

ME046 / 2010

“A contact with the Mystic City of Jerusalem”

Code: ME046 / 2010

Date: 6/7 – 17/7/2010

Place: Old City Of Jerusalem

Hosting Organization: Youth Development Department (YDD) in cooperation with African Community Society

Work Type: 1. Cleaning the Historical Corners of the Old City
2. Organizing activities for the African Community children.

Number of Volunteers: 15 Internationals + 10 locals

Participation Fee: 200 Euros

Accommodation: Volunteers will be hosted in two apartments in the African Quarter in the Old City (one for girls, one for boys)

Hosting Organization: African Community Society

Coordinating Organization:

The Youth Development Department – YDD was founded to work with a development prospective, and to work as a professional and technical umbrella for the youth sector in Jerusalem, with a through the existing youth bodies in Jerusalem beside it's activities locally, regionally and internationally.

Local Community:

Origins: With the spread of Islam and the conversion of African in Africa, more and more black people participated in the Haj. However there were also migrations from Arabia to Africa and later back to Arabia to perform the Haj. The Palestinian Historian Al Aref reported that some people trace the Historical of contemporary Africans in Jerusalem back to Arabia.

The origins of the African community go back to pure Arabic roots. The majority of the members are derived from the Arab Muslim tribe called Al Salamat. The tribe was living in Jeddah, Hijaz (now in Saudi Arabia), and then migrated to Chad and Sudan with Hijaz, especially Mecca and Medina for the Haj, and after the pilgrimage they went to Jerusalem to continue their worship in al Aqsa mosque, the place of the nocturnal journey of the prophet Mohammed to the seven Heavens. Settling in the Old City of Jerusalem: Most contemporary members of the African community came to Jerusalem as pilgrims. They also came to Jerusalem to defend Muslims holy shrines in Jerusalem. More over, the Africans living in Jerusalem are proud of their historic role as guardians of the Islamic holy places since the time of the Mamluk in the thirteenth century. They occupy the mamluk buildings of either side of Alaá Ad- Deen Street leading to Al Aqsa mosque. On one side are the Ala'Ed deen Busari buildings, completed in 1267 and named after the mamluke founder of the quarter. On the other side are the Al Mansouri buildings which were completed in 1282. Originally the two ribats were hostels for

pilgrims worshipping at Al Aqsa Mosque. During the Ottoman period the Ribats were occupied by Africans who worked as guards of the mosque and waqf properties. Because of their honesty these Africans held the key of the GATES of the mosque and were responsible for preventing non-Muslims from entering the mosque area. Towards the end of the Ottoman era the Ribats were converted into prisons: Ribat Ad-Deen became Habs Ad-Dam while Ribat Mansouri became Habs Ar-Ribat.

Men who came from Africa to Jerusalem during this century married local women, many of whom were of African descent themselves. Ties with different Palestinian cities and towns where many African communities exist are particularly strong, like Jericho, Acre, Ledda, etc. Other married Palestinian women who have no ties with Africa. Although African Palestinians of Jerusalem are a separate community from the black Bedouin, some intermarriage occurs.

Project Description

Jerusalem is a very important city not only for religious reasons, being important for all the three main monotheistic religions, but also for its strategic position as a very vital commercial crossroads. Currently Israel is persisting in the Judaization of the city.

For force Palestinian to live Jerusalem and go in the West Bank or in other country, the Israel's authority use several ways, one of this is that for Arab Jerusalemite there are problems of crowded housing conditions, ever worse with the influx of the "illegal residence". In general they were concentrated in a few neighborhoods or spread throughout East Jerusalem.

The actions of Israel - the new colonies, the construction of the Wall, the demolitions of houses, a system of rigid limitations to the concession of permissions of house building and the continuous closing of the Palestinian institutions determine an increment of the Jewish presence to East Jerusalem, deteriorate the Palestinian community in the city, hinder the city development of the Palestinian of Jerusalem.

The program has different forms of work finalized to maintain the Old City that volunteers can participate in. The work camp is aimed to underline the importance of Jerusalem and particularly the Old City for the Palestinian.

The work will be divided into different sessions, such as:

- Working on cleaning the historical Walls of the Old City
- Cleaning the corners of the Old City
- Cultural exchange through interaction with the local community (experience, dance, cultural)

Cultural Program:

Documentary films;

Field visits in the areas surrounding East Jerusalem:

- Refugee Camp

- Destroyed villages
- Historical Wall of East Jerusalem
- Villages separated from Jerusalem by the Isolation Wall, but traditionally part of the city Meeting and testimony with Palestinians affected from House Demolition and revocation residence.
- Political Prisoners
- Cultural Events in East Jerusalem
- Documentary Films.

This Work camp is organized and implemented by YDD and African Community Society

Inscriptions should be directed to Ms: [Maali Edris ydd_exchanges@orienthouse.org](mailto:ydd_exchanges@orienthouse.org)