

Building the Rule of Law in Jenin Governorate: Interview with Dr. Qaddoura Mousa, Governor of Jenin

The Palestinian authorities are undertaking significant steps to improve the rule on the governorate level in the West Bank. In the framework of its project 'Forum Rule of Law', the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Palestinian Center for Security Sector Management (PCSSM) held on 18 May 2010 an interview with the Governor of Jenin, Dr. Qaddoura Mousa. In this interview Dr. Mousa lays out the way forward for improving the rule of law in Jenin governorate. DCAF and PCSSM jointly publish this interview as a contribution to transparent and accountable security sector governance.

DCAF & PCSSM: Dr. Mousa, what is your vision for the Jenin governorate?

Qaddoura Mousa: My vision for the Jenin governorate is a region that is free of settlements, free of illegal vehicles and in which gangs are dismantled. An area, in which crimes do not occur. Despite the difficulties we are facing, we are not far from reaching these achievements

DCAF & PCSSM: Could you tell us about the most important achievements in the context of building the rule of law in the Jenin governorate?

Qaddoura Mousa: The most important achievement was the specialisation of the security forces. The military intelligence service follows up all matters pertaining to violations committed by military personnel. I mean that we started with re-organising the security forces to show the citizens that every person is accountable. The second point was to prevent security officers to intervene in the work of the judiciary. The third achievement was to encourage citizens to file complaints against any person regardless of his or her rank. This has helped strengthen the rule of law in the governorate.

DCAF & PCSSM: What kind of difficulties are you talking about?

Qaddoura Mousa: The first and foremost problem is the occupation. We don't owe all our shortcomings to

What is the Security Sector?



The security sector consists of the core security and justice providers and their management and oversight institutions. The legal and policy framework regulates their tasks, authorities and structures.

Core security and justice providers:

- ◆ Security forces (armed forces, police, intelligence and security services, but also liberation armies and insurgency groups)
- ◆ Justice and law enforcement institutions (courts, prosecution services, prisons, traditional justice systems)

Management and oversight institutions:

- ◆ Executive management and oversight bodies (Presidency, Council of Ministers, ministries of defence, interior, justice and finance)
- ◆ Legislative management and oversight bodies (Parliament and its committees, ombudspersons)
- ◆ Informal oversight institutions (civil society organisations, media, research and advocacy organisations)

the occupation, but when we go to detain criminals, or seize illegal vehicles, for example, especially in the Areas C, we face a problem. Until this very moment, we don't have anti-riot tools; we need such tools that don't cause damage or harm people's lives.

DCAF & PCSSM: *You say that the Israeli occupation is the main obstacle that hinders the rule of law. But what about internal factors, such as the political division? Do you include members of the political opposition in your consultations?*

Qaddoura Mousa: Only those who condemn what happened in the Gaza Strip can become our partner. Unless the head of the Hamas bloc condemns what happened in Gaza, I won't call him to attend any meeting. If you want me to treat you democratically, you should be democratic.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Is it possible to talk about the future of the governorate without the participation of all segments of the Palestinian political spectrum?*

Qaddoura Mousa: Yes. The people are satisfied, only the political leaders boycott. All that the people need is good services.

DCAF & PCSSM: *How can services be improved without inclusive participation?*

Qaddoura Mousa: You're right. Reconciliation could accelerate the process, without a solution in this regard things could go rather slow. If we deliver good security and social services to the public and reduce the rate of unemployment, we will triumph. The occupation also must end because even if you give people gold without ending the occupation, they won't be satisfied. In 1987, the economic situation of the Palestinian people was the best. The per capita income was very high, but when an Israeli vehicle ran over three citizens in Gaza, the 'Intifada' broke out.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Do you think that there have been mistakes, or things you would have done differently over the last years, during the security operation 'Smile and Hope'?*

Qaddoura Mousa: Every day and every year, there are new instructions and things are getting clearer. We have done mistakes, but we have addressed them on the spot. There have been individual mistakes but no systematic transgressions. For example, one security officer was mistakenly killed by his colleague in clashes with an armed group in the village of Jaba'. We should deliver security services professionally, so if we get anti-riot tools, we won't make such mistakes.

DCAF & PCSSM: *With regard to the relations with civil society and its participation to security campaigns, have there been particular challenges?*

Qaddoura Mousa: There must be direct contacts between us and civil society. We succeeded in our campaign, which can be considered as a model for forming such relations with the local community. We were able to introduce ourselves to the people through workshops. The fact that I am from the city of Jenin and know the people's problems and needs was very helpful. Yet, the main problem we face today is an unemployment rate of 42% in the governorate. Some people wonder how we live under such conditions. We know how difficult it is but families' cooperation and symbiotic relations among the citizens help alleviate their problems. But this won't be completely solved without putting an end to unemployment.

DCAF & PCSSM: *You mentioned that workshops with civil society were held. What was the outcome of these workshops?*

Qaddoura Mousa: In the beginning, the main aim of the workshops was to understand the needs of the citizens in the governorate. We divided the governorate into sectors, unions and NGOs and chose participants from governmental departments, professional sectors, journalists, human rights activists, and women's organizations. We then reached findings and identified priorities. The first priority for the people was security. We brought security officers together with the citizens who benefit from their services. We chose traders, women and men from every sector and concentrated on the issue of illegal vehicles, which caused real insecurity on the streets. The second priority was to tackle the issue of unemployment. We paid much attention to it and set a strategy which included what should be done. The third priority was infrastructure. We paved the Jenin-Salem road, now more than 5000 vehicles drive on it. The active movement we see today in the governorate is due to the process of construction of infrastructure.

DCAF & PCSSM: *How did citizens contribute to better law enforcement?*

Qaddoura Mousa: People met the security officers at the outset of the security campaign with flowers and desserts. We faced no problems during the campaign but in two areas. In the town of Qabatia, one of the security servicemen and a young man from the town were wounded, but we were able to have control over the situation without further problems. I think that 90-95% of the population was happy about the campaign.

DCAF & PCSSM: *What advice do you give to the civil society to contribute to strengthening the rule of law?*

Qaddoura Mousa: Technology today is very advanced, and children know more than their parents, so the parents need to follow up on their behavior to strengthen the culture of partnership among the

different segments of the society, including the family, school and university.

DCAF & PCSSM: *You said that the first priority mentioned by the people who participated in the workshops you organised was security. How do you evaluate the role of the security forces in satisfying this need?*

Qaddoura Mousa: The performance of the security services has become good. Each service and each commander understand the instructions and powers issued to him. All security forces are working to achieve security and order, but the police force spearheads the process. The police are a crucial element in strengthening the rule of law, together with the other security services. None of these services detain people for political reasons, we only detain outlawed people.

DCAF & PCSSM: *How many detainees are there?*

Qaddoura Mousa: I don't have accurate statistical information, but there are about 15-20 persons currently in detention. Some of them get remanded for a week or ten days. They were arrested for having smuggled money or unlicensed arms.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Do the security forces have, as many citizens say, overlapping powers?*

Qaddoura Mousa: I think the citizens know and understand. They are not ignorant, but they sometimes tailor things according to their personal interests. The police constitute the main pillar of the relationship with the citizens. They are responsible for protecting the consumer, organising the traffic, fighting drugs and other responsibilities that keep them in contact with the people on a daily basis. The external security lies with the General Intelligence, which is responsible for following up whatever happens in the country in terms of political and military issues. The Preventive Security is responsible for following up and monitoring the political and social movement in the country to protect the society against crime. The responsibility of the Military Intelligence is to follow up on the behavior of the military personnel.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Do you think that such matters are clear to the citizens?*

Qaddoura Mousa: The citizens are aware of that, and that's the reason why they come from distant areas suing officers of the intelligence service, for example. They are clever people.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Many citizens say that the number of the security servicemen compared to the services delivered is very large. Do you employ more than what you really need?*

Qaddoura Mousa: This hasn't happened since a year. We need an army of young people, because the army we have is composed of the old generation

of the Palestinian revolution. We can't tell them "go home", because they maintained our honor and our revolution. We are thinking of a plan to have an army that is dedicated to serving the Palestinian society as a society, and that's why we are seeking to recruit a new generation with new conditions. The issue of unemployment among the young is another factor. We know that we should help the sector of the young to enable them to build their lives.

DCAF & PCSSM: *What are the most important steps you took during the past two years to enhance the process of recruitment?*

Qaddoura Mousa: The age of those who like to be recruited should not exceed 18-22 years.

DCAF & PCSSM: *You mean: Not university graduates?*

Qaddoura Mousa: We announce vacancies when we have them. If the police need experts in law, they announce it, hold interviews with applicants, and those who get selected go to a training course in this regard and become officers. With regard to the other security services, they might need experts in law or administrative staff, the announcement includes the job description. The age of any applicant should not be over 45 years.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Effective recruitment criteria, as you have outlined, is a first step. What is the second?*

Qaddoura Mousa: The second step is delivering training courses either in Palestine or abroad. The Palestinian Academy for Security Sciences in Jericho absorbs a good number of trainees. We also receive grants and benefit from the experience of others, especially Jordan, Egypt, Turkey and Germany. These activities help strengthen the abilities of the Palestinian people to establish their state.

DCAF & PCSSM: *What progress has been made in strengthening the accountability of the security services?*

Qaddoura Mousa: We have started holding a weekly meeting headed by the governor since the start of the security campaign. All security commanders attend this meeting. The aim of this meeting is to discuss complaints and handle them, set the weekly plan and assess the whole situation.

DCAF & PCSSM: *You talked about complaints. How are citizens' complaints processed?*

Qaddoura Mousa: We have a special complaints' box at the gate of the governor's office. The citizens put their complaints in this box. I personally follow up on the complaints, and then report it to the chief of the police in the governorate, and they follow it up with the citizen. Concerning security and detention complaints, we hold a meeting and inform the intelligence agencies of the complaint. I follow up

on the case taking into account human rights. We also have a legal advisor whose role is to defend the citizens' rights.

DCAF & PCSSM: *When you talk about achievements, I feel Jenin is better than Switzerland. But what about future needs? How do you see Jenin in five years?*

Qaddoura Mousa: We lack an independent economy. Our economy depends on Israel's and we suffer much of that. We are not Switzerland. Expired goods enter our markets and our homes. We suffer poverty and diseases. We had success in security matters only. The Israeli side poses a danger to us. We receive donations from the outside world. For example, a person from the Arab Gulf supported us in building a school that absorbs 300 students, but the Israeli side threatens us with demolition all the time. This is a big problem.

DCAF & PCSSM: *There has been much attention recently by the Palestinian National Authority on devising long-term development plans...*

Qaddoura Mousa: We have an eight-year plan (until 2018).

DCAF & PCSSM: *There is also the Palestinian National Plan (2011-2013) for the creation of Palestinian state, how do you see your governorate's contribution to that?*

Qaddoura Mousa: The pillar of the state is here. We have an economic and tourism crossing, the crossing of Jalama. We also have an industrial area that could extend on 4'000 dunums [1'000 acres] of land, as well as a professional young generation. 35'000 workers from Jenin governorate were working in Israel, but today we have no more than 1'500 workers working in the Israeli labor market. We have a plan for stabilising the Palestinian economy and another plan for constructing the sewage system and extending pipes that would irrigate about 162'000 dunums [40'500 acres] of arable land. This will support the agricultural sector and enable us to export our products abroad. Jenin has large areas of arable land where agricultural projects could be established. We also have a dump for solid waste that no country in the Middle East has.

DCAF & PCSSM: *So Jenin could be a model for the future Palestinian state?*

Qaddoura Mousa: Ending the occupation is the most important point.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Our final question: What is your assessment of local ownership of the Palestinian national project?*

Qaddoura Mousa: I would like first to ask the question: Does Israel have the intention to end its occupation? Why all those violations and settlement building? Netanyahu has spoken about the 'Model of Jenin'. I ask what he means by that.

DCAF & PCSSM: *Dr. Mousa, thank you very much.*

DCAF Spotlight publishes concise reports on salient topics of Palestinian security sector governance for local and international SSR practitioners.

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