

**The Palestinian Centre For Rapprochement Between People (PCR)**



**PCR**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2004**

***The Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People  
Annual Report for the year 2004***

***Introduction:***

The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People is a non-governmental non-religious, non-affiliate and non-for-profit organization that advocate the Palestinian cause in three different levels. PCR hopes to achieve its goals in three methods; the community service, the nonviolent direct actions and media. PCR has been established in 1991, three years after the real start of the project. It was officially registered in the Palestinian Ministry of Interior in 2004.

PCR continued to be an activism oriented organization. Most of its efforts and resources were directed towards running and upgrading the work of the International Solidarity Movement.

Considerable resources were employed in information dissemination, an area that PCR staff is highly experienced in. IMEMC project has developed considerably. The news website was considerably upgraded, and the audio production studio is feeding headlines and reports to various U.S. radios.

Stepping into the field of activism was not without a price. During 2004 PCR continued to be dependent on individually provided donations, as most of official donors, who has praised the work of PCR, consider PCR work as political and risky, therefore refrained from establishing official links with PCR.

PCR has started the process of advancing individual fund raising through working to assign a U.S. based fiscal sponsor to become illegible to tax deductible donations, which is expected to considerably boost fundraising. Arrangements have been made, and the proposed fiscal sponsor Middle East Children Alliance (MECA) has already allocated an account for PCR.

## ***Upgrades and Activities***

**Advocacy and Media: The International Middle East Media Center (IMEMC)**  
PCR continued to upgrade its news site ([www.imemc.org](http://www.imemc.org)). It is right now the most comprehensive English language news site.

*The followings were achieved:*

- 1- The volume and quality of publishing was increased considerably.
- 2- A data based driven website is in the final stages. Was done on voluntary bases, saving 10,000 \$
- 3- The rate of republishing from the site in about 15 different languages increased considerably.
- 4- Audio feeds are provided to radio stations in the U.S. and broadcasted. The quality is improving and radio stations are paying for it.
- 5- In few weeks time PCR will launch a PR campaign to introduce the new site, call for volunteers and funds.

## **Administrative Notes**

In June 2004, the center finally managed to get itself registered. An interim board of directors replaced the executive committee that supervised the PCR activities throughout the past years. The PCR registration number is BL-447-S was issued on June 9, 2004.

The board of directors consists of seven members has been working to hold elections to choose a new board of directors and register members to the center.

The financial reports for the years 2002, 2003 were finalized. These two reports were very hard to make because of data loss resulted from a computer damage in 2002 and an office raid by the Israeli military in May 2003 during which they confiscated many of PCR's financial documents among many other things.

PCR focused its efforts to develop the International Middle East Media Center project (IMEMC NEWS). PCR planned to build an audio studio in the office and adjust the office space to be able to accommodate more staff in the future.

Two employees were added to the staff. One was fully employed in January 2004 who worked as a secretary and book keeper while the other was under probation since November 2004 who was fully dedicated to the IMEMC project. This raised the number of staff up to 4. In addition, at least six different International volunteers helped out with the IMEMC project through the year.

## **The International Solidarity Movement Major Activities for the Year 2004**

The ISM is an integral part of the PCR work run through the "Action for Peace and Justice Unit."

Between January to July of 2004 there have been around 150 actions varied

between organized anti-wall demonstrations to defying incursions and curfew in different West bank cities, villages and Refugee camps. ISM marked the land day by joining almost all the actions organized by the local community nation wide. American Rachel Corrie killed in Rafah on March 16, 2003, and British Tom Hurndall killed in Rafah April 12, 2003, were commemorated in a prayer for the land organized on March 15. The focus of actions between January and June was in the villages northwest of Jerusalem as the wall construction was there. There were almost daily protests in Biddu and Budrus and some other areas against the wall. The ISM presence there was noticeable and was based on cooperation with the local community.

### ***The Freedom Summer Campaign***

On June 25, 2004, The Freedom Summer campaign started. Fifty-six (56) days of non-violent, direct actions by Palestinians and Internationals to promote freedom and justice for Palestine. The 56 days represent the 56 years since 1948. The campaign was organized on two stages. One month of various activities in different West Bank villages, Refugee camps and cities, and three weeks of walk along the Apartheid Wall known as the "Freedom March".

The action stage included actions against the wall, actions in support of the Palestinian Prisoners, actions in support of Palestinian women, actions against the checkpoints, and a special action on Jerusalem Day.

On July 30, the Freedom March started in the northern West Bank where the wall starts and ended on August 19.

Throughout the March, Anti-Wall actions were organized in most of the villages where the wall route passes through. An average of 70 Internationals and hundreds of Palestinians joined the March.

The ISM activists joined the Palestinian Prisoners in their strike that started on August 15. August 30, was declared a hunger strike day for all ISMers all over the world in solidarity with the striking prisoners. ISM designated a special space on its website to promote the prisoners issue.

### ***The Olive Harvest Campaign***

The olive harvest campaign is an annual campaign that ISM organizes since 2001. In this campaign the ISM accompanies the farmers to their olive orchards to pick olives. On one hand they provide some voluntary labor and second, and more important, they provide protection from the settlers. ISM targets olive groves where settlements or military bases are close to.

The campaign started on October 5, and lasted on November 15. ISM helped protect farmers in the north of the West Bank around, Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilia, and Nablus, in addition to villages northwest of Jerusalem.

During December the ISM was preparing for the election campaign in January 2005 in which ISM activists monitored the Israeli violations of voters and candidates rights.

The ISM activists reported on the arrest of some of the candidates upon attempting to enter Jerusalem for election rallies.

### **PCR Youth Programs: list of the youth group activities**

A little more attention has been given to the youth group through out the year. There was an attempt to enhance relation with other local NGOs specifically in Bethlehem area, especially NGOs who have youth groups. In 2004, the youth group organized the following activities:

1. Youth meetings with Wi'am Center. Ice breaking meetings and discussion of common interests of youth were held both at PCR and Wi'am center premises.
2. Presentation about the Zionist Lobby by one of the activists, Naba' Al-Assi from Bethlehem
3. A set of lectures and workshops with Minerva Qassis on Youth Empowerment were given in the PCR premises.
4. Presentation on "The Hague" ruling against the Wall by the PCR coordinator George N. Rishmawi
5. Latest updates on the PCR status by PCR Exc. Director, Ghassan Andoni
6. Film Screening, "The people and the Land" and discussion run by the group itself.
7. A solidarity visit to the "Hunger Strike" tent in Bethlehem in solidarity with the Striking Prisoners, in August.
8. Presentation on the Hunger Strike and the hardships of going through it, by PCR coordinator George N. Rishmawi
9. Film Screening, "Devine Hand" for Palestinian director Eli Hanna in September followed by a discussion.
10. Workshop on relation between local communities with the Technology by Ghassan Andoni at the peace center, youth group participated.
11. Participation in a full-day workshop on Youth role in the society in Jericho (Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy PCPD)
12. Vigil in solidarity with Gaza People in Beit Sahour in October
13. Participation in Vigil on Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People Nov. 29 at the YMCA
14. Film Screening about the situation Gaza Strip (Rafah) ISM followed by a discussion on the situation in the Gaza Strip and in Palestine in General.
15. The Candle Procession for this year entitled "Light a Candle for the National Unity"

### ***The Candle Procession that marked the 16 Anniversary of PCR***

The candle procession for this year was entitled "Light a Candle for The National Unity"

Around two thousand Palestinians and some Internationals marched on Christmas day in Beit Sahour, calling for a National Unity in Palestine.

Traditionally the annual candle procession targets a certain issue of interest for the Palestinians.

It started in 1991 entitled "Light a Candle for Peace and Justice". Then, Palestinians, Internationals and Israelis marched together under this slogan.

In the years 2002 and 2003 the procession's main title was against the Apartheid wall Israel is building on the West Bank land that is annexing at least %50 of the West Bank to Israel leaving the Palestinians with about %11 of the Historic Palestine before 1948.

The march started at around 4:30 (GMT +2) from the Shepherd's field in the town and went downtown Beit Sahour to the Greek Orthodox Church hall to celebrate the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Establishing the center.

The celebration started with the Palestinian National Anthem played by a local boy scouts group with their bag pipes, preceded with a moment of silence in respect of the Palestinian Martyrs and the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

In his welcoming speech, the executive director of the center, Mr. Ghassan Andoni, named some of the major achievements the Rapprochement Center had through the past sixteen years of its work. Explaining about the three major axis of PCR's work in Advocacy; Media, Youth & Community Service, and The International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which PCR is one of its major co-founders.

The speech was a followed by live Arabic music played by a group called Jadal. The group nicely played pieces for some of the most famous Arab musicians and singers, like Marcelle Khaliefeh and Fairouz.

The young activists in Rapprochement were the ones who presented plaques to the founders of the organization in a symbolic appreciation from the young generation to the older one, the founders.

Then a slide show presentation was screened to the crowd reviewing some of the major activities and projects carried out by the center and showing different stages and generations in the history of PCR.

The celebration was closed after the Pax-Christi Netherlands Choir chanted some Christmas carols.

At least 30 young people from the youth group of PCR worked to make this action

a successful one. The rain was a trouble; however the youth were very much encouraged to march even under the rain.

The march was led by two boy scouts groups; the Evangelical Lutheran Boy Scouts group and Roman Catholic Boy Scouts group.

**Recommendations:**

- 1- PCR focus more on information dissemination and upgrade further its media project.
- 2- PCR increase its involvement in community projects, including developing plans to upgrade its youth programs.
- 3- PCR should consolidate fundraising channels to provide the center with more resources.
- 4- PCR continue to be an action oriented group, through maintaining a high level of independence, and encourage voluntary work.