

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Institute for Palestine Studies Annual Conference “The Situation of the Jordan Valley and Area C”**

**November 2-4, 2018 Ramallah, Palestine**

*Proposals due by May 28, 2018*

Large scale annexation of Palestinian land has gained attention recently. More specifically, there is considerable discussion among Israeli parties about the necessity of Area C annexation and all of the Jordan Valley. Still others have suggested annexation of all of the West Bank. This discussion emerges from a context of many years of deepening settler-colonization of the West Bank, Jerusalem, as well as the distortion of the natural and human landscape. This colonization is taking place in the context of the obstruction of the Oslo process and its transformation into a sustainable structure of Israeli hegemony, in addition to the inability of the Palestinian leadership and Palestinian political and civil society to create viable alternatives that challenge this reality. Perhaps, what is happening in the Jordan Valley and Area C is as important as the question of the Palestinian struggle itself and the situation in Jerusalem. For Palestinians, the Jordan Valley and Area C means geographic contiguity, sovereignty, and control over any future border as well as for Palestinian national security. The natural resources of these two regions provide the breadbasket of Palestinian society and the future Palestinian state. Despite that fact, the subject of the Jordan Valley and Area C has not garnered the attention that it deserves from community activists, media outlets, or development organizations.

In 2012, the Institute for Palestine Studies brought the situation of the Jordan Valley and Area C to light with its annual conference on the situation of the Jordan Valley and contributed to the increased attention of this central part of the Palestinian struggle. The conference papers covered various dimensions of the situation including its related demographic, geographic, economic, security and ideological struggles. Papers also highlighted various modes of popular steadfastness, the positions of international state actors, and the possibilities of national development. However, the reality of colonization, dangerous political developments and the regional, national, and local struggles, have only bolstered the Israeli extreme right wing in their demands for annexation. This situation is exacerbated by the distorted and divisive Palestinian positions that have weakened the visions for the future.

The above context prompts us to, once again, choose the Jordan Valley and Area C as the theme of the Institute of Palestine Studies annual conference. It is hoped that the conference will cover recent developments and open new horizons of action with regard to organizations, popular movements, civil society, and official bodies to support the Palestinian cause overall.

Schedule:

May 28, 2018: Paper proposals due

September 15, 2018: First draft of conference paper due (if accepted)

**The conference will cover the following proposed themes:**

**First: Background**

A. *The demographic situation for the Jordan Valley and Area C residents, who number approximately 300,000 people.* This topic will cover the population distribution and their social, educational, and health situation.

B. *Situation of territorial control.* This topic will cover the hegemony of settlements over land and territory generally; policies of strangulation pursued by the occupying power toward the Palestinian communities as well as their possible uprooting, and the effect of this throughout the Palestinian areas.

C. *The water and natural resources and sources of renewable energy.* This topic will cover existing natural resources (nature reserves among other things) and the sources of renewable energy in the Jordan Valley and Area C and how are they deployed in the service of settlement and denial of their basic mode of existence and steadfastness.

**Second: Settlements and their political, economic, and demographic impact**

A. *The security and strategic dimension.* For many years, Israel has justified its settlement of this area, especially during the period of Labor Party control of the government, on the basis of security and existential survival. What is the status of this claim in the context of recent developments in the region? What are the Israeli modes of control over territory?

B. *The economic modes of settlement.* How does settlement steal Palestinian national resources and exploit Palestinian labor? How does it evade oversight and inspection of Israeli settlement products, at least in the European market? What are the ways that sanctions can become more effective?

C. *Movement for large-scale annexation.* What are the areas that are envisioned to fall under Israeli hegemony in recent years, by the Likud and other parties, over parts or all of occupied Palestine since 1967? How will Israel deal with Palestinian residents and what will be their status? What will be the long-term effect of their action on urban spaces and the future of the Palestinian cause?

**Third: The political and legal conflicts, support, and activism**

A. *Palestinian strategy.* What are the available political and legal strategies that Palestinians could use against settlement and annexation? What is the legal possibility of activism and international political support? Have Palestinians exhausted all of the possible tools in this field? Is it their responsibility in the context of direct conflict, and their political, security, and legal situation?

B. *The Palestinian legal status in the Jordan Valley and Area C.* What would be the effect if Palestinians adopted a civil legal struggle? How could they redefine their status outside of the Oslo process categories?

C. *International activism.* Many international organizations, including the UN, have played a central role in supporting Palestinian residents of the Jordan Valley and Area C. What is the status of this activism? What have been their accomplishments and how could they be supported?

**Fourth: Popular steadfastness and organizations in the context of development**

A. *Lessons in survival and steadfastness.* What are the tools of survival and steadfastness used by the people of these areas? What are the lessons that could be learned? What are the steps taken that

are suitable for their reality that could support their survival and steadfastness from the perspective of Palestinian civil society and political groups?

B. *The hegemony of, and dependence on Israeli settlements.* Without a doubt, settlement and colonization is not implemented only with an iron wall, but rather is part of a structure of exploitation and economic hegemony. How do the settlements exploit Palestinian labor? How is this labor implemented by the Palestinian market? What are the means of opposing it?

C. *The role of civil society and official national organizations.* What is the role of Palestinian organizations? What are the reasons for their negligence? How can these organizations escape the box of old ideas to close the gap between them and the reality of the people in the Jordan Valley and Area C?

D. *The role of the private sector, especially in the impoverishment of sustainable development.* It is known that, despite the control of the settlements over the economy, Palestinian private investment is growing. What is the status of this investment? Could it further impoverish local people, widen the class gap, and move wealth from the Jordan Valley to distant centers for private interests? Is it possible that this investment could lead to sustainable development for Palestinian environment and society?

**Please submit your (300-500 word) paper proposal in Arabic or English to [conference-2018@palestine-studies.org](mailto:conference-2018@palestine-studies.org) by May 28, 2018. Applicants will receive a response on their proposal by June 15, 2018.**