

## The brief for the Saving Lifta Event:

Announcement of the first stage of the Saving Lifta project-campaign in the Jerusalem region.

To begin the first stage of the project-campaign in the region, our first objective will be to hold a series of events in Lifta (the timetable for the event will be announced at a later date). The purpose of the events is to demonstrate why the heritage of Lifta is potentially invaluable and necessary for future peace in the region. And we will convey this possibility by orchestrating a series of events that engage into the potential of Lifta's spaces and demonstrate what can be possible.

The aim of holding an event will be to demonstrate the potential of Lifta's space as a place for conciliatory dialogue. All stages of the events will be loosely based around exercises capable of reconstructing the memory of Lifta. All work conducted in the events will be creatively and critically devised to ascertain the necessary information needed for the 2nd stage - to derive with the design of a master-plan for Lifta. The 3rd stage will be to lobby the master-plan, both regionally within the Jerusalem municipality and internationally, in a case aimed to protect Lifta.

Working towards a new narrative, a new history, and a new space.

The overall objective of the project-campaign will be to try and save Lifta by engaging her upon a theme that demonstrates her potential to become an innovative 'space of reconciliation'. As a space of reconciliation Lifta has the potential to transform into a place for the purposes of conciliatory dialogue. A potential gateway to a space seeking a goal to confront and reconcile narratives of histories, otherness and conflict whilst, demonstrating possibilities of a place that promotes healing, pluralism and inclusiveness.

The task for the event - A space for conciliatory dialogue:

The first task will focus on Lifta as an 'origin' to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The aim is to convey the memory of the Nakba catastrophe through eye witness accounts from the displaced people of Lifta. We aim to demonstrate and document that an encounter between an intangible memory and a tangible place allows a displaced people and community to confront their trauma and their tragedy. A poignant encounter nevertheless vital because firstly it establishes an authentic relationship of a bond existing between a people and a land; and secondly, it can play a vital role towards the healing of a people and the larger regional community.

Through observance of the memories of the displaced people, during this encounter, we aim to record and document the individual memories creating a mapping of a narrative of the Nakba catastrophe in Lifta. This information will be later used (in stages 2 & 3 of the project-campaign) as evidence demonstrating that this village has the potential to convey, as a museum/site of memory, a story of the origins of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The next task of the event will continue to focus on observing Lifta as an 'origin' of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Again, during the observance of the memories of the displaced people that unfold the narrative of the Nakba in Lifta, we will use these observations to demonstrate that Lifta has the potential to become a place for the creation of dialogue between the uprooted people of Lifta, as well as all Palestinians in general, with the Israeli public.

Engaging into the memory of the Nakba, in this instance from a place that has remained virtually desolate and un-appropriated since her uprooting in 1948, provides the backdrop for a real space within the Palestine/Israel region that has the capacity to make accessible an open dialogue and encounter a sense of shared-values through the issues of 'displacement', 'victimhood' and 'tragedy'. Themes that not only resonates throughout the Palestinian narrative since 1948, but are historically preserved and ever-present within the narrative of the Israeli 'other'; for instance the Holocaust, and the displacement of Arab Jews in the North African and Middle East region. Sharing and building upon multiple common themes, reaching beyond rivalry, and consoling upon the seeds of despair.

Lifta is also accessible to the 'other' because she allows us to re-imagine communities. Although her community consisted of an ethnic-religious majority of Muslims, the community still shared a religious diversity that consisted also of Christians and Jews. The uprooting of Lifta was a tragedy for the Palestinian community of the village however, the Nakba in Lifta was a catastrophe for the Palestinian Muslims, Christians and Jews. The Jewish Hilo tribe, who were part of one of the five main tribes in Lifta, apparently were given the option by the pervading force to remain in the village, decided to share the same fate with their community and vacated the village.

And now over 60 years have gone by, enabling enough time to take a step back and reflect at histories. Histories, that are usually referred to in their own unique set of circumstances and disparate narratives, can be engaged together in one space. In this task of the event, we will orchestrate an encounter between the Israeli public and the people from Lifta, engaging into the real memories of displacement set against the tangible backdrop of the valley landscape of Lifta. We will demonstrate that Lifta can become a space of encounter; a necessary place where both Palestinians and Israelis can come together and share a dialogue and speak of their narratives of tragedy, victimhood and displacement. An encounter made admissible because there still stands and exists a place in the region that is virtually desolate; where memory concealing a narrative of displacement can be reconstructed and sustained from a bond between a people, who can recount and relive their tragedy, and this place. A place that can challenge and defuse narratives that translate into a language of opposition or even hostility by presenting and addressing common themes shared in the tragic histories by both peoples.

The narratives of displacement shared together at Lifta can create this place into a necessary common-ground for the purposes of healing and conciliation. During the event, we will demonstrate and document these encounters on the space of Lifta, drawing upon the potential of this place for the purposes of invaluable capacity-building for the regional civil society. And the information gathered and collected will be used to inform and towards the case for the alternative master-plan.

- Anil Korotane, director of Belonging