Jerusalem, April 11, 2013

His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

Emir of the State of Qatar

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh,

Given your auspicious role in preserving Islamic culture and identity in general, and noting the leading position of Qatar in actively promoting the preservation of the Arab and Islamic identity of Jerusalem in particular, we are encouraged to write you on behalf of Al-Quds University, in attempt to explain its contribution to strengthen the resolve of Palestinian Jerusalemites in the struggle to preserve the identity of Jerusalem against Judaization and Israelization, and the challenges it faces. We do believe that only a state, and state like Qatar, can help alleviate these challenges, including the need for financial support.

Al-Quds University provides higher education and community services within Jerusalem, including the Old City, and to the neighboring towns of Abu Dis and Al-Bireh/Ramallah. It has at this stage about 11,328 students with more than fifty percent females. Al-Quds University is the largest Palestinian employer in the Jerusalem area. The total number of employees is 1110. It has ten academic faculties including the college of the Qur'an and Islamic, a college of Da`wah, Arts, Science and Technology, Medicine, Dentistry, Public Health, Health Professions, Law, and Engineering.

In the Old City, our Center for Jerusalem Studies provides numerous cultural activities, including educational tours. Its mission is augmented by the Center for Archeological Studies, the Center for Social Services (services include legal advice against a host of Israeli laws that discriminate against Palestinians in violation of International Law), and the cooperation with the Burj al-Laqlaq Youth and Sports Center. They all provide services to the local population in the Old City as well as an alternative narrative to the Zionist narrative and myths.

Since the Apartheid Wall was built, most of Al-Quds University students and faculty could not make it anymore to the inner city campuses and institutions. Most of the infrastructure developments took place in the Abu Dis campus, east of the wall.

Higher education in Palestine suffered under Israeli Occupation, and all Palestinian universities and colleges suffer from various degrees of financial difficulties. Al-Quds University has the lion’s share of these financial challenges. Other universities have patrons and a university such as Bethlehem University is catholic and enjoys support from the Vatican.

The current annual difference between our total incomes (student tuition, funded scholarships and the student loan fund) and our total expenditures (including the empty Provident Fund and the End of Service Gratuity) is $10,600,000. The low per capita income and high unemployment make it practically impossible to increase tuition. Up to March 31st 2013 our total deficit (according to our internal accounts) has reached the sum of 48.05 million J.D. (equiv. $67.67 million dollars), whereas it was calculated at 42.6 million J.D. on August 31st 2011 as per our audited report.

All Palestinian universities are supposed to receive some financial help from the Palestinian Authority, but this is interrupted due to punitive measures against the PA from time to time (example, Israel withholding levy taxes as part of the Paris Agreement). As a result, Al-Quds University had to take bank loans.

Your Higness,

Allow us to reiterate the importance of Al-Quds University in being part of your initiative to protect and support the indigenous Arab and Islamic cultural heritage of this Holy City. We look forward to your support to Al-Quds University to fulfill its obligation towards Jerusalem.

May Allah SWT continue to bless Qatar, its Emir and people.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Sari Nusseibeh Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway

President, Al-Quds University Integral Chair for the Study of Imam Al-Ghazali's Work at the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Quds University