

**GCMHP's 5th International Conference**  
**"Siege and Mental Health..... Walls vs. Bridges"**  
**27 – 28 October, 2008**  
**Gaza City, Gaza**

The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) is a Palestinian non-governmental, non-profit organization established in 1990 to provide comprehensive community mental health services to the population of the Gaza Strip. Since that time, the Gaza Strip has witnessed extreme forms of violence and suffering, due to Occupation and military operations. Furthermore, the siege imposed on Gaza following Hamas takeover the Gaza Strip has accumulated the mental health problems to reach unprecedented levels.

GCMHP in partnership with WHO plan to organize GCMHP's 5th international conference entitled "*Siege and Mental Health... Walls vs. Bridges*". The major goal of the convention is to discuss issues related to siege, mental health, and human rights. Furthermore, the conference aims to help international academics, policy makers, and civil society groups understand the linkage between siege, violence, mental health, and human rights. The conference will include keynote speakers, workshops, and discussions sharing experiences on the conference themes.

#### **Effects of siege on mental health**

All this siege and humanitarian suffering impacted the Palestinian mental well-being; particularly children's and women's. Human beings are product of the environment in which they live. Currently, the Palestinian environment is a combination of deprivation, poverty, violence, feelings of powerless and helplessness. Such feelings are lead to more violence, defiance, extremism, and abandonment which is supposed to leave catastrophic consequences of the psychological profile of the next Palestinian generation. Thus, it will threaten all perspectives of peace, security and stability not only in the Gaza Strip, but also in the whole area.

#### **Goals of the Conference**

GCMHP's and WHO's major goal is to help attendees understand the relationship between siege, mental health, and human rights, as well as:

- To alleviate the mental health impacts of siege;
- To raise awareness of the international community of the impacts of siege on mental health;
- To influence the political and legal environment within and outside Palestine to respect human rights and promote mental well-being.
- To highlight the Palestinian psychosocial suffering in the Gaza Strip;

- To provide the international community with a greater understanding of siege and its impact on the deterioration of mental health and human rights of Palestinians;
- To build local capacities in the sector of psychosocial support;
- To enhance the communication and cooperation amongst International Organizations in different regions of the world.

### **Conference Themes**

- Siege and mental health.
- Siege, culture, democracy, and civil society.
- Impact of adversity on individual, family, and community.
- Siege in international law and human rights.
- International experiences of siege.
- Siege and Public Health.
- Siege and Development.
- Impacts of living in adversity situations.
- History of sieges and their impact on mental health and behavior.
- Women and Children under military siege.
- any relevant theme will be reconsidered.

### **Conditions for accepting research papers :**

1. The paper should relate to one of the conference themes.
2. The paper should follow accepted documentation procedures.
3. The research should be typed on A4 paper using the Times New Roman font of writing, letter size 12, bottom margins 12, single space.
4. Deadline for receiving abstracts is July 15th, 2008 and full papers will be received after the approval.
5. All papers shall be preliminary evaluated before they can be accepted for presentation in the conference by the conference scientific committees
6. All papers should be sent by e-mail to the address: [mahmoud@gcmhp.net](mailto:mahmoud@gcmhp.net)

### **Notes:**

1. Papers presented in the conference will be published in the conference proceedings.
2. The Conference budget shall cover the expenses of traveling (tickets), residence and accommodation for the keynote speakers.
3. The Conference fees for international participants are 150 \$US, to be paid in CASH during the conference to cover accommodation, food and local transportation.
4. The official languages of the conference are English and Arabic with simultaneous translation.

To get First Announcement and Call for Papers [Click Here](#)

To get Registration Form [Click Here](#)

To get Abstract Form [Click Here](#)

## **Conference Activities**

GCMHP and WHO plan to hold the conference in Gaza, yet we expect that some participants may not be able to attend due to the siege. Therefore, it is important to use the video conference technique to visually and audibly connect between the two locations Gaza-Ramallah or Gaza-Jerusalem, for example. The conference will last for three consecutive days **27-28 October, 2008**. The first and second days will include two panels each day where each one will be covered by four keynote speakers who will address the whole audience in Gaza and Ramallah or Jerusalem. After each panel, the attendants from both Gaza and Ramallah will be divided into three workshops in both locations to discuss certain themes where every two teams will be connected through video conference that is separate from the other two workshops. Furthermore, every workshop that includes two groups in Gaza and Ramallah or Jerusalem will be connected live together and simultaneous translation will be provided through head phones to all members of the workshops Simultaneously with the original speech. However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day will be field visits where the participants will be divided into groups and conduct field visits to various places in the Gaza Strip including Hospitals, camps, razed farms and destroyed homes. At the end of the visits, a press conference will be held jointly by all groups. Additionally, the conference will include documentaries about the effects of siege on all aspects of life in Gaza Strip.

## **Committees**

### **Advisory Committee**

*Taysir Abdallah*

*Sanna'a Abu Daga*

*Fadel Abu Hein*

*Sufian Abu Nejela*

*Ahmad Abu Tawahina*

*Mohamad Asqool*

*Eyad El-Sarraj*

*John Jenkins*

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Dereck Summerfield  
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Mark Vanommeren  
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**Organizing Committee:**

*Mahmoud Abu Aisha  
Rajiah Abu Sway  
Zahavi Arnona  
Marwan Diab  
Husam El-Nounou  
Michal Goldberg  
Dyaa Saymah*

**Related Links for Information on the Siege on Gaza and its Impacts**

<http://www.end-gaza-siege.ps/>

<http://www.ochaopt.org/>

<http://www.emro.who.int/palestine/>

<http://www.pchrgaza.org/>

[http://www.mezan.org/site\\_en/index.php](http://www.mezan.org/site_en/index.php)

**Contact Us:**

For more information, please don't hesitate contact us:

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