

INTRODUCTION

The Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry- Jerusalem was founded in 1936. Eversince, the Chamber has been active, competent and dynamic in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

During the years of occupation, the Chamber of Commerce had been almost isolated from the rest of the business world. In spite of that, it rendered lot of services to the residents of Jerusalem through its administrative activities. The Palestinian people in general and the residents of the annexed city of East Jerusalem in particular, have faced severe hardships as a result of the occupation, suppression, collective punishments, closure and demolition of houses etc...

The Chamber of Commerce was founded as a result of the 1936 General Strike against the detachment of the Chamber of Commerce which was a British administration. It became the first national organization, under the Chairmanship of H.E Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, the man who had initiated the establishment of the first Palestinian National Movement, a prominent politician, and became thereafter president of the General Government of Palestine.

At present, the Chamber in not only looking forward to offering its members the best services, but is also aiming at strengthening its relation with its General Assembly, comprising both the tradesmen and the industrialists. This intention will hopefully enable trade and economy in the city to flourish, and as a result blood will flow again in the veins of Jerusalem while recovering healthily and spiritually for a better future.

THE PRESENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chairman	Ahmad Hashem Zughayar
Vice Chairman	Wasef Daher
Secretary	Hussein Abdeen
Treasurer	Muneer Maraka
Vice Secretary	Adli Al Hammouri
Vice Treasurer	Daoud Wazwaz
Member	Mustafa Abu Zahra
Member	Yousef Aweidah
Member	Salah Atallah
Member	Hijazi Risheq
Director	Azzam Abu Saud
Deputy Director	Raymond T. Abdallah

JACCI MEMBERSHIP

The chamber is the representent of the interests of the whole regional economy and a partner services to each company whether it is large or not, or belongs to the industrial commercial, or services sector. The more the prospective members know about the functions and activities of the chamber, the better their interests can be acted upon. We are striving to establish intensive contacts with our member companies.

The starting of a business automatically makes the person a member of the chamber. Thus this member number among the 4,000 companies based in Jerusalem and its suburbs, belonging to our chamber companies of different size, from the industrial, commercial or service sectors and focusing on varying activities. The membership is legally regulated and this for an evident reason: the task of the chamber of commerce and industry consists in promoting the economy of its districts as well as protecting the interests of the district's tradesmen. Of course, this concerns the entirety of the member companies. This is the only way to guarantee objectivity and independence of individual interests.

Every member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry pays subscriptions, contributing to the fact that the chamber is able to fulfill its tasks. Members may probably ask themselves "what do I get from that?" " What do I get in return?". We ensure our members lots of services, because we have also a lot to offer, even in every single advantage is not measurable.

Moreover we are in charge of sovereign tasks that the city would normally carry out, for instance, we are responsible for all the matters concerning further training.

Lastly, the Chamber of commerce and industry offers its members a wide range of services: we help our members to find cooperation partners, we let them know if they can claim for public sponsored funds, we let them know as well if the conditions for a business expansion exists, we offer them technological and environmental protection advice, we discuss with them what they have to observe in case of a clearance sale, we hold seminars on further education for you and your colleagues, we can procure them some technological information from our data bases.

A LAST WORD

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Jerusalem seeks to offer better services to the merchants and to the industrialists in Jerusalem. It is keen on seeking cooperation with its brethren the Arabs, in order to deepen the Arab economical relations and strengthen its role. It shall work together with the Arab Chambers of Commerce towards a united Arab economy, and the integration of the Arab economy, in order to become an effective power in the global world.

The Chamber is also seeking to encourage the Arab investors to come to Jerusalem in order to rebuild and develop the economy of the Arab city which has suffered a lot from the Israeli occupation.

- Arbitrate in commercial disputes, and mediates in resolving problems between importers and exporters.
- Provides consultations to importers and exporters on markets.
- Guides investors to the best investment opportunities.
- Participates in and supports the general activities targeted at rendering services to the society.

THE OUTLOOKS

The Chamber of Commerce is looking forward to widening its services in the following aspects:

- Maintains and update a commercial library, to provide the members with information on commercial affairs.
- Establishes a consulting taxation and legal department, to provide necessary consultations regarding these issues.
- Develops the economic department at the Chamber.
- Arranges for workshops aiming at training and upgrading the employees working in the private sector.
- Executes new tourist centers in Jerusalem for finding extra tourist attraction sites.
- Issues a periodical leaflet, concerning the commercial, industrial and tourism sectors in Jerusalem.
- Issues a monthly newsletter focusing on modern business opportunities and proposals, and discussing problems and solutions to the benefit of the member.
- Endeavors to establish a commercial and industrial club to offer social, rest and recreational services, and organizes trips for the family members, to visit foreign exhibitions at a reduced rate.
- Renovates the hall of the Chamber by adding two sub-halls to be utilized for different purposes.

JERUSALEM - THE CRADLE OF RELIGION... AND CITY OF PEACE

Jerusalem the highly proud city of its two Mosques (The Blessed Al-Aksa, and the Dome of the Rock), the Holy Sepulcher Church, and many other Churches, its old walls, its markets, and its narrow alleys filled by the historic redolence, is the place where the eyes of the world look. It is the birthplace of civilization and the celestial religion. It has been invaded more than twenty five times over the last five thousand years, but has resisted in the face of those who tried to change its Arab features. It is the birthplace of the heavenly religions, the ascension place of the prophet Mohammed to Heaven, and it is the resurrection of the Jesus Christ, the Symbol of love and peace.

Jerusalem in Figures

Arab Population of Jerusalem	249270 (mid 2003)
Population of Jerusalem Governorate	394105
Governorate Area	333,000 dunums (1 dunum = 1000sq.m.)
Agricultural land area	15,700 Dunums more than its half is planted with olive trees.
Its highest point above the sea level	(in mt. of Olives) 826 meters.
Its lowest point above the sea level at Silwan fountain	610 meters
The Industrial firms	2223 (include the handicraft firms)
The size of annual production	300 million dollars approximately
Number of hotels	28-2225 rooms -4928 beds.
Number of schools and kindergarten	201
Universities	2 (Al-Quds University, the Open University of Jerusalem)
Number of hospitals	7

East Jerusalem is known throughout the whole world to be the Center of Tourist Industry. There are 51 Hotels functioning and operating in East Jerusalem, with a capital of about 200 million dollars. It contains about 3200 rooms, with about 2000 skilled laborers and clerical employees.

Tourism is organized through lot of special associations covering tourist activities such as:

- The Higher Council of the Arab Tourist Industry.
- Arab Hotels.
- Travel Agencies.
- Tourist Transport.
- Restaurants.
- Tour Guides.
- Oriental Souvenirs.

THE ECONOMIC LIFE IN JERUSALEM

Jerusalem received 2 million visitors in 1999, yet 3 millions are expected in the year 2000 and more afterwards.

The tourism sector is a potentially significant growth industry. Jerusalem economy is dependent on tourism in general. Trade, services, and industry come second.

The basic tourist industry has generated a significant number of economical activities such as: hotels, tourist and travel offices, tourist transport companies, restaurants and coffee shops, profession of tourist guiding, oriental souvenirs and handcrafts stores, and other workshops connected to oriental gifts; therefore, all these branches form the main economy in the city.

The start of the Palestinian intifada on the 28th of September 2000, has greatly affected the economy and particularly the tourism industry.

The beneficiaries and the investors of the tourism sector were financially badly hit. They were obliged to accept bank loans in order to settle their dues. The tourism sector forms 45% of the main economy of Jerusalem and is distributed to: hotels, tourist and travel agencies, tourist transport companies, restaurants and coffee shops, profession of tourist guiding, oriental souvenirs and handcrafts stores.

As a result of the Israeli military checkpoints set up at the entrances to East Jerusalem the economic and commercial activities in the city has been greatly deteriorated and weakened. This measure is in fact to prevent Palestinian products from the West bank and Gaza from reaching the markets of the Holy City.

The isolation of the occupied territories and the Israeli fence construction works, crossing agricultural roads, and cutting off residents from their water supply sources, from schools, businesses, and public services, etc.... forbids the private sector as well as the Palestinian chambers of commerce from taking part in developing local and international businesses.

THE ISRAELI WALL... AN OBSTACLE TO NORMAL LIFE (by Raymond Abdullah)

Looking back at the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989, and the completion of reunification on October 3, 1990, many Germans continue to be amazed at how unexpectedly and how rapidly this historic development occurred.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, Chancellor Helmut Kohl talked about the "flourishing landscapes" that would arise in the region.

Today, you will find flourishing landscapes throughout the whole region from

tourist resorts on the Baltic coast with their unique seaside, palaces and villages attract large number of visitors.

Industrial centers have also been rebuilt. There was investment and prosperity in new production plant, and besides, new factories were built.

However, this was on too modest a scale to create and provide new jobs for the workers. Of course, the investors also made sure the new facilities would be highly productive with low personnel costs to successfully compete on world markets.

Now, if we look back to our homeland, Palestine, and watch what is going around its territories, we will find out that the people continue speaking about the Israeli defensive wall, cutting through many Palestinian cities, crossing agricultural roads, cutting off residents from their water supply sources, from farms, from schools, businesses, and public services- this is indeed a great obstacle to normal life and bright future, as well as destruction to the Palestinian national economy.

The said wall separates Israel from the West Bank, and other Palestinian territories. Such a defensive wall, will control the borders of any future Palestinian State, and will mark Israeli's eastern border, and thus, will never bring peace to the whole region.

As a result of the Israeli military measures, such as, setting up checkpoints at the entrances to East Jerusalem, and many obstacle measures against the Palestinian people, the economic and commercial activities in the city has been greatly affected and weakened. These measures are in fact to prevent Palestinian products from the West Bank and Gaza from reaching the markets of Jerusalem.

SERVICES OF THE CHAMBER

The Chamber offers its members, the investors and the business community in the city a series of services:

- Defends the interests of the private sector in Jerusalem.
- Issues certificate of origin and authenticate the commercial documents.
- Prepares reports on the economic situation of Jerusalem.
- Provides training services in the administrative, marketing and productive aspects.
- Resolves taxation issues.
- Conducts studies on local industries, companies and production.
- Coordinates the participation of members in local and international exhibitions.