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## UD History Professor, Former Resident of Ramallah, Says Events in Middle East 'Highlight Hollowness of Peace Process'

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 Contact: Pam Huber  
 Huber@udayton.edu

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## NEWS TIPS

### UD HISTORY PROFESSOR, FORMER RESIDENT OF RAMALLAH, SAYS EVENTS IN MIDDLE EAST 'HIGHLIGHT HOLLOWNESS OF PEACE PROCESS'

The violence in the Middle East could abate if the Israeli military would withdraw, "even if they would just move their forces back to the checkpoints, to be away from these centers. They're creating targets for rage," said Ellen L. Fleischmann, assistant professor of history at the University of Dayton.

Fleischmann, who is teaching a course this semester on the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, lived for several years in the West Bank town of Ramallah, the site of this week's missile strikes and continuing violence. "Seeing missiles hitting the town I lived in was very traumatic," she said. "It was a small community and it was easy to know people there." Although many of her friends have moved from Ramallah, she keeps in touch with those still there via e-mail.

"These events just highlight the hollowness of the peace process," she said. "It wasn't a very solid process anyway." She points to the "asymmetry of power" in the region as a contributing force to the violence that has continued over the past weeks.

Tensions among Palestinians are aggravated by the continuing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, she said, "the second longest occupation by a military power since World War II. It has a cumulative effect on people. This has been going on since 1967 — there's a whole generation that knows nothing else. When something happens, the military moves in. There's a lot of frustration and a lack of progress in their lives."

Fleischmann taught history at a Quaker school in Ramallah from 1986 to 1988. Her experience working in the West Bank inspired her to continue her studies in history, and she returned to Ramallah from 1992 to 1994 while she worked on her dissertation. Her most recent visit to Israel and the occupied territories was in the spring of 1999 while on a four-month research visit to the region.

She describes daily life in Ramallah as "oddly roller-coasterish. It's tense, but with strikes and curfews, there's a lot of enforced inactivity. When something happens, you hang around, listen to the news and be anxious. A lot of productive time is lost." Children bear the brunt of living such a nervous life, she said. "In the long run, it affects the children very badly. They have no sense of security or routine, and they see violence and arrests all around them."

For media interviews, contact **Ellen Fleischmann** at home on Friday and over the weekend at (937) 256-2664 or via e-mail at [fleischm@checkov.hm.udayton.edu](mailto:fleischm@checkov.hm.udayton.edu). Her UD office number is (937) 229-3046. The class on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 to 4:15 p.m. in Miriam Hall room 202.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS  
 300 College Park Dayton, Ohio 45469-1679  
 (937) 229-3241 (937) 229-3063 Fax  
[www.udayton.edu](http://www.udayton.edu)