

PERSONALITIES  
OF THE MONTH

In keeping with our theme of Humans of Palestine, we propose that all the authors who contributed to this issue and the people featured in their articles be highlighted as Personalities of the Month.

**Ahmad Ali Bushkar** sells Arabic coffee and bestows the precious gift of an unsolicited smile on whomever he meets, brightening up our world just a bit in ways that are within his reach.

**Jamil Dababat** is an award-winning journalist who informs readers about matters that range from international politics, the environment, and the rights of minorities to more modest concerns such as the beautiful smiles of people around him.

**Ahmad and Mohammed** are among the 30,000 Bedouin refugees who are threatened with being forced to leave their locations in the country that they call home, according to an Israeli "transfer plan." Given that their family must rely on livestock as their source of income, the boys spend their days herding and dreaming of a better future.

**Nabil Darwish**, photojournalist and much more, enchants readers with the poetry of his images and his writings. Look also for his Street Photography series that will leave you touched, charmed, captivated, and delighted.

**Odeh Turjman** is a key co-founder of the Palestinian music group Sabreen and currently a member of the International Music Council (IMC) and the International Society for Music Education (ISME). He discovered how we experience internal mirroring processes that, he proposes, evolutionarily developed to enable nonverbal communication and the ability to learn a language but also facilitate a uniquely human sense of self-awareness.

**Reem Abdul-Hadi** is a specialist in communication and strategic planning with more than 30 years of experience in the fields of development, human rights, gender, and communication. Her quiet work in the background has made possible one of the most fascinating articles in this issue.

**Hasheemah Afaneh** is a student at Birzeit University specializing in a health-related profession. She observes the world with a keen eye and a sense of humor, and publishes her poetry, stories, and essays in international media and in a blog that asserts the freedom of thoughts and words.

**Hala Sweidan** is a student of nutrition and dietetics at Birzeit University who discovered her talent and love for modern dance while in college. Having danced *dabka* for many years, she shares her love of movement and life while working as a volunteer with underprivileged youth and children with special needs.

**Nadira Aboud** is a Palestinian refugee, originally from Haifa, who grew up in Syria. She spent the last three years in Turkey and Greece before travelling across eastern Europe to finally seek refuge in Germany.

**Khaled Jarrar** is a multidisciplinary artist with a strong sensitivity for human suffering. He is currently filming *Destination Berlin*, a documentary of Nadira on her way to what she hopes will finally be a safe place.

**Toine van Teeffelen** and **Roger Salameh** have founded a unique blog and Facebook page that showcase the ordinary and not-so-ordinary experiences and lives of Palestinians.

**Samar Al-Dreamly** is a prize-winning journalist from Gaza whose work focuses on the vulnerability of women. She has been a media coordinator and the editor of *Al-Ghaidaa* magazine on women's affairs. In this issue, she shares with us an inspirational story of strength, love, and resilience.

**Amneh Hamdan, Um Issam**, is head of a large Gazan family that she has raised through hard work and dedication. She has retained her youthful, active, loving spirit and reminisces that she also knew how to inspire her children to strive to do their best. Their successes and comfortable positions in life reveal the wisdom that guided her decisions.

**Lina Abdul-Samad**, a student majoring in health-related studies at Birzeit University, has a special talent with words. She publishes poetry, keen observations, and thought-provoking stories on her blog called *Lina's Thoughts and Words*.

**Yara Hussein** is pursuing studies in nutrition and health at Birzeit University and in her free time tells stories and creates poetry via shapes and colors. Her inspiration may come from ancient myths or everyday experiences and gives rise to diverse works. She wishes that more people would recognize that engaging in art facilitates a form of freedom.

**Amira Gabarin** studies politics at SOAS, University of London, and loves to write. She focuses on the politics of the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict but has also covered issues that range from the Internet of Things to music in Palestine and elsewhere. She publishes a blog called *Amirasays* on wordpress.

**Marcel Khalife** is a Lebanese singer and *oud* player who has earned fame through songs such as *Ummi (My Mother)*, *Rita w'al-Bunduqiya (Rita and the Rifle)*, and *Jawaz al-Safar (Passport)*, based on poetry by Mahmoud Darwish. In 1999, he was granted the Palestine Award for Music, and in 2005, was named UNESCO Artist for Peace.

**Muna Nassar** is a Palestinian freelance writer, translator, and enthusiastic bookworm who infuses her inborn pessimism with a stubborn sense of optimism. She asserts that remaining in Palestine has made her a better person because dealing with the ensuing hardship, in her opinion, simply forces you to grow – and eventually lets you flourish.



**Khulud Darras** is committed to promoting and supporting education in Palestine and, specifically, her hometown Bethlehem. She lives by her guiding principle that while we must recognize the world as it is, we should look for its positive aspects, even if they may be hard to find.

**Dr. Sabri Saidan** dedicates his life work to education in Palestine, focusing especially on under-served and underprivileged areas. He believes not only in innovation, promoting the use of IT in Palestinian schools, but also in the importance of teaching youth the values of steadfastness and love of lifelong learning as effective means of resistance.

**Ahlam Tarayra** asks probing questions and publishes her thoughts and occasional images on her personal blog in Arabic. Like many Palestinians, she is urgently trying to understand the latest surge of violence.

**Bahaa Alayyan** was an inspiring social and cultural activist before the hopelessness and despondency of the Palestinian situation led him to commit a desperate violent act.

**Hani Mourad**, the head of the Lions Club in Bethlehem, explains that doing good deeds in raising funds for charities and enjoying yourself are the two ingredients that make up the success of the work of the Lion's Club.

**Janoub Atatra** applies her knowledge as a trained teacher to raising her children and uses the insights gained from living under difficult circumstances to deal constructively with the children in a classroom. She is convinced that positive reinforcement is the most effective way to foster cooperation and a love for learning in children.

**Hamza Atatra** has become a very perceptive and thoughtful young man as a result of living with the challenges of a brain tumor. The most difficult aspect of not being able to rely on his body is the ensuing loneliness, as he cannot participate in most of the activities his classmates and peers enjoy as teenagers.

**Lena Saleh** is enjoying active retirement from a lifelong career with UNESCO by travelling between Europe and the Middle East and supporting the Palestine Youth Orchestra and other cultural activities. Conversing fluently in Arabic, English, French, and Greek, she is a most inspiring lady!

**Sabrin Hasbun** has two passions: travel and writing. Although during the last few years she has lived in France, Japan, and the United Kingdom, and has been part of the University of Pisa, the Sorbonne University of Paris, and Bath Spa University, her writing focuses mainly on Italy and Palestine, her two home countries. She intrigues with her sense of honesty.

**Abu Khaled** is a living example of resilience and creativity in finding ways to raise his family and care for his ailing parents under difficult conditions. Like many others, he is struggling to compensate for the deteriorating economic situation in Palestine.

