



THE
ALTERNATIVE
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150 Palestinian Youth from Throughout West Bank and Israel Participate in Extraordinary Summer Camp Organised by AIC, UHWC

8 August 2007: Over 150 Palestinian youth from throughout the West Bank and Israel are participating in a one of a kind summer camp organised by the Alternative Information Center (AIC) and the Nidal and Jadal Centres of the Union of Health Work Committees (UHWC). The camp, opened last night and held under the slogan *Unity of the People, Land and Identity*, is the only one in the region which brings together Palestinian youth, girls and boys aged 14-20, from throughout the entire West Bank and Israel.

“Summer camps here are predominantly local school affairs,” notes Ahmad Abu Haniya, Coordinator of the AIC youth group, “and as such involve the same people and ideas that the youth encounter during the year. We wanted to break through the walls created by the Israeli occupation and bring together Palestinian youth from throughout the West Bank and Israel, kids generally unable to meet due to travel and other Israeli restrictions.

“No less importantly, we wanted to breach the subsequent walls in thinking and expose youth, both girls and boys, to a plurality of ideas and provide them with structured opportunities to explore crucial issues such as personal identity, gender, leadership and social responsibility.”

The ten day summer camp, held on the camping grounds of the YMCA in Beit Sahour, features a full schedule of interactive sociopolitical workshops and tours, theatre and music, films, hiking, swimming and cultural evenings. Particularly special events to be held also include a full-day exploration of religion and history at Bethlehem’s Nativity Church, a tour of the divided city of Hebron and an evening of theatre and music to which the campers’ families are invited.

The AIC and UHWC began work on the summer camp almost four months ago, holding comprehensive weekly trainings for the 20 female and male camp counselors selected for this notable event.

“It was crucial for us that the values of democracy, equality and leadership responsibility be at the forefront already in the planning stages,” says Nassar Ibrahim, Policy Director of the AIC and strongly involved in the camp design. “Camp counselors



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held elections and the camp is run democratically with an emphasis on participation and consensual decision making. The assimilation of these concepts is critical for our youth and the future of Palestinian society.”

The AIC will be providing updates and photographs on its website (www.alternativenews.org) about the camp (9-18 August) and its activities

The campers have invited partners and friends of the AIC to join them next week for a shared evening of music, theatre and discussions. For additional information and to participate, please contact Connie Hackbarth on 052 6804 587.