Razan Zuayer  
Chair of the Board, The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature

Years go by and our journey continues with the support of our followers, volunteers, and dynamic management and team, with a compass that did not budge one iota from the goals and visions we drew in the beginning. Our work in food sovereignty, green resistance, and raising awareness continues. We took it upon ourselves to occupy the place we deserve at international forums, bearing causes from the Arab region and defending our rights. That is all through our 4 programmes: The Million Tree Campaign, The Green Caravan, Food Sovereignty, and If Only You Knew.

We present to you the annual report of our work in 2021 with what our programmes have achieved, the doors we knocked on, the issues we raised, and every piece of land we planted in Jordan and occupied Palestine, hoping this will stimulate more hope first, and secondly, more support.

We are striving to achieve a lot together, and we look forward to the new year, where we will intensify communication with international movements and networks supporting Palestine. We will launch another global campaign to plant trees and replace those that have been uprooted, protecting Palestinian land from confiscation, and we will make further achievements with food security in Jordan. We will also proceed with a campaign to plant trees in Lebanon while we repeat the words of our poet Samih Al-Qasim:

“As long as I have a handspan of my land  
As long as I have an olive tree  
A lemon tree  
A well... and a cactus bush  
I still have... myself  
And I will forever remain mine”

Mariam Al Jaajaa  
General Manager, The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature

Like the years that have passed, we have spent the days of 2021 working together, learning, and strengthening our local, regional, and global partnerships. We have aligned ourselves with peoples’ consciences while listening with our minds and hearts to the land and farmers in a way where they determine their own priorities. At the same time, we proved our presence and continuous dialogue with decision-makers, providing honest, professional insight and advice objectively and responsibly.

We at the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature are proud of setting an example of a genuine civil society organization that is uncompromising and insistent on independence from any conditional support. We do not succumb to pressure or allow ourselves to be led astray. We continue to stand where we are meant to and beside those who dream of a better future.

We extend our hands to them, moving away from factionalism, sectarianism, and exclusion. This vision is reflected in the diversity of our staff, members, and volunteers. While embracing different ideas, backgrounds, and cultures, we share a vision of unity and the region’s sovereignty over its resources and food. This requires firm belief and hard work to liberate our lands and minds from a history of colonialism and neocolonialism.

We believe that there is no real development without a solid agricultural sector that does not marginalise small-scale farmers and is not dependent on strategies and priorities of countries, corporations, and organizations at the expense of our region.

We are proud of your support and collaboration. We invite you strengthen your efforts in our collective movement. We are happy to hear your voices and thoughts and promise to continue working together towards the good of our Arab nation and humanity as a whole.
About the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)

The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature was established in 2003 as a non-profit civil society organisation to contribute to the protection of the environment and natural resources of Arab countries, in coordination with both Arab and international organisations, against all hazards, including the destructive impacts of war and foreign occupations.

Our Mission

APN seeks to reinforce the capacity of the Arab people to sustain their natural resources and gain sovereignty over them, especially in areas under occupation and conflict, and to mobilise civil society organisations to advocate for regional and global environmental issues.

Our Goals

1. Contribute to the rehabilitation and sustainability of natural resources in the Arab region affected by war and occupation, with a particular focus on Jordan and Palestine.
2. Influence the drafting and implementation of environmental, agricultural, and food policies on the national, regional and international level.
3. Mobilise civil society efforts to contribute and respond to environmental issues.
4. Build the capacity of the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature to achieve its mission with professionalism, effectiveness, and institutional sustainability.
2021 General Assembly

APN held its annual General Assembly on May 18, 2021, with a majority of its members present. The meeting commenced with a discussion of the prior year’s achievements and a review of the administrative report. A representative of the Talal Abu Ghazaleh firm presented the auditor’s report and APN’s 2020 financial statements which were approved by the General Assembly.

Auditors
Talal Abu Ghazaleh Organization

APN Founding Members

Razan Zuayer  
Rami Barhoush  
Asem Shehabi  
Eman Abu Alrous  
Hassan Al Jaajaa  
Sameeh Kawar  
Suhbia Al Maani  
Humam Mufti  
Zina Kawar  
George Mushahwar  
Inas Bseisou  
Lubna Irshied  
Sari Zuayter  
Dina Abu Alrous  
Nicola Billeh  
Saad Hijawi  
Humam Darwaza  
Fouad Srouji  
Mutaz Al Affi  
Sami Nabulsi  
Sima Alami
Board of Directors

Razan Zuayer
Chair of the Board

Rami Barhoush
Vice Chair

Zina Kawar
Treasurer

Nicola Bilieh
Secretary

Humam Mufti
Board Member

Omar Shogem
Board Member

Fouz Shaqair
Board Member

Mariam Al Jaajja
General Manager

Mohammad Qaisahat
Project Manager

Maha Qwasemi
Advocacy and Research Officer

Ibrahim Hanasra
Representative of APN in Palestine

Malek Jariri
Accountant

Mahmoud Lafi
Media Officer

Walaa Dabash
Administrative Assistant

Deyar Muhaisen
Project Officer

Sameh Hejab
Logistics Officer
APN Volunteers

APN relies on the participation of a large volunteer community working in a horizontal structure. Over the years, thousands of volunteers of all ages have joined together to spread and act on the organization’s message.

APN is a member of the following networks and institutions

- Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS) ......................... Chair
- People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) ....................... Co-chair
- The Arab League Committee on the Eradication of Hunger ________ Co-chair of the Group on Combating Hunger in Conflict-Affected Countries
- Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) _________________________________ Coordinator of the Working Group on Protracted Crises
- CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) _________ Co-Chair of the Working Group on Conflict & Fragility
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) .......... National and Regional Committee Member
- Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) _________________ Member of the Partners’ Assembly
- International Network of Jerusalem Institutions, ________________ Member
- Jordanian Federation for Environmental NGOs, ________________ Member
- Global Campaign to Return to Palestine ___________________________ Member
- International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS) ________________ Board Member
APN maintained the following accreditations

1. Special Consultative Status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
2. Observer Status at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

APN collaborates with the following regional and international institutions

- CFS: Committee on World Food Security
- UN-ESCWA: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
- FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- LAS: The Arab League/League of Arab States
- AOAD: Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
- UN-HABITAT: The United Nations Human Settlements Programme

APN Partners in Tree Planting and Land Rehabilitation Programmes in Palestine

- Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)
- Palestinian Farmers’ Union
- Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture
- Al Nahda Rural Society
- Bethlehem Farmers’ Union
- Council of Palestinian Municipalities
- Saltfilm Development Association
- Handala Cultural Center
- Ahali Center for Community Development
- Al Hakura Society
- Palestinian Farmers’ Association – Al Wusta Governorate
- Gaza Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture Platform
APN Partners in Tree Planting and Land Rehabilitation Programmes in Jordan

- Al Numeira Environmental Association
- Al Balqa Creativity Institute
- Madaba Women’s Charity Association
- Jordanian Agricultural Workers’ Union
- National Agricultural Research Center (NARC)
- Nawa Platform
- Greater Amman Municipality
Summary of Achievements in 2021

APN continued its work within its 4 programmes during 2021, resulting in quality achievements at the local, regional, and international levels.
The Million Tree Campaign in Palestine
Why the Million Tree Campaign?

Historical Context

In 1897, the First Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland, to promote the implementation of Zionist goals, namely the creation of a home for the Jews in Palestine under public law (Mitchel, 2011).

In 1917, Arthur James Balfour, the United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary, wrote a letter known as the Balfour Declaration to one of Britain’s most influential Jewish citizens, Baron Rothschild.

This letter expressed the government’s support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

The letter disregarded the fact that, at the time, non-Jews constituted approximately 94% of the population (Mccarthy, 1990).

This declaration paved the way for the mass immigration of Jews, and while it clearly stated that the establishment of a Jewish home should not prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing communities in Palestine, what followed was nation-wide ethnic cleansing, land and resource dispossession, and the internal and external displacement of over 800,000 Palestinians.

All of these events enabled the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Israel continued to expand, capturing and occupying the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem in 1967.

Discriminatory Laws Enacted by Israel to Seize Private Palestinian Land

1. The Absentee Property Law, 1950
   The law gives Israel the “right” to seize, administer, and control land owned by absentees (Bishara, 2009; Anon., 1950). The law also states that property (including land) held by the state, Development Authority, or the Jewish National Fund is closed to use, development, or ownership by non-Jews (Falk & Titley, 2017).

2. The Land Acquisition Law, 1953
   The law legalizes the seizure of land based on security and development (Forman & Kedar, 2006; Liston, 2013).

3. Ottoman Land Law, 1858
   In the 1880s, Israel began implementing an 1858 Ottoman law, which states that any plot of land which has not been cultivated for three years or has less than half its area cultivated, must be reverted to the Ottoman sultan, or under Israeli application, to the colonial state (Matar, 1997).
   While the Ottoman law was originally enacted to encourage farmers to use their land, it has been manipulated by Israeli occupation authorities to facilitate mass land grabbing.
Israeli Violations on Palestinian Land

To facilitate the expropriation of occupied land under the Ottoman Land Law, thousands of acres of Palestinian agricultural land have been razed and uprooted by Israeli authorities and citizens. This has paved the way for the expansion of illegal settlements, the building of settler-only roads, and the extension of the Israeli Apartheid wall (El-Jazari, 2010).

1- Approximately 3 million trees have been uprooted or destroyed since the year 2000, the majority of which are olive trees (Ministry of Agriculture Palestine, 2009).

2- The construction of the Apartheid wall resulted in the uprooting of an estimated 100,000 trees, along with the displacement of hundreds of families and the severance of vital roads (Mair & Long, 2003).

3- Settlers continually attack Palestinian lands, resulting in the burning, vandalism, and poisoning of trees (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2016).

4- An estimated 90% of Palestinian communities own olive groves within or around Israeli settlements and are frequently denied access to them by Israeli occupation authorities under the pretense of “security rationales,” leading to land deterioration and confiscation (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012).

The Significance of the Palestinian Agricultural Sector and Olives

Palestinians have relied on olives for centuries, and the strategic targeting of their emblematic olive groves is an attack on Palestinian identity, culture, heritage, and livelihoods.

One-third of all women in the West Bank are employed in the agricultural sector. The olive industry—table olives, oil, and byproducts—supports between 80,000 and 100,000 Palestinian families and is worth between US$160 and US$191 million (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2016).

Restricted land access and land destruction are a direct threat to the many Palestinian families who rely on agriculture as a source of food and income (UNRWA, 2013). As a result of these impediments, many farmers no longer have the financial means to replant their uprooted trees.

The Palestinian Cause and International Policy

Israel has violated decisions made by the International Court of Justice and a plethora of international laws including the 4th Geneva Convention. Three UN resolutions breached by Israel include:

**Resolution 194 (III), 1948**

In 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 194 (III) stating that Palestinians have the right to return to their homes, which completely invalidates Israel’s Absentee Property Law.

**Resolution (ES-10/14), 2004**

Following the submission of resolution ES-1014 by the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel is obliged to return the land and olive groves seized for the construction of the wall to the Palestinian owners with full compensation.

**Resolution 2334, 2016**

In 2016, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2334 reaffirming that Israeli settlements, the confiscation of land, the demolition of homes, and the displacement of Palestinian civilians are flagrant violations of international law and have no legal validity.

A UNESWA study on “the Question of Apartheid” stated that the system of racial discrimination enforced by the state of Israel is a threat to regional peace and security (Falk & Tilley, 2017).

Despite the obligation of Israel, as an occupying power, to abide by international law in protecting Palestinian civilians and land, the Israeli occupation authorities and illegal settlers continue to operate unabated with infrequent indictments and even rarer accountability (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012).
The Implications of the Siege on Gaza

In 2007, the Israeli occupation of Gaza’s land, air, and sea, transformed into a blockade locking 2 million people away from the outside world (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017).

The Israeli siege on Gaza and its deliberate targeting of the Palestinian agriculture sector has eroded any sense of food sovereignty, forcing 47% of Gazans into food insecurity (UNRWA, 2016).

The blockade has destroyed public infrastructure, devastated food and agricultural imports, halted people’s movement, and has severely limited the delivery of basic utilities including water and electricity.

Between 90% to 95% of Gaza’s water supply is non-drinkable and 40 percent of the population receives just 5 to 8 hours of water supply every 3 days (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017; Amnesty International, 2009).

The Israeli military has imposed “buffer zones” inside Gaza rendering 30–40% of the arable land in what had been considered Gaza’s food basket inaccessible (Palestinian Farming and Civil Society Organizations, 2013).

The military has imposed a similar nautical military buffer zone, barring Gazan fishermen from 17 of the 20 nautical miles of the Mediterranean Sea over which the Oslo Accords determined they had rights (Palestinian Farming and Civil Society Organizations, 2013).

These restrictions prevent access to large fishing areas and directly undermine the livelihoods and security of approximately 4,000 registered fishers (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2013).

The Current Situation in the West Bank

To date, indigenous Palestinian communities are left with less than 15% of Palestine (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017; Anon., 2011). Of the remaining land, 60% of the West Bank is classified as “Area C” and is under full Israeli control.

The Apartheid Wall, which Israel began constructing in 2000, cuts deep into the West Bank expanding the expropriation of Palestinian land. The Wall is not built along the 1967 boundary, rather 85% is located within the West Bank. While the wall encompasses over 10% of the West Bank, Palestinians are barred from accessing some 40% of the area due to the additional presence of military zones, settlements and outposts, bypass roads for settlers, and other spaces. (United Nations Report to the General Assembly, 2007). The Wall, along with hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints, subjects Palestinians to a complex system of physical and bureaucratic barriers that impede freedom of movement and access to healthcare, education, and other essential services (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2006).

The Current Governance Structure in the West Bank

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (1995) divided the West Bank into three administrative categories: Areas A, B, and C. Soon after, a new category, “Natural Reserves,” was formed. The areas differed in the amount of self-governance Palestinians would have through the Palestinian Authority.
The Exploitation of Palestine’s Natural Resources

The land allocation described in table 1 facilitates Israel’s continuous exploitation of Palestine’s natural resources, namely through the restriction of Palestinian access to water (The World Bank, 2008). Israel determines the amount of water Palestinians can extract from aquifers and springs through most of the West Bank, routinely destroys rain collection facilities, and prohibits the drilling of new water wells.

Palestinian water extraction is limited to 17% of the share of the aquifers’ water, while Israel extracts the remaining 83% for settler use, consumption in “Israel,” or for sale back to Palestinians at inflated prices (The World Bank, 2008). These discriminatory policies result in alarming disparities in water access between Palestinians and Israelis; settlers receive four times more water than Palestinian citizens (Amnesty International, 2009). The list of references is at the end of the report page 113.
The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem:
Planting trees in lands threatened with confiscation is considered zakat (religious charity)
The Million Tree Campaign (MTC)

The Million Tree Campaign (MTC), launched in 2001, replants trees in the Palestinian lands under the slogan “They Uproot a Tree...We Replant Ten”. The significance of the program lies in counteracting Israel’s deliberate confiscation of agricultural lands, which has contributed to high rates of food insecurity and unemployment in Palestine. From its launch until the end of 2021, the program succeeded in planting 2,594,488 trees in all the governorates of Palestine.
The Million Tree Campaign (MTC) 2021
Why the Green Caravan?

Thousands of years ago, the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region was known as the Fertile Crescent and the cradle of civilization, lauded for its incredible fertility and advanced agricultural development, from extended irrigation networks to the domestication of livestock. In the 1930s, WANA was a net exporter of wheat, with Egypt, Iraq and Transjordan as major producers (Woertz, 2014). Since the 1990s, however, a multitude of complex geopolitical, socioeconomic and environmental issues have led to the brutal decline of the region’s renowned agricultural conditions. Consequently, WANA is considered one of the most food-insecure regions globally (Center for International and Regional Studies, 2012). Jordan, in particular, has fallen casualty to weak agricultural policies and a neoliberal-driven economic development strategy.

Poor Agricultural Policies

Throughout the late 1990s, an eager focus on economic development and modernization, largely based on the Western model of societal reform, led to overwhelming neglect of a key source of stability and welfare; the agricultural sector (Baylouny, 2008). As a condition of joining the World Trade Organization, Jordan began implementing the Agricultural Structural Adjustment Program (ASAP), which was in line with neoliberal policies that favoured deregulation and privatization of the sector (Jabarin, 2005; El Saadi, 2017). As such, ASAP led to a major decline in governmental support through the elimination of agricultural subsidies and incentives, the removal of standard pricing of agricultural commodities, and the placement of interest rates on agricultural loans (EuropeAid, 2012; Jabarin, 2005). The agricultural reform also led to the adoption of an export-led and trade-based food security strategy, along with a heavy reliance on foreign labour for domestic productivity (Woertz, 2014).

The budget cuts and misallocation of resources have not ceased. As a result of neglect, Jordan has weak post-harvest storage and processing infrastructure and has only one agricultural credit institution (ibid.). Other institutional constraints include the weak farm extension system with considerably limited physical and technical capacity.

Today, the sector’s direct contribution to the national GDP stands at a mere 4%, a considerable decline from roughly 40% in the 1950s (EuropeAid, 2012).
Trade Imbalances

In the 1960s, Jordan’s wheat self-sufficiency was at 70%, whereas today, the country meets 3-10% of national demand (EuropeAid, 2012) and imports more than 95% of its cereal needs (Santos & Ceccacci, 2015). The over-reliance on such food imports among many others has exposed Jordan to the vulnerability and volatility of international food supply chains and food prices (AFED, 2014; ESCWA, 2010). Jordan was hit particularly hard by the 2008/09 and 2011 global food crises and faces high fiscal and political pressures as a result of its soaring food import bill (Harrigan, 2015).

Foreign Labour

Due to low returns from the sector, many workers in the agricultural sector gradually migrated into other sectors, namely services and industry (UNDP, 2013). The agricultural sector witnessed a continuous decline in the share of national employment from one third in the 1960s to less than one tenth by the 1980s, and approximately 2% in 2010 (UNDP, 2013; Baylouny, 2008).

This has created a dire need for foreign labor to fill the vacancies (Mryyan, 2012; Awad, 2017).

Currently, over 28% of migrant labor in Jordan force is engaged in the sector (EuropeAid, 2012).

Despite the capacity of the sector to absorb unemployment which stands at 18% (Trading Economics, 2017), there has been no effective national strategy to encourage and facilitate domestic agricultural labour.

Environmental Challenges

Jordan is one of the five most water-stressed countries in the world (Hladin, et al., 2010; Europe Aid, 2012). Over 90 percent of the country is classified as arid and receives less than 200 mm of annual rainfall (Ministry of Water & Irrigation, 2016). The limited area fit for cultivation is slowly declining due to urban sprawl and other biophysical constraints, including excessive groundwater extraction, the depletion of soil quality, soil salinization, and frequent droughts (UNDP, 2013; Europe Aid, 2012). The country also suffers from inefficient water use and management (Ministry of Water & Irrigation, 2016). Furthermore, the progression of climate change in the region and nationally is expected to significantly affect local production (IFAD, FAO & The World Bank, 2009). The domestic agricultural sector will rely on the country’s ability to adapt to rising temperatures, a reduction in rainfall, and more frequent and intense climatic events, all of which place greater pressure on natural resources (Santos & Ceccacci, 2015; Breisinger, et al., 2010).
Geopolitical Challenges

While Jordan is widely considered as an oasis of peace surrounded by turmoil, the country has not escaped the consequences of regional war, conflict, and occupation.

Jordan has long depended on Syrian and Iraqi markets as major export destinations and gateways to European markets. The closures of these borders and markets have had dire consequences on agricultural exports.

While climatic challenges add pressure to Jordan’s natural resources, the country’s resource scarcity is also largely man-made; Jordan’s resource crisis has been exacerbated by Israel’s water strategy, which relies on the full exploitation of water resources within and largely beyond its boundaries (Stork, 1983). In 1964, Israel’s National Water Carrier began transferring water from the Sea of Galilee to the Negev mainly for irrigation projects (Bleier, 1994), diverting the flow of water from the Jordan River into the Sea of Galilee. This resource appropriation left Jordan and Syria with brackish, saline water, and has substantially affected local agricultural activity (ibid.).

The list of references is at the end of the report page 115.

The Green Caravan

In light of these pressures on the agricultural sector, the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature launched the Green Caravan in 2003 to protect the land and increase national green cover.

The Green Caravan targets vulnerable smallholder farmers across Jordan, who have fallen victim to harsh economic conditions and agricultural policies marked by neglect.

The initiative provides Jordanian farmers with fruit trees that bring an additional source of sustainable income. As such, the project seeks to reinvigorate the farming culture in Jordan and revive the connection of local communities with their land.
The Green Caravan Programme was launched in 2003 with the aim to reduce the rate of desertification, highlight the importance of agriculture, and support small-scale farmers. These aims are the key components to improving Jordan’s food basket. The programme also aims at enhancing food security and establishing food sovereignty. Since its launch until the end of 2021, the program has successfully planted 151,534 fruit trees.
The Green Caravan Programme 2021

- 31,992 Beneficiary family members
- 6,328 Beneficiary farmers
- 28,868 Fruit-bearing trees
- 57 Planting activity
- 552 Volunteer opportunity
- 616.5 Area of cultivated land
The Food Sovereignty Programme 2021

The Food Sovereignty Programme seeks to influence environmental, agricultural, food and development policies at the national, regional, and international levels by collecting and analyzing data, organizing dialogues between stakeholders, advocating for priorities, and leading negotiations at global platforms on behalf of civil society organizations.

This is in addition to participating in technical work groups and organizing fact-finding missions, and campaigns.
Global People’s Summit on Food Systems

Within this programme, APN held numerous meetings with partners to curb the interference of major food companies and agribusinesses at the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021. On July 25, 2021, and through the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS), APN organised a webinar titled “The People’s Track to Food Security, Genuine Development and Just Peace”.

The event aimed at responding to the marginalisation of peoples and communities by the UN Food Systems Summit and addressing Action Track 5 of the summit, which deals with the connections between conflicts and food systems.

For the demands of the webinar, refer to page 101

Hundreds of experts from around the world participated in the webinar, where case studies were presented on the impact of conflicts on food production and consumption, the use of food as a weapon, and the relationship between food aid and economic liberalisation. The organisation mobilised efforts to push for what is referred to as a ‘shadow conference’ titled “Global People’s Summit on Food Systems”.

The event was organised in collaboration with the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) and a group of international organisations over 3 days, starting on September 21, 2021, in conjunction with the UN Food Systems Summit. APN and the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty presented critical interventions during this shadow conference.

For the GPS Declaration, refer to page 103
Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

APN and the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty participated actively in the 47th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) launched on February 9, 2021.

One of its sessions was devoted to discussing monitoring the implementation of the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA).

The CFS approved the framework after 3 years of negotiations in which the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature led the Global Civil Society delegation.

APN became part of the CFS-FFA Monitoring Technical Task Committee and published a comprehensive report with partner organizations on the implementation of the framework in the name of the International Civil Society Mechanism.

UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

The partnership between APN and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) continued this year to include a high-level dialogue meeting on March 31, 2021 on “Harnessing Local Agriculture Production to Create Healthy Diets”.

This is in addition to APN making critical interventions at the Regional Stakeholder Dialogue in preparation for the Regional Conference for theNear East which would take place in 2022.
"Land and Conflict in the Arab Region", a study published in collaboration with UN-Habitat

APN completed the study “Land and Conflict in the Arab Region” in collaboration with UN-Habitat. The study, a first of its kind, was prepared after holding a comprehensive desk review and several consultations and interviews with dozens of Arab and international academics and experts to exchange knowledge about the relationship between land and conflict and investigate the root causes of land disputes.

The organization presented the study at several multi-actor events, giving recommendations on ways to resolve, prevent and remedy land-related conflicts and their impacts.

The People’s Research Training Workshop

APN held a workshop titled “The People’s Research Training” in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN), the Arab Non-Governmental Organizations Network for Development (ANND), and the People’s Coalition for Food Sovereignty (PCFS) on November 23, 2021 for grassroots organisations in West Asia and North Africa.

The workshop is divided into 5 modules

- Module 1 – Introduction to People’s Research
- Module 2 – The Research Process
- Module 3 – Methodology and Design
- Module 4 – Analysis and Writing
- Module 5 – Role of Research in Policy Advocacy, People’s Rights, Lessons from the Field
UN Environmental Assembly (UNEP)

Many major issues were addressed at the 2021 UN Environmental Assembly (UNEP), the highest body of environmental organisations in the world.

APN attended the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGS) meetings on February 9, 2021, to organise its demands and conclusions in a single statement to submit to the UNEP in the presence of member states.

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

APN also participated as a speaker at the global virtual event ‘Recovery or Transformation? Addressing challenges to peoples’ rights, climate justice, and sustainable development’ on July 9, 2021, at the invitation of several organisations in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) based in New York City.
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

APN continued working closely with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2021 by attending its congress in France and communicating with the Arab candidate for its presidency.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

At the regional level, APN participated in several seminars and dialogues at the invitation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), including the Arab Regional Dialogue for Food Systems in cooperation with the Arab League, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Program, the World Health Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

This is in addition to another seminar on “Degraded Lands in the Arab region,” organised in conjunction with the International Day of Drought and Desertification.
"Arab Tree Path" - League of Arab States (LAS)

On another subject, APN presented an initial plan to launch the "Arab Tree Path" project at the 5th meeting of the Committee on the Eradication of Hunger affiliated with the League of Arab States on June 22, 2021.

The plan included the invitation of Arab countries to discuss the concept note for the project after those countries approved the project at the committee meeting in December 2020. At the committee meeting on December 9, 2021, APN announced its desire to choose 5 Arab countries as partners as per the project’s criteria.

Jordan’s Biosafety Law

In addition to this, amid the drafting of Jordan’s biosafety law in 2021, APN was proactive in representing civil society at discussions held with the government and unions. APN organised a research meeting on May 8, 2022 attended by environmental experts Bassel Burqan and Hala Murad to present suggestions on the draft law to the Ministry of Environment.
Zuayter on the BBC calling for Arab strategic integration to win the war on hunger

A statement issued by the World Food Programme in November 2021 raised concerns about the reality of hunger in the Arab region and the challenges imposed on those suffering from starvation. It brought up the question:

Can people die of hunger?

This question was the opening remark of the “Dunyana” episode on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, broadcasted on the BBC. Zuayter, APN Chair of the Board, was hosted along with Abeer Etefa, World Food Program (WFP) spokesperson in the Middle East and North Africa, and Basheer Omar, the spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross. The session was moderated by Malak Soudi, a Syrian researcher and critic, and Lebanese actress Anjo Rihane.
APN outlines challenges to future of food sovereignty in Jordan at Francais Proche Orient webinar

The general manager of APN, Mariam Al Jaajaa, spoke about the reality of food sovereignty in Jordan and the challenges it faces, at a webinar held by Institute Francais Proche Orient (IFPO) titled "The Food Sovereignty in the Middle East" on Wednesday, September 29, 2021.

APN introduces its work at seminar hosted by Namliyeh

Razan Zuayteler, APN Chair of the Board, was invited by Goethe-Institut Jordan and Design Studio Namliyeh to take part in a seminar within the "Fabrakat" training programme on Tuesday, November 16, 2021. She was invited to discuss the food system in Jordan and its relationship to food systems around the world.
Al Jaajaa discusses threats facing international food security on World Food Day

On World Food Day (October 17, 2021), Co-founding Member of APN, Hassan Al Jaajaa, discussed prominent environmental and health challenges facing food security in the world, specifically in the Arab region, as well as the efforts made by countries and people to meet the basic needs of citizens. This took place during an interview with Al Jaajaa by Al-Mayadeen Channel as part of the Al-Sahia programme.

APN documents Israeli war on Jordanian agricultural lands and supports those affected

A number of Jordanian farms in the border areas of Mashari near the Jordan River banks were exposed to deliberate fires by Israeli settlers from occupied land in Palestine. This criminal act resulted in burning more than 5,000 fruit trees on more than 150 dunums.

APN launched a campaign to support these farmers in the Jordan Valley to compensate for some of their losses. The campaign distributed 3,000 fruit trees and 52,000 metres of irrigation pipes of various sizes to the farmers.

Following the event, the organisation intensified its presence in the media to bring to light the plight of the farmers. News pieces on the fire and the organisation's positions on the incident were published by Petra News Agency, Al Dustour, Al Ghad Newspaper, and several other news outlets. An op-ed on the fires by Razan Zuayer, Chair of the Board at APN, was published by Al Ghad Newspaper with the headline "Israeli fires in our farms: negligence or complicity?"

"The Zionist state intends to ignite these fires, which cause great damage to farms near the border. This is part of a systematic process to destroy Jordanian farms and the cornerstone of the production process and food security, under security pretexts. Israel aims to displace farmers and destroy agricultural land in the Jordan Valley, one of the region's most fertile."
APN urged many other media outlets to shed light on the suffering of the farmers, including Al-Mamlaka, Roya, Radio Mazaj, Radio Hosna, and the Jordan News website.

Picture below: From the site of the fires, Mariam Al Jaajaa, General Manager at APN

APN submits a report on the Israeli fires to the Jordanian government

APN submitted a report to the Jordanian government with a list of actions taken, a media kit, and a set of demands regarding their responsibilities towards Jordanian farmers (June 23, 2021).

Copies of the report were handed to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Water and Irrigation, and the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation.
APN issues statement on copper mining in Dana

APN demanded the accountability of the opposing parties in the case of copper mining in Dana in Jordan. The group emphasized that the opposing parties’ disregard of the local community’s aspirations and concerns in Dana is a grave mistake.

APN called in its declaration shared with local media outlets for the importance of providing transparent economic feasibility studies and studies of the environmental impact of projects.

APN stressed the need for an inclusive dialogue around how natural reserves are managed and how the government makes developmental decisions, noting that this is the correct way to protect society’s right to development while simultaneously protecting.

To view the statement in the Appeals, Statements, and Recommendations section, go to page 110

Food Tank lists APN among 121 food organisations to watch in 2021

121 Food Organizations to Watch in 2021
APN and Sanabel publish article on the design of food sovereignty

On August 30, 2021, the Design Jordan digital platform published an article by Mariam Al Jaajaa, General Manager of APN and Zeena Al Jaajaa, CEO of Sanabel, the incubating company for the organisation’s activities, entitled “Designing Food Sovereignty”.

The article refers to joint efforts by APN and Sanabel, in rehabilitating the Alwan Garden or “Garden of Colours” in a preparatory school for girls affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees (UNRWA) in Jerash Camp. Around 888 square metres were transformed from a neglected and closed area into an interactive one with activities stimulating education in fields such as science, environmental studies, art, and agriculture. The garden has a calm atmosphere and is equipped with everything students and employees need to improve academic performance and stabilize mental health. There are agricultural basins, a water harvesting system, and an amphitheatre in the garden, which helps with the overcrowding of classrooms in a school that serves 3,000 students in two shifts.

The article reviews APN’s work in advocacy on the environmental and agricultural and food policies at the regional and global levels. The organisation obtained several accreditations and formed partnerships with regional and international organisations. In 2012, APN established the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty as a platform for developing and promoting regional policy priorities. The APN team also lectures on the importance of the environment and local agriculture to thousands of students across Jordan.

Zuayter gives lecture on MTC Programme at AUB

At the invitation of AUB’s University for Seniors, APN’s Chair of the Board Razan Zuayter presented a lecture titled “Palestine and Green Resistance”, in which she reviewed the organisation’s Million Tree Campaign achievements held in Palestine via Zoom (November 30, 2021).

Over 90 participants attended the lecture and shared an outpouring of support for APN’s efforts.
Million Tree Campaign receives wide support in Spain

As an affirmation of the universality of APN and its role in amplifying the voices of Palestinian farmers in the world, the Islamic Fundraising Foundation, located in Spain, has launched a fundraising campaign in December 2021 for the Million Tree programme.

The campaign mobilized 250 supporters in just 10 days to help cultivate 620 olive trees in Gaza.

HRH Prince El-Hassan bin Talal praises efforts of APN

APN received a thank you letter from His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, in which he praised the society’s efforts in protecting the environment of the Arab region and serving various agricultural issues.
New partnership agreement between APN and LOYAC

APN made a new agreement with LOYAC, a nonprofit organisation working towards youth development, to carry joint action for planting trees in Lebanon in support of low-income farmers.

Palestinian farmers display fruit of trees planted by APN to protect their lands

A national market for agricultural products took place in the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem on the occasion of Palestinian National Economy Week. Ibdaa Foundation organised the market in cooperation with APN, BADIL Center, Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees, Alternative Information Center, and ActionAid - Palestine (June 14, 2021).

APN organized another national farmers’ market with the Bethlehem Municipality. The market offered a range of food and agricultural products of farmers the organisation had previously supported.

Senator Dr. Akif Al-Zoubi’s letter of gratitude to APN

APN received a thank you note from the Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Water in the Senate, Dr. Akif al-Zoubi.

He complimented the group’s efforts in servicing the agriculture and food sector in addition to “supporting farmers in Palestine and planting trees to protect the land and farmers from Zionists plans to seize the land and uproot the Palestinians from their lands.”
APN incubating company Sanabel awarded prize for social responsibility

Sanabel Landscape Architecture - Urban Design & Planning, the incubator of APN and its largest sponsor, won 1st place in the Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility Awards. They were given the prize at the 14th session of the awards in the small companies category. The honouring ceremony was held in Dubai and organised by the Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility Network (ACSRN).

Jordanian artists support APN efforts to save and restore agricultural sector in Gaza after aggression

A wonderful team of Music for Palestine organisers and musicians answered the call of APN to hold a concert with all proceeds going to the organisation’s efforts to revitalise agricultural land destroyed by the Israeli war machine (June 19, 2021). The ceremony was held with the help of Mais Al-Sahl, who arranged the necessary space for the event.
Barhoush reveals severity of Israeli violations against the agriculture sector in Palestine on Canadian radio

Canadian radio station Sauga 960 AM hosted Rami Barhoush, Vice Chair of APN, to speak on the effects of the occupation’s aggression and abuse on climate change, agriculture, and food sovereignty in Palestine. He also discussed the challenges and obstacles faced by Palestinian farmers and civil society endeavours to protect farmers, the environment, and land (August 27, 2021).

Zeena Al Jaajaa presents impact of APN’s work in Palestine at Pecha Kucha event

Zeena Al Jaajaa participated as a spokesperson for APN with a distinct set of speakers in an event titled “About Palestine, from Palestine, and To Palestine” organised by Pecha Kucha in Amman (September 6, 2021).

Speakers at the webinar included Lama Shehadeh, Shatha Safi, Ibrahim Al-Hindi, Tariq Al-Bakri, and Majd Mashharawi.
CEOB Conflict Monitor talks about APN achievements

Research and Advocacy Officer Elie Ambler wrote a blog post for the Conflict and Environment Observatory about conditions of farmers in Palestine and APN’s work in challenging Israeli colonization efforts. The piece explains the political significance of the Million Tree Campaign both in retaining land under the occupation’s military orders and maintaining communal agrarian traditions that have been threatened since British colonization.

A corner for the “Plant Your Resilience” campaign at AlRidwan Schools

As part of its Olive Festival, AlRidwan Schools organised a corner for the “Plant Your Resilience” campaign, which APN holds annually within the Million Tree Campaign programme.

In situations of occupation where land, food and identity are intimately linked, planting a tree can become an act of resistance.
APN hosts Palestinian Minister of Agriculture

APN hosted the Palestinian Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Riyad Al-Atari, and the Undersecretary Abdullah Lahlouh (December 22, 2021) at the office in Amman in the presence of the Chair of the Board Razan Zuayer, General Manager Mariam Al Jaaaja, and members of the board of directors, Mr. Rami Barhoush and Mr. Humam Mufti.

Al-Atari and Lahlouh were briefed on APN’s projects in Palestine. They expressed their admiration for the important role the organisation is playing in supporting Palestinian farmers and strengthening their steadfastness in the face of Israeli settlement expansion and displacement policies.

Al-Atari praised APN and said: “I am very happy with this work. It is clear from the activities that it is sustainable”. He also asserted that this work necessitates further cooperation between the two sides as partners with other Palestinian institutions and international organisations.

Centre for Freedom and Justice Colorado hosts Rami Barhoush to talk about the Million Tree Campaign

Vice Chair of the Board at APN, Mr. Rami Barhoush, was interviewed by the Centre for Freedom and Justice Colorado (CFJ) as part of an online interview series.

He spoke about the plight of those living under Israeli occupation and the different adversities that they face. He also introduced the listeners to the Million Tree Campaign (MTC) programme in Palestine.

Mr. Barhoush unfolded the systematic way Israel destroys the livelihoods of Palestinians to push them off their lands and confiscate them.
APN’s distinguished participation at the Conference of Palestinian Women Abroad

On March 27, Razan Zuayer, Chair of the Board at APN, participated as a speaker at the Conference of Palestinian Women Abroad at the invitation of the Palestinian Forum in Britain (PFGB). The conference was held on the 45th anniversary of Land Day.

During her speech at the festival, at which Palestinian women active in various fields participated, Zuayer recounted the origins of APN, launched in the aftermath of the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 and has accomplished significant achievements in supporting Palestinian farmers and protecting land from confiscation.

Zuayer on the 73rd anniversary of the Nakba: Palestinian unity and revolution are the paths to liberation

Razan Zuayer, Co-chair of the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty and Chair of the Board at APN inaugurated an international webinar in solidarity with the Palestinian people on the 73rd anniversary of the Nakba. Mandela Mandela participated in the meeting organised by the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty, APN, the International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS), and the Global Campaign to Return to Palestine (May 15, 2021).

During the opening speech, Zuayer said that the meeting is a symbolic global demonstration that carries multiple strong messages and proved that humanity is indivisible.

The following people also spoke at the event: Jawdat Manna, General Coordinator of the Global Campaign to Return to Palestine; Lisa Maza, Secretary-General of the Organization of American Countries; and Henry Morales from CPDE.
Zuayer: Supporting resilience of Palestinians requires sustainable projects and joint relief and development efforts

Razan Zuayer, Chair of the Board at APN, gave a speech on “How to support the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in their resistance against occupation and aggression through development and relief” at the 5th Session of the Arab International Forum for Justice for Palestine. The session was organised by the Tunisian General Labour Union and the International Arab Centre for Communication and Solidarity (June 17, 2021).

Zuayer indicated that support directed to Palestine has been mostly limited to charitable support and rarely towards the sustainable development goals.

She presented several recommendations to develop short, medium, and long-term strategies to consolidate the idea of integrating development and relief efforts.

APN at international conference to discuss ways to rebuild Palestine after the recent Israeli aggression

General Manager of APN, Mariam Al Jaajaa, participated in an international webinar titled “Rebuilding Palestine” which was organised by the American organisation Iportal (July 13, 2021).

Al Jaajaa presented a set of ideas from an environmental and agricultural angle to enrich the webinar. She pointed out that agriculture has a crucial role in promoting the sustainable economic development in Palestine, particularly through supporting local and community-led initiatives.

The webinar featured 15 experts from various fields to build bridges between local organisations and supporters from outside Palestine.
APN participates in anti-normalization meetings

APN has been invited to a number of different events to speak against normalization including the General Arab Conference ‘United against Normalization’, the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad, and other events organised by Women for Jerusalem and BDS Egypt.

General Arab Conference ‘United against Normalization’

On February 20-21, Chair of the Board at APN and President of the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty, Razan Zuayter, chaired the 7th session of the General Arab Conference ‘United Against Normalization.’ Over 500 participants from most Arab countries responded to the invitation of the Arab National Congress, the General Congress of Arab Parties, the Arab Progressive Front, Al-Quds International Foundation, the National Islamic Conference, and the Arab Left Forum.

In the first speech of the session, the former Secretary-General of the Arab National Congress, Maan Bashour, presented a paper on ‘Normalization: Reality and Confrontation at the Popular Level.’ After, many opponents of normalization presented papers, including from Palestine, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Secretary General of the National Initiative, and Dr. Jamal Amro, from Egypt; Dr. Hassan Nafea, professor of political science at Cairo University; from Jordan; Dr. Ahmed Al-Armouti, former head of the Jordanian Doctors Syndicate and Chairman of the Executive Committee to Protect the Homeland and Confront Normalization; from Morocco; Ahmed Wehman, head of the Moroccan Observatory against Normalisation; from Bahrain; Radhi Al-Mousawi, the former Secretary General of Wa’ad Society; from Sudan; Mr. Othman Al-Kabashi, general coordinator of the Sudanese popular forces against normalization; from Lebanon; Mr. Abbas Qaddouh; and from Mauritania; Dr. Mohamed El-Amin El-Nati, head of the Mauritanian Commission against Normalization.

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Egypt

Chair of the Board at APN, Razan Zuayter, was invited by BDS Egypt to discuss normalization agreements with Israel.

Zuayter spoke about the experiences of a number of countries who have entered into normalization treaties with Israel in the past. She argued that promises of development in the economic, tourism, and agricultural sectors as part of such agreements are illusive.

She also warned of the dire consequences to the region by igniting discord and internal strife based on ethnic, tribal, and regional grounds.

Distinguished participation of APN at international conference against normalization

Chair of the Board at APN, Razan Zuayter, spoke at an event organised by the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad as part of a larger International Conference to Resist Normalization (February 27 - March 3, 2021).

Zuayter called for documenting the experiences of Arab countries which have entered into normalization agreements with Israel. She added, “We have to reveal how different economic sectors have reached unprecedented levels of collapse.”

The conference was held in cooperation with more than 100 international and Arab institutions and many media outlets.
Seminar organised by the Women for Jerusalem Society

Hassan Al Jaajaa, Chair of the Scientific Committee of APN, was invited to speak on the first day of the seminar titled “Resisting Normalization and Defending the Land” under the slogan “All the Land is Palestine,” organised by Women for Jerusalem Society on the 45th anniversary of Land Day (March 30, 2021). The gathering brought together prominent speakers from Palestine and various Arab countries.

Al Jaajaa explained the economic and agricultural results of normalization in Palestine and Jordan. He moreover explained the magnitude of settlement expansion during the decades of normalization, saying “the size of the settlements more than quadrupled from before the signing of the Oslo Agreement: from 144 to 528 settler outposts and 252,000 to 834,000 settlers.

Roya TV hosts the Green Caravan: Journalist Diala Dabbas dedicates episode of ‘Helweh Ya Donia’ to APN

Roya TV allocated an episode to the Green Caravan programme, which APN has been implementing since 2003. They presented the programme’s objectives, achievements, and some of its challenges in the presence of Razan Zayyter, Chair of the Board of the organisation (May 21, 2021).

In a segment of ‘Helweh Ya Donia’ dedicated to exploring Jordan, Diala Dabbas presented the activities of the Green Caravan programme during a visit to the Central Jordan Valley. She met with some of the farmers involved in the programme to discuss the role of the programme in transforming their lives and enhancing their socio-economic conditions.
If Only You Knew 2021

If Only You Knew, APN's environmental awareness programme, which advocates for sustainable agriculture, delivered lectures to hundreds of university students and schoolchildren this year. The programme, active since 2012, was undeterred by health restrictions and school closures, reaching students virtually and training new volunteers to expand the reach of the programme to more schools in the Kingdom.

In 2021, the program resumed its plan remotely using virtual tools in which a group of volunteers became equipped with enough knowledge to conduct awareness sessions for students at schools.
Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS)

In 2012, APN co-founded the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS) as an independent non-profit network to enhance food sovereignty in the Arab world and build resilience against the underlying causes of economic, social, agricultural, and environmental vulnerabilities that plague the region.

The network consists of 30 non-governmental organisations including farmers’ unions and fishers’, pastoralists’, women’s, youth, and consumer associations from across 13 Arab countries. APN was elected to chair the network until September 2021.

Why the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty?

Arab countries have among the highest food import dependency rates, making the region highly vulnerable to supply and price fluctuations in the international market. Even though agriculture employs between 53% and 84% of the Arab labour force, the region imports approximately half its caloric intake and is the largest cereal importer in the world.

Several factors contribute to regional agricultural deficiencies. Environmental factors, particularly water scarcity and climate change, undoubtedly play a role in reducing productive potential, while population growth rates of >2% add pressure to increasingly scarce resources. More important, however, are the domestic and international nutritional, environmental, and agricultural policies affecting the region. The decline of investment in agricultural productivity and the absence of governmental support for infrastructure and extension services have lowered production and weakened resource sustainability. The high import dependency ratio has dire consequences for food stability, considering the likelihood of trade disruption due to persistent regional conflicts and crises.

The sector requires targeted national and regional investment in agriculture, research and development, and technology. Governments must empower smallholder farmers and work to reduce losses and waste. New policies are needed to bring about a sustainable agricultural sector that manages and protects essential natural resources, including water, land, and seeds. The region, the birthplace of agriculture, has incredible productive potential to enhance food security. The Arab Network for Food Sovereignty was initiated to actualize that potential.

Why the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty?

The Arab Network for Food Sovereignty aims to achieve the following goals:
1. Promote concepts, practices, and strategies for food and natural resource sovereignty in the Arab world.
2. Improve institutional and community capacity to enhance the role and effectiveness of civil society organisations working in the fields of agriculture and food security.
3. Encourage and mobilize innovative initiatives in the areas of food security and food sovereignty at the community and institutional levels.
4. Strengthen the cooperation and coordination of regional and global networks to serve the ANFS vision.
5. Influence governmental and non-governmental policies and regulations on the local, national, and international levels to achieve food and natural resource sovereignty.

The General Assembly of the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty voted for the following executive committee on September 22, 2021:

Razan Zuayer from Jordan, Munjed Abu Jaish from Palestine, Hanada Sadat from Syria, Haidar Dekmak from Lebanon, Abbas Rahi from Iraq, Laith Ben Bishr from Tunisia, Abdullah Al-Balih from Morocco, Abla Ahmed from Sudan, and Sayed Ahmed Obeid from Mauritania.
People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)

The People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty is a growing international network of organisations and popular movements concerned with food sovereignty-containing farmers, fishers, food producers, and allied NGOs. The coalition’s work focuses on the right to food and the means of its production. It was officially launched in Asia in 2004, and while it has expanded globally, its leadership remains, and must remain, centered in developing countries.

APN is a member of the PCFS Global Steering Council and the Global Executive Committee representing West Asia. In 2018, APN Co-founder Razan Zuayter was elected PCFS co-chair along with Sylvia Mallari, the head of the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC).

PCFS Mission

1. Promote food sovereignty as an orientation for global food and agricultural policies.
2. Establish the “People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty” as a means to articulate the concept of food sovereignty and unify efforts between organisations and civil society across the world.
3. Organise regional and international activities on food sovereignty, including research and capacity building.
4. Exchange knowledge and expertise within the realm of food sovereignty.
5. Push for the ratification of a binding global convention on food sovereignty at the national and international levels.

Executive Committee

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Mallari</td>
<td>IBON International</td>
<td>Global co-chairperson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Razan Zuayter</td>
<td>Arab Network on Food Sovereignty</td>
<td>Global co-chairperson</td>
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<td>Hakim Balraine</td>
<td>Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum</td>
<td>Africa Steering Council</td>
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<td>Chennaih Poguri</td>
<td>Asian Peasant Coalition</td>
<td>Asia Steering Council</td>
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<td>Julie Smit</td>
<td>Food Sovereignty in Action</td>
<td>Europe Steering Council</td>
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<td>Abla Mahdi Ahmed</td>
<td>Hawa Association</td>
<td>West Asia and North Africa Steering Council</td>
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Demands formed at the Global People's Pre-Summit event
“The People's Track to Food Security, Genuine Development and Just Peace”

On July 27, the Global Peoples’ Summit organised a pre-summit event titled “The People’s Track to Food Security, Genuine Development and Just Peace.” This event was convened to discuss the effects of war, sanction, and occupation in driving hunger and in ushering in policies that advantage corporate agribusiness over local food systems. It was formed as a response to the silence of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) on these issues. While the UNFSS has dedicated a track (Track 5) to “building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress,” it does not reference the impact wars, sanctions, and occupations have on food systems, much less how to address them. It also disregards the highly relevant work that has already been collectively developed and endorsed in policy platforms such as the CFS Framework for Action on Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA). These omissions are striking given that the WFP has cited armed conflict as the single greatest challenge to achieving Zero Hunger.

This event was one of several events hosted in the lead-up to the Global People’s Summit, which seeks to provide an alternative vision to the UNFSS, in response to these and other failings.

Speakers from Cuba, Venezuela, Palestine, Jordan, the Philippines, Uganda, Pakistan, and Lebanon discussed these global issues. Following their presentations, the floor was opened for participants to discuss their ideas on conflict in the food system and their demands for change. In contrast to the UNFSS approach, the event targeted and was led by those affected by conflict from around the world, and was attended by 150 people. It was organised by the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty, the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature the CPDE Rural Sector and Working Group on Conflict, Dibeen Association for Environmental Development, SWAGEN, and Roots for Equity.

The UNFSS’s appearance of comprehensive work on food system problems and concurrent failure to call for an end to the most aggressive forms of food system destruction grants political coverage to those most culpable for global hunger and leaves those struggling against such hunger without guidance or allyship. This event worked against these omissions by issuing the following demands and suggestions.

Demands to governments, intergovernmental bodies, and international non-governmental organisations designing food policy for fragile situations:

- Focus on ameliorating the root causes of conflict and apply pressure to stop states from carrying out wars, sanctions, and occupations in addition to demand remediation from such states that have violated the right to food while carrying out these actions.
- Respect national sovereignty, end the politicisation and militarization of aid and follow the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, and do no harm.
- Put impacted communities in the center of policy design and programme implementation.
- Center affected communities to define ‘peacebuilding’ as something more than ensuring the absence of short-term violence and integrate this vision with the triple nexus approach of linking humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding work.
- Push for the implementation and use of the Framework for Action on Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, a document which was conceived at CFS through a participatory process and details specific standards and methods for food policy, and carry out self-assessments of CFS-FFA coherence.
- Create national multi-actor platforms to design and implement food programmes and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Form specialized governmental units to monitor food security programmes.
- Make food sovereignty a strategic objective of “development” projects and create plans for agricultural reforms that return to people-driven agriculture and reduce reliance on agribusiness.
GPS DECLARATION: End corporate monopoly control! Fight for People’s Rights to Just, Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Food Systems!
September 24, 2021

We are organisations of smallholder farmers, landless peasants, agricultural workers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, plantation workers; groups representing indigenous peoples, local communities, youth, women, urban poor, and consumers; and advocates of food sovereignty, agroecology, and genuine agrarian reform and rural development. We represent the global regions of Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and North America.

We make up the Global People’s Summit for Just, Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Food Systems.

In 2020, about 2.37 billion people worldwide suffered moderate or severe food insecurity, according to the 2021 report on the state of food security and nutrition. The number of food-insecure people swelled by 320 million in just one year – equivalent to the increases in the previous five years combined.

Further, the raging COVID-19 pandemic has devastated millions of jobs and livelihoods worldwide, including those directly involved in food production, worsening the already alarming and deteriorating state of global hunger and poverty. Worldwide, the number of people facing hunger reached about 768 million in 2020, around 118 million more than in 2019. This includes those who are likely to have experienced hunger as a result of the pandemic.

We stress, however, that the COVID-19 pandemic is just one of several drivers of worsening hunger and food insecurity. Long before COVID-19, a pandemic of systemic and perpetual hunger being perpetrated by big business through the globalized food economy – a system characterised by unsustainable monoculture production, environmental plunder, and waste; as well as wars and conflicts fueled by imperialist competition for resources, land, and markets.

The worsening climate crisis – highlighted in the 2021 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – has been pushing hundreds of millions to famine and deprivation. Like many other environmental crises, the climate crisis is deeply rooted in the inherently destructive monopoly capitalist mode of production, including in food and agriculture.

Amid these multiple and interrelated crises of health, climate, environment, and economy and their many impacts on hunger and poverty, it is indeed very urgent to radically transform the global food system. The nature of this transformation should be a subject of open and honest debate, with people’s rights at the center of all discussions. But the oligopolies of agribusiness including the agro-industrial livestock industry, agrochemicals, genetic engineering, and digital technology in cahoots with research institutions, foundations, and token civil society groups, have dominated and dictated the discussions on food systems transformation, as can be clearly seen in the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).

We find it unacceptable that the UNFSS is proclaiming itself as a so-called “people’s summit” when the aspirations and demands of the world’s peoples for a truly radical transformation of food systems are being met with lip service while being sidelined by the profit-seeking interests of monopoly corporations. As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food pointed out, the UNFSS turned a blind eye to structural causes of failed food systems, ignored the worrisome corporate concentration of power, and diluted the right to participation in decision-making through the so-called multistakeholder approach. While supposedly encouraging the contribution of grassroots movements and civil society, the UNFSS lacked transparency and meaningful opportunities for people to participate. Those who took part in UNFSS events and meetings have become cynical as there was no clear connection between people’s input and the Summit’s outcomes.

The path that UNFSS has charted is towards the further promotion of “techno-fix” “solutions”, including digital farming or precision agriculture; harmful technologies like agrochemicals and genetic engineering; and market-based approaches anchored in neoliberal policies of privatization, deregulation, and trade liberalization, pushed by corporations and implemented by governments – all for the narrow benefit of big
business at the great expense of people and the planet, including fragile ecosystems already suffering unprecedented forest fires to make way for agro-industrial production.

It is highly concerning that powerful industrial livestock agribusinesses, which are among the worst emitters of GHGs and destroyers of forests, have gained space in the UNFSS while small-holder farmers have been almost erased from the process. The UNFSS thus serves this destructive industry by greenwashing its harmful practices and giving them free passes to continue as usual with their dirty business. Meanwhile, governments and multilateral development banks continue to invest in unsustainable livestock farming, especially in the Global South, when the real solution is to divest from factory farming and redirect those resources towards small-scale diverse farming, agroecological practices, and overall cleaner food systems.

We say to the UNFSS and its big business patrons, “Not in our name!”

Not in our name shall you peddle unsafe GM foods on the pretext of addressing the climate crisis when your real intention is to deepen and expand corporate monopoly control of our seeds and resources.

Not in our name shall you push more toxic pesticides from the Poison Cartel of big agrochemical companies in the guise of improving farm productivity, when these expensive inputs merely shove small food producers into the pits of debts and bankruptcy, while damaging our health and environment.

Not in our name shall you displace and threaten indigenous peoples and local communities and deforest their lands to make way for agro-industrial livestock farming, plantations, mining, and other so-called development projects, which are already taking a huge toll on the world’s forests.

Not in our name shall Big Tech mine, privatise, and monopolise data about our farms and crops so that corporations can consolidate their position as the command and control of food production while making it easier for the finance oligarchs to determine which are the most profitable farmlands for their parasitic speculation.

Not in our name shall governments use their levers of power to subsidize and orient food production towards exports rather than towards feeding their own citizens.

Thus, we have gathered as the Global People’s Summit to expose and strongly counter the devious corporate agenda of the anti-people summit that is the UNFSS.

More importantly, as the Global People’s Summit, we declare that through the collective vigor and resolve of our communities and movements, we shall advance with unwavering enthusiasm the people’s demands for a food systems transformation that is truly built on justice, equitability, health, and sustainability.

We commit to the struggle for just food systems.

We believe that a just food system can only be built on the people’s right to own and effectively control land, seeds, water, and other productive resources. We will continue to assert that land belongs to those who directly till and enrich the land to produce food and other needs of societies, and not to the landlords or corporations that enormously profit from its wanton exploitation. Water resources shall be accessible at all times to communities that rely on them for food and livelihood. We will resist all forms of land and resource grabbing and labour exploitation that massively displace farmers, indigenous peoples, workers, fishers, and other rural peoples. We demand accountability from those who plunder and destroy the environment and grossly violate the people’s rights to land and resources.

In building just and healthy food systems, the contributions of indigenous and local communities, including women, who play an essential role in the sustainable management of natural resources and restoration of ecosystems, must be recognised. Indigenous and genuinely sustainable local initiatives to produce food must be supported instead of the destructive and unsustainable agro-industrial food production. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ self-determination over their ancestral land and diversified food system is critical to promote just and equitable food systems.

A just food system entails that people’s rights and human dignity be upheld at all times. No community, social class, or nation shall be ever deprived of access to food because of poverty, wars, or conflicts.

We commit to the struggle for equitable food systems.

We believe that an equitable food system can only be built on the people’s right to land and livelihoods, and to decent working and living conditions for all. This means that food production must be decided by the sovereign will of the people, based on their particular circumstances, priorities, and needs. Profit motives of corporations – euphemistically called market forces – should not determine what food to produce, how to produce it, and for whom. Meanwhile, we assert that agricultural workers and all workers in the food sector must enjoy living
wages, job security, maximum social protection, and other rights and benefits, and the incomes of smallholder farmers must be guaranteed through various forms of state support and protection to allow them and their families to live decently. Women farmers, who make up much of the global farming population, must be accorded the respect they have earned, and their rights protected.

We commit to the struggle for healthy food systems.
We believe that healthy food systems can only be built on the people’s right to have access at all times to nutritious and sufficient food. Food that is produced in an agroecological manner must be promoted and be made widely available and affordable to all in order to protect the health and wellbeing of both the food producers and consumers. We assert that food production that relies on heavy doses of poisonous agrochemicals or uses questionable technology – like genetic modification – must be halted. Corporate-controlled farms and plantations and intensive, large-scale animal farming are creating conditions for the spread of killer diseases and pandemics and must be held accountable for damaging the environment and harming public health.

We commit to the struggle for sustainable food systems.
We believe that sustainable food systems can only be built on the people’s right to a healthy planet and environment that is also capable of adequately producing all the food needs of the world’s population. Building a strong foundation for sustainability in our food systems requires food sovereignty and agroecology, for people’s rights to land and resources, for decent working and living conditions, and for a nutritious diet. We assert that our farmers and other small food producers can feed the world in a manner that is mindful of our planetary boundaries by maximizing and combining their indigenous knowledge and practices with socially responsible science and technology supported by public resources and appropriate, pro-people, and pro-planet government programmes. Amid a worsening climate crisis, support for smallholder farm production is more urgent and necessary than ever. Unlike large-scale corporate farms that drive significant GHG emissions, smallholder farmers are motivated to practice agroecology and are more resilient to severe climatic events. Unlike industrial mono-crop plantations and factory farming, small-scale farmers practice integrated farming and diverse crop production. They are the custodians of the diversity of crop species and varieties that are crucial in maintaining rich and healthy biodiversity, which is very important for global food security and indispensable for resilient food systems, in particular in the face of the growing climate crisis.

We commit to the struggle for diverse local food systems.
We believe that a single, globalized food system imposed everywhere can never be healthy, sustainable, or equitable. Those goals can only be met by local food systems that are reflections of cultural and biological diversity, and that put local needs before export. Local food systems are the key to food sovereignty, dignified land-based livelihoods, and the health and wellbeing of both people and the planet. We reject and oppose the globalization and corporatization of our food systems, and call for the political mechanisms – regulations, subsidies, and taxes – that currently favour the big, global and techno-industrialized, to be shifted so that they support sustainable local food systems instead.
We vow to work collectively to carry out the national, regional, sectoral, and thematic People’s Action Plans that were produced from the workshops, public forums, and consultations organised under the Global People’s Summit. These Action Plans represent our concrete and particular demands and campaigns along the four pillars of food systems transformation – (1) Food sovereignty and democracy at the core of food and agricultural policies; (2) Agroecology and sustainability in production, distribution, and consumption; (3) People’s right to land, production, and resources; and (4) People’s right to adequate, safe, nutritious, and culturally-appropriate food.
We are the Global People’s Summit and we are hungry for change.
Join the struggle for just, equitable, healthy, and sustainable food systems! (For follow-up actions, get in touch with the organisations that produced the Action Plans or email the Global People’s Summit Secretariat at secretariat@foodsov.org)
Statement on behalf of the Arab Network for Food Sovereignty on the brutal Israeli aggression on Gaza

Firstly, we stand in reverence for the heroism and sacrifices of the Palestinian people, and we salute their steadfastness. We declare our unconditional support for their valiant resistance against Zionist aggression and vicious crimes. Israel is not only targeting innocent people in their homes but also bombing and destroying agricultural infrastructure and land along the areas bordering the strip to starve Gaza, whose majority depend on agriculture and women’s small development projects.

Losses and damages to the agricultural sector have exceeded the value of $27 million in only 10 days since the aggression began. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, these losses multiply every day due to the continuous bombing of hundreds of dunams and tens of agricultural establishments and targeting stores and warehouses of agricultural products and supplies.

The systematic attack on agricultural lands threatens the people of Gaza with starvation due to the destruction of the local food system there, especially as it is a system that suffers from a chronic state of crisis as a result of an unjust blockade and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Continuous Israeli violations threaten nearly 20,000 farmers in Gaza. Around 95% of these are small farmers whose ownership of land ranges between 1-3 dunams. In most cases, members of the family are the ones who do the farming to compensate for the cost of production. About 5% of these farmers are women who are the head of their household.

In addition to challenges faced by farmers, around 4,000 fishers are deprived of their most basic right to reach the port and continue fishing. Israel blocks their access to the sea and destroys their boats, property, and tools. In light of these dangerous developments, we call on the international community to use all documentation available to pressure Israel to stop its brutal war on Gaza and its agricultural sector, to lift the unjust blockade immediately, and to criminalize the use of food and water as a weapon in this war. We also call on all international institutions and human rights and civil society organisations around the world to mobilise efforts to rehabilitate infrastructure that has been destroyed so farmers can exercise their right to access their lands, care for their crops, and provide food to the residents of Gaza during this crisis.

We conclude our statement by calling on Arab governments to take the initiative to stop all forms of normalization with the Zionist enemy. We also call on the countries of the world to consider Israel a racist entity that must be boycotted.

APN’s stand on copper mining in Dana

The lack of sufficient information and rationale behind the recent decisions concerning copper mining in Dana have prevented citizens and various civil and local society forces from coming out with a clear position regarding the situation.

This requires addressing past and current issues related to government developmental projects in different regions and a conversation about how natural reserves are created and managed, noting that this is the correct way to protect society’s right to development while also protecting the environment.

The worst part of this situation is the opposing parties’ disregard of the local community in Dana and the people who have owned and lived on those lands for hundreds of years, considering them a last priority, while they became the biggest victims of those competing for their lands under various justifications.

We, of course, do not agree with the government’s pursuit of the announced mining and exploration projects without transparent economic feasibility studies and assessment of the social and environmental impact of the projects. Otherwise, these proclaimed attempts of economic recovery will come at the cost of grabbing land with rare natural properties. There needs to be assurances and community dialogues, particularly when there are many examples of government projects established at the cost of public properties that were later privatized. Many of these projects have left behind severe environmental effects with the local communities receiving only scraps from the returns of those investments.

We also do not agree with the monopolisation of any party of vast expanses of state lands, controlling them, and executing their plans on the lands with no participation, oversight, or accountability.
Worertz, E., 2014. Historic Food Regimes and the Middle East. In: Food Security and Food Sovereignty in the Middle East. s.l.: s.n.
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