitation. Ramlawi wrote that Israel and its army have committed in their war on the Gaza Strip all sorts of grave breaches enumerated and outlined in International Law and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This calls for action on all available fronts to bring the Israeli perpetrators of those crimes to international justice and to punish them.

So what must be done?

The State of Palestine's accession to the four Geneva Conventions was necessary politically because it means a state's commitment to the provisions of international humanitarian law in front of the world. It also came in fulfillment of the call of the signatory states to these conventions, which have made repeated calls and appeals to the states that have not yet acceded to these conventions to do so as quickly as possible, and is a state's right and duty in accordance with the Montevideo Convention of 1993.

The state of Palestine is also required to work with the International Court of Justice because in view of the objectives and nature of the mandate of the International Criminal Court, as well as the provisions of the Rome Statute pertaining to the Court, and the urgent need of our people at this stage, there is no excuse for delay or hesitation in the State of Palestine's accession to the Rome Statute at a minimum, and even requesting from the Court, after accession, to open an investigation into the crimes of war, crimes against humanity, crimes of genocide and other serious violations committed by Israel and its army against the Palestinian people, including the continuing crime of settlement. Of course, asking the ICC's prosecutor to proceed with his work in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 relating to the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian people requires good preparation for this step with regard to providing him with supportive documents and irrefutable evidence of the crimes of killing civilians, destruction of homes and other actions classified as crimes in the Rome Statute, giving testimonies by the victims such as individuals who lost most of their family members, were wounded or had their homes

destroyed because of the Israeli military hostilities in the Gaza Strip, and having Palestinian and Arab legal organizations and Palestinian legal experts follow up on this matter tirelessly and continuously with the prosecutor to bring the Israeli criminals to the International Criminal Court.

Ramlawi concludes his article by discussing the UN Security Council's relationship with the International Criminal Court, and refutes the fears that Article 16 allows the Security Council to dominate the Court.

*Title of Article: “Sustainability Indicators in the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016”*

*Author: Mr. Zakariya As-Sarhad*

At the public policies corner, development researcher Zakariya As-Sarhad presented a study on "Sustainability Indicators in the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016." As-Sarhad conducted a set of measures to check the plan's sustainability. The researcher used four dimensions in this measurement process.

**The first** was the economic dimension in terms of the individual's share of the gross domestic product, variance in the trade balance and patterns of consumption and production.

**Second:** The social dimension manifested in social equality in terms of the proportion of the population below the poverty line, the poverty gap, public health with its subscales such as average life expectancy at birth, infant and maternal mortality rates and maternal deaths resulting from pregnancy, as well as primary health care. Another aspect of the social dimension is education in terms of the illiteracy level and educational enrollment ratio in the various stages. This dimension also includes indicators such as housing, security, population and population growth.

**Third:** The environmental dimension in terms of the atmosphere, which is based on two sub-indicators: climate change, and ozone depletion and air quality. The environmental dimension also includes land in terms of the index measuring land degradation, desertification, deforestation and fresh water in terms of water quality and quantity. The environmental dimension includes biodiversity in terms of the percentage of endangered species and the percentage of protected areas.

**Fourth:** The institutional dimension: This dimension is shaped by several measurement sub-indicators in sustainable development plans including:

1. The institutional framework: development plans and international treaties.
2. The institutional capacity measured through subscriptions in internet services, telephone landlines and mobile phone lines, as well as the basic infrastructure of the telecommunications and information technology sector and spending on scientific research.

*Book Reviews:* **“Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli conflict”**

Journalist and writer Yousef Ash-Shayeb presents a review of Michael R. Fischbach’s book "Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli conflict" which was published in its Arabic translation by the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut in 2013. In this book, Fischbach trotted three continents to document dispossessed Palestinian property. And as always, the library corner in SEYASAT includes reviews of a collection of recent publications.

SEYASAT concludes its opening article by saying: “The factions and Israel have agreed to a period of calm followed by indirect negotiations brokered by Egypt to look into the outstanding issues. No one knows the outcome of the negotiations, but the Palestinian fall will certainly not be less hot than the summer that witnessed the aggression since major tasks are awaiting the Palestinians in terms of Gaza reconstruction, promoting and cementing unity, and crafting a unified national strategy for confronting the occupation rather than dealing with the conflict in pieces. SEYASAT tried its best and will continue to, because "on this earth something is worth living for."



Information about the Authors:

1. **Mr. Yousef Al-Hilu** is a researcher and media person at Cambridge University
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7. **Mr. Zakariya As-Sarhad** is a development researcher
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