

# An Open Letter from Bethlehem

*The lack of freedom and justice inherent in living under an illegal military occupation is well illustrated in this message from a First Year Bethlehem University student.. It is published on the Generalate web site: <http://www.lasalle.org>.*

2 April 2007  
AlMuataz  
First Year Student  
Bethlehem University in the Holy Land  
[www.bethlehem.edu](http://www.bethlehem.edu)  
Major: Computer and Information Systems  
GPA: 3.0



The person who writes these words believes that all people on this earth must live together and he cries for the time when humanity will reach this point. I do not remember when my grandparents ever owned a house of their own. However, I still remember that time when my parent owned our first small home and I also remember those terrible moments when we lost it. I did not expect that I would be directly impacted by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. My story started four years ago. We worked very hard to collect money to build our first house on my mother's land – land which she inherited from her father – land in the West Bank town of Beit Jala, just adjacent to Bethlehem.

It was a very large step for my family and our life. After two months of living in that house, the Israel government sent a paper to order my father to go to an Israeli court. When my father went to the court, they accused us of having an "illegal house" and ordered us to take permission from the Israeli government to build our house. But we live in the West Bank, in the Palestinian territories, land under the Palestinian Authority. We take all our requirements such as electric-

ity and water from the Palestinian Authority and we have Palestinian IDs.

The Israelis put my father in prison for one month. Three years later they forced us to leave our house and they demolished it. That was in February 2005.



My mother and my little brother lived with my grandmother. My father, my old brother and I lived in a tent. It was the Winter of 2005. I know there are people who will not believe this, but it happened.

After three months the people in my village collected money for us and they rebuilt our house again – right next to the rubble of the first house. We lived eight months in the second house. The Israeli government sent the same papers. This time we went to apply for permission from Israeli government. We were forced to do that because of our desire to keep our land and our house. We discovered that the Israeli government wanted to take our land. They rejected our application.

During these eight months of seeking Israeli government permission to keep our house on our land in the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority, we tried to keep our land and our house but we couldn't. We were alone and the Israeli government used their foolish laws with us. I know they will not use them with the Israeli people.



They came with their foolish bulldozers on 12 December 2006 and demolished our house for the second time.

Now, in April 2007, about one km from our land the Israeli government has started working to build the Separation Wall. I do not know if our land will still be for us. My family and I do not know where we can live, but we believe there are many good people in this world and especially in Palestine and Israel. If we want to search



for good people, we will find them from both sides of the Separation Wall.

I hope that all the people outside of this land will listen to the words of the people and not to the two stupid governments. We want peace here and now. We know the peace will not happen by Walls, soldiers or governments. The peace will happen when peo-

ple live with each other and when we return to humanity laws.