

# Palestine Unbound

Published each issue, this section strives to capture the tenor and content of popular conversations related to the Palestinians and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which are held on dynamic platforms unbound by traditional media. Therefore, items presented in this section are from a variety of sources and have been selected because they either have gone viral or represent a significant cultural moment or trend. A version of Palestine Unbound is also published on *Palestine Square* ([palestinesquare.com](http://palestinesquare.com)), a blog of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

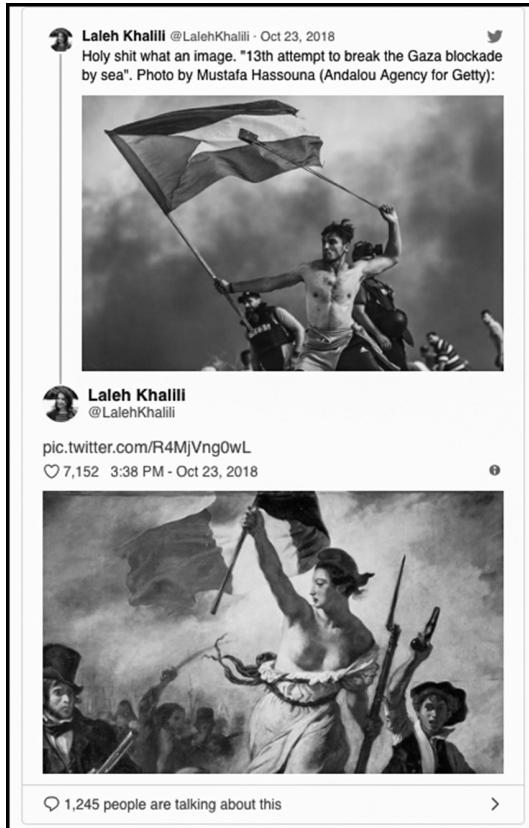
## This Quarter's Topics

Palestinians' <i>Liberté</i> .....	110
Palestine Underground.....	111
#Gaza_tantasisir (Gaza_victorious) .....	112

## Palestinians' *Liberté*

An image of a Palestinian man participating in the months-long Great March of Return protests in Gaza (see JPS 47 [4] and 48 [1]) went viral shortly after its capture on 22 October 2018. The shirtless man in the photograph, who was identified by Al Jazeera as 20-year-old Aed Abu Amro from the al-Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City's south side, grips a Palestinian flag in one hand and a cocked slingshot in the other. The dramatic photograph, which was picked up by Al Jazeera, Haaretz, and The Independent, among others, has been compared extensively to Eugène Delacroix's famous painting of the July Revolution, *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (Liberty Leading the People) on Twitter. Some have also likened the protester to the famous biblical underdog David, who felled tyrannical giant Goliath with only a slingshot.

Mondoweiss's Ahmad Kabariti later reported that, on 5 November, three weeks after the image went viral, Abu Amro, whose now-iconic image had been "shared more than 50,000 times," was shot in the leg in the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahia when Israeli naval forces opened fire



A Twitter user posts the viral image alongside Delaroix's famous painting. (23 October, Twitter)

*on a protest flotilla of fifteen Palestinian ships headed for Israeli waters.*

*In the same article, Kabariti shared excerpts from an interview he conducted with the protester before he'd been injured. Abu Amro confirmed that the possibility of injury was almost certain and insisted that he would continue to protest at "whatever cost to him." This sentiment—the imperative of sacrifice—is not an uncommon axiom among Palestinian protesters, over twenty-five thousand of whom had been wounded in the Great March of Return at this quarter's end.\**



A wounded Abu Amro flashes the victory sign as he's carried away from the Great March of Return protests on a stretcher after being shot in the leg with a rubber bullet. (5 November, Mohammed Asad, Mondoweiss)

## Palestine Underground

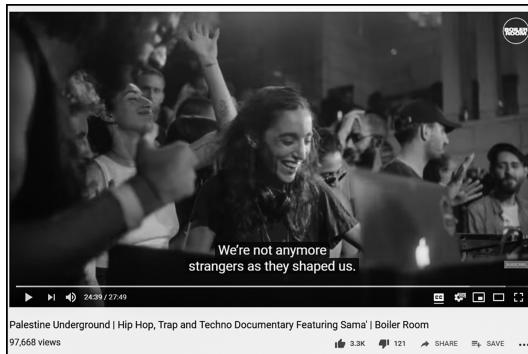
*On 30 October 2018, the global music-broadcasting platform Boiler Room collaborated with Arabic-music web magazine Ma3azef to premiere Palestine Underground, a documentary about Palestinian hip-hop culture and the bridge it's building between the divided Palestinian peoples in the northern Israeli city of Haifa and the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah. The film, which was produced as part of Boiler Room's "Contemporary Scenes"—a series aimed at "uncovering underground collectives, artists and subcultures from across the world"—captures the week leading up to a massive hip-hop and electronic dance music party live-streamed globally on 22 June. Other music cultures documented by the series include Cxema—Kiev's radical techno rave scene—and the streets of Manila, which are a fount for hip-hop counter culture in the Philippines.*

*The Boiler Room (also the name for the live set of music hosted and streamed by Boiler Room) was Ramallah's first, and featured sets by cultural tastemakers from both cities, including Ramallah's own rapper and beat-maker Muqata'a, techno DJ SAMA', and members of the Haifa music and art collective Jazar Crew, who have been hosting Palestinian dance parties in Haifa for over a decade. Muqata'a's tracks are underlain by sound samples he records on the streets of the city, and DJ SAMA's set alone garnered 1.2 million views on YouTube.*

*Palestine Underground, which has received over 107,000 views and counting, opens with footage of Ramallah-based DJ ODDZ climbing a wooden ladder to the top of the eight-meter separation wall from which he must jump down into occupied East Jerusalem. The DJ then makes his way to the only Palestinian venue in Jaffa, the city from which his family was expelled in the Nakba. The film is significant not only for bringing Palestinian hip-hop culture to international audiences, but also because it demonstrates the intentional fracturing of the Palestinian people by the separation wall encircling the West Bank and the determination with which they combat separation in their unified*

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\* Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "More Casualties Sustained during the 'Great March of Return' in Gaza," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 16 November 2018, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/more-casualties-sustained-during-great-march-return-gaza>.



In this screenshot from *Palestine Underground*, DJ SAMA' spins a set at Ramallah's first Boiler Room. (13 November, YouTube)



Muqata'a talks about his inspirations and creative process. (13 November, YouTube)

*bid to resist Israeli oppression by all means possible. “We are fighting every day,” says Ayed of the Jazar Crew, “and we are trying to keep our culture strong.”*

### #Gaza\_tantasir (Gaza\_victorious)

*Palestinians and allies hailed news of the resignation of Israeli defense minister and right-wing Yisrael Beitenu Party leader Avigdor Lieberman as a decisive political victory for Gaza, which, said Hamas spokesperson Sami Abu Zuhri, “by standing firm against the Israeli aggression, succeeded in causing a political earthquake in Israel.” These sentiments were shared by a wide range of Arabic-speakers as reflected on Twitter, where users shared celebratory postings about Lieberman’s resignation with the hashtag #Gaza\_tantasir (Gaza\_victorious).*

*Lieberman’s decision came after a botched covert operation inside southern Gaza on 10 November—a routine security drill, according to Israeli sources—left seven Palestinians, including one Hamas commander, and one Israeli dead. On the brink of a promising Egyptian-brokered cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, the attack, which was the first known ground incursion in Gaza since Operation Protective Edge in 2014, threatened to cause an all-out war between the sides.*



Egyptian political poet and public figure Abdullah el-Sharif tweets a message of pride and solidarity for the people of Gaza. The tweet reads: “There’s an Egyptian proverb that says ‘the bald girl talks up her sister’s hair.’ So from one bald head among a zillion others, let me tell you, dear people of #Gaza, that your hair is the [curtain of] modesty that lets us baldies hold our heads high. You make us proud. #Lieberman\_resignation #Gaza\_victorious” (14 November, Twitter)



An Israeli airstrike targets Rafah—one of a number of attacks in the tit-for-tat fallout of the botched Israeli covert operation in Gaza on 10 November. (Said Khatib/AFP/Getty Images)

*Though there was a precipitous spike in violence following the attack—Hamas fired hundreds of rockets into areas of Israel contiguous with Gaza, while the Israeli military bombed several buildings, including the Hamas-run TV station and a structure used as a kindergarten classroom—the quarter ended with a temporary cease-fire.*

*In a televised press conference, Lieberman referred to the cease-fire as “surrendering to terror,” a jab at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose party was left with a mere one-seat majority in the Knesset and the prospect of early elections.*