

(UNESCO) and upgrade the level of communication with Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Tourism in the international community with emphasis on marketing the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem.

- 2 Lobby Israel to loosen up constraints imposed on tourism offices and Palestinian tour guides as well as merchants in the city.

#### On the level of cooperation with the Ministry of Education, organizations, and private sector:

- 3 Sign Memorandums of Understanding (under the current political situation) between the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and national organizations and companies working in tourism illustrating the roles of each party in developing tourism in Jerusalem. Additionally, allocate budgets and funds to support tourism serving a mutual vision.
- 4 Build a clear action plan by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Ministry of Education (Jerusalem) to reinforce historical knowledge of students and teachers and heighten their sense of belonging to Jerusalem through visiting religious, cultural, commercial, and other places in the city.

#### On the Ministry level:

- 5 Reconstruct tourist places in Jerusalem, such as monasteries, lodges, hospices, etc. in order to promote their tourist value as well as provide sufficient information about the hidden and undefined areas with archeological, cultural, and historical value.
- 6 Promote the development of Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem through supporting traditional small projects that aim to preserve cultural heritage such as handmade crafts and sewing. Such support will protect cultural heritage, boost Jerusalem's economy, and can be highlighted by tour guides.
- 7 Produce publications about tourist sites highlighting Palestinian narrative (books, brochures, maps, signs for sites, etc) so as to give references for tour guides, teachers, and interested tourists.
- 8 Conduct supplementary trainings for Palestinian tour guides in order to enrich their historical backgrounds and increase their abilities to understand the importance of the role they play in the struggle on the identity of the city.
- 9 Reinforce internal tourism and motivate Palestinian citizens in general and Jerusalemites in particular to use the available tourist resources, visit holy, historical and cultural sites in Jerusalem.

## Position Paper

# On the Role of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Jerusalem

## Colors of the Rainbow Are Not White and Blue Only

The Arab Palestinian narrative on the history of Jerusalem is facing a vicious attack aiming to distort and obliterate it, thus to be replaced with a Jewish Israeli narrative that is compatible with the the future vision of Jerusalem as the permanent capital of the "Jewish State."

The efforts to realize this vision are carried out through two parallel methods; the first is based on altering the Jewish consciousness of the city; and the second is based on altering the Palestinian Jerusalemite consciousness as well.

In order to reach this goal, Israel have enforced policies and procedures such as establishing an institution to improve the image of Jerusalem, forming a committee to follow up on "Temple Mount" related issues, and implementing plans to highlight biblical references in the city. Such plans were executed through land confiscation to develop public biblical gardens, excavations for Jewish remains, rehabilitating archaeological remains while infusing biblical touches in these spaces, obliterating Palestinian sites, assigning Hebrew names to neighbourhoods and streets, and publishing maps targeting tourists excluding Islamic and Christian sites and their Palestinian names.

Additionally, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism rehabilitated tourist guides, Jewish and Palestinian, abiding them to illustrate the Israeli narrative in each tour they lead.

Israel's work in changing the features of the city via Judization and Israelization does not stop there as Israeli organizations, official and unofficial, such as "Atrit Kohanim" and "El'ad Society" legally and illegally took over Palestinian property in order to expand the Jewish Quarter in order to expand the Jewish neighborhood through annexation of parts from the Islamic, Christian, and Armenian Quarters in the Old City.

The comparison between the numbers of tourists visiting the Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem to tourists visiting the Jewish neighborhoods indicates that global tourism is evidently directed to showcase the Jewish identity of the city overshadowing the Palestinian identity with the purpose of supporting Jewish-Israeli tourism and draining out Palestinian tourism in the city.

Palestinian tourism in Jerusalem faces several challenges some of which are explicitly related to the Israeli occupation policies against Jerusalemite merchants and various tourist companies through converting tourist paths or imposing high taxes to force people to give up their properties and eventually sell them. Some of these challenges are associated with the limited involvement of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities who is compelled by signed political agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel in Jerusalem.

As Jerusalemite organizations and Palestinian residents in this city, we recognize the important the role of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in maintaining the Palestinian identity of the city (Islamic and Christian) and its responsibility in developing Palestinian tourism and protecting it from attempts to replace and diminish Palestinian historical narrative.

In May 2016 and in order to introduce the role of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism in the city, Palestinian Vision Organization (PalVision) under the Tajaawob Program working with Jerusalem's youth committee who were trained on the concepts of social accountability, implemented a group of individual interviews<sup>1</sup> with specialists working in the field of tourism in Jerusalem in addition to developing a questionnaire<sup>2</sup> to assess the impressions of Jerusalemites in regard to the role of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the city.

1 Individual interviews with Raed Sa'adeh, Head of Board, Jerusalem Tourism Cluster and Manager at Jerusalem Hotel; Khalil Sabri, General Manager of Sabri Company for Tourism and Travel; Anan Gheith, General Manager of Jerusalem Tourism Cluster; Khader Nijem, Tour Guide in Jerusalem.

2 220 questionnaires were filled in by a Jerusalemites including employees, workers, and students from 14 neighborhoods in Jerusalem between 14 – 64 years old inside the Separation Wall and inside it with a gender distribution of (56% male, 34% female) and 53% with university level education.

**Results from individual interviews and questionnaire reflects the challenges facing the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Jerusalem. Below is a summary of the main results:**

- 1** Lack of clarity on the role of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in developing the tourism sector in general as projects for developing tourism are unseen under the tense political situation.
- 2** Around half of the questionnaire sample are uncertain about the responsibility of the Jerusalem Municipality and other Israeli ministries role in developing tourism in the city. However, most of them agree on Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' failure in maintaining Palestinian and Arab identity of the city and taking a leading role in the tourism sector considering that the infrastructure, in their opinion, is available for competent tourist guides in Jerusalem.
- 3** The Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' ability to implement its agenda in Jerusalem is lacking. Some said, "Israeli tour guides are able to explore the West Bank without any monitoring and thus the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities can negotiate allowing Palestinian tour guides to enter Jerusalem or the 1948 areas.
- 4** Lack of tourist publications; maps, awareness raising material, and brochures published by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, to be distributed and circulated to tourists and Palestinians (internal tourism). On the other hand, those types of publications are available in other languages and for every tourist place in white and blue.
- 5** The correlation between the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism is unclear. The results showed that people's satisfaction in regard to the role of schools in highlighting the Palestinian national identity through visits and exposure to the historical dimension of the city was average.
- 6** The results showed that activities related to tourism for Jerusalemites are below average as the majority of people that filled in the questionnaire rarely participated in tours or frequented restaurants and hotels except for visiting holy places.

**Thus, some measures are suggested to the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to be considered in order to improve tourism in Jerusalem taking into account the individual interviews and questionnaire's results.**

#### **On the international level:**

- 1** Position Jerusalem on the international map through completing coordination with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization