



Dispatches from Seraj

2022 TOUR



Bethlehem
Monday, October 24

From Bethlehem to Aida Refugee Camp

A Day in Pictures

By Anne Cordes, Trip Scribe



Driving up and down the West Bank these past 8 days, **we have become pretty familiar with The Wall**, 85% of which runs through occupied territories. It is made up of concrete walls, fences, ditches, razor wire, and an electronic monitoring system.

We've also learned to distinguish settlements from villages. Most of the buildings in settlements look identical, having been built at the same time; they stretch along the tops of the hills; the land around is the well-watered and green; and they are served by new highways.

The Palestinian villages are distinguished by the water tanks covering every rooftop. These households depend on the water that is delivered once a week. There is fencing everywhere and access is limited in a variety of ways.

The route that pilgrims used for centuries to reach the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem has been severely restricted since 2001. All of the shops are shuttered; the owners have had to make their living elsewhere. Tour buses now use a new road from Jerusalem.

And yet the Aida refugee camp—one of three near Bethlehem—is the site of one of **Seraj's most creative libraries**. When we arrived in this brightly painted space, with its comfortable furniture and well-stocked shelves, an English class was in session and several kids were playing video games on computers. The founder, talked to us about the "**beautiful resistance**" that they practice, in an effort to keep living—rather than dying—for their country.



A trompe d'oeil has to suffice since the view from a village to Jerusalem has been blocked by The Wall.



Shuttered shops along the pilgrims' road to the Church of the Nativity.



A string of settlements extends along the hilltops from Jerusalem towards Bethlehem, with a section of The Wall in the foreground.



Water tanks adorn the rooftops the the Aida refugee camp.

We'll continue sending updates on our journey. Watch your email.

See the full 2022 tour itinerary [HERE!](#)

See past tour Dispatches [HERE!](#)

18 PEOPLE are exploring Palestine up close and personal with our SERAJ executive director, Laurie Salameh, and her dedicated staff. October 16 -25. We hope you enjoy these reports.

REMEMBER we are dependent on your support for the programming and the maintaining of the libraries.

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