

Campus in Camps
Collective Dictionary

CITIZENSHIP

المواطنة

FINAL DRAFT
15.01.2013



كالمطعم في كالمطعم
جامعات في المقيم

CITIZENSHIP

المواطنة

CONTRIBUTORS

Naba' Al-Assi, Murad Odeh, Shadi Ramadan

CAMPUS IN CAMPS

Campus in Camps is a two-year experimental educational and project oriented program, engaging the participants from the West Bank's refugee camps in an attempt to explore and produce new forms of representation of camps and refugees beyond the static and traditional symbols of victimization, passivity and poverty. The program aims at transgressing, without eliminating, the distinction between camp and city, refugee and citizen, center and periphery, theory and practice, teacher and student.

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Alessandro Petti

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Sandi Hilal (UNRWA, Camp Improvement Programme)

PARTICIPANTS

Marwa Al-Lahham, Qussay Abu Aker, Alaa Al-Homouz, Saleh Khannah, Shadi Ramadan, Ahmad Al-Lahham, Aysar Al-Saifi, Bisan Al-Jaffarri, Nedaa Hamouz, Naba' Al-Assi, Mohammed Abu Alia, Ibrahim Jawabreh, Isshaq Al-Barbary, Ayat Al-Turshan, Murad Odeh

MENTORS

Munir Fasheh, Michel Agier, Sari Hanafi, Ilana Feldman, Mohammed Jabali, Ayman Khalifah, Wilfried Graf, Tareq Hamam, Ruba Saleh, Vivien Sansour

PROJECT TEAM

Ghassan Bannoura, Yasser Hemadan, Ala Juma, Diego Segatto

PROJECT ACTIVATORS

Brave New Alps, Matteo Guidi, Sara Pellegrini, Giuliana Racco

ENGLISH AND ARABIC INSTRUCTORS

Tala Abu Rahme, Thea Piltzecker, Daniel McKenzie, Iman Simon, Ayman Khalifah, Samih Faraj

Al Feneiq Cultural Center, Dheisheh Refugee Camp
Bethlehem - Palestine

Campus in Camps is a program by Al Quds University (Al Quds/Bard Partnership) and hosted by the Phoenix Center in Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem. It is implemented with the support of the GIZ Regional Social and Cultural Fund for Palestinian Refugees and Gaza Population on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in cooperation with UNRWA Camp Improvement Programme.

The content of this publication does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the institutions mentioned above.

The Collective Dictionary is a series of publications containing definitions of concepts.

The terms proposed are those considered fundamental for the understanding of the contemporary condition of Palestinian refugee camps. These words have emerged as a result of actions and active dialogs with the camp community. Written reflections on personal experiences, interviews, excursions and photographic investigations constitute the starting point for the formulation of more structured thoughts.

The Collective Dictionary is both the reference and conceptual framework for all Campus in Camps projects and interventions.

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Research on the terms *Watana* and *Mowatana*

Murad Odeh

Watan, Mowatana and their historical context

Watan and *Mowatana* are two terms that have roots in the Arabic language, and by looking at their origins, the ideas both these terms carry will become clear. However, the two terms take place within the Arabic culture and are connected to the modern culture. *Mowatana* is originally derived from the word *Watan*. *Watan* as the *Arabic Dictionary Lisan Al Arab*¹ defines it is “the home you live in. *Awatan* is the plural. *Watan* is where sheep and cows live”. In addition, the word *Watan* in the ancient Arabic dialect has no emotional content. It is more of a description of a temporary place. As *Abdallah Al Ala’eli*² argues, “the specialty of the Arabs is their tribal virtue of

¹ Lisan Al-Arab Dictionary <http://www.baheth.info/all.jsp?term=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86>

only resumed after international intervention

² Abdallah Al Ala’eli, *Introductions to understand the history of the Arab*

the environment, but nationalism only exists in the agricultural societies. For that, working on the field of agriculture is the source of feeling towards *Watan*. Humans inherit a mysterious love for the land that gives them what they need for the necessities of life.”

Here we notice the radical change between the original understanding of the ancient Arabs and the generational understanding of that term. The *Watan* is not just about the history or the geography, it also becomes a creator of the self, and an important source in creating the ego and the collective self. It becomes the glasses we look through towards ourselves and the world, and forms a part of culture.

As we saw in *Lisan Al Arab, Mowatana*, in the Arabic historical context, doesn't mean anything more than the place of being, but *Mowatana* in Islam is different. Islam doesn't define *Mowatana* or even mention it, but maybe the synonym of *Mowatana* is the Muslim himself. Anyone who becomes Muslim directly receives rights and the places as part of the society. From my point of view, the Islamic definitions for the political groups are based on religion. Anyone who wants to have his or her full rights of *Mowatana* must be Muslim and this is the only important condition to be a *Mowatin*. The non-Muslim person's relation with the society is then based on their ties with the original group.

The differences between the “arabic” and “non-arabic” terms of *Mowatana*

There is a mistranslation between the English word “citizen” and the Arabic word *Mowatin* because they do not hold the same meaning. There is a big difference in the historical and cultural context around this term. As I mentioned before, *Mowatana* for Arabs was connected with the spatial understanding and didn't have emotional connections. While in the Islamic culture, the *Mowatin* is any Muslim, so there is no word synonymous with the citizen in Arabic. There is a term that is used in the same vein, however; *Ibin Al Balad* means “the son of the country.” This is completely different from the ancient Greek definition that means “the person that participates in the public affairs”, but in the Western civilizations it has more meanings. For example, in *Longman English Dictionary*³, the term points to the status of the citizen. It defines citizen as “a person who lives in one state and belongs to it. They give it their loyalty so they can have the protection from it and gain membership. To be a citizen in a country by a place of birth or gaining membership.”

³ Longman dictionary, <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/citizenship>

Political and Socio-economical Context

Countries' agendas are based on various definitions that shape the details of who are citizens. We can notice the political meaning for citizen that clarifies that *Mowatana* is based on the rights of the state for those who carry its membership and the obligations imposed on them. It can also mean the participation in the issues of their country that makes them belong to it. From a socioeconomic point of view, citizenship is satisfaction of basic needs, when it doesn't distract from the general social work. Or making groups based on common needs could create cooperation and integration into the social level. We notice the different definitions from one place to another labeled with general well-being, because of this, countries give reasons for limitations of membership.

From my point of view, all these rules only help certain groups, and in a large way, increase the gaps between societies, and take them out of context in order to control the resources of life.

Globalization has been a major influence within the changes of the general world policies. We often hear that the world has become a small village. Technology passes across borders and cannot be controlled. Therefore, it has decreased the importance of geography. Because of this, most people on the earth share a lot of things together consciously or uncon-

sciously. If we take a look at schools' academic curriculums around the world, they have a huge amount of similarities and contain no context of the natural, social, and cultural differences within these societies. This melting pot of societies and their compressed sources of knowledge are forming one common language between the people while denying all other cultural uniqueness that is very important in the life of the nations and creates a natural and automatic compression between civilizations and destroys their origins. It has become a way of thinking that different spheres of the world use. What I want to ask now is, are the borders important? Or what is the importance of the borders? Do these borders have importance in a better world? A world that is based on an understanding that everyone is equal in their terms and cultures, with respect to their differences between the people and their choices of place and way of life?

Watan and Mowatana

Through several definitions of the terms *Watan* and *Mowatana*, I have formed my own point of view and definitions for these terms. We can't define *Mowatana* without defining *Watan* and what it means for everyone. For me, *Watan is the idea and the practice*, which has the importance for some people to build

their lives based on these terms, and for others to not care about them. *Watan* as an idea that reflects the practice of any person in their daily life, and the question here is, "Why do people need *Watan*? And why do some people search and ask for it, while others do not care about it? And what is the difference between the *Watan* and *Mowatin*? From my perspective, *Watan* is the idea and the practice, and *Mowatin* is the place of living. It's possible to have a *Mowatin*, which is totally different than the *Watan*, and this dialectical process is connected to how each one perceives it.

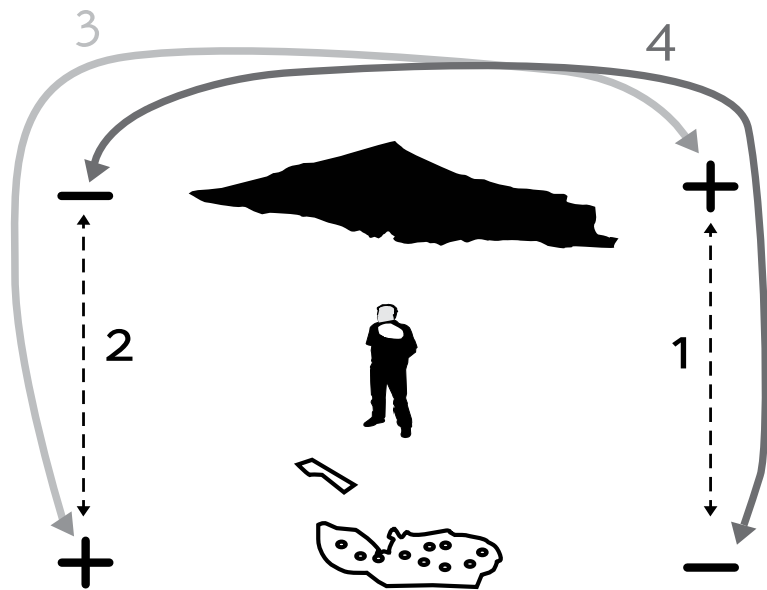
Using the Palestinian example will make this idea more clear. The Palestinians lose their *Watan*, but they still are attached to it even though they are living in it as *Mowatin*. The Palestinian generation creates the deference between the *Watan* and *Mowatin* and they can distinguish between them very well. All of this may not exist in the daily thoughts of some people, but in the Palestinian case it is still very important to understand these terms, to open that huge door of questions that helps us to understand where we are standing.

Is there are a difference between *Watan* and State?

We try to bring out new definitions for *Watan* and

Mowatana so that each one of us can redefine these terms and other terms in his own lives. Through what we define we build our personalities as individuals and as a collective society. Based on my point of view, we can look at *Mowatana* and *Watan* from two sides, the physical and the moral. *Mowatana* is the relation between the imagination and the realistic, which is connected with the term of belonging. The realistic side is what the person lives, related with his own opinion about the *Watan*. The imagination aspect is the part where the person is imagining things that is not in reality but that he or she hopes to implement into his or her own life and the lives of the groups that he or she lives in.

All of these elements are connected with the sense of belonging that stems from doing things that connect us with the imagination and the reality through idea and practice. With the participants and the work group in *Campus in Camps* we created a diagram in order to understand these relations.



1 - → +

A lack in reality leads to more imagination, with the want or the will to make the imagination into a reality. For example, the Palestinians have been resisting for 64 years. In spite of the forced diaspora and the suffering, they are still living with hope that they will return to their Watan that is still in their imagination.

2 + → -

Accepting the reality without creating anything in the imagination and without the will to change. For example, one of the Palestinian points of view accepts the two-state solution on the 67 "borders", bowing down to the reality without working to change it.

3 + → +

Accepting the reality with the want to create change in the future. For example, some Palestinian points of view accept

the bitter reality and consider it their point of launching themselves towards a better reality. They are working to change their reality and move the imagination into the reality.

4 - → -

If it starts from the reality, it means to be careless without belonging to it. If we start from the imagination, it will destroy the reality. For example, from the "reality to the imagination", some Palestinians, especially the capitalists, will not care about change and catastrophes that have happened to the Palestinians, unless they are affected by it. From "the imagination to the reality", what we notice from the Western corporations and International Banks is that they infiltrate the Palestinian society to destroy what Palestinians build in their imaginations and make them bow down to reality.

The wor(l)ds of citizenship

Collective reflection held on
November 10th 2012 in Campus in Camps

The word citizenship, with all its definition and contradictions, is often related to different concepts, and one of the easy way to understand it better is to look for other words directly connected to it when we hear the word citizenship.

Stability

Accountability

Membership

Providing Services

Accessibility

Equality

Common Possession

Responsibility

Discrimination

In the Palestinian context, the Watan is the imaginary part, because it is missing from the reality. So, the Palestinians draw the Watan in their imagination wishing and working to move it into their reality. Here we can notice the correlation between the lack of the Watan in reality and the imagination of each person and their will to make it real. This depends on each one's belonging and believing in these terms.

Why do we feel that we have to be tied to one place?

In an attempt to redefine these terms, these questions may help you to analyze your point of view: What does stability mean to you? Does stability change from one period to another in a humans' life? What does it mean to belong? Does belonging to something mean you feel responsibility towards it?

Tell me what the Watan is for you, and I tell you who you are.

Monitoring / Controlling / Surveillance

Legal Status

Statehood

Rights

Duties

Representation

Identity / Non-Identity

Collectivity

Number (*relation to the State*)

Belonging

Democracy

Protection

Security

Hierarchy

Individualism

Subjectivity

Freedom

Mobility

Homogenization / Standards

From where does the term citizenship, in Arabic *mwatana*, derive?

Naba' Al-Assi

There are many terms that people constantly use without truly understanding their significance. One of these terms has had its meaning changed by Totalitarian regimes and universal systems. This term is citizenship, or *mowatana*.

Due to the accelerated global pace of changes in various aspects of life including socio-politics, culture and economics, there is an urgent need to review a number of terms that should be opened up to question. Especially if we consider that the negative impact of the universal network is increasing each day. Perhaps the concept of *mowatana* is the term which most needs to be vigorously studied and understood in order to be regenerated.

Hence the importance of analyzing the content which makes up this term in order to understand and then discuss the nature of its impact, vulnerability and interaction, revealing both its the positive and negative implications.

Community workers and politicians say they believe that a community with a strong sense of solidarity is a community rich in affiliations. But the disappearance of shared sense and beliefs, and consequently the emergence of individualism and excessive materialism, is a sign of the contradiction of belonging interpreted through terms such as *mowatana* which are limited by duties and rights.

The source of the word *mowatana* is Western, specifically deriving from modern civilization and its ideology. We became aware of this when we searched for the Arabic origin of the term, which, in fact, we did not find in relation to how it is used today.

There is no doubt that our readers will notice the absence of this word in older Arabic dictionaries, such as "lesan Al-Arabs", "Al Qamos Al muhet", "Asahhah", "Tag al Aroos" and so on. Furthermore, this absence is not exclusive to dictionaries, but also to poets and novelists. Therefore, it becomes obvious that Arabic history does not include this term citizenship. Most importantly, why should we be bound to this term, its obligations and its rights? What makes the term citizenship a criterion with which to measure our loyalty to a country? And who is charged with imposing these rights and obligations upon us?

The concept of *mowatana* is foreign to Arabic civilization and when we come to practice it, as Arabs, we

must take many issues into consideration; the most important being the difference between the Arab concept of homeland and the way this has been conceived by the West over the past hundreds of years. Arabs have historically lived in tribes, constantly moving from one place to another, searching for water and food sources. These constituted the idea of homeland for them. This is inherently incompatible with the modern concepts of homeland, citizen *mwatan* and *mowatana*. These terms determine the affiliations of the person with geographic and political boundaries. So where is the *mowatana* of the Arab people?

Unfortunately, through conspiracies and conspiracy agreements, modern civilization succeeded in dividing the Arabic lands into separate countries, as well as entrenching terms such as *mwatan*, *mowatana* and *watan* with new concepts. And here lies the clash with Arab tribal culture. This conflict especially concerned those who lived on the borders of countries such as Jordan and Syria, where they refused to naturalize, attributing this refusal to their nomadic and borderless nature. But eventually, against their will, those tribes complied with these divisions.

And here we can see that *mwatan* is another term used incorrectly in Arabic communities. So what does *watan* mean today? And why did these foreign distinction and borders come to our Arab land?

In my own point of view, being mwaten simply means being a number in government documents. And it is the government who determines whether you are a good citizen or not, through your practice of *mowatana* – the rights and duties which have been determined by the ruling class – within the geographical boundaries called the state. So how can I accept to be just a number in this or any another way? From the very beginning, I am not a partner in this equation that has been developed and introduced to our communities without our consultation or contribution.

Do you feel you are a citizen?

Shadi Ramadan

– No, because I live in a camp, and I am not in my village.

unemployed, 26 years

– No, because I live in a camp, and I am not in my village.

Unemployed, 26 years

– To some extent I am a citizen but with no rights.

Housewife, 26 years

– No, we don't have land in that place.

Unemployed, 28 years

Interviews collected
in Deheishe refugee camp
and in Doha City
on November 28th 2012

– No, I am in exile and I don't have "Watan".
Unemployed, 20 years

– Of course a citizen "with no rights", because I
belong to this country.
Trader, 38 years

– No, because we don't have rights, and we don't
have "Watan"
Unemployed, 24 years

– No, I am a refugee and not a citizen. The UNRWA is
responsible for me not the Palestinian authority.
Seller, 62 years

– Yes, because I belong to this country.
Trader, 26 years

– No, because I am refugee and I don't have even the
simplest rights.
Student, 24 years

– Of course I am a citizen. I am a part from Palestine,
and Palestine is a part from me.
Private business, 29 years

– No, because I am a refugee and I don't see myself
in my country.
Employee, 21 years

– No, because I am not living.
Employee, 24 years

– No, bad government, and the name of citizen is
written in paper.
Employee, 25 years

– No. No rights, no identity.
Employee, 26 years

– Of course I am a citizen, due to the services
provided by the Palestinian Authority.
School teacher, 28 years

– No, I am not a citizen, as I have no rights and my
home is Beit-Jibreen.
Housewife, 56 years

– No, because I don't live in my home country.
Unemployed, 65 years

REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF CITIZENSHIP

What are we?

Naba' Al-Assi

Citizenship is perhaps the strangest and most difficult term for Palestinians to define because they don't practice it. And they are not part of it in any way. As I'm writing and trying to understand this term, I will also explain terms like identity, affiliation, citizen, who the citizen is, what is the history that produced the meaning of citizenship, and how the human can be a citizen. This pushes me to read the actual Palestinian situation in every part. There is another question we should think about: do our official papers that we have prove our citizenship; do we have this nationality or another one? Or it is just an issue about affiliation and love?

We as Palestinians didn't choose to move from one city to another or to go to another country. We were forced to do so. And this is the refugee status that we live in as a Palestinian. We are not like the other nations which lived in their villages and cities who tried to live there but then decided to leave or to stay. We didn't try that, so we don't have the choice to choose the place where we want to live. As with my generation, I was born in a refugee camp, and I

suffered and am still suffering from the life I live as a refugee. I don't know what I would do if I was not a refugee and lived in my original village, "Ajour." Maybe I would leave it and just go to live in another place, or maybe I would stay there. But the only experience I know is how to live in the camp and how to live as a refugee.

Citizenship in Palestine is different since there are three presiding governments. The first one is Israel's government, which is occupying Palestine, but this one is unimportant and meaningless in one way or another for Palestinians, even though it controls all of Palestine and there is no place it can't reach. The second one is the Palestinian Authority, which has different kinds of control over specific areas (A, B, C) according to the Oslo agreement between the PA and the Israel. And the third one is the Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip.

For a little analysis for the situation, take an example: when I move from Bethlehem to Ramallah I pass through two areas, one is for the PA and the other one is for the Israeli government. And any one of them can give me a traffic violation. Any one of them can arrest me if I do something illegal from their point of view. And if we can go to Gaza as a Palestinian who lives in the West Bank, we will pass through three areas controlled by three governments. The first one is the PA, the second one is the Israeli gov-

ernment, and the third one is the Hamas government. And here is the question: what about the normal human who is unrelated to anyone of these three parts (he's supports neither Fateh nor Hamas, and for sure he is against the occupation) and he is Palestinian; how will he be a citizen and under which control will he be?

As to elections, the refugee who lives in the camps inside Palestine (Gaza & West Bank) don't participate in the Local council elections because we live in refugee camps, and the governing power responsible for the refugee camp is the UNRWA. So can we say that the refugee is less Palestinian because he or she doesn't vote? And what about the refugee who lives in hosting countries like Jordan, Syria or Lebanon? They don't participate in any elections, so can we say that they are not Palestinian anymore?

This led me to ask another question: what about the Palestinian people who live in the occupied 1948 territory under the government of Israel? They have rights, they participate in elections, and they hold Israeli citizenship. Can we consider them Israelis?

Also I don't know who is a citizen in my occupied country. My cousin married a Ukrainian girl and she has the green Identity Card (ID), which is the Palestinian Authority ID. She wears a scarf (*hijab*) like my mother and sisters. I saw her once praying like the

Muslim people. She sits with her son and teaches him what Palestine is and what his original village is. She reads a lot of political books in Arabic. And she sits with women in the neighborhood where she lives in the camp like a Palestinian women. Another Russian woman married a man from the camp, and she participated in the Second Intifada. She was arrested by the Israelis and sentenced to life imprisonment. She was released from jail with the recent exchange deal between Hamas and Israel. And she refused to go back to Russia; she chose to stay in the camp with her husband and family in order to raise her daughter.

This leads me to a conclusion: the citizen is a small word to describe the relation between the people and their land; it's something more about affiliation and sacrifices. It's not about official papers or ID cards. These women consider themselves Palestinians even though they still keep their original citizenship or nationality.

When we speak about the Palestinian Identity, it's not that green ID card which we have from the PA or any another ID for that matter. We cannot limit the Palestinian identity to a document or an ID card or a passport. Palestinian identity is the Palestinian culture, affiliation, struggle, resistance, of martyrs and prisoners. And refugee status is one of the essential parts of that. Citizenship is not determined by iden-

tity papers that fade out with time. It is not determined by participating in elections or not.

Nationality and citizenship for us as Palestinians is sacrifice, steadfastness, martyrdom and generosity. Citizenship is different when it is in the Palestinian sense. Different when we practice our right of struggling without forgetting or giving up on our land and true rights.

So these papers that we have, whether passport or ID card, is not the way to prove that we are Palestinian. We are not even citizens. We are Palestinians or we are citizens suspended until liberation when we get back our dignity.

This is my personal understanding of these terms, and if someone came to inject Palestinian citizenship into our case, I would say to him that instead of rights we have resistance, and instead of duties we have struggle.

Citizenship

Shadi Ramadan

Citizenship refers in its general definition to the relationship between the individuals and the land/place/home they belong to and as a consequence their rights and duties.

This belonging can be seen in a set of actions that the individual does for the country he belongs to. The feeling of citizenship can't be reduced to the legal elements of citizenship, but it includes the feeling of national and cultural belonging that the individual feels for this land.

Palestinian citizens, especially the refugees, depend mainly on the national and cultural feelings and belonging when we define our homeland. As we are apart from the law, political agreements, and curriculums, we learn with or without intent that we have the right to live free with dignity in a state called Palestine, to get history back to its right track, because we want a homeland that we can understand, know, belong to, and can define through our national identity.

I see citizenship as the individual's feeling of comfort and freedom and his ability to practice what he believes without any authority to monitor his behavior, whether parental or legal authority.

When I started work on the concept of citizenship, I made local interviews and found that many see citizenship in different point of view, and most of them see it in a frame of belonging and nostalgia for their original land. The portion of the refugees who live in West Bank refugee camps define themselves as 'temporary residents.' They are waiting to return to the land which their roots belong to it, and they look to implement the concept of citizenship by returning and living in that land without any legal status.

Who are the Palestinian citizens?

Murad Odeh

We ask ourselves: *who are the Palestinian citizens?* Are they the 68% of Palestinians who are refugees in or outside of Palestine? Are they the inhabitants of the Palestinian villages where the Palestinian Authority can't access even to give them basic goods because they are in Area C? Are they the one and a half million Palestinians that live on the other side of the green line? Are they the 11,000 Palestinian prisoners in the occupation jails? Are they the inhabitants of the Palestinian cities destroyed since the beginning of the Palestinian story until now from the Israeli occupation attacks?

On our way to Jericho we pass through many questions, anyone can pass through them. I see a beautiful landscape that I am connected with, both its color and its smell. And that connects us with a relation that starts more than 6,000 year ago, but at the same time I see a Russian man owns it and speaks with a French man in English, wearing the small hat on his head that shows the religious symbol. I see a soldier that is not yet 18 with the power to stop me, arrest me, or send me back from where I came.

Identity documents of a Palestinian *pre-citizen*

Personal identity and travel documents are connected to three different governments: the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli Occupation, and the Hamas

government. Furthermore, if someone wishes to cross the borders into Jordan or Egypt, he or she also requires documents from these authorities.



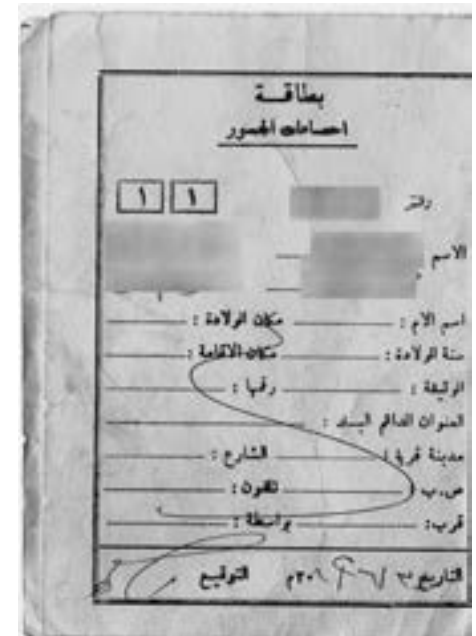
Palestinian
travel document



Jerusalem blue
Identity card



Palestinian green
Identity card



Jordanian
travel permission



Israeli temporary travel permission



Palestinian driving license



Israeli driving license for Palestinians living in Jerusalem

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CONTRIBUTORS
Naba' Al-Assi, Murad Odeh, Shadi Ramadan

TEXT EDITING
Dan McKenzie

BOOK DESIGN
Fabio Franz, Sara Pellegrini, Diego Segatto

EDITION
Printed in January 2013

COPYLEFT
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Used fonts: Junction by Caroline Hadilaksono
(The League of Movable Type - distributed under Open Font Licence)



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