

(This is our own translation)

Dortmund's DTG supports an interesting sports-project that serves the purpose of bringing Israelis and Palestinians together

## **Aikido –group from Dortmund visits the West Bank**

Three “Black Belts” of the sports club “Dortmunder Turngemeinde” have visited an aikido-peace-project in the West Bank.

The wall is stretching out long between Israel and the Palestinian territories, covered with graffiti and slogans - signs of the continuous conflict of the Israelis and Palestinians. The three aikidokas from Dortmund have been on the road since morning with their host Miles Kessler. Now they are crossing the border by foot at the checkpoint.

The DTG's aikido department has been supporting the peacemaking project “AWB” for quite a while by collecting much-needed donations. Founded by the aikido-teacher Miles Kessler (5<sup>th</sup> Dan), who practiced aikido in Japan for eight years, the non-profit organization brings Israelis and Palestinians together. AWB is founding aikido groups in the conflict-laden Middle East, where Israelis and Palestinians can practice the peaceful art of aikido. The organization's dojos primarily create a network for children and youth between Israel and the West Bank.

The German aikido department had gotten to know Miles Kessler through his international aikido workshops. Now the DTG's three “Black Belts” had the opportunity to get a glimpse of the work AWB is doing throughout the West Bank. Therefore, Sabine Spatz, Dagmar Uttich and Susanne Richter initially travelled to Tel Aviv to stay in Miles Kessler's dojo and undergo intensive aikido training as so called “Uchi deshis”. But the highlight of their stay was without a doubt the visit of the Palestinian AWB-dojos in Bir Nabala, where they had to travel by bus via Jerusalem. The atmosphere in Bir Nabala was excited, because a visit of the project's founder Miles Kessler and a training session under his supervision is always a special occasion, especially for the two coaches Ghassan Eyalan and Sufian Mahmud. Many helping hands were required the afternoon of their visit, because a new group of children and youth were having their first aikido practice session. The three German aikidokas were invited to join the session and found themselves in the heart of AWB's work in the West Bank.

The aikidokas from Dortmund hope for Ghassan Eyalan to succeed in his project of opening a new AWB-dojos in his hometown Jib.



Content delegation: (f.l.t.r.) Susanne Richter, Sabine Spatz, Miles Kessler, Dagmar Uttich



The martial artists of the “DTG” exercised with Palestinian children