

Shaikh Raed Salah
The Gandhi of Palestine



- Raed Salah was born in 1958 in the Palestinian town of Umm al-Fahm where he received his early education. He was a founder of the Islamic movement in Israel in the 1970s and has travelled widely throughout historic Palestine, playing a major role in preserving the Islamic heritage of Jerusalem. Shaikh Raed has attended numerous gatherings of the Palestinian Diaspora in European countries and solidarity conferences with the Palestinian people.
- Enjoying unprecedented popularity among the Palestinian people, not least because he has faced several threats from Israeli officials and intelligence agencies, Shaikh Raed remains one of the most daring Palestinian figures in his struggle against the occupation which has led to his imprisonment on many



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occasions. In addition to his charismatic personality, he is known for his close relationship with ordinary Palestinian citizens, being well-known for his modest way of life, high moral standards, quiet character and kind smile that never leaves his face.

- Shaikh Raed Salah began his political and public career in 1989 through his candidacy for mayor of Umm al-Fahm (which has been subject to Israeli occupation since 1948); he won a tremendous victory, polling more than 70% of the votes. He won the municipal elections twice more in 1993 and 1997 before deciding voluntarily in 2001 to step down from the post to spend more time in defence of the Palestinian cause and to stand up for the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants in the face of growing Israeli threats.
- He leads the “Islamic Movement in Palestine ‘48” - the Palestinian territories occupied by Israeli forces in 1948 - the most popular Palestinian political force in those areas. Shaikh Raed and the movement he leads rejected the option of contesting elections for seats in the Israeli parliament (Knesset) as he believes that there are no opportunities to end Israel’s occupation through parliamentary involvement due to the dominance of military, intelligence, extremist and racist forces in the Israeli political arena.
- Shaikh Raed is famous for his tireless and peaceful protests against the Israeli occupation and its continued violations. His reliance on non-violent means has earned him the sobriquet “the Gandhi of Palestine”. In addition to the social programmes and the humanitarian and educational projects he stands behind, in 1998 Raed Salah launched the “self-reliant community” initiative which aimed to achieve Palestinian self-development and economical independence from the Israeli occupation.
- He has drawn attention repeatedly to successive Israeli governments’ use of peace agreements with the Palestinians as pretexts for continuing its expansionist policies on Palestinian land against Palestinian citizens; this includes Israel’s continuous violations against the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, and the imposition of the military occupation on the Palestinian territories.



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- In 2002, the Israeli Interior Ministry issued an order barring him from travelling abroad; the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice ignored his appeal and upheld the order.
- Shaikh Raed was among the first to launch mass campaigns against Israeli policies for the future of Jerusalem, notably the occupation authority's continuous attacks on Islamic and Christian religious sites and the destruction of tombs and encroachment on the historic Ma`man Allah cemetery.
- In 2009 and 2010, the Israeli occupation authorities issued military orders banning Shaikh Raed from entering Jerusalem after he exposed a series of Israeli plans for the implementation of wide-ranging architectural projects around Al-Aqsa Mosque and the construction of complex tunnels under Islamic and Christian holy sites and the historic city walls.
- Many solidarity campaigns have been led by Shaikh Raed with the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem in opposition to Israeli policies to expel them from their homes, withdraw their Jerusalem identity cards and deny their right of residence in the Holy City. He has had a key role in organising daily convoys of buses loaded with Palestinians from the Arab towns and villages occupied in 1948 who are keen to show solidarity with the inhabitants of the Old City of Jerusalem.
- Over the past few years, Shaikh Raed has been campaigning for the the right of return of Palestinian refugees who were ethnically cleansed by Zionist militias from their towns and villages in 1948, and their descendents. On the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba (the catastrophe of the creation of the state of Israel) he proclaimed, "No retreat from the right of return".
- In 2000, Israeli troops shot him in the head in what was considered by observers to be an assassination attempt.



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- Shaikh Raed Salah participated in the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza in May 2010 during which nine people were killed by Israeli soldiers. He was wounded during the assault and there were reports that he had been assassinated.

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