



THE ONEVOICE NEWSLETTER

Tackling Extremism & Building Moderate Leadership in Palestine

29 August 2015



In Jericho, the local Governor joined OVP in engaging the members of the community.

The deadly arson attack in the village of Duma earlier this month is a reminder that rising extremism risks pulling Israelis and Palestinians back into an abyss of violence.

With insecurity on the rise, throughout the West Bank, OneVoice Palestine (OVP) has focused tremendous energy in amplifying moderate voices to denounce violence in the quest for Palestinian statehood, by way of a non-violent path towards an end to the occupation.

Over the past month in Nablus, Jenin, and Jericho, OVP Youth Leaders have been engaging political leaders and the community, promoting the message that 'Violence is a Weakness'. Hundreds of activists have taken to the streets of these cities-- places that saw some of the worst bloodshed during the last intifada-- pushing back at those who seek to spark violence and lawlessness.

Local and international media outlets such as [Wafa](#), [Alwatan Voice](#), and the [Palestine News Network](#) have been instrumental in transmitting the impact of OVP's initiative from the streets into the homes of average Palestinians.

The series of events began with a group of OVP activists in Nablus denouncing the recent rise in violence, and it quickly gained support from local and national leaders, resonating deeply with large swathes of the community, with the campaign then moving across the rest of the West Bank.

Jericho's Governor Majed Fityani donned an OVP T-shirt and badge and joined the movement's activists to call for an end to violence, emphasizing that any push toward freedom and sovereignty for Palestinians must be peaceful in order to be effective.

In the words of OVP Youth Leadership Training Program Director, Abdullah Hamarshe, "the launch of [Violence is a Weakness] is directed toward inspiring Palestinians to renounce violence. The voice of reason must prevail if this generation aspires to live in an independent state ruled by law and democracy".



The Siaseh Cafe discussion was the scene of emotional debate. Hamarshe and OVP also took the campaign of non-violent activism from the streets into the classroom last week. The Nablus Siaseh Café—a lively series of political discussions in a tolerant setting—under the direction of Dr. Raed Nierat of Al-Najjah University, saw 20 Youth Leaders participate in an emotional discussion surrounding the hopes of the Palestinian people in seeking statehood, resisting occupation, and countering rising extremism.

A core element of the Siaseh Café session was the legacy and fallout of the Oslo Accords, signed in 1993. “It is difficult to discuss Oslo in the current environment of political stalemate,” explained Abdullah, who has overseen the training of more young Palestinians than anyone at OneVoice. Many of the activists in the room were not even born when the accords were signed, and yet statehood seems no closer after all this time.

The consensus was that if this status quo is to change, it will require fresh thinking from this new generation of activists; people committed absolutely to non-violence, and who have learned the lessons of previous diplomatic failures. This is the network of emerging moderate leaders that OneVoice is building on both sides of the Green Line with your help and support, and the greatest hope we have right now for a transformed Israel and Palestine.