

## No Child is Born a Terrorist

Film: 22 minutes

*What happens when Palestinian youth are given an alternative to a life of violence and martyrdom? Deep inside the most radicalized refugee camp in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, The Freedom Theater is an outlet for*

*feelings of anger and frustration, where expressions of violence can transform into expressions of art.*



---

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grades 9 – 12

Theater Arts, World History

**Theatre - Standard 5. Understand how informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning.**

- Know how social meanings communicated in informal productions, formal productions, and personal performances of different cultures and historical periods can relate to current personal, national and international issues

**Theatre - Standard 6. Understand the context in which theatre, film, television, and electronic media are performed today as well as in the past.**

- Understand ways in which theatre can reveal universal concepts
- Understand ways in which personal and cultural experiences can affect an artist's dramatic work

**World History - Standard 44. Understand the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world**

- Understand the role of ethnicity, cultural identity, and religious beliefs in shaping economic and political conflicts across the globe (e.g., why terrorist movements have proliferated and the extent of their impact on politics and society in various countries; the tensions and contradictions between globalizing trends of the world economy and assertions of traditional cultural identity and distinctiveness, including the challenges to the role of religion in contemporary society; the meaning of jihad and other Islamic beliefs that are relevant to military activity, how these compare to the Geneva Accords, and how such laws and principles apply to terrorist acts)

**Resource - [McREL Content Knowledge – Standards & Benchmarks](#)**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☞ What do you think are some daily struggles and issues for the Palestinian children living in Jenin?
- ☞ How do the people in this film define the term “occupied”? As in, we are an “occupied” country?
- ☞ How can role playing and drama techniques help Palestinian youth cope with the realities of their lives?
- ☞ Why does Juliano Mer Khamis, an Israeli, operate a theater camp in a Palestinian refugee camp? What is he hoping to accomplish? Do you think this is a worthwhile use of his time?
- ☞ Why does Zakaria Zubeidi come back to The Freedom Theater? What do you think the impact will be on the theater students and their life?
- ☞ In what ways is Zakaria Zubeidi a “role model”?
- ☞ Why do you think Zakaria Zubeidi allows documentary filmmakers into his neighborhood? Do you think it is a good idea?
- ☞ Why does the host, Charles Annenberg Weingarten, say “My mom is going to kill me when she sees this film”?
- ☞ Has this film changed your perspective on the Middle East conflict? Why or why not?
- ☞ Describe a drama exercise or role that you feel helped transform the way you deal with your own life struggles and issues.

### ACTIVITY

#### Write a Dialogue - Life in Jenin

With a partner, write a dialogue about a typical daily event in Jenin. Imagine one of you is an Israeli and the other is a Palestinian. For example, you could be a soldier, a freedom fighter/terrorist, a shop owner, or a teacher. You could be any gender or age. How does the world look different to these people who live so close to each other but come from such different cultures?

---

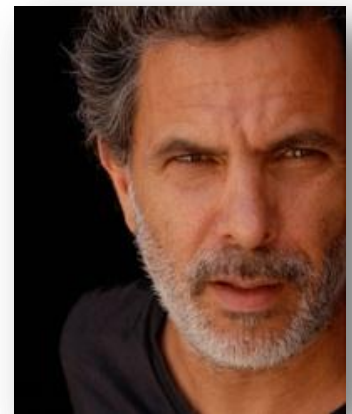
## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Excerpts from Interview at [explore.org](https://www.explore.org)

*Juliano Mer Khamis is an actor, director and filmmaker — but his greatest work lies in the creation of a theatre in the Jenin Refugee Camp that provided a creative outlet for local youth in an emotionally charged environment.*

#### What is The Freedom Theatre?

[The Freedom Theatre](#) aims to demonstrate a model of artistic excellence in theatre in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and, using the creative process as a model for social change, provide opportunities for the children and youth of Jenin Refugee Camp to develop the skills, self-knowledge and confidence which would empower them to challenge present realities and to take control of their future.



***When was it created and by whom?***

The Freedom Theatre was created in 2006 by myself, Zakaria Zubeidi, the former military leader of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, Jonatan Stanczak, Swedish-Israeli activist, Dror Feiler, Swedish-Israeli artist, with the help of many other people in Palestine and throughout the world.

***What inspired the founding of The Freedom Theatre?***

Jenin Refugee Camp was during 2002 and onwards brutalized by the Israeli army in much the same way as Gaza was recently. Many hundreds of people died and thousands have been killed or arrested since. This area is still under tight Israeli military control which means that all aspects of daily life are affected, just like in the rest of the Palestinian territories. Each and every one of our students bears marks of bullet wounds, severe beatings, torture or psychological traumas. This is the language of the occupying power.

In an effort to change this situation, we decided to open The Freedom Theatre. We came from around the world, people with different backgrounds, faiths and political views, to join the children of Jenin in their struggle against occupation and oppression, for their right to childhood and freedom.

***What is the importance of the Theatre?***

In the context of Jenin, the work of The Freedom Theatre is all the more important since the Israeli occupation aims to destroy the Palestinian culture and sense of identity. Prior to the establishment of The Freedom Theatre, few residents of the Jenin area had even seen theatre, much less participated in performing arts activities. The majority of cultural activity is television, Internet or cell-phone generated, with some input from the odd workshop, performance, or wedding dancing.