

A close-up photograph of a person's arm and hand planting a small green seedling into the soil. The person is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The soil is dark brown and appears to be in a garden or field. The background is slightly blurred, showing more soil and some other plants.

# Hands On Resistance

Quarterly Report 2015



## Dear friends and colleagues:

The Hebron International Resources Network (HIRN) was never meant to be a large organization. It was the brainchild of an international human rights observer fused with the enthusiasm of a local activist that had some knowledge about the situation on the ground and wanted to make some changes for the better. We had no idea then that HIRN would merit a large number of small actions that would improve the lives of the many over the past four years. During these years HIRN was blessed with the affection and warmth of a multitude of individuals and exceptional institutions that made our work possible and even delightful. For them, we are eternally grateful as without them (you) we would not have been able to change lives and allow a ray of hopefulness to shine upon many. We do sincerely and deeply thank you and look forward for further cooperation in the near and far future.

We have listed herewith the many activities carried out by HIRN in the first quarter of 2015 covering the time period between January 1 and March 31, 2015. We are continuing with the same dedication and spirit to improve lives and reduce hardship for those that come across our way. If you would like to assist us in our mission and to help in lighting another candle in the dark, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at [qawahame20@yahoo.com](mailto:qawahame20@yahoo.com). We give 120 percent. We hope you can join us in our small organization that has a LARGE imprint on the ground.

HIRN Administration

HIRN works on a number of fronts. Its activities aim at trying to provide the basic services for the targeted communities. These services include community support, kindergarten sponsorship, making schooling and higher education affordable and within reach of many, improving the services provided by schools while offering a range of other supportive services for the needy. This report will look at the activities that HIRN has carried out in the first three months of the year 2015 with some detail in an effort to show its impact with transparency to HIRN's friends and supports. You have helped making this impact, and for that we thank you.



## Kindergarten Sponsorship:

During the first quarter of 2015, HIRN has continued to support the kindergarten of Al Shuhada Street. The salaries for the months of January and February have been covered by HIRN in a gap-filling measure until additional financing can be dedicated to it. HIRN was instrumental in laying the concept of the kindergarten and worked tirelessly with other great partners (including Youth Against Settlements, The Leichhardt Friends of Hebron, EAPPI and the TIPH) to translate that concept into a beautiful reality. Currently, there are 25 students attending the kindergarten from a number of neighborhoods of the Street that has been closed for Palestinian traffic since the year 2000.



Moreover, HIRN has been active with a number of partners (including UNRWA, APHEDA and Ma'an Development Center) to make an overhaul of the kindergarten to make it a more suitable educational institution for the children it services. We are hoping that work on this project would start in the very near future.





HIRN made an outreach attempt and helped in the creation and the support of two more kindergartens; one in the South Hebron Hills community of Twani and the other is the Jordan Valley community of Sateh Al Bahar.

The kindergarten of the community of Twani used to be housed in 2013-2014 schooling year in a cave in the community that is facing a number of hardships due to its close proximity to the violent settlement of Ma'on. During the first 9 months of the year 2014 a German governmental organization built a new premises to be used exclusively as a kindergarten. The building looks MAGNIFICENT. Yet, that was all that was provided as no basic services of the kindergarten was installed; no chairs, no stationary, no billboards, no toys, no playground games, no computer, no clay. NOTHING. In addition, the salary for the kindergarten teacher was never provided by any source. In turn, HIRN, in cooperation with the British Shalom Salaam Trust ([www.bsst.org](http://www.bsst.org)), provided in January 2015 toys, games, chairs, tables, clay, stationary, a 3-in-1, etc., in addition to paying for the salary of the teacher for the rest of the second semester of 2014-2015 school year.





HIRN went beyond its usual geographical area of intervention (Hebron and Bethlehem) and reached an isolated community in the Jordan Valley. The community is called Sateh Al Bahar Bedouin community which is located at 0 meter on sea level, thus the name.

HIRN has already donated a tent to the community that was used to establish a kindergarten. Upon setting the tent up, the community collected monies from within and established a cemented floor for the children in preparation for its usage as a kindergarten. HIRN was asked once again to intervene and provide a fence to mark the boundaries of the kindergarten, which we did. The fence was established in late January 2015.

Currently, HIRN is working with the community in order to secure additional funding for the basic infrastructure of the kindergarten including tables, chairs, stationary, toys, educational CDs, etc.





## Umm Al Khair KG:

In its effort to continue the support of the community of Umm Al Khair, located southeast of the city of Yatta in close proximity to the settlement of Karmel, HIRN was instrumental in keeping the community's kindergarten (students = 30) up and running through a number of steps including:

- a) Renegotiated the rental agreement with the owner of the building housing the kindergarten. HIRN managed to extend the free rental for an additional 5 more years in return for a renovation of the kindergarten. Renovation work was undertaken in February 2015 in close cooperation with the Village's Group. Work included the addition of a new shade to the playground, fortifying the fence, placing a gate at the entrance of the kindergarten in addition to fixing door knobs.
- b) In cooperation with the wonderful British Shalm Salaam Trust, HIRN is currently paying for the salaries of the three teachers and one aide working in the kindergarten.



## Khashem Al Daraj:

The kindergarten of Khashem Al Daraj is located close to the Israeli military “Closed Area” near the Bedouin communities of southeast Yatta. The kindergarten was established in 2011 as a result of close cooperation between HIRN, UNRWA, Leichhardt Friends of Hebron, among others. Ever since then, HIRN has been actively engaged in the daily affairs of the kindergarten in terms of training, supplies and salary. During the first quarter of 2015, HIRN, in cooperation with the British Shalom Salaam Trust, has been paying for the salaries of two teachers and an aide and will continue to do so until the end of the 2015 school year.





## School Support:

The major undertaking of HIRN during the first quarter on 2015 was the renovation of Qurduba School's sanitary unit. That was one of the main requests of the administration of the school as the sanitary unit was at its present form since 1974 !!! After securing funding from the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH), HIRN, in close cooperation with Youth Against Settlements (YAS), embarked on the journey which proved to be filled with logistical complications especially due to the fact that the Israeli Army manning checkpoint 56 (located at the entrance of Al Shuhada Street) would not have allowed us to get the building materials through the checkpoint. Adding to the complications was the fact that we had two snow storms that delayed the completion of the project over a ten-day period.

Materials were sneaked in through the cemetery during the day and night hours with the help of the magnificent YAS. The cleaning and the removal of the rubble took many many many hours during the night with the help of YAS and the Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT). Relentless effort was put forward in the face of deliberate obstacles put forth by the Israeli security forces. Yet, finally we managed to do it and an inauguration ceremony was conducted at the premises of the school on March 11, 2015, where Appreciation Plaques were provided to HIRN, TIPH, Al Ahli Association, YAS and the CPT.

In short, it was a magnificent piece of collaborative work that stood firm in front of the challenges in order to provide the very basic service of a clean environment for the boys and girls of Qurduba School.

Sincere thanks for the TIPH, YAS and the CPT. Excellent work.



## School Transport in the Community of Dkaika:

With good will and donations from the Leichhardt Friends of Hebron, HIRN was able to organize a deeply needed school transport for children in Dkaika and nearby villages, which are located in South Hebron Hills, in the southern part of West Bank. The transport was initiated in September 2014. Ever since, it has affected enormously the children's motivation to attend school. It has offered them a safe access to education in a hostile environment and encouraged (in many other ways) many other children to attend school. In addition, the school transport managed to provide three women the chance to attend Al Quds Open University. They were unable to pursue their higher education before the existence of the school transport due to infrequent access to dependable transportation. More female students were encouraged to attend the university and we are expecting a marked increase in their numbers in the 2015-2016 school year.





## Al Majaz School:

Al Majaz School is located in the Massafer Yatta area. The Israeli Army refers to the area as Fire Zone 918 and wants to expel the Palestinian residents of 8 villages located there, including those residing in Al Majaz. In turn, HIRN (in cooperation of some beautiful beautiful souls) managed to donate two tents to the community in early 2014 which were used as a school. The idea behind the donation is that in order to support marginalized communities, one has to be able to provide the basic services to them.

Upon establishing the school, HIRN continued to support it; in Q4 of 2014, HIRN provided the school with its English books as well as educational display materials. In addition, HIRN contributed to the effort of the school to make a playground for the students where they can stand to salute the flag and to play (like any other normal children).

The efforts of HIRN were crowned in Q1 of 2015 as the Palestinian Prime Minister inaugurated the school during his visit to the community □. Also, in the same time period HIRN provided the school with a printer, as per their request.



## Higher Education:

During Q1 of 2015, HIRN continued tirelessly its efforts to provide full and partial tuition for university students living in the vicinity of settlements. This activity is done in close cooperation with the wonderful Villages Group. These students live, and are affected by the settlers of the settlements of, Susiya, Ma'on, Karmel and Kiryat Arba. These settlements are known to be the most far right and violent settlements in the Governorate of Hebron. In Q1 of 2015, HIRN paid for 15 students from the said areas to attend Al Quds Open University – Yatta Branch in addition to 5 other students attending Hebron University.





## Community Support:

Q1 of 2015 witnessed no difference in HIRN's continued efforts to support the Bedouin community of Umm Al Khair (located in the vicinity of the settlement of Karmel). In addition to supporting the university students in the community, HIRN focused on improving the livelihood of the community especially in the wake of a harsh demolition campaign on October 27th, 2014, and increased settler harassment leading to reduced access to grazing fields.

As such, HIRN participated in a campaign initiated by the Palestinian Volunteer Council in which more than 200 olive trees were planted in the valley owned by the residents of Umm Al Khair.





Also in Q1 of 2015, HIRN initiated and implemented a livelihood project in the community in which 3,000 thyme bushes were planted to become a source of income. HIRN carried out the activity in association with the Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT) as well as with the EAPPI South Hebron Hills team. Funding for the project was secured through a wonderful group from Germany. All due respect to all who made this project a reality.





On another front, HIRN continued in the said time period to advocate on behalf of the community; in response to the Israeli attempt to demolish two homes and a soccer field in the community, HIRN managed to pay the legal fees to the community's lawyer to open a file at the Israeli High Court to stop the demolition of the said structures. The intervention was very timely as it was expected for the demolitions to actually take place due to the fact that the Israeli Army gave the residents only three days to respond to the Orders. The demolition was averted due to HIRN's intervention.



In the meanwhile .....

HIRN also carried out a number of side campaigns to meet some needs that popped up along the way. These campaigns include the following:

In honoring the souls and volunteering spirits of Deah Shaddy Barakat. Yousor Abu Salha and her sister Raza, who were killed in Chapel Hill, North Carolina on February 11, 2015, HIRN carried out a clothes distribution campaign under their name. A call went out for friends and family to collect winter clothes to be distributed to the needy especially during the harsh and cold conditions of winter 2015. In cooperation with the Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT), clothes were collected, categorized and placed in appropriate bags before being distributed in two waves. The distribution took place two days before a major storm hit the area. We are very pleased with this activity done as a gift to the souls of Deah, Yousor and Raza, may their souls rest in peace.





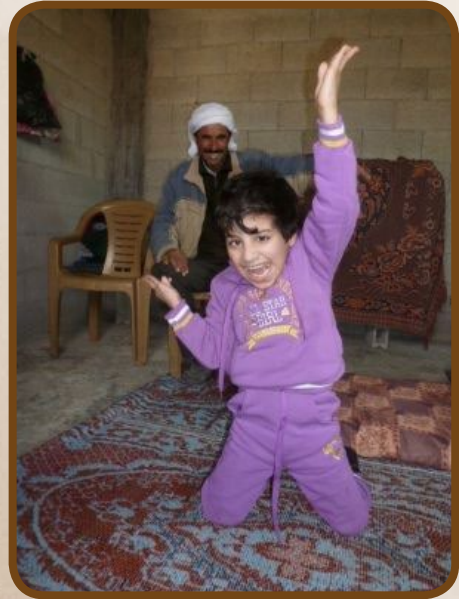
On another front, a family that lives near a violent settlement has asked for a camera to be provided to them in an effort to document settler violence as a protection measure. HIRN rose to the occasion to provided that. They “feel” a bit safer now !!!



In its continued support to the steadfastness of the community of Khallet Zakariya (located in the Gush Etzion area of Bethlehem Governorate) HIRN has headed 4 international delegations to the spread the knowledge about the conditions in the village. HIRN also donated a laptop to the village council. Support will continue in the short and long terms, inshallah.



Changing lives continues... Hala is a 2-year old girl who is not able to stand or to walk. Ever since birth, the case was neglected (in terms of treatment) until a group of friends got to know about her. Upon pursuing the case further, it turned out that there is a nearby rehabilitation center for similar cases. When contacted, the Center did some tests and found that Hala can STAND within 2 months of the treatment and can actually WALK in 6 months. The problem for her family was providing the cost of the transportation to and from the rehabilitation center. HIRN has agreed to pay for a designated driver a monthly salary (depending on the number of trips per month) for the next six months . Our understanding is that a great improvement has taken place in Hala's health and now HIRN is trying to improve the family's living conditions through building a bathroom for them. To be continued.





HIRN is also working with a family in South Hebron Hills to provide them with electricity through solar panels. Two payments have been made already to the implementing agency and it is expected that the family will have electricity early in April 2015. It has to be pointed out that HIRN has provided the family with a tent earlier in 2014 to provide shelter for them.



In its continued effort to enrich its library with the latest and most relevant reports, HIRN has added a number of new studies to its library in Q1, 2015. They include:

- A paper presented by Gabriele Mombelli titled “The Palestinian National Authority Security Sector – An Operational Overview”
- The text of a petition submitted by Hamoked, Bimkom, B’tselem, The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Yesh Din, Adalah, Physicians for Human Rights and Rabbis for Human Rights against the State of Israel on the issue of punitive demolitions.
- Emek Shaveh’s publication “Refaim Valley – The Palestinian Villages of Al Walajeh and Battir.”
- Emek Shaveh’s publication “Nabi Samwil – A Village Trapped in a National Park”
- Emek Shaveh’s publication “Israel’s ‘National Heritage Sites’ Projects in the West Bank: Archeological Importance and Political Significance”.
- Emek Shaveh’s “Tel Rumeida: Hebron’s Archaeological Park”.
- Emek Shaveh’s “Tel Shiloh (Khirbet Seilun) – Archaeological Settlement in the Political Struggle Over Samaria”.
- Handicap International’s “Bombs Under the Rubble – A Study of Awareness of Explosive Remnants of War among the Population of Gaza”.
- An Expert Opinion about “The Lawfulness of Israel’s House Demolition Policy under International Law and the Israeli Law”.





That was it. All of the activities listed herewith were carried out over a three-month period. Needless to say that these activities did cost money, most of which were donated by trusting persons such as yourself to which we are EXTREMELY thankful.

We are requesting your assistance again. We are in no position to dictate to you how much to donate. But what we can do is to promise (as it has been the case for the life circle of HIRN) that every penny donated will be directed to the service of the most vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank, at least those who we can reach. We cannot emphasize strong enough how much we need you. Every little bit would help in making life less harsher on those in need and would make HIRN's mission of reaching a bit easier. Your assistance would be most appreciated.