



The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific

Annual Report 2016



Strengthening Support for Palestinian Self-Determination and Statehood

Front Cover Image

The raising of the Palestinian flag for Palestinian Independence Day in Melbourne at Federation Square

Rear Cover Image

The Palestinian Delegation in Canberra

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific

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Executive Summary



Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Izzat Salah Abdulhadi, reflects on the highlights of 2016.



*Izzat Salah Ambdulhadi, Head of the General Delegation of
Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*

Probably the most significant event during 2016 was The Australian Foreign Minister the Hon Julie Bishop's visit to Ramallah and her meeting with H.E. The Prime Minister, Dr Rami Al Hamdallah. This meeting was an excellent opportunity to enhance and promote bilateral relations between the Palestinian leadership and the Australian government.

The Hon Julie Bishop also met with the Minister of National Economy, H.E. Abeer Odeh, where both parties agreed on the importance and necessity to start development, trade, and economic cooperation.

This year also witnessed the issuing of Security Council resolution 2334 which condemned Israeli settlements and labelled them a flagrant violation of International law. The resolution called for the complete withdrawal of the occupying Israeli Army from all Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967.

In this regard New Zealand played a vital role, as a non- permanent member of the Security Council, in presenting the resolution and adopting it with a majority vote of fourteen members of the security council, with the USA abstaining.

As for the Pacific countries, 2016 observed the onset of technical and developmental cooperation between the State of Palestine and a number of the Pacific countries via The Palestinian International Cooperation Association (PICA)/ the Palestinian Foreign Ministry.

This year also witnessed increased cooperation between the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra, civil society organisations and the advocacy groups in Australia and New Zealand. In addition to that, the cooperation between the Palestinian Embassy and the Arab and Islamic communities developed immensely and this manifested in numerous visits from these organisations, which focused on reinforcing networking and furthering support for Palestine.

The relationship between the Palestinian Embassy and the Palestinian community has progressed, and the Palestinian Embassy participated in various activities with the Palestinian community in 2016. The

Palestinian community's celebration of the Palestinian Independence Day on November 17, 2016 was one of the important events that the Palestinian Embassy participated in. This led to a significant leap in the Palestinian community's efforts of unification as well as being a great development in the cooperation between the community and the embassy.

The Palestinian Embassy executed an in-depth study on the relationship between the Embassy and the Palestinian community in preparation of establishing the Palestinian Community Council in Australia.

2016 witnessed development in the professional capabilities in the Palestinian Embassy by adding an additional diplomat and a local staff member.

The internship program which the Palestinian Embassy runs has developed hugely as a result of the increase in interns and volunteers in the embassy and their work on numerous research reports with regards to the strategy and vision of the Palestinian Embassy .

Despite the great difficulty in measuring the impact of the Palestinian Embassy on the Australian and New Zealand foreign policy and on the relationship with the advocacy groups, the Palestinian, the Arab and Islamic communities, there are strong evidence-based signs that the Palestinian Embassy is playing an important and effective role on all of these segments.

Warm regards,



The Ambassador of the State of Palestine

Izzat Abdulhadi

*(Head of the General Delegation of Palestine
to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific)*

Political Context



The GDOP continues to operate in a difficult political context. The Delegation is currently situated in Canberra, Australia, which is a country that does not politically recognise Palestine's statehood, Additionally, Palestine struggles for its self-determination in the Middle East with the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The political context is critical to understanding the aims and objectives of the GDOP in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, as well as the necessity for improving its political relations with these nations.

Australia

The most prominent political issue during this period was the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop to Israel and Palestine. Despite the short time the Minister spent in Ramallah, Palestine, on the 5th of September 2016, it was enough time for the Minister to understand the developments of the political situation in Palestine. It was an important occasion to discuss the further



*Minister Julie Bishop meeting with Prime Minister
Dr Rami Al Hamdallah in Ramallah.*

development of bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine, based on partnership and common interests.

Minister Julie Bishop met with his Excellency the Prime Minister, Dr Rami al-Hamdallah, and with her Excellency the Minister of the National Economy, Abeer Odeh. Minister Julie Bishop also met with graduates of Australian Universities who benefited from the government sponsorship that allowed them to study subjects such as Administration, Public Administration and Law in Australia. This visit led to the strengthening of relations between Australia and Palestine. The visit also presented

the Minister with the opportunity to see up close the challenges that Palestinian people face, particularly the effect of the continuation of the Israeli settlements, which are the main obstacles to the possibility of a two-state solution.

In addition, an Australian delegation composed of members of the opposition and the leading party, traveled to Israel to participate in the Cooperative Leadership Program between Australia, Israel, and Britain. The Australian delegation visited Ramallah and met with the Prime Minister, Dr Rami Al Hamdallah, and the Minister of National Economy, Mrs Abeer Odeh, on 18 December 2016. The visits sparked disagreement within the Australian Labor Party, due to Bill Shorten's (the leader of the opposition party and supporter of Netanyahu and Israel) statements. The visit resulted in the strengthening of bilateral relations between Palestine and Israel especially in the domain of commercial exchange.

This year also witnessed the issuing of Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemned Israeli settlements and labeled them a flagrant violation of International Law. The resolution called for the complete withdrawal of the occupying Israeli Army from all Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967.

It is important to note that the United States abstained from voting for Security Council Resolution No. 2334. The Australian Government also made public statements against the Resolution, calling it one-sided. The Resolution stated that the settlements were illegal and called for an end of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The abstention prompted criticism towards the Australian Government, as it sided against the international consensus and international legal principles. Australia also distanced itself from the concluding statement of the Middle East Peace conference in Paris, in spite of the attendance of an



Australian delegation. This stance also prompted reproach from the Palestinian Government.

The Australian Government's

interest in the War on Terrorism, especially in Iraq and Syria, continues. Minister Julie Bishop participated in the first meeting

of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Coalition Against Terrorism Countries, which was held in Washington on 21 July 2016. During her participation in the meeting Minister Bishop announced that Australia would be donating AUD\$25 million to humanitarian aid for Iraq, following the AUD\$60 million in aid that has been given to Iraq since 2014. Australia has also increased humanitarian aid to Syria, and has given more than AUD\$433 million to Syria since 2011.

Australia has also focused on improving bilateral relations with Iran, through a visit by the Minister of Trade, Tourism and Investment, Mr Stephan Cube to Tehran. This trip aimed at discovering the possibilities for commercial cooperation between the two countries. Minister Bishop also participated alongside the Foreign Minister of the European Union, Ms Federica Mogherini, in the launching of the Australia and European Union Conference in Brussels, Belgium. This meeting is considered important for the future cooperation in trade, tourism, business, media, politics, civil society and other sectors.



New Zealand

New Zealand's membership in the Security Council has played a significant role in its agenda towards Palestine. New Zealand has particularly stressed the importance of finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict since joining the Security Council in January 2015. New Zealand has emphasised that the Security Council must play a role in the solution to the conflict.

New Zealand continued its strong condemnation of the Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian Territories. This interest was evident during New Zealand's membership in the Security Council, which began in 2015, and whenever it presented the Palestinian issue during discussions on the Middle East. This period also witnessed the nomination of Ms Helen Clarke, a former Prime Minister of New Zealand, for the position of Secretary General of the United Nations.

New Zealand sponsored the Security Council resolution, which condemned Israeli settlements and considers them in breach of international law. Based on that, New Zealand supported and voted in favour of the Security Council Resolution No. 2334. Israel expressed its strong disapproval of the resolution.

In addition to the Palestinian issue, New Zealand used its role as a member of the Security Council to conduct consultations on the situation in Syria. New Zealand encouraged a ceasefire agreement supported by Russia and the US. New Zealand called for all sides to abide by the rules of the ceasefire and to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria. New Zealand supported a wider intervention from the Security Council to solve the crises in the region.

New Zealand continued to strengthen its relations with other members of the Arab world, especially in the field of trade and commerce, particularly focusing on trade agreements with the Gulf States. The New Zealand Minister of Trade, Mr Todd McClay, welcomed the signing of the trade agreement between New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates. It is important to note that both sides, the New Zealand Government and the Gulf Cooperation Council, have been in negotiations over an extended period of time regarding the signing of the Free Trade Agreement.

Minister of Foreign Affairs H. E.

Mr Raid Malki meeting New Zealand Foreign Minister

New Zealand continues to focus on the Pacific and South Asia. New Zealand supports the Pacific countries with \$4 million in aid, in order for these countries to undergo fundamental reforms in

taxation, duties, International Law and other areas. New Zealand also took a neutral stance, contrary to Australia, on the subject of maritime freedom and the South China Sea. Tension between China and America over the building of structures in the South China Sea and the Chinese claim to sovereignty, has incited anger and frustration from Australia, America, Japan and other states which request maritime freedom in the South China Sea. The Philippines presented their grievance to the International Court of Justice, claiming its sovereignty over parts of the South China Sea and consequently winning the case. However, China has not abided by the decision. New Zealand emphasised the necessity to respect International Law in this matter.

The political situation in New Zealand underwent an important development when the Prime Minister John Key suddenly resigned to spend time with his family after many years of public service. Mr Bill English, the former Minister of Finance, was appointed as the new Prime Minister. New Zealand's foreign policy towards Palestine is not expected to change as a consequence of this, especially since the New Zealand Government supports a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders.

Pacific

There were no changes to the relations between the Pacific countries and Palestine. This is particularly the case for the nations with which Palestine has the newest relations: East Timor and Vanuatu. East Timor continued to vote in favour of Palestine in the United Nations General Assembly. Vanuatu has mostly abstained from voting.

The Palestinian Embassy in Canberra continued its relations with the government of Fiji and Papua New Guinea. However, in order to establish full diplomatic relations with these countries, further work needs to be done.

Fiji has excellent relations with Israel, through both military and development cooperation. The Prime Minister of Fiji, Mr Frank Bainimaram, went on an official visit to Israel on 7 November 2016. During his trip he met with the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who thanked him for Fiji's continual support. Mr Netanyahu announced that he would be visiting Fiji in February 2017. Fiji's voting record in the UN varies between voting in favour of Palestine and abstaining.

It is worth mentioning that the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra has started initial contact with five Pacific countries to start development cooperation and technical assistance programs with them through the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA) and within South-South cooperation.

Goals and Objectives



The overall goal for this year was to enhance and strengthen the status and legitimacy of the GDOP as the diplomatic representation of the State of Palestine and the credible partner for all interested stakeholders in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

The strategic objectives to achieve this were as follows:



1. Further enhance and institutionalise bilateral relations with the foreign affairs ministries and policy-making bodies of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
2. Strengthen relationships between the GDOP and the Arab and international diplomatic corps.
3. Further enhance and institutionalise relationships with civil society in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
4. Further enhance and institutionalise relationships with the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic communities in Australia.

The Delegation strives to improve the ability of the GDOP to operate efficiently and effectively through the streamlining and institutionalisation of managerial, financial and consular processes.

Mode of Operation

1. To initiate and engage in heartfelt strategic dialogue with the Coalition Government members including the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Julie Bishop MP, DFAT leaders, Coalitions MPs, among others. have clarified that the Coalition's foreign policy is unlikely to be sympathetic towards the Palestinian situation. For this purpose, a position paper that discusses the main components of Australia's foreign policy and its impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be prepared and future dialogue with the government will be based on it. The GDOP believes that a clear position, agreed upon by the GDOP, Palestinian civil society and Palestinian business societies, must be determined before the GDOP approaches the new government to initiate official dialogue.
2. To create and sustain a more effective relationship with the New Zealand Government, through robust dialogue and the development of a clear working plan that engages all stakeholders.
3. To work closely with the Pacific island states, with more direct visits and improved bilateral coordination with their representatives in Canberra. The implementation of an active and inclusive regional strategy by Palestinian missions in the Pacific region would substantially improve relations between Palestine and various regional actors. Stronger lines of communication between the GDOP and the U.N. observer missions in both New York and Geneva would also lead to marked

improvement in relations with relevant states. The GDOP hopes to participate more directly in discussions already taking place in New York and Geneva.

4. To develop an institutionalised strategy and implement an active method to engage with various Palestinian advocacy groups. The GDOP hopes that such strategy will specify a clear, overarching political vision and definite, unanimous political messages that can be impressed upon decision-makers in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Furthermore, developing an information sharing mechanism on Israeli human rights violations and other issues of concern will support these groups in their advocacy.
5. To empower and encourage the Palestinian community to take a stronger role in political life in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. A politically adept Palestinian community would theoretically form strong bonds with decision-making agencies, such as parliaments, ministries of foreign affairs, civil society groups and other institutions. Organising the Palestinian community and working to improve the leadership skills of its members is a high priority for the GDOP. In this regard, the GDOP will particularly focus on youth groups, which is integral to the community's future. The GDOP aims to assist in establishing an Australian Palestinian Community Council as a framework of representation for the Palestinian community, also to be used as a model for the region. Such a council should facilitate the community's ability to play a more prominent role in the political life of Australia. The council should also provide beneficial social services to members and assist with local level engagement with councils and institutions.
6. Given the considerable influence of the Jewish community in Australian society, maintaining a productive and amiable relationship between this community and the GDOP is extremely important. The GDOP believes that robust and earnest dialogue with the Jewish community will lead to greater common understanding. Such dialogue could potentially influence and moderate the political positions of the Jewish community. Ultimately, a sustainable strategy for engagement could eventually lead to important long-term changes of the positions and policies of the Jewish community in regard to the Palestinian question.
7. The GDOP has worked diligently to connect with media and has made some progress with print media, resulting in the publication of numerous articles and interviews. The GDOP is pleased with this limited outreach, achieved without a dedicated media department. However, the GDOP believes that a dedicated media strategy would generate a much stronger impact and be far more effective at influencing public opinion within Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. At present, the capacity and strategy includes little more than a contact list for various media representatives in Australia and New Zealand. Undoubtedly, it is essential to involve the media and to keep them, and therefore the public informed and interested. Furthermore, the proper utilisation of social media on platforms like Facebook and Twitter is essential, particularly if the GDOP hopes to connect directly with the public in any meaningful and influential way.
8. To prioritise those events and tasks within the GDOP's program with the most impact, in a bid to manage constraints on the GDOP's financial and human resources. In order to further respond to these constraints, the GDOP has launched a new program to engage volunteers, /interns who are able to offer their valuable expertise in exchange for experience. These volunteers, most of whom

are recent university graduates from a variety of fields, have been engaged to cover particular areas of work through a focus on research. The involvement of volunteers - all of whom work under guidance of the GDOP's professional staff- could significantly alleviate the human resources problem facing the GDOP, especially if coupled with effective general management of the GDOP's program, annual plan, and targeted outcomes.



Activities



In 2016, the GDOP embarked upon a vast range of activities designed to fulfil the objectives of the year 2016. Putting these objectives into action has achieved strengthened support for Palestinian self-determination. The activities of the GDOP aimed to improve bilateral relations with Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, as well as to implement other multilateral activities. The GDOP expanded its outreach to the community through various community-based events. The GDOP also improved its relations with civil society and community organisations.

Bilateral Relations with Australia

1. The Palestinian Ambassador and Counsellor Suheir Gedeon met with the Assistant Secretary for the Middle Eastern division in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Greg Ralph, in January. Both parties discussed the developments of the Australian aid to the NGOs involved in the development of the Palestinian agricultural sector. The Ambassador thanked the Australian government for its support in this area, and expressed his hope that the agreement will be signed shortly between the Palestinian Agricultural Ministry and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

2. The Ambassador met with a large number of Federal MPs at the Australian Federal Parliament to explain the Palestinian perspective regarding the current political situation in Palestine and present Palestinian strategy to save the two-state solution. He particularly discussed the need to bring the conflict before the UN Security Council, in the hopes that they will issue a resolution condemning Israeli settlement activities considered illegal under international law and provide international protection the the Palestinian people.

3. In February, upon invitation from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Palestinian Ambassador attended a luncheon at the department in honour of Dr Ibrahim Nejem, the religious advisor to Sheikh Al Azhar.

Dr Nejem gave an important speech pointing out Islam's stance on terrorist movements and the role of Muslim communities in different countries to support moderate discourse. He also emphasized the role of Sheikh Al Azhar in supporting moderation in the Arab World.

4. In March, the Palestinian Ambassador met with Mr Mike Baird, the NSW Premier, in Sydney. This was prior to Mr Baird's trip to Israel and Palestine. The Ambassador presented Mr Baird with a summary on

the current political situation in Palestine, emphasizing continuation of Israeli settlements, which threaten the future of the two-state solution. He also gave a brief summary on the economic situation in Palestine and the obstacles that the Israeli occupation poses to economic growth.



*The Palestinian Ambassador during his meeting
with NSW Premier Mike Baird*

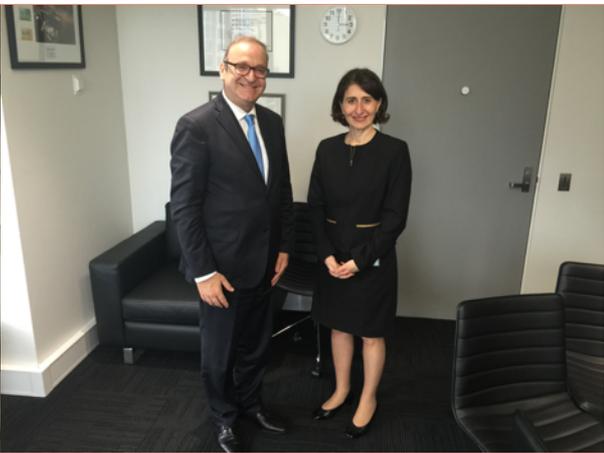


The Palestinian Ambassador during his meeting with Mr Shaoqette Moselmane, NSW MP

Mr Baird expressed his pleasure in visiting Palestine and his interest in hearing the Palestinian perspective regarding the conflict. He also expressed his desire to strengthen the bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine. Within this discussion, Mr Baird suggested a wide program for academic cooperation between Palestinian universities and the University of Sydney in research, training, and scholarships. The Ambassador also met with Mrs Gladys Berejiklian, the Treasurer of the NSW government. In addition, Ambassador Abdulhadi met with MPs Linda Wolf and Shaoqette Moselmane.



The Palestinian Ambassador during his meeting with Mrs Linda Wolf, NSW MP.



The Palestinian Ambassador during his meeting with MP Gladys Berejiklian.

5. The Palestinian Ambassador attended a function in Sydney organised by the Australian Arab Business Council to commemorate its 10th anniversary. The Palestinian Ambassador met with a number of businessmen, political leaders, and members of parliament. They discussed the possibility of investment of Palestine, and he encouraged them to visit and meet with various economic representatives.

6. In April, the Palestinian Ambassador accepted a lunch invitation organised by the Australian Arab Chamber of Commerce in Canberra. It was attended by the president and members of the board of directors.

The attendees discussed the program of the Australian Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its role in supporting the economic links between the Arab world and Australia. Strategies were discussed to support arrangements between the Council of Arab Ambassadors and the Arab Australian Chamber of Commerce.

The Palestinian Ambassador presented the reality of the economic situation of occupied Palestine and the investment opportunities there. He encouraged the members of the chamber of commerce to visit Palestine and meet with representatives of businesses to discuss the possibility of economic, commercial and investment cooperation between Australia and Palestine.

7. The representatives of the embassy met with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to determine a program for the visit of Mayor of Bethlehem, Ms Vera Baboun. Ms Baboun came at the



The reception held by the Ambassador in honour of Mrs Vera Baboun's visit to Canberra.

invitation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ms Baboun's visit was considered to be extremely important due to the significance of the city of Bethlehem, as the birthplace of Jesus Christ. This visit also had political significance due to the current situation in Palestine, especially under the continuing Israeli settlements around the city.

The Palestinian Embassy held a major reception in May for Ms Vera Baboun. International and Arab diplomats, representatives of the Australian

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, members of the civil society and Arab and Palestinian communities attended. Several activities were organised during her visit to Canberra. DFAT held a business luncheon in her honour. Attendees included Ambassadors of Morocco, the Vatican, and Indonesia, in addition to the Palestinian Ambassador, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon, and representatives from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ms Baboun met with the political advisors of the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and with the minister herself for a short time. Ms Baboun also met with a group of mayors and representatives of the Palestinian community and Australian civil society and advocacy groups.

Mr Samer Shahin, a South Australian businessman from a Palestinian background, organised a dinner for Ms Baboun and many Australia politicians and businessmen and religious leaders attended. Ms Baboun was warmly welcomed in Australia during her visit. She left a good impression on decision makers in government due to her measured and balanced views, especially regarding her accurate portrayal of the Israeli violations for human rights.

8. The Palestinian Embassy in Canberra arranged a farewell function for a number of Members of Parliament who decided not to re-contest their seat in the 2016 elections.

These members included MPs Melissa Parke, Joe Hill, Laurie Ferguson, and Alan Griffin. The Palestinian Embassy in cooperation with the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine organized the Farewell function. Attendees included members of Federal Parliament, the Arab Ambassadors, and representatives of advocacy groups, civil society, and Arab and Islamic communities.

The Palestinian Ambassador delivered an important speech commending the professional performance of the leaving parliamentarians, and expressed his appreciation for their continued support to the Palestinian people. The Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, the Moroccan Ambassador, Mr Mohammad Maa El Ainien, also gave a speech commending the leaving parliamentarians' support for the Palestinian issue. The leaving members spoke of the need to recognise the State of Palestine, and affirmed their ongoing support for the Palestinian self-determination despite leaving parliament.

The Palestinian Embassy presented those parliamentarians with certificates of appreciation from the President of Palestine, Mr Mahmoud Abbas, and with plaques in commemoration of their work, as well as Palestinian cultural gifts.

9. The Palestinian Ambassador met with the Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, Ms Julia Finn. They discussed the development of a plan to empower the committee and increase its effectiveness. An agreement was reached to strengthen the relationship between the group and the embassy. The Ambassador informed Ms Finn of the current situation in occupied Palestine.

10. The Palestinian Ambassador and Counselor Suheir Gedeon met with the Assistant Secretary for Middle East and Africa Division, Mr Greg Ralph, and Director of International Development, Mr Luke Wild, and the Director of the Middle Eastern Department, Mr Luke Davies. This meeting addressed a number of issues, most importantly the French Peace Initiative, including the conduct of the International Peace Conference in Paris and the role that Australia could undertake in this area. The meeting also covered the most recent issues in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially the importance of Australia taking a clear stance against the Israeli settlements as a signatory to the Fourth Geneva Convention. Both parties discussed the stages of Australian funding to Palestinian NGOs and challenges facing the implementation

11. The Ambassador and the Counselor, Suheir Gedeon, met with the First Assistant Secretary of the Pacific Division of the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the director of the Department. Both sides exchanged information about the Pacific region, and the Palestinian Ambassador presented the vision and strategy for the region. Both sides agreed on the continuation of discussions aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two countries.

12. On 29 June, the Palestinian Ambassador and Counselor Gedeon met with Mr Greg Ralph, the Assistant Secretary in the Middle East and North Africa Branch, and Mr Luke Wild, the director of the Department of International Development in the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. and Trade Both sides discussed Australian aid to Palestine, especially the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade decision to stop funding to one of the Palestinian Agricultural NGOs because of claims that this organization is observing the Land Day and praising the Palestinian martyrs. The Palestinian Ambassador expressed his concern about this decision and asked the ministry to reconsider. Both sides also discussed the present political situation, especially the illegal Israeli settlements.

13. A meeting was set up by the Palestinian Embassy led by the Ambassador held at the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Canberra. Attendees included the First Assistant Secretary of the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mark Innes-Brown, on 3 August. Those present discussed the observer status of Palestine in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Prior to this meeting a letter was sent to the Australian Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, asking for Australia's vote for Palestine to join the WTO, for economic and technical reasons, not political. The Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said they would seriously study this request and respond as soon as possible.



Palestinian National Day in Sydney

14. The Palestinian Ambassador met with representatives of the Palestinian community in Sydney. Those present discussed the ongoing preparation for the celebrations for the Palestinian National Day on 17 November. Those assembled decided on the importance of the attendance of Federal and State Parliamentarians.

15. During his visit to Palestine the Ambassador Abdulhadi had several important meetings, among which were the following:



*Julie Bishop meets with the Palestinian Prime Minister
Dr Rami Hamdallah*

i. A meeting with the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, and His Excellency the Palestinian Prime Minister Dr Rami Hamdallah on 5 September. Julie Bishop discussed the current political situation with the Prime Minister and the challenges the peace process is facing in the Middle East.

ii. Julie Bishop also met with the Palestinian Minister of National Economy, Ms Abeer Odeh, also in attendance was the Palestinian Ambassador. Minister

Odeh discussed the priorities of the economic sector in Palestine and the obstacles it faces.

16. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a morning reception organised by the new Secretary of the Department for Foreign Ministry and Trade, Ms Frances Adamson, on the occasion of obtaining her position on 11 October, and was attended by Arab ambassadors. Ms Adamson thanked the Arab Ambassadors for their attendance and she affirmed the deep relationship between the Arab countries and Australia, and the great interest Australia has in strengthening the cultural and commercial relations with the Arab World. There was a long discussion between the Palestinian Ambassador and Ms Adamson about the current situation in Palestine and the basis for future negotiations. The Palestinian Ambassador thanked Ms Adamson for the support Australia is giving to Palestine, which is contributing to the state-building process.



*Reception at the Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade held by the
new Secretary, Ms Frances Adamson*

17. The Palestinian Ambassador met with Mrs Judith Robinson in February, who evaluates the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) on assignment from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This evaluation occurred during a time when Jewish community media in Australia attacked UNRWA, accusing some of the UNRWA workers of encouraging terrorism. It is worth mentioning that the Australian Government devoted \$19 million AUD to supporting UNRWA annually. The Palestinian Ambassador emphasized to the evaluation team the importance of UNRWA and the services and support it offers to Palestinian refugees, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Gaza currently exists under a total blockade, with destroyed infrastructure as a result of recent Israeli attacks.

18. The Staff of the Palestinian Embassy, led by the Ambassador, met with a delegation from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, on 21 October in Canberra. Both sides discussed the results of Ms Julie Bishop's visit to Palestine, especially the economic and trade aspects. DFAT representatives were interested in learning about the economic and trade priorities and needs in Palestine and the role of Australia in supporting Palestine, especially in the fields of agriculture and research. Both sides agreed to hold another meeting after going back to the Palestinian Ministry of Economy and agreeing on a clear working plan to strengthen the trade relations between both sides.

19. The Palestinian Ambassador along with Counselor Gedeon met with the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator David Fawcett, on 9 November. Both sides discussed the main components of the Palestinian Foreign Policy and the challenges that Palestine faces in the peace process, especially due to the continuation of Israeli settlements and violation of Human Rights. The Ambassador explained to Mr Fawcett the position and strategy of the Palestinian leadership.

20. On 15 November, the Ambassador met with the Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine Committee, MP Maria Vamvakinou. He also met with Ms Bronwyn Halfpenny, the Chair of the Victorian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine Committee. Both sides discussed the goals of both committees and discussed other future projects.

21. The Ambassador attended the annual end of year and Christmas celebration organised by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 31 November. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Julie Bishop, gave a speech honouring the achievements of the Ministry in 2016 and the goals of the department going forward, and talked of the vision for the next five years.

22. Counselor Gedeon met with representatives from the Department of Immigration to discuss issues, primarily the status of Palestinians in the detention centres in Papua New Guinea, on 7 December.

23. The Palestinian Ambassador met with Ms Maria Vamvakinou, the Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine. They discussed the methods of development of this group and its program during the current year. They also discussed the present political situation and how to further support the relationship between the Palestinian Embassy and Federal Parliament.



Christmas celebration at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Bilateral Relations with New Zealand

1. The Palestinian Ambassador met with the New Zealand Foreign Minister, Mr Murray McCully, in March in Sydney. They discussed the bilateral relations between Palestine and New Zealand, and the recent developments in the Israeli - Palestinian conflict.



New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Murray McCully meeting with Foreign Minister of the State of Palestine and Dr Riyad al-Malki

The Minister was on an official visit to Australia, and held an important lecture on New Zealand Foreign Policy at the Frank Lowy Institute in Sydney. Both parties discussed in depth the current political situation in particular the continuation of Israeli settlements activity and its negative impact on the two-state solution. They also discussed the importance of raising the issue of settlements in the Security Council in order to succeed in issuing a resolution in this regard. Further discussion centred on the current events in Palestine and the reasons for the continuing settlement activity in the Occupied Territories.

2. The Members of the Arab Ambassadors Council, met on May the 26th with the Head of the Middle East division at the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. During the meeting, they discussed the most recent political events in the Arab World and the International arena. The guest from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed New Zealand's full support for the two-state Solution, and the establishment of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. He condemned the Israeli settlements, considering them illegal by International Law. He expressed the importance of taking conclusive decisions around the Palestinian cause through the UN Security Council. The attendees also discussed the crises in Syria, Yemen and Iraq, and the War on Terrorism. The Head of the Middle East section also mentioned the importance of addressing religious teaching and curricula in the Arab World, and the adoption of a strategy that incorporates religion to combat terrorism.



The Ambassador meeting with New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Murray McCully

Bilateral Relations with the Pacific

1. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a charity event for Fiji's rebuilding after Cyclone Winston. The event was organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Fiji on the 27 May 2016. The aim of this event was to collect donations to help those affected by the cyclone which hit Fiji causing massive destruction to the infrastructure and public facilities, resulting in a large number of victims. The High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji and Fijian community appreciated the participation of the Palestinian Ambassador and the strengthened friendship.

Relations with Islamic, Arab and Palestinian Communities

1. The Ambassador completed a successful visit to Palestine during January, where he met with many Palestinian politicians. In particular, the Ambassador met with His Excellency, the President Mahmoud Abbas, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Riyadh Al-Malki. The Palestinian Ambassador discussed the current political situation within the Delegation's mandate, and the strategic outlook for achieving national and political rights, and how this should be presented to the UN. He also relayed the position of the Australian and New Zealand Governments towards the conflict and the efforts that the Delegation is gain obtain these Governments' recognition of Palestinian rights. Further, the Ambassador discussed the present financial support from the Australian government and how this support will contribute to Palestinian state building effort.

The Ambassador met with a large number of representatives of Palestinian Non Governmental organisations, especially the beneficiaries of Australian aid. They discussed the problems that the human development is presently facing and their outlook on institutional building process in Palestine. A meeting also occurred with the director of the Australian Representative Office in Ramallah, where they discussed the activities of the Office and continuing cooperation between the Office and the Delegation.

2. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a luncheon organised by the Grand Mufti of Australia, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammad, on 24 September. The farewell luncheon was in honour of the Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, Mr Mohammad Maa IE Einen and Charges D'Affaires of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Mr Hamzeh Al Omari.

3. The Palestinian Ambassador sent a letter of appreciation to representatives of the Palestinian community in Sydney in commemoration of the anniversary of the establishment of the Palestinian People's Party during the celebrations held on 15 February. The Palestinian Ambassador noted in his letter the

important role that the People's Party has played historically in the national resistance of Palestinians, and in their intellectual contributions to the struggle for self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Relations with International and Arab Diplomatic Corps

1. The Palestinian Ambassador attended a reception in February at the Indonesian Embassy in honour of the General Secretary for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani. The other attendees were ambassadors of Islamic countries and members of the OIC. H.E. Madani gave a speech on the present challenges facing the Islamic world, particularly Daesh's terrorist activities, the negative perception of Islam in Western countries and the need to alter this perception. H.E. Madani also emphasized the importance of holding an emergency conference on Jerusalem for the OIC in Jakarta this year, as requested by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.



Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi with members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Canberra during the meeting with the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

A new group has recently been formed in Canberra, consisting of several diplomatic missions from OIC countries. They elected the Indonesian Ambassador, Mr Nadjib Riphath Kesoema, to preside over this new group, and the Palestinian Ambassador as the Vice President.

2. Members of the OIC Group Steering Committee held a meeting on 26 February 2016 at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. The Indonesian Ambassador, Mr Nadjib Riphath Kesoema, chaired the meeting. The members of the Committee representing Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Palestine were present. The attendees discussed a plan for the group over the coming months, especially to enable and strengthen relations between the OIC, Australian civil society and Islamic communities domestically.



President Mohammad Abbas during his meeting with the Indonesian President, during the OIC Summit in Jakarta

Further discussion occurred on the importance and urgency of the Palestinian issue and raising it in relevant forums. The Indonesian President will host the OIC summit in Jakarta in March, and he will highlight the support that Indonesia has given the Palestinian people, particularly on the issue of Jerusalem.

3. The Palestinian Ambassador attended a conference on public policy at the Australian National University, hosted by the Belgian Embassy in conjunction with the Australian National University in March. Attendees represented organisations interested in developing public policies and advocacy sectors, members of civil society, the Arab and International Diplomatic Corps. Discussion focused on the best methods to exert influence through public policy, and developing influence to serve local communities.

4. The Palestinian Ambassador continued to conduct meetings with members of the Arab and International Diplomatic Corps, meeting with the new Iraqi Ambassador, Mr Hussain Mahdi Al-Ameri, the Turkish Ambassador, Mr Ebru Barutçu Gökdenizler, and the Lebanese Chargé D'affaires, Mr Giscard El Khoury in March. Discussion focused on regional issues, especially the situations in Syria and Iraq, as well as Palestine and the continuing Israeli aggression, violation of human rights and implementation of the international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

5. The Palestinian Ambassador attended a meeting with the leadership of the OIC in April. The committee approved a plan of action for the group and various activities to be arranged over the coming year. The Palestinian Ambassador thanked the Indonesian government during this meeting for arranging a conference in Jakarta on the status of Jerusalem. He noted the important statement that resulted from this meeting. It is important to note that the Ambassador is the Vice President of the recently established OIC Group in Canberra.

6. The Council of Arab Ambassadors had their monthly meeting on 11 May, and met with Mr Greg Ralph the Assistant secretary to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Many International and domestic issues were raised, most importantly the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The Ambassador emphasised the continued building of illegal settlements and encouraged the Australian

Government to take a clear stance against illegal settlements. Other global and regional issues were raised, including, the War on Terror, and the situations in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya.

7. The Palestinian Ambassador on 25 May participated in the celebration of Africa Day, in the presence of the International Diplomatic Corps, the Arab diplomatic Corps, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Australia and New Zealand. The Dean of the African Group, the Moroccan Ambassador, Mr Mohammad Maa El Eeinen, gave a speech on the right of Palestinian people to establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and condemned the continuing establishment of settlements in occupied Palestine.

8. On 28 April 2016, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a reception held by the Indonesian Ambassador, Mr Nadjib Riphath Kesoema, to celebrate the traditional performance of *Wayang*. During this event, there was a show of traditional Indonesian music and puppetry.



9. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a charity event, which was organized by the Embassy of Ecuador on 4 June for the victims of the earthquake. Representatives from the International Diplomatic Corps, Arabic Diplomatic Corps and Latin American Diplomatic Corps participated in the event along with Australian official representatives.



10. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a festival organized by the Embassy of Sri Lanka. At the festival, there were several traditional artworks and performance, which exhibited Sri Lankan culture and history. The Ambassador met with, and thanked, the Ambassador for organizing the festival.

11. The Arab Ambassadors Council conducted a meeting on 19 July presided by his excellency the Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The attendees discussed the strategies of the Council for the coming two years and the current developments in Australia and the Arab World.

12. During his visit to Palestine the Ambassador had several important meetings, among which were the following:

i. A meeting with His Excellency the Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Riyadh Al Malki. They discussed the vision and the strategy of the Palestinian Embassy for the technical cooperation with the Pacific countries, especially after the establishment of the Palestinian International Development Agency (PICA), new department in the ministry to deal South-South development cooperation.

ii. A meeting with the diplomatic advisor to the Palestinian President, Dr Majdi Al Khalldi. They discussed the latest political developments and strategic vision of the Palestinian leadership in the coming period.

iii. A meeting with His Excellency the Minister of Health and Deputy Minister of Health. They discussed the latest developments and the possibility of a documentary on the relationship between the Ministry and Israeli hospitals on the subject of cancer.

iv. The Ambassador also met with Her Excellency the Minister of National Economy, Ms Abeer Odeh, to discuss the agenda of the meeting with the Australian Foreign Minister Julia Bishop and the economic and trade situation in Palestine.

v. The Ambassador met more than once with his Excellency the Ambassador Mazen Shamiyah, Head of the Asia, Africa and Australian Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They discussed the bilateral relations between Australia/ New Zealand and Palestine. They also discussed how they could enhance the relations and the communication between the department and the Embassy in Canberra.

13. On 25 September, the Palestinian Ambassador held a farewell dinner in honour of the Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mr Mohammad Maa Eleinen. The Palestinian Ambassador attended this dinner along with other Arab Ambassadors and representatives of the Arab community in Canberra. The Moroccan Ambassador gave a touching speech thanking the Ambassador of Palestine for his valuable efforts within the Council of Arab Ambassadors and his strong commitment to the Palestinian issue. The Palestinian Ambassador in turn gave a speech praising the commendable leadership of the Moroccan Ambassador and his important role in strengthening the work

and credibility of the Council of the Arab Ambassadors. The Palestinian Ambassador presented the Moroccan Ambassador with a gift of a model of the Dome of the Rock.

14. The Ambassador and the Counselor Ms Suheir Gedeon met with Ms Eve Richards, the coordinator of the Council for Australian Arab Relations (CAAR). Ms Richards gave a detailed explanation of the aims and the program of the CAAR and its future activities. She presented the results of her visit to Palestine and talked of her meeting with a number of representatives of Civil Society Organizations in Palestine. Both sides agreed to continue meeting each other and for the Palestinian Embassy to clarify the goals of the CAAR to Palestinian Organizations and community and recommend projects which the CAAR could financially support.

15. Counselor Gedeon participated in a book launch on traditional Egyptian food, organized by the Egyptian Embassy in Canberra, on 26 October.

16. The Palestinian Ambassador along with a group of other Ambassadors received His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah on 2 November at Canberra Airport. His majesty King Abdullah was on an official visit to Australian and New Zealand.



The Ambassador met His Majesty Abdullah II of Jordan and his wife Queen Rania Abdullah

17. On 11 December, the Palestinian Ambassador and the First Secretary, Noura Salah participated in a celebration organized by the Islamic High Council, in celebration of the Prophet Mohammad's Birthday in Sydney.

18. The Palestinian Ambassador and Counselor Gedeon attended a reception at the Moroccan Ambassador's residence to celebrate the results of the Marrakech Climate Change Conference. His Excellency, the Moroccan Ambassador, Mr Kareem Medrek stressed the importance of this conference and the importance of abiding by the Paris climate Change Agreement.

19. Counselor Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh attended a celebration for World Arabic Language Day organized by the Saudi Arabian Embassy.

20. Meetings continued between the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra and the United Nations Information Centre in preparation for the UN day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, to be held on December the 1st. The attendees discussed the preparation plan and each party's role in this operation. This celebration is held annually in cooperation with the Council for Arab Ambassadors, with attendances from



Palestinian National Day in Sydney



The Multicultural Festival in Canberra

the International and Arab Diplomatic Corps, advocacy groups, representatives from Civil Society, and members of the Arab, Islamic, and Palestinian Communities.

1. The Palestinian Embassy participated in the National Multicultural Festival in February, with more than 300 000 total visitors. The Palestinian stall showcased handicrafts and embroideries, as well as Palestinian foods and other cultural and educational brochures. Several paintings by Palestinian artists expressing the struggle during different times were also exhibited.

2. The Palestinian Ambassador met with representatives of the Sydney Palestinian community in March to discuss arrangements for the Palestinian National Day in November. The community is preparing for a large celebration for the occasion, including the attendance of a large number of politicians, representatives of civil society, and advocacy groups, in addition to members of the International and Arab Diplomatic Corps. This celebration was held in cooperation between the Palestinian community and the Palestinian Embassy.



Counselor Suheir Gedeon and the Palestinian Stall on Harmony Day at Hughes Primary School.

3. Upon invitation from Hughes Primary School to celebrate the Harmony Day the Palestinian Embassy staff participated in Harmony Day at Hughes Primary School. The Palestinian Embassy exhibited embroidery, handicrafts and national dishes, which were highly appreciated by visitors. Ambassador Abdulhai and Counselor Suheir Gedeon thanked the Principal of the school for their excellent initiative to promote Harmony Day and multiculturalism among school students.

4. The Palestinian Ambassador met with a group from the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN), which included Mr George Browning, the President of the APAN, and Professor Bassam Daly, the Vice President. They discussed the latest developments in the Palestine-Israeli conflict, particularly the current vision and strategy of the Palestinian leadership. The APAN representatives presented their 2016 program, and particularly their work with the Australian government lobbying for increased support for the political and national rights of the Palestinian people. Both sides agreed to continue the relationship, which will serve the goals of the national Palestinian struggle.

5. The Palestinian Ambassador attended a function arranged by the Australian Middle Eastern Media in May in Sydney. The Ambassador delivered a speech on behalf of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, recognising the organisation's role as a voice connecting together Arab immigrant communities and those in the Middle East.

6. The Graduates Association also commemorated the Palestinian *Nakkba*. During the commemoration in Sydney, certificates of appreciation were distributed to highlight achievements by

Palestinian students. Also participating in this occasion were Members of Parliament, Academics, members of civil society organizations and the Palestinian community.

The Palestinian Ambassador delivered the main speech in which he pointed out the ethnic cleansing which Israel practiced in 1948. This resulted in the forced displacement of 750,000 Palestinians to neighboring countries. He also pointed out Israel's continuing policy of ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem, and the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem for more than 49 years.

The Palestinian Ambassador also praised the determination of the Palestinian people for putting Palestine once again on the map, after Israel assumed the Nakkba of 1948 had destroyed the Palestinian spirit. He also pointed out that more than 138 countries recognized Palestine currently, and that Palestine is now a State and officially became an observer Non-member State at the UN in 2012. He mentioned Australia's failure to recognize Palestine as a State is very unfortunate and urged the Australian Government to recognise the state of Palestine and to save the two-state solution. The Palestinian Ambassador stressed on the Palestinian diaspora, especially in Australia, and on the importance of advocating their issues to the Australian Government.

During this commemoration, the Palestinian Ambassador presented a trophy/Award from his Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, to the General Union of Palestinian Workers, in appreciation of their role in serving the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people. The Ambassador appreciated the role of the Union in promoting the self-determination, the right of return and establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.

7. The Palestinian Ambassador attended a seminar about the situation in Iran and the democratic transition process on 7 June on invitation from the University of the Third Age/Canberra. The lecturer was Dr Ian Dudgeon, a researcher at the Australian Institute of International Affairs. In the lecture, he talked of the impression he got during his last visit to Iran, which concerned the transformation of opinion in international politics, internal politics, and regional politics, especially in the case of Saudi Arabia and Israel.

8. The Palestinian Ambassador and members of the Palestinian Embassy participated in Iftars during the month of a Ramadan. These attendances aimed to present the true image of Islam, which preaches mercy, forgiveness and the acceptance of others. The Ambassador of Palestine attended many iftars across Australia, traveling to Queensland, NSW, SA and the ACT.

During these various visits the Palestinian Ambassador met with representatives of the Palestinian community, advocacy groups, Members of Parliament, private sector representatives and the Australian

Organization for Culture and Sports in Queensland. He also met with members of the Australian Friends of Palestine in Adelaide (AFOPA), where he also visited the Palestinian Centre for Peace, recently established by the AFOPA. The Centre showcases many important Palestinian items and historical documents.

9. The Indonesian Ambassador, Mr Nadjib Riphath Kesoema, organized a Ramadan Iftar for all Muslim missions in Canberra, . He invited representatives from the Australian government, International diplomatic Corps and Arab diplomats.

The Palestinian Ambassador also took part in an Iftar organized in the honour of the people of Gaza, ran by the Al-Aqsa schools in Sydney. The Palestinian Ambassador gave a speech during this Iftar, focusing on the Gaza blockade and mentioned the importance of national unity under these difficult circumstances.

10. The Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine (AJPP) organized a showing of the film “The Idol” starring Mohammad Assaf, on 20 July with the Palestinian Ambassador attending. The Ambassador gave a speech at the opening of the film thanking the organizers and pointing out the importance of cinema in portraying the Palestinian resistance and State Building. He also mentioned the importance of removing the unjust blockade on the Gaza Strip.

11. The Palestinian Ambassador lectured at the Centre for Strategic Defence, a subdivision of the Australian Ministry of Defence, in Canberra on 21 July. In this speech, the Ambassador addressed the history of the Palestine/Israel conflict and the Palestinian narrative on the root causes of the current conflict. He also raised the possible obstacles facing a just and peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue. The

Ambassador also pointed out the present strategy of the Palestinian leadership, especially moving the Israel Palestine file to the Security Council and United Nations institutions. High-ranking military officials from different countries attended this lecture. This lecture was part of an annual training program, which was run by the Centre for Strategic Defence for high-

ranking military officials from various countries.





The Delegation meets with the non-Government Organization Global Gardens of Peace in Gaza.



The Ambassador during a meeting with a delegation of animal protection and welfare institution.



The Ambassador meeting with Dr. Muhammad Shtayeh, the General director of the Palestinian Economic council of Reconstruction and Development.

12. The Palestinian

Ambassador participated in the opening of the Arab Cinema Festival in Canberra on 5 September. This event showcased critically acclaimed Arabic films, among which were some modern Palestinian Films.

13. During his visit to Palestine, the Palestinian Ambassador had several important meetings with Civil society organisations, among which were the following:

- i. The Palestinian Ambassador met with Dr. Muhammad Shtayeh, the General director of The Palestinian Economic council of Reconstruction and Development along with the non-Government Organization Global Gardens of Peace in Gaza. This project aims to establish a large garden in Gaza, which would be a community centre that would provide a variety of services to the Palestinian community in Gaza. It would also provide a place where different sectors in the Gaza strip could conduct activities, strengthening and empowering the local Gazan community. Dr

Shtayeh promised that he would help the group by providing financial assistance and actively participating in achieving this goal.

ii. The Palestinian Ambassador met with Ms Shatha Hamadi, the Representative for Animals Australia, Which aims at protecting animals in accordance with international regulations. Representatives of a similar society in Palestine also attended, which had recently been established to accomplish the same goal.

iii. The Palestinian Ambassador also met with a number of representatives from Palestinian NGOs and members of the Civil Society, and discussed the strategic vision of the civil society sector and how they can work in cooperation with similar groups in Australia. The ambassador also met with some of the recipients of Australian funding and discussed with them their work and the challenges they are facing.

iv. The Palestinian Ambassador met with Ms Marcia Pius, Head of the Australian Representative Office in Ramallah. Both sides discussed the political situation and relations between Australia and Palestine. They suggested a consultative process to enhance the relationship between the Australian Representative Office and Palestinian Embassy in Canberra.

v. The Palestinian Ambassador met with his Excellency Dr Ramzy Khouri, the general director of the Palestinian National Fund. They both discussed the importance of continuing relations between the Palestinian National Fund and the Embassy. The Ambassador thanked him for his professionalism and his support to the Palestinian Embassies across different countries.

14. The Palestinian Ambassador attended an art exhibition by Ms Marcelle Mansour, on 21 September. Ms Mansour exhibited a number of artworks with a concentration on the Palestinian issue and its relation to the international diminution. Ms Mansour mentioned the effects of the *Nakba* on her cultural identity and her artwork. John Ajaka, the NSW Minister for Multiculturalism, praised Ms Mansour's work and mentioned



The Ambassador at an art exhibition by Ms Marcelle Mansour.

how cultural, ethnic and religious diversity is important in strengthening acceptance of multiculturalism within the wider Australian society. The Ambassador gave a speech on the role of Palestinian authors and intellectuals in the Palestinian diaspora in the resistance against Israeli occupation and in supporting the right of Palestinian people to establish an independent State.

15. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a meeting with representatives from the Palestinian community in Sydney, during which they discussed the preparations for the celebrations for the Palestinian Independence Day.



The Ambassador attending the charity event in Sydney organised by APAN.



The Ambassador giving his speech at the event.

16. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a charity dinner organized by APAN on September the 24th. The Ambassador was the main speaker and guest of honour during this dinner. He gave a lecture pointing out the challenges that face the Palestinian leadership and Palestinian people during this historical stage, especially with the continuation of Israeli violation of human rights and the expansion of settlements, which are against international law. He also thanked the advocacy groups for Palestine, and the Palestinian community groups for their campaigns, which they organized to support the Palestinian cause.

17. An important meeting was set up between the members of the Jewish community in Canberra and the staff of the Palestinian Embassy, at the Embassy on 28 September. This meeting covered various political subjects, especially those having to do with the Israel/Palestine conflict and the relationship between the Israeli and Palestinian communities in Australia. This meeting witnessed a frank, open and professional discussion, with both sides agreeing on further



Meeting between members of the Jewish community in Canberra and staff of the Palestinian Embassy.

meetings.

18. A delegation of students representing various universities from around Australia visited the Embassy to discuss the developments of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and to listen to the Palestinian point of view on this subject. This delegation visited the Embassy through the UN annually, as an international initiative to train students to take different diplomatic roles in the future.



The Ambassador at a seminar on multiculturalism at the ACT Parliament

19. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a seminar on multiculturalism at the ACT Parliament upon invitation from Bluestar Intercultural Centre, on 4 October. The Ambassador of Pakistan presented an inclusive paper on examples of multiculturalism. In her speech, the Ambassador of Pakistan referred to the dominance of the principles of acceptance and love between the different sects and religions despite Pakistan being an Islamic State. She made a comparison between multiculturalism in Australia and Pakistan.

20. The Palestinian Ambassador met with Mr Kevin Bray, President of the Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine, on October the 5th. Both sides discussed the activities of thebooo organisation and its future plans, and methods for cooperation with the Palestinian Embassy and other advocacy groups.

21. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in the International Day of Non-Violence, which was organised by the National Press Club in Canberra. Professor Hamish, from the ANU, presented an important paper on non-violence, citing examples of non-violent resistance, including the experiences of Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. His paper criticised the UN, especially the Security Council, whose permanent members have the right to veto decisions.

22. Upon invitation from APAN, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a lecture by Professor John Dugard, a South African Lawyer and ex-UN envoy for Palestine and Israel, on October the 11th at the Australian Press Club. Professor Dugard is considered a prominent supporter of the Palestinian right to self-determination. He visited Australia upon invitation from APAN. During this visit he met with a number of Australian officials. Prof. Dugard gave a number of lectures in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra. Prof. Dugard





Minister Julie Bishop presents at UN Day.



The Ambassador meets with former President of East Timor José Ramos-Horta.

emphasized in all of his lectures the rights of the Palestinians and in particular their right to self-determination. He condemned the settlements, considering them illegal under international law.

23. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in the UN Day, organized by the UN Information Centre on 24 October. Participation in this event included Ms Julia Bishop, who gave a speech praising the UN role in resolving conflicts, especially the role of UN peacekeeping and global humanitarian aid. The Palestinian Ambassador met with the former President of East Timor José Ramos-Horta, who defended the rights of the Palestinians and was given a Nobel Peace Prize for his struggle for the independence of East Timor.

24. On 15 October the Ambassador met with representatives of the Palestinian community in Melbourne, including the Palestinian Community Association (PCA). The discussion covered the PCA 2017 plan and the relationship with the Palestinian Community and Embassy.

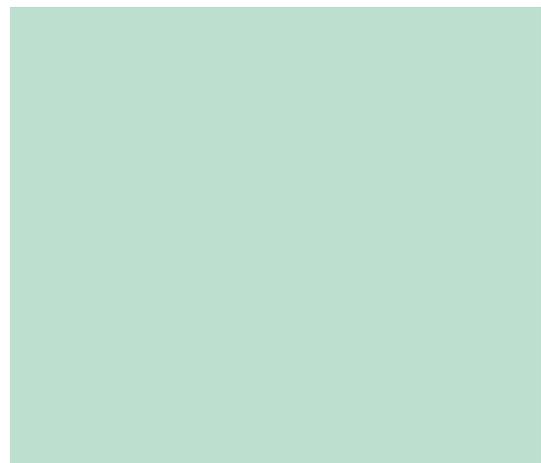


25. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a number of activities organised by the Palestinian Community and Embassy in Melbourne and Sydney in celebration of Palestinian Independence Day. A celebration was held for this occasion at the NSW Parliament. A number of politicians, representatives from the civil societies and members of the Palestinian community participated on 9 November. The

Ambassador gave a speech pointing out the meaning of this day, highlighting the achievements of the Palestinian Community in confirming the right of self-determination. The Palestinian Community held a large celebration on 18 November at the Western Hotel for the same occasion. A large number of Parliamentarians, members of the Arab diplomatic Corps, members of the Arab community and members of Palestinian civil society attended the events. During this celebration, Dr Nabil Shaath delivered a speech via Skype on the accomplishments of the Palestinian National Authority, especially in the fields of education and health. He pointed out the important political achievements that have been realised, especially the increasing international recognition of the State of Palestine. The Palestinian Ambassador gave a speech praising the Palestinian Communities initiative in organizing the event and their role in affecting government policy, allowing for a balanced stance on the Israel/Palestine conflict. He also addressed the accomplishments realised during the previous years, especially regarding the continuous support for the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people and for supporting the legitimacy of Palestine. Mr Eddie Zanari delivered the Palestinian community speech where he introduced the various stages of the Palestinian community struggle for Palestinian national and political rights. In addition, Mr Zanari criticized the Australian policy towards Israel-Palestinian conflict and urged the Palestinian community and advocacy groups to do more for changing the Australian policy to adhere more with international law. It is worth mentioning that representatives from the NSW Government and the opposition also delivered speeches on the occasion.

The Palestinian community in partnership with the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) in Melbourne also celebrated the National Day in Federation Square, where the Palestinian flag was raised for the first time in Melbourne. The Palestinian Ambassador thanked the Palestinian Community in Melbourne, praising the achievements that have been made in acknowledgment of Palestinian legitimacy and support for Palestine on the International level.

26. The Palestinian Ambassador participated on 18 June in the opening of the Palestinian Film Festival in



APAN meeting in Melbourne for Palestinian Independence Day in Federation Square.



Sydney and Adelaide. The Ambassador opened the film festival in Adelaide with a speech in which he addressed the changes that have occurred in the Palestinian Film Industry, and how this embodies the different stages of the Palestinian Struggle. He also noted how Palestinian directors who focus on the everyday life of Palestinians and the influence of the Israeli occupation on the political, economic and social aspects of peoples' lives.

The opening of the Palestinian Film Festival in Adelaide.

27. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a charity event organized by the Australian Friends of Palestine Association (AFOPA) on 19 November in Adelaide. More than 400 people attended this event, representing people from across the social spectrum. The proceeds went to the Australian Friends of Palestine.



28. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a press conference, which was organized by the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network. This was in support of imprisoned children in Palestine, and a condemnation of arbitrary punishments that the Israeli government makes against Palestinian children. The event was held in the back garden of the Federal Parliament on 28 November. Members of the Federal Parliament participated in this conference. Those attending signed a petition condemning Israeli actions against Palestinian children. The Palestinian Ambassador gave a speech pointing out the continual Israeli violations of International Convention on Children's rights. He also thanked Members of Parliament who stood with the Palestinian children.

29. Counselor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh attended Mr Peter Manning's book launch on the life of Wael Zuaiter's wife, Janet Venn-Brown. This event took place at the Federal Parliament on 29 November., which was organised by the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine.

30. The Palestinian Ambassador on 29 November was the guest of honour at the Anglican Overseas Aid Organisation. He gave a speech thanking the organisation for their support, and the aid they have given to Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza as well as the Anglican Hospital in Nablus and others. He also mentioned the relations between the Palestinian Embassy and the Anglican Church under Cardinal John Frailer.

31. On 1 December, the Palestinian Embassy, in cooperation with the UN Information Centre, celebrated the International Day of



International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Ambassador at the Anglican Overseas Aid Organization.

International Day of Solidarity

Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Those in attendance included International and Arab diplomatic corps, representatives from the Australian civil society, advocacy groups and members of the Arab, Islamic and Palestinian communities. At the event, there was a show of traditional Palestinian costumes. The theme of the day was education in

Palestine and the support of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in this area. There was a photography exhibition, which showed the educational activities that UNRWA conducted. There was also an exhibition on traditional Palestinian handicrafts.



Palestinian ambassador participated in an exhibition of artist Marcelle Mansour and give her an award in recognition of her efforts

The Palestinian Ambassador, the Director of UNIC and the Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors delivered speeches where all of them highlighted the importance of the two-state solution and the right of the Palestinian people to self determination and to establish their

sovereign and independent state on their land with Jerusalem as its capital.

32. The Palestinian Ambassador on 2 December met with Ms Kate Anderson, the Oxfam representative in Canberra. Both sides discussed future cooperation and programs Oxfam runs in Palestine. They also discussed Oxfam's manager visit to Palestine and the projects supported by the Australian government in Palestine.

33. The Palestinian Ambassador attended the art exhibition of Marcelle Mansour, in Sydney on December the 7th. Ms Mansour exhibited her portraits of important political and cultural figures in Sydney. Attending the event were a number of Members of Parliament. The Ambassador gave a speech thanking Ms Mansour for her unique artistic contributions and presented her with an award of appreciation from President Abbas.

34. The Palestinian Ambassador attended the Egyptian Mummy Exhibition with the Ambassador for the Arab Republic of Egypt and a number of other Arab Ambassadors and public figures.

35. The Palestinian Ambassador and the First Secretary attended a book launch for the new book by Professor Amin Saikal, the Director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, at the ANU. Professor Saikal's book launch was attended by a group of International and Arab diplomats and the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms Julia Bishop. Ms Bishop discussed the challenges that face the Middle East and the interests of Australia in the region.

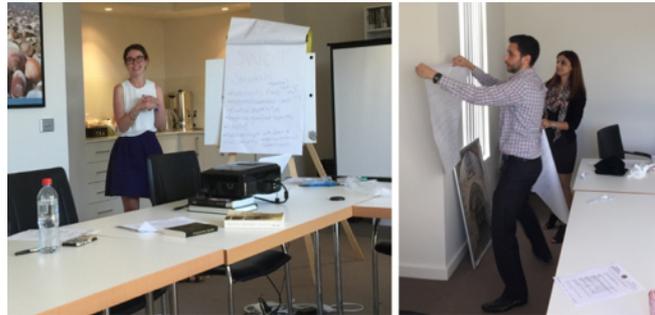
Organizational Development at the Embassy

1. The Palestinian Delegation continues to implement wide ranging programs to enhance the professional capacity of the Embassy through the following:

1. Upgrading the Embassy's website, especially the integration of social media within the website.
2. Consolidating the consular procedures of the Embassy on the website in order to continue providing excellent services to the Palestinian community and others in Australia and New Zealand.
3. Publishing the first volume of the news bulletin, which provides for improved communication with all relevant parties.

4. The continuation of the internship program, which strengthens technical support for the Delegation and provides an excellent atmosphere for new graduates to learn more about the conflict, foreign policy and International relations.
5. Issuing the annual report of 2015 for the Palestinian Embassy and circulating it to all relevant parties.
6. Organising a workshop for strategic planning, to be attended by the staff of the Embassy, in addition to volunteers and interns.

2. A workshop was held on the filing and classification system at the Embassy. The financial and administrative assistant Nada explained the present filing system and how it can be developed to best serve the purposes of the Embassy.



A workshop on strategic planning held at the Delegation

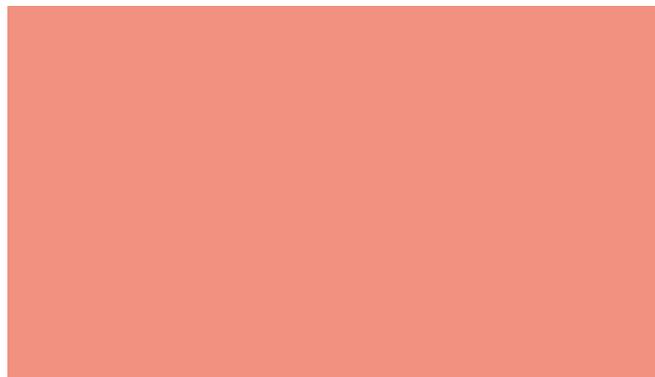
3. An important meeting was held on 1 April at the Embassy in company of the Embassy staff and volunteers. The Palestinian Ambassador delivered a presentation on the present political situation in occupied Palestine and the strategic vision undertaken by Palestinian leadership. This presentation was important to establish a clear vision among the staff and volunteers at the embassy of the current situation and policy. This helps ensure that all staff and volunteers are in agreement.

4. The Palestinian Ambassador and Counselor met with Dr Lawrence Brown, Head of Cooperation and Volunteers at the ANU. Both sides discussed future cooperation through sponsoring the ANU Internship Program; Dr Brown thanked the Embassy for taking in more students from the ANU.

5. The Palestinian Embassy continued in its internal corporate and administrative development in the following ways:

1. Relaunching the website, making it more user friendly.

2. Improving the telephone system at the embassy.



3. Developing the filing system using new equipment, and making information more accessible to employees at the embassy.
4. Improving the security systems of the embassy
5. The continuation of issuing reports about the Australian and New Zealand position on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.
6. Continuation of issuing administrative and financial reports and sending them to the respective departments.





Evaluation

Despite the difficulty in assessing the impact of the Palestinian Embassy on Australian and New Zealand policy regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, there are a number of signs showing the effectiveness of the activities and their positive impact on this policy.

Relations between the Palestinian Embassy and the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Firstly, the relations developed significantly between the Palestinian Embassy and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop. Relations have also progressed through the circulation of several letters on various subjects, which led to positive results. For example, an agreement was signed in support of the agricultural sector in Palestine under the auspices of Australian funding. The Palestinian Embassy undertook substantial responsibility in facilitating the signing of this agreement.

The Hon Julie Bishop has also showed interest in endorsing the Palestinian request for World Trade Organisation (WTO) Observer status.

The Australian Foreign Minister's visit to Palestine bolstered the relations between Australia and Palestine, especially with the presence of the Palestinian Ambassador in the meetings in Ramallah. These meetings paved the way for the start of cooperation between the two countries in economic and trade sectors.

The Palestinian Embassy also contributed to the compilation of the Australian aid strategy and priorities to Palestine after many intensive meetings in 2016. These meetings resulted in an Australian aid program for Palestine, which amounted to more than 42.8 million dollars in 2016.

As for the political effect, the Palestinian Embassy sent numerous letters to the Australian Foreign Minister about the most important political topics especially the continuation of the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These letters resulted in clarifying the Australian stance regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and especially the continuation of Australia's support for the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Relations between the Palestinian Embassy and the Australian Parliament

The program with the Federal Parliament had a great effect on elucidating the Palestinian position to a number of members of Parliament and also supporting the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine , whose members now reach 35.

The meetings with members of Parliament resulted in making the Palestinian position clearer and shed light on the strategy of the Palestinian government for the coming years. The meetings also resulted in developing many joint initiatives between the Embassy and some members of Parliament.

Maybe one of the most important achievements is the signing by more than 70 members of Parliament of a document condemning the Israeli violations of children's rights and their mistreatment during detention. The Palestinian Embassy in cooperation with the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) relayed information on this subject through many meetings and discussions.

Unfortunately, four pro-Palestinian Members of Parliament. Most notably Melissa Parke left Parliament. The Palestinian Ambassador presented the departing Parliamentarians with certificates of appreciation and symbolic gifts from President Mahmoud Abbas. This event in cooperation with the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine had a great impact. The speeches illustrated the considerable support for the rights of the Palestinian people in the presence of a large number of members of Parliament and members of the international and Arab diplomatic corps.

The Palestinian embassy's continuous program with the Federal Parliament is considered one of the most effective of the policies regarding the Australian government.

Relations between the Palestinian Embassy and the New Zealand Parliament

The Palestinian Embassy followed up on its relations with the New Zealand government, particularly in regards to it being a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council. The Palestinian Ambassador's meeting with the New Zealand Foreign Minister in Sydney resulted in the manifestation of the New Zealand position in a number of topics, and particularly New Zealand's condemnation of the Israeli settlements as they are a violation of the international law.

New Zealand presented and adopted Security Council Resolution 2334, which was supported by fourteen member countries of the Security Council, except for the USA who abstained.

Relations with the International and Arab Diplomatic Corps

The relationship between the Palestinian Embassy and the international and Arab diplomatic corps was strong and professional in 2016. The Palestinian Embassy plays a leadership role in the Council of Arab Ambassadors, which is very supportive of the Palestinian cause. This comes as a result of the Palestinian Embassy's presentation of reports and information to the Arab ambassadors in order to strengthen their endorsement of the Palestinian situation during their meetings with the Australian and New Zealand authorities.

The Palestinian Embassy enjoys excellent relations with other international diplomatic corps, whether during meetings or during activities with them. One important success story was the participation of the Palestinian Embassy in two fundraising dinners, which aimed to support the Fijian and Ecuadorian people whose countries suffered from natural disasters.

Relations with Civil Society Organisations

The Palestinian Embassy contributed to supporting the advocacy groups through participation in their activities and workshops. The Palestinian Embassy helped these groups to raise funds for activities by inviting the Palestinian community to attend their fundraising events.

The Embassy introduced Palestine Fair Trade Australia's Palestinian products to the Palestinian community, which increased the sales of this organisation. Palestine Fair Trade Australia is an Australian civil society organisation promoting fair trade Palestinian products in Australia.

The Palestinian Embassy also facilitated APAN's campaign to raise the Palestinian-Israeli issue during the election campaign. The Embassy supported APAN staff to attend the Palestinian Embassy's activities and to provide the attendees with the necessary information to apply it more in the Israel -Palestine issue in the election campaign.

The embassy also set up appointments for many representatives of civil society organizations to visit Palestine. In this regard, the Embassy in partnership with the Palestinian Higher Council for Youth arranged for a group of young Australians to visit Palestine. The young men and women were impressed upon their return to Australia.

The public diplomacy program of the Palestinian Embassy and its relations with the members of the civil society and the advocacy groups was constructive and left an important imprint on the programs and work of the Australian civil society organisations.

However, this year the Embassy did not succeed in reaching other important Australian civil society organisations such as churches, labour unions, and the indigenous people of Australia. This is considered a weak point, which the embassy must overcome during its program for 2017.

Relations with the Palestinian Community

The Palestinian Embassy's goal to establish a representative or coordination body for the Palestinian community has not been achieved. But, if the objective of the embassy is to link the Palestinian Community organisations and individuals together and to deepen their political understanding and to strengthen and enable the community, then the Palestinian Embassy has done much in this field. That is a great achievement in itself.

The celebration of the Palestinian Independence Day was one of the most important accomplishments of the cooperation between the Embassy and the Palestinian community.

In addition to that, the Palestinian Embassy's participation in most, if not all, activities of the Palestinian community, as well as giving speeches during many occasions, has contributed positively.



Palestinian Independence Day in Melbourne

The Palestinian Embassy participated in a squash tournament on 23 October between the Diplomatic Corps. A number of Australians represented the Embassy wearing Palestinian t-shirts, winning a number of the competitions.

The Palestinian Embassy organized a picnic in celebration of spring for the Palestinian community in Canberra, introducing new members of the community to one another. During the picnic there were a number of activities, including games for the children, allowing for people in the community to meet. There was also a discussion over the activism of the Palestinian Embassy.



The Palestinian Embassy continued to host internships for students from the ANU. These internships involved students conducting research projects that benefit the Palestinian Embassy's aims and provide the students with firsthand experience.

The staff of the Palestinian Embassy celebrated the New Year with a luncheon on 20 December.

The Palestinian Embassy held its annual staff meeting on 21 December, in which they discussed the plan and strategies for the coming years. During this meeting, the work program for 2017 was discussed.

Members of the Palestinian Community in Canberra, including an Embassy staff member, won their opening match in the Hyatt Embassy Futsal Cup 2016. The Palestinian Ambassador attended the event to cheer on team Palestine.

The political advancements and strategy of the Palestinian leadership regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the basis of the ambassador's speeches to the Palestinian community. The discussions with the Palestinian community and the circulation of official facts and figures have deepened the Palestinian community's understanding of the political situation.

The embassy's continued communication with the Palestinian community and the setting of the political elements and programs of the relations with Australia and New Zealand has proven to be successful.

The Palestinian Ambassador sent a letter of appreciation to representatives of the Palestinian community in Sydney in commemoration of the anniversary of the establishment of the Palestinian People's Party during the celebrations held on 15 February. The Palestinian Ambassador noted in his letter the important role that the People's Party has played historically in the national resistance of Palestinians, and in their intellectual

contributions to the struggle for self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Organizational Development and HR Capacity Building in the Palestinian Embassy

The embassy continued to support a sustainable institutionalization process. This involves maximising the political and programmatic aspects of the Embassy, and enhancing professionalism in all its works/functions, and accordingly increase effectiveness, efficiency, and impact.

Maybe one of the most important results of the institutionalization process of the Palestinian Embassy is developing the annual and monthly plans and monitoring the professional implementation of them according to the stated objectives of the Embassy.

The most important system in the Embassy is the annual and monthly plans that are set out and followed up with accuracy and as per the set goals. The Embassy continues to assess its programs through its quarterly and annual reports, as well as regular staff meetings.

The embassy also continues to sponsor interns who prepare research and reports that are pertinent to the strategy and the in-depth understanding of the political topics relating to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The results of the research have contributed immensely to the general bilateral policies and between the Palestinian embassy and the governments of Australia and New Zealand and to the understanding of their respective internal politics.

The most important organizational development element was increasing the staff in the Embassy with a new diplomat and a local staff member.

Great advancements have been made in the media segment. The Embassy has increased the communication through Facebook which has now more visitors to the page and the Embassy's website now posts headline updates, as well as the activities of the Embassy.

It is not possible to list all the administrative, professional and organizational activities in the Palestinian Embassy, however they have all left an impression on the general atmosphere of the Embassy.



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