

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

# **STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION AND STATEHOOD**

**Annual Report 2011**



**Front Cover Image**

The Honourable Sussan Ley, MP Federal Member for Farrer, inspecting an APHEDA-Ma'an Rural Livelihoods Project near Tulkarem, in the north of the West Bank, 23 April 2011.

Ms Ley is Deputy Chair of Australian Federal Parliamentary Friends of Palestine and visited Palestine as part of a Federal Parliamentary Study Tour.

The APHEDA Ma'an project which is funded by the Australian government under AMENCA 2, is supporting the regeneration of areas that were previously waste land. Regeneration of waste land to enable food security is a priority in this local area, due to the large scale loss of land through Israeli confiscations and the building of the separation wall.

**Rear Cover Image**

The Palestinian Costume Parade at the 2011 Canberra Multicultural Festival, faithfully recorded by Layla Al-Sweity.

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**His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas**

President of the State of Palestine  
Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian  
Liberation Organisation  
President of the Palestinian National Authority



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The outstanding successes of 2011 have been achieved through the exceptional commitment of Staff and Volunteers, at the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.**

Diplomatic Staff Mr Mohammad Abu Dagga and Mrs Suheir Gedeon, have consistently represented the General Delegation in its relationships and dealings in Australia, New Zealand, Timor-Leste, and with representatives of other nations within the General Delegation's diplomatic scope.

Mr Mohammad Abu Dagga has represented me as Chargé d'Affaires a.i., exercising considered and reliable judgement when I have been absent. Mrs Suheir Gedeon's initiative has enabled her to provide strong support, particularly in the area of aid and development relationships.

My wife, Mrs Zeina Abdulhadi, has been my consistent support in all of my duties. It isn't possible to list all of the ways in which Zeina has assisted me, both personally and professionally. Most specifically, Zeina has given her professional skills, helped behind the scenes in Delegation activities, and has extended her warm and gracious hospitality to the many visitors who have come to our home and to the General Delegation premises.

I give my warmest thanks to our Local Staff. Our Local Staff include Mrs Najibe Zahabi my Personal Assistant and Administration and Consular Assistant. Mrs Zahabi has dealt with an ever-expanding workload that has demanded an increasing range of skills. Through all of this, Mrs Zahabi has remained composed, dedicated and flexible.

Mrs Patricia Abbott has worked as a Consultant and has also given extended amounts of her own time *pro bono*. I'm especially indebted to Mrs Abbott, whose accurate research, critical analysis, excellent writing skills, insightful understanding of the local context, relationship building, organisational skills, and her willingness to undertake a range of tasks, have been invaluable assets to the General Delegation of Palestine.

Our Local Staff work on salaries that are uncompetitive in the local market, performing a very diverse range of tasks and with limited resources. In all of this, Local Staff provide the support and services that enable Diplomatic Staff, led by myself as Ambassador, to perform our representational roles and duties effectively.

The Australian-Palestinian Community have generously given their personal time and their skills to assist the General Delegation. I extend my deepest gratitude to all our Palestinian Community Volunteers and I hope they will continue to give their time, skills and resources into 2012.

The activities in this report, have been the daily work of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. The successes detailed in this report, represent the commitment, the skills and the energies of all of my staff, who are all working to achieve self-determination and statehood for Palestine.

It is with pride that I commend them to you.

**His Excellency Ambassador Izzat Salah Abdulhadi  
Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand  
and the Pacific  
Canberra Australia 30 January 2012**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Strengthening and building support for Palestinian self-determination and the right of Palestinian people to establish an independent, viable and sovereign state based on 1967 borders, was the 2011 objective of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.**



**His Excellency  
Ambassador Izzat Salah  
Abdulhadi**

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

Deputy Dean of the Council of  
Arab Ambassadors

Diplomatic Partner of the  
Australian Parliamentary Friends  
of Palestine

Deputy Chair (Diplomatic) of the  
Australian Parliamentary  
Australia-Arab Friendship Group

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As the diplomatic representation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and the Palestinian National Authority, this objective remains constant.

Self-determination through statehood was thrown into acute political and public focus in 2011, through the request made by Palestinian political leadership for full member status in the United Nations General Assembly.

The General Delegation of Palestine strengthened support for Palestinian self-determination and statehood, through building on the foundations and relationships established with government, civil society and the media. The General Delegation of Palestine significantly and measurably influenced debate and decision-making on Palestinian self-determination, through direct lobbying and through providing authoritative, sought-after information and persuasive input.

In this work, the three tracks of Palestinian statehood were reinforced and integrated: broadening and strengthening recognition and support for Palestinian statehood; building the infrastructure and institutions of state and; broadening and strengthening support for the peace process and its framework of UN resolutions, the land for peace principle, the Arab Peace Initiative and Final Status Issues.

The achievements and successes of 2011 have created an enviable position from which to move forward. However the achievements and successes of 2011 revealed a weakness, and this weakness is the inadequacy of the resources available to the General Delegation of Palestine.

Ensuring on-going strengthening and expansion of support for Palestinian statehood and self-determination in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region, demands the urgent increase and upgrading of the human and financial resources available to the General Delegation of Palestine, and systematic communications and coordination with other influential stakeholders such as the Permanent Representative of Palestine to the UN.

Failure to increase and upgrade the human and financial resources available to the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific and institute systematic and coordinated communications and action, risks the stalling of support for Palestinian statehood stall or worse: the loss of the real gains that have been made in the region for Palestinian people's right to self-determination and their own independent, viable, sovereign state.

**His Excellency Ambassador Izzat Salah Abdulhadi  
Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand  
and the Pacific  
Canberra Australia 30 January 2012**



# WORKING IN THE CONTEXT

**2011 is distinguished by consistent and in-depth discussion, debate and decision-making regarding Palestinian self-determination and recognition of Palestine as an independent, viable, democratic and sovereign state.**

Parliaments, and public sectors of Australia, New Zealand and Timor-Leste, and opinion leaders in the mainstream media, civil society and the Palestinian community, demonstrated in-depth interest and concern in Palestine, and particularly in Palestinian statehood. This interest provided multiple pathways for the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, to lobby, to strengthen existing support, and to develop new support for the Two-State Solution and recognition of a viable, independent Palestinian state based on 1967 borders, the peace process and Final Status Issues.

In particular, the General Delegation of Palestine lobbied for decisions and commitments that moved beyond policy statements to providing actual and material support for Palestinian self-determination and the Palestinian state.

Hand-in-hand with the move by Palestinian leadership to push for strengthened recognition of Palestinian statehood through full bilateral relationships and full member state status of the General Assembly, were 5 major factors influencing responses to Palestinian statehood within Australia, New Zealand, Timor-Leste and the Pacific region. These factors were:

## **The Emergence of New Directions in Australian Foreign Policy**

Australian foreign policy is more usually focused on Asia and the Pacific region, and on the bilateral relationship with the United States of America. However contemporary Australian foreign policy is moving towards the conceptualization of Australia as a middle power within an international and multilateral context.

Australia is demonstrating increased interest in international issues and an increased willingness to engage beneficially and productively in international arenas. A key factor driving this interest would appear to be Australia's seeking of a non-permanent Security Council seat for 2013.

New Zealand, whose foreign policy is very strongly focused on Pacific interests and issues, tends historically to develop and hold foreign policy positions that are more reflective of independent regional interests and less tied to the interests and influence of the United States. Over time, New Zealand foreign policy has tended to be more liberal and to be more materially committed to moral interests and issues. New Zealand's eligibility for consideration for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in 2014, would appear to also be generating additional interest in Palestine as an international political issue and a moral issue of self-determination.

## **The Influence of Domestic Politics on International Actions**

Where new directions in foreign policy increased Australia's willingness to engage in international issues, domestic political realities appeared to create acute disagreement within the Australian government with regard to Palestine, and impose real limits on Australian support for Palestinian statehood.

The Honourable Kevin Rudd MP Foreign Minister of Australia, supported an Australian abstention in the proposed vote on Palestinian member state status in the General Assembly, whereas the Honourable Julia Gillard MP Prime Minister of Australia,

proposed a no vote. Voting on UNESCO membership saw Australia vote no. Holding power with a majority of 1 vote and holding this majority through a coalition with 4 independent MPs, 2011 saw the Australian government under sustained attack by the Opposition on a range of issues, including Palestinian statehood. Explicit support for Palestine would have enabled the conservative Opposition to strengthen its widely publicised attack on the government and with regard to Palestine and Israel.

Achieving a majority of 2 seats in November, the government's increased security appeared to enable Australia to take a somewhat bolder position, than that taken in the vote on Palestinian membership of UNESCO. November saw Australia deliver a series of yes votes and abstentions in General Assembly voting regarding Palestine. This increased sense of security is reflected in the 30 November Statement by Ambassador Gary Quinlan, Australian Ambassador to the United Nations.

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*Australia remains committed to a negotiated two-state solution that allows a secure Israel to live side-by-side with a secure and independent Palestinian state . . . (negotiations) should occur on the basis of the 1967 lines plus mutually-agreed land swaps. Other final status issues should also be resolved through these direct negotiations . . .*

*It is, therefore, of pressing importance that Israelis and Palestinians refrain from provocative actions which undermine confidence. This includes the new construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and outposts which are an obstacle to the Middle East peace process.*

His Excellency Ambassador Gary Quinlan  
Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations  
*Statement to the UN on the Situation in the Middle East*  
30 November 2011

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New Zealand elections saw the re-election of the Nationals in a centre-right coalition and the Right Honorable John Key Prime Minister of New Zealand, holding power with an increased and more secure majority, thus increasing the security of both the Prime Minister and the government.

The Honourable Murray McCully, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade for New Zealand, is strongly supportive of Palestinian statehood and self-determination, while the Prime Minister appears to hold a more nuanced position. New Zealand has provided relatively consistent support for Palestine within the international arena and abstained in the UNESCO membership vote. However, it remains to be seen if the increased security of the Prime Minister and the conservative Nationals overall, sees some drawing-back of New Zealand's commitment to Palestine.

### **Commitment to Palestinian State-building outside of the International Political Context**

Where explicit commitment to Palestinian statehood may be seen as politically problematic, material commitment to the second track for achieving the two-state solution through support for the building of Palestinian infrastructure, institutions and civil society, is strongly supported.

Australia and Palestine signed the 5 Year Aid Development Partnership Agreement in September, formalising the agreement that will see Australia in the top 10 donors to Palestine. Aid will flow to Palestine through a variety of pathways including direct budget support, funding to UNRWA and the provision of Australian scholarships.

Proposed in 2011 and nurtured by Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Hon. Murray McCully, New Zealand and Palestine will commence a strategic dialogue in 2012 to develop long-term aid and development assistance for Palestinian state-building, and to discuss Palestinian national and political rights.

### **Realities and Influences within the Pacific region**

Nation states within the Pacific region are geographically, historically, politically and culturally diverse. The US exercises a significant level of influence over the diverse Pacific region. However, political realities, the limits posed and opportunities for effective diplomatic representation and lobbying are more complex than the single reality of US influence.

One example of clear limits on effective lobbying, is in relationship to dependencies and protected states that are unable either constitutionally or in practice, to exercise certain independent powers e.g. foreign policy.

The Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands have the status of *protected state* in which the US is responsible for security. Constitutionally, these 3 states possess control over foreign policy. However without robust internal democracy and being economies almost wholly dependent on the US, representation and lobbying by the General Delegation of Palestine alone, unlikely to alter the position of these states in relationship to Palestine.

Excluding dependencies and protected states that do not exercise independent control over foreign policy, the serious address of 3 key realities would enable effective diplomatic engagement in the Pacific region. These realities are:

- a.** Face-to-face culture which demands discussions and dealings in important matters, be conducted in person
- b.** Necessarily combining regional issues, relationships, organisations and interests
- c.** Establishment of aid and development funding in support of regional issues and interests

Face-to-face culture demands systematic personal representation, if representation and lobbying regarding Palestine are to be effective. Face-to-face culture places real and severe constraints on long-distance development of support for Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

Video phone, e-diplomacy, letters, phone calls, emails and other forms of communication are not influential and do not establish a persuasive relationship and rationale on any given or specific matter including Palestinian self-determination, recognition of statehood or bilateral relations.

The attendance of HE Dr Riad Malki Foreign Minister of Palestine, at the Pacific *Islands Forum* — PIF which was supported by Timor-Leste, was profoundly important in commencing serious discussions with Pacific states regarding their position on Palestine. It must be noted that this 1 face-to-face visit, which was also attended by Ambassador Abdulhadi, resulted in the commencement of communications by the Solomon Islands, in request of full bilateral diplomatic relations.

Extending and developing the discussions and relationships commenced through Minister Malki and Ambassador Abdulhadi's face-to-face meetings, are General Delegation priorities for 2012—2013.

It must be noted that the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific has previously asked for specific funding for travel in order to begin discussions and relationships in the Pacific region. In 2011, this funding was costed at over \$11,000 AUD for airfares alone. This funding request was declined.

### **Regional Relationships, Interests and Funding**

The Pacific is dominated by regional issues, relationships, interests, and regional organisations. Support for Palestinian statehood does not immediately resonate with Pacific states, as Palestine is not immediately relevant to the interests of most Pacific states.

Two exceptions are Timor-Leste and Vanuatu; States that have undergone extended struggles for independence. It is notable that both Timor-Leste and Vanuatu have full bilateral diplomatic relationships.

The most pressing regional issues are food security, resource deficit including land and energy, security issues such as border control for the enforcement of fishing zones, environmental issues such as climate change and rising sea-levels, and also disaster management.

For Palestinian self-determination and statehood to be taken up boldly by Pacific states, the issue must be made relevant within regional concerns. It is important to note that Israel is situating its relationship to Pacific states within the regional arena through supporting the development needs of Pacific states, with direct aid funding and assistance. Israel's actions repeat the successful actions of other states seeking influence in the Pacific.

However the 2010 UAE proposal, developed in conjunction with the previously titled UN *Pacific Small Islands Developing States* group (now part of the *Asia-Pacific Group*) and endorsed by the Arab League, to establish an office in Fiji, has not been activated. The plan to establish a 50 million dollar fund for aid and development assistance mainly in the area of climate change, has not been activated.

A substantial Arab League presence in the Pacific, in conjunction with meaningful aid and development assistance, would create a beneficial and influential framework of regional relationships, within which Palestine can be situated as a regional concern. Without relationships such as this, Pacific states that control their foreign policy are being asked to support Palestinian self-determination and statehood on the basis of moral conviction alone.

The Asia-Pacific Group is increasingly important in the UN and provides a pathway for engaging the regional interests of the Pacific states in conjunction with the interests of many Arab states.

The Asia-Pacific Group must be targeted and worked with, in cooperation between the Arab League, the General Delegation of Palestine, the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN, and with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Arab League must be strongly encouraged to fulfill its commitment to a regional office and to an aid and development fund targeting regional issues. Regional relationships must be established and regional organisations must be enlisted as a pathway for strengthening regional relationships and interests.

Face-to-face meetings with Pacific state leaders, ministers and representatives must be conducted by the Arab League, Palestinian Authority Ministers and representatives, the General Delegation of Palestine, and the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN.

**Strategic, systematic engagement between all stakeholders will be the most effective pathway for developing political support for Palestinian self-determination, recognition of Palestinian statehood, beneficial changes in the UN voting records of Pacific states, and the establishment of full bilateral diplomatic relationships with Pacific states.**

# STRATEGIC PATHWAYS

**Diplomatic presence, representation and influence, which build specific political and material commitment to Palestinian self-determination and statehood, are the overall goals of the General Delegation of Palestine in Australia, New Zealand, Timor-Leste and the Pacific region.**

These goals have been reached through integrating the **Strategic Pathways** with the **5 Objectives** established for 2011, thus targeting and working with key institutions, organisations and persons.

## **OBJECTIVES**

**Objective One:** Grow accurate understanding of the Palestinian right of self-determination, the establishment of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state as integral to the two-state solution, and recognition of Palestinian statehood through full member state status in the General Assembly and bilateral relationship

**Objective Two:** Develop and deep accurate understanding of Final Status Issues and of challenges to the peace process

**Objective Three:** Increase material support for Palestinian National Authority state building and development in Palestine

**Objective Four:** Strengthen existing relationships and develop new relationships with civil society organisations in Australia and in New Zealand, including the Australian-Palestinian community

**Objective Five:** Improve the ability of the General Delegation of Palestine to perform role through increasing professional skills, administrative rigor and managerial skills

## **STRATEGIC PATHWAYS**

**Strategic pathways target key decision making and opinion-influencing institutions, organisations and persons within Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Strategic pathways put into action, lobbying, communications, information dissemination, support for civil society organizations, informed relationship building, and responsive, effective leadership and management.**

The strategic pathways, through which the 5 Objectives of the General Delegation of Palestine have been put into action are:

- a. Decision-making and policy-making Institutions and Organizations and crucial position holders including the Parliaments of Australia, New Zealand and Timor-Leste, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Development Agencies and Government Departments**

The General Delegation of Palestine conducted a series of meetings to discuss specific issues regarding Palestine with Parliamentary Committees, relevant Ministers, the advisory staff of Ministers and individual members of Parliament and Senators.

In addition, the General Delegation of Palestine has worked strategically with the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine to strengthen understanding and interest in Palestine and to inform decision making. This work included the highly successful visit of Parliamentary Friends of Palestine members to Palestine in April 2011. The visit

enabled Australian Members of Parliament to gain a deep and transformative understanding of Palestine, its diversity, its people and its successes. Australian MPs experienced the occupation first-hand, waiting at checkpoints, witnessed restraints on everyday travel, and saw the effect of the crushing effect of the occupation on Palestinian people, their lives and their livelihoods. Additionally within the Australian Parliament, the General Delegation of Palestine has played a central role in the establishment of the Australian-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The General Delegation of Palestine strengthened its relationship with the Australian Agency for International Development *AusAid*. In addition to input into the signing of the *5 Year Development Partnership Agreement* providing material support for Palestinian state-building, the General Delegation provided accurate responses to political issues regarding Palestine that were raised in the Australian Parliament.

A range of communications, discussions and meetings have been held with the Hon. Murray McCully, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade for New Zealand, and particularly to discuss strategic dialogue between Palestine and New Zealand.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste, in conjunction with the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs MOFA, have been a particularly effective pathway for extending the diplomatic presence of the General Delegation of Palestine in the Pacific. The assistance of Timor-Leste enabled the strengthening of understanding and support for Palestinian statehood, in the Pacific region.

### **b. The Council of Arab Ambassadors and Regional Diplomatic Relationships**

The central political issue pursued by the Council of Arab Ambassadors with the Australian government, is Palestinian self-determination and recognition of Palestinian statehood. The issue has been pursued in face-to-face lobbying, meetings, letters and joint meetings with relevant Ministers including Prime Minister Gillard and Foreign Minister Rudd.

The overall work of the Council of Arab Ambassadors significantly strengthens Australia's and New Zealand's understanding of the importance of Palestine in multilateral and regional relationships. Multilateral relationships elevate both Australia and New Zealand's significance within the international arena and create a counter-balance to the historically more dominant relationships and alliances with Israel and the US.

The Australia-Arab Dialogue, supported by the Memorandum of Understanding with the Arab League and the Council of Arab Ambassadors, is a strategic pathway for Australian recognition of the importance of Palestine. The creation of the Federal Parliamentary Australia-Arab Friendship group extends and re-inforces this dialogue in the Parliamentary arena.

Ambassador Abdulhadi as Deputy Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, holds a key role in the Council. Ambassador Abdulhadi's experience in working with the Parliament of Australia and in New Zealand, is enabling the Council of Arab Ambassadors to effectively build its influence.

### **c. Strategic and Authoritative Communications**

Ensuring the General Delegation of Palestine is the authoritative voice regarding Palestine, and occupies the most influential positions from which to convey its voice, has seen the General Delegation systematically pursue the most effective media and communications pathways.

Television, English and Arabic radio, metropolitan daily newspapers and Arabic press have all been used extensively. The website of the General Delegation of Palestine is the most widely accessible face and voice for the General Delegation, and is used

to publish leading information, support material, news from the President's Office, the Palestine Government Media Centre, other Palestinian Authority Ministries, and also to circulate media alerts.

The General Delegation of Palestine also supplied Australian and New Zealand-based media outlets with the contact details of key Palestinian political leaders. The result was a measurable increase in direct interviews and quotes from Palestinian leaders within Australian and New Zealand newspapers and radio.

Reporting on the work of the General Delegation of Palestine, consists of both progress reports critically evaluating the work of the General Delegation and reports on specific Palestine-related issues. These reports are sent to HE Dr Riyad Malki Foreign Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Palestinian Government Media Centre, the Palestinian National Fund and the Office of the President.

#### **d. Strategic Civil Society Relationships and Partnerships**

The role of local civil society organisations is integral to building support and commitment for Palestinian self-determination and statehood within diverse democratic contexts such as Australia, New Zealand, Timor-Leste and the Pacific States.

Civil society organisations and their members are the local advocates and the parliamentary constituency and the numeric influence on decision makers. The General Delegation of Palestine has strategically supported influential civil society organisations in Australia and has begun establishing relationships with civil society organisations in New Zealand.

An example of the General Delegation's strategic support for civil society organisations, is its facilitating role in the creation of the *Australia Palestine Advocacy Network* — APAN, formally established on 9 April, 2011.



APAN [www.apan.org.au](http://www.apan.org.au) is a networked organisation composed of mainstream civil society organizations in Australia including Churches, the Palestinian Community, Business Groups, Workers Unions, NGOs, Academics and solidarity groups. The General Delegation formalized its relationship with APAN, conducting consultations with to share information in order to increase the strategic efficacy of APAN's work.

#### **e. Expanding the Diplomatic Presence in the Pacific Region**

Transforming the Pacific region's low record of support for Palestinian self-determination and statehood is an imperative, and particularly with regard to UN voting on the status of Palestine.

The General Delegation of Palestine has initiated discussions with a number of Pacific states, to establish full bilateral diplomatic relations. These discussions have

been conducted through the Embassies and High Commissions present in Australia.

The attendance of HE Dr Riad Malki and Ambassador Abdulhadi at the Pacific Islands Forum between 5–9 September, held in Auckland New Zealand, enabled highly effective face-to-face discussions with Pacific state Foreign Ministers.

However, the level of financial support given to the General Delegation does not permit the most effective pathway for this work i.e. face-to-face meetings in the Pacific states themselves. The lack of specific funding for travel imposes real and harmful constraints on this work.

Excellent beginnings have been made. However, transforming the voting record in the Pacific region requires additional financial resources and systematic information sharing and coordination between the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN and the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, and MOFA.

### **f. Leading Role of the Palestinian Community**

The Palestinian community is the core voice on Palestine and as such, the Palestinian community must play its rightful and leading role. The Palestinian community authentically and powerfully, speaks the reality of the Palestinian experience.

Within the Australian context, ethnic community councils are key consultation partners for public advocacy and government policy. It is noticeable that the Australian Jewish community also uses its community organisations to full effect.

Recognising the highly influential role that can be played by the Australian-Palestinian community, a community that is politically diverse and geographically spread, the General Delegation of Palestine has embarked on a process of working with the community to overcome foundational obstacles preventing greater community cohesion.

The General Delegation has become a key reference point for the Australian-Palestinian community in Australia. Strategic work with the Australian-Palestinian community will continue in 2012 to support the establishment of a peak community body; a Palestinian Community Council.

### **g. Strengthening Management and Productivity**

Fulfilling the expanding scope of work required of the General Delegation of Palestine, demanded a re-conceptualisation and re-configuring of management processes within the General Delegation of Palestine.

Program management has enabled Ambassador Abdulhadi to coach staff in developing their skills, individual judgment and responsibility for internal organization. This has enabled staff to carry significantly heavier workloads and has enabled Ambassador Abdulhadi to engage in more and higher-level diplomatic representation than has been previously possible. However, more time allocated to representation and lobbying is required.

Australian volunteers who have given their professional skills and personal time, also contributed significantly to the General Delegation's ability to achieve extraordinary outcomes in relationship to the human and financial resources available.

Sustaining these outcomes into the medium and longer-term and as the scope of work continues to expand, requires an urgent and immediate increase in the resources available to the General Delegation of Palestine to enable it to properly fund all of its work and to recruit and retain appropriately skilled local staff.



# OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

**Putting Objectives into action through the Strategic Pathways has achieved strengthened support for Palestinian self-determination and the right of Palestinian people to an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state on 1967 borders.**

The following section details a representative range of the activities undertaken by the General Delegation of Palestine to increase support for self-determination and statehood. It must be clearly noted that many additional activities were undertaken, which also increased support for self-determination and statehood.

## OBJECTIVE ONE

**Grow accurate understanding and support for Palestinian self-determination, the establishment of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state as integral to the two-state solution, and recognition of Palestinian statehood through full member state status in the General Assembly and bilateral relationship**

### **1. Coordinate and manage the visit of the Special Envoy of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, Dr Ghassan Khatib Director of the Palestinian Government Media Centre, to Australia and New Zealand. between 31 July and 5 August 2011.**

The Special Envoy's visit targeted Australian Government decision makers and their advisors, civil society leaders, media and the Palestinian community. The visit of Dr Ghassan Khatib was the first time that a high-ranking Palestinian National Authority official was available in-country. Government leaders, civil society leaders and the media were able to receive immediate, highly experienced and informed first-hand responses to questions and points of concern.

Achieving maximum profile in the visit, Dr Khatib met with the Hon. Dr Craig Emerson, MP Minister for Trade, representing the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Minister Rudd was unavailable for pressing medical reasons. Dr Khatib also met with the Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister Mr Richard Maude, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs Ms Gillian Bird. As Parliament was not sitting at the time of the visit, many MPs were outside of their seats or outside the country.

An inter-departmental roundtable was held, consisting of representatives from AusAid, the Department of Defence, the Office of National Assessments, the Attorney-General's Department and DFAT. The roundtable was chaired by Mr David Stuart First Assistant Secretary of DFAT. Dr Khatib also met with analysts at the *Australian Strategic Policy Research Institute* - ASPI, and delivered a filled-to-capacity lecture theatre at Australian National University.

Meeting with civil society leaders and their members including the *Australian Council of Trade Unions* - ACTU, *Australia-Palestine Advocacy Network* - APAN, NGOs, Church representatives, Jewish Capital Forum and the Jewish Democratic Society, Dr Khatib's message of Palestinian statehood, self-determination and the two-state solution, was delivered to the most active and influential civil organisations.

Media coverage of the visit was excellent. Dr Khatib featuring on Radio National, the largest Australia-wide radio news and considered to be the most accurate and most influential in Australia. Dr Khatib was also featured in newspaper articles including *The Australian*, on television, and in a range of other radio and internet news services, including an extended interview with *The Jewish News* and community-based Jewish television service which broadcasts to a mainly under-30's audience.

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*. . . Australia, like many other countries, support(s) peace in the Middle East based on two-state solution. In 1947 one of these two states was created. We think that it's about time for the other state, Palestine, to be created with the full support of the international community including Australia.*

Dr Ghassan Khatib  
Special Envoy of President Mahmoud Abbas  
*Palestinian Envoy calls for Australian Support*  
Radio National AM 1 August 2011

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In New Zealand, Dr Khatib met with the Hon. Murray McCully Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Mr David Walker Deputy Secretary of Americas, Asia, Middle East and Africa Group within MFAT. Dr Khatib participated in a highly productive roundtable with departmental representatives that was chaired by Mr Hamish McMaster Director of the Middle East and Africa Division in MFAT.

Dr Khatib explained the Palestinian quest for full member state status within the General Assembly, statehood within the peace process, and asked for New Zealand recognition of Palestinian statehood. Dr Khatib also reinforced the importance of the strategic dialogue between New Zealand and Palestine. Meeting with civil society representatives, Dr Khatib's visit has opened pathways for stronger civil society relationships in New Zealand.

Sharply increased and critically beneficial discussion regarding recognition of Palestinian statehood, the two-state solution, the need for material support for the two-state solution, and a focus on Israeli actions damaging the two-state solution, were all immediate, and all followed strongly from the visit of Dr Khatib.

Dr Khatib's measured style spoke perfectly to Australian and New Zealand cultural sensibilities, and was a major factor in the highly successful communication of these messages and the overall success of the visit. Maximum profile and impact was achieved with government and media, and maximum follow-on impact has been achieved through civil society organizations, the Palestinian community and with government and the media.

**2. The 2 visits of the Hon. Kevin Rudd Foreign Minister of Australia, strengthened the relationship between Australia and Palestine, through personal discussions with His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, His Excellency Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, His Excellency Dr Riyad Malki and other Palestinian Authority Ministers.**

Minister Rudd's first visit to Palestine occurred in December 2010 when the Minister met with HE President Mahmoud Abbas and visited an UNRWA school at Qalandia.

Returning to Palestine in March and in April 2011, Minister Rudd requested Ambassador Abdulhadi arrange meetings with President Abbas and Palestinian Authority Ministers, to discuss a range of political issues and the proposed 5 Year Development Partnership Agreement.

Minister Rudd sought to discuss and to fully understand the Palestinian position on the peace process, and in particular to understand Palestinian negotiating positions on Final Status Issues. Borders and security were discussed at length. The reference points for the peace process were explored; UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the vision of the two-state solution, the role of international and humanitarian law in the peace process, and the Arab Peace Initiative.



His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas with the Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP Foreign Minister of Australia. Ms Jenny Grant-Curnow Australian Representative to the Palestinian Authority, is seated to the side of Minister Rudd.

President Abbas strongly conveyed Palestinian commitment to the land for peace principle and the unwavering commitment of the people of Palestine to a secure, just and negotiated peace. However as settlements erode the possibility of viable Palestinian state, Israel's commitment to the two-state solution is called into question.

Discussing security, President Abbas re-iterated and explained the PLO and the Palestinian Authority position on 3rd party peacekeepers in border areas. An international peace-keeping force such as this would have the support of the international community, would respect international law and would protect the peace and security of all parties.

Noting Australia's long-standing commitment to UNSTO and other international peace-keeping and peace-enforcement missions, President Abbas clearly indicated that he would welcome Australian involvement in any such future operation.

In both March and April, Minister Rudd extended a warm invitation to HE President Mahmoud Abbas to visit Australia. It is the hope of the General Delegation of Palestine, that President Abbas will be able in the future, to accept and act upon this warm invitation.

**3. The Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine visit between 17 and 26 April, enabled Australian Parliamentarians to obtain persuasive first-hand experience of Palestine and its people.** During the visit, Australian MPs met with Palestinian decision makers, educationalists, community leaders, business people, Church leaders and Australian diplomats and military personnel. MPs travelled through the West Bank and to East Jerusalem, with some able to enter Gaza. In addition, MPs met with leading Jewish and Arab Israeli's.

The purpose of the visit was to enable MPs to experience the vibrancy of Palestine, the commitment of Palestinian people to creating their own independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state, and the on-going impediment that Israel occupation creates for Palestinian self-determination and statehood. Working with MOFA, the Palestinian Legislative Council Protocol Section, Jerusalem Inter-Church Center, the Australian NGO APHEDA, the Australian Representative Office in Ramallah and the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Governorate of Nablus, the visit achieved and exceeded all of its objectives and outcomes.



Maria Vamvakinou MP, Melissa Parke MP and Jill Hall MP at Bethlehem University, with students and Vice Chancellor Brother Peter Bray FSC.

Entering Palestine through King Hussein/Allenby Bridge, MPs were received and welcomed by officials from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Governorate of Jericho. Meeting with the Mayor and Governor of Jericho, MPs were introduced to one of the harsh realities of Palestinian life under Israeli occupation: water theft. Jericho, as a major agricultural area, is economically as well as humanly dependent upon stable water supplies. Water gouging, authorised under long-standing Israeli military orders, is destroying Palestinian farming areas and inflicting grave damage on the environment.

Meetings with leaders of the Palestinian Authority included HE President Mahmoud Abbas, who was especially interested in hearing the MPs impressions of Palestine and understanding Australian political party positions on Palestine. Discussions with HE Prime Minister Salam Fayyad focused on the importance of state-building and the on-going difficulties of Israeli violations of international law and agreements, and in particular the problem of settlement building. HE Riad Malki Minister of Foreign Affairs, discussed Palestinian strategy in the international arena.

HE Dr Hussan Abu-Libdeh Minister for the National Economy, held a dinner to enable MPs to meet with Palestinian business leaders and discuss opportunities available for Australian-Palestinian commercial relationships and investments. Supporting high-level meetings with on-the-ground experience, MPs visited one of Palestine's most successful and well-known commercial operations, Taybeh Brewery. Following from the 2010 Palestinian Trade Delegation to Australia, MPs met with HE Dr Ismail Du'iek Minister for Agriculture.

Engagements with leaders and members of Palestinian civil society organisations including Churches, NGOs, Unions, Universities and community groups, enabled MPs to meet with ordinary Palestinians. Passing through checkpoints daily and hearing the experiences of life under occupation, MPs were profoundly impressed by the extraordinary resilience, creativity and measured hope of Palestinian people.

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*The Palestinian people also have the right to live in peace and security. They also have the right to move freely without sanction within the borders of their own Palestinian state . . . Palestinian people are building the institutional infrastructure as they prepare for statehood. They do this against incredible adversity . . . an occupation which spans checkpoints, closures, home demolitions, settlements, the separation wall, the permit system the two-tier system of roads and access and control over water and agriculture as well as the crippling effect of the blockade on Gaza. A peace settlement will bring enormous benefits for both states and the region . . .*

*. . . I can inform the House that the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, has conveyed to us in no uncertain terms that the Palestinians are ready to make peace. They are ready to make a deal on the 1967 borders, 22% of their original ancestral lands . . .*

*. . . we on this side of the House have always been committed to the two-state solution. . . (and) we are also committed to the rights of the Palestinian people to the same peace and security within their own state.*

Maria Vamvakinou MP  
 Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Palestine  
 House of Representatives Speech in response to the Hon Julie Bishop  
 Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs  
 23 May 2011

Introduced to Palestinian culture, MPs were welcomed by Dr Hani Husary President of the Orthodox Club in Ramallah, enjoyed traditional Dabkeh dancing, and the informed politics of Dr Husam Zomlot, Senior Advisor and Deputy to Dr Nabeel Sha'ath. In Nablus, MPs were warmly welcomed by Governor Jibreen al-Bakr and Deputy Governor Anan Attireh, and enjoyed Nablus' unique cultural riches.

In all aspects of the visit, MPs witnessed the crushing reality of the occupation and the readiness of Palestine and its people, for the responsibility of democratic statehood. The MPs who participated in the visit have been informed, balanced and persuasive advocates for Palestine and Palestinian statehood, within the Parliament, the media, and in the broader public domain.

#### **4. The visit of HE Dr Riad Malki Foreign Minister of Palestine, to the *Pacific Islands Forum – PIF*, in Auckland New Zealand between 5 and 9 September, to lobby face-to-face with Pacific state Foreign Ministers.**

HE Dr Malki met repeatedly with the Hon. Murray McCully Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, met face-to-face with Pacific state Foreign Ministers, and also met with the Hon. Ban Ki-Moon Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Attendance at PIF enabled Dr Malki to lobby face-to-face for recognition of Palestinian statehood through full members status in the General Assembly, and for the establishment of full bilateral diplomatic relations recognizing Palestine as a state.



His Excellency Dr Riad Malki  
Foreign Minister of Palestine and  
the Honorable  
Murray McCully  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
and Trade for New Zealand

Pacific Islands Forum  
Auckland New Zealand  
5-9 September 2011

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One immediate outcome of the visit of Minister Malki has been the submission of a memorandum by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade for the Solomon Islands the Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka, to the Government of the Solomon Islands, for the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Palestine.

#### **5. President Jose Ramos Horta Head of State of Timor-Leste, visited Palestine in February to consolidate and grow the relationship between Timor-Leste and Palestine.**

President Horta met with His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas and reiterated Timor-Leste's support for Palestinian self-determination. President Horta requested Palestine assist Timor-Leste in meeting its health care needs through sending 2 Palestinian doctors to Timor-Leste. This request which will build the relationship between Palestine and Timor-Leste, will be developed in 2012.

Following the visit of President Jose Ramos Horta to Palestine, Ambassador Abdulhadi visited Timor-Leste in August, meeting with President Horta, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. On 17 August, Ambassador Abdulhadi also met with the Council of Ministers of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste.

Ambassador Abdulhadi lobbied for robust support for Palestinian statehood, focusing on the failure of direct negotiations to resolve final status issues. Recognition of Palestinian statehood will create the framework for such resolution. Ambassador Abdulhadi asked for Timor-Leste to strongly support Palestinian statehood in the international arena, in order that Palestinian people might enjoy the same self-determination enjoyed by the people of Timor-Leste.

It should be noted as an example of the **Regional Relationships, Interests and Funding** contained on p. 6 of this report, that Timor-Leste has been subjected to aggressive lobbying by Israel.



His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas and President Jose Ramos Horta Head of State of Timor-Leste, exchange greetings at Al-Muqata'ah, the Presidential Compound in Ramallah, February 2011.

#### **6. Ambassador Abdulhadi met with the Honourable Julia Gillard, MP Prime Minister of Australia, on 16 September 2011 to request and lobby for Australian recognition of Palestinian statehood.**

Ambassador Abdulhadi's lobbying centered on Palestinian statehood as specific political embodiment of Australia's policy position of support for the two-state solution and Palestinian self-determination.

Ambassador Abdulhadi targeted the points that recognition of Palestinian statehood is most fully in accordance with Australian interests internationally, in relationship to the Arab states and in the immediate relationship of Australia to Palestine and Israel. Ambassador Abdulhadi explained Palestine's quest for statehood as fully in accordance with UN resolutions, international law, previous agreements between Palestine and Israel which Australia has supported, and fully in accordance with Australia's support for the two-state solution.

Ambassador Abdulhadi noted Australia's long-standing commitment to equity and justice and significant commitment already made by Australia to Palestinian state-building. Recognition of Palestinian statehood is the formal and explicit recognition of these existing commitments.

The meeting with the Prime Minister was also attended by His Excellency Mr Omar Metwally Ambassador of Egypt to Australia. Ambassador Metwally's participation reinforced the Arab states interest in Palestine, the interest of the Arab League in Palestinian statehood and the commitment of the Council of Australian Ambassadors to pursuing the issue of Palestinian statehood within the Australian Parliament.

Following the meeting, Prime Minister Gillard published two newspaper articles reiterating the unquestioned right of Palestinian people to self-determination. However, it would appear that domestic considerations constrained the Government from exercising a more beneficial position regarding Palestinian statehood.

**7. Addressing the Australian Federal Parliament's Full Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on 14 September 2011, Ambassador Abdulhadi's presentation lobbied for recognition of Palestinian statehood,** focusing on the following four points:

- Statehood upholds the credibility of the two-state solution which is an international and Australian commitment
- The PLO has adhered to all agreements and conditions imposed under international agreements
- Palestine is ready to be recognised as a state as certified by major international organisations such as the IMF, the UN, World Bank and the EU
- Palestine is wholly committed to negotiations for resolution of Final Status Issues and within a meaningful and enforceable framework.

Reiterating Australia's interest in strengthening its position as a middle power and relationships with Arab states, Ambassador Abdulhadi noted that refusal to support Palestinian statehood would isolate Australia from states with whom it has sought to develop beneficial relationships i.e. Arab States and Islamic Asian states.

Additionally, two meetings were held in the New South Wales and Victorian State Parliaments to lobby on these same points, and ensure accurate information regarding Palestinian statehood was delivered on all Parliamentary levels.

**8. *Palestinian Statehood and Australia*, a panel discussion, was delivered at the NSW Labor Party Conference on 10 June 2011.** The panel was composed of Melissa Parke, MP Federal Member for Fremantle, Mr Eddie Zaniniri representing the Palestinian Community, Mr Peter Wertheim Executive Director of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Professor Ben Saul Professor of International Law at the University of Sydney Centre for International Law and leading Australian legal expert on self-determination and statehood, and Ambassador Abdulhadi. The panel was chaired by Mr Matthew Wood.

The panel presented mainly to rank-and-file members of the Labor Party i.e. the largest numerical body of voting members of the party. The panel presented a convincing, broad and highly informed argument for recognition of Palestinian statehood encompassing both the political and legal arguments for recognition of statehood.

**9. A series of briefing papers on Statehood and Final Status Issues was commenced and circulated to government, civil society and media.** The briefing papers reinforce the lobbying undertaken by the General Delegation of Palestine and are specifically tailored to the Australian, the New Zealand, Timor-Leste, and the Pacific context. The first briefing paper titled, *Palestinian Statehood, the Two-State Solution and Peace*, informed and supported inter-governmental and civil society dialogue regarding Palestinian statehood and self-determination.



Additionally, the brief contained specific recommendations to government and civil society. The remainder of the series will address final status issues and will be produced at the same level of suitability for inter-departmental government discussions and will also include targeted recommendations.

**10. Two articles on statehood were published in *The Australian*, the Australia-wide daily newspaper.** Ambassador Abdulhadi's articles promoted recognition of Palestinian statehood as integral to the peace process and addressed the misinformation circulated by opponents of Palestinian statehood. Most specifically, Ambassador Abdulhadi critically addressed claims made by the Israeli Ambassador His Excellency Mr Yuval Rotem, that Palestinian statehood is subject to negotiation, cannot be realized without Israeli approval, and that Palestinian statehood is a rejection of Palestine's commitment to meaningful bilateral negotiations.

The two articles, *Statehood is the Path to Peace* published on 19 September and *Palestine's UNESCO seat a Yes for Peace*, published on 4 November, were circulated electronically to all Members of Parliament and Senators and posted on the General Delegation of Palestine website. *Palestine's UNESCO seat a Yes for Peace* was accompanied by a media alert.

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*. . . Within the international framework that collective international recognition of statehood will bring , a more equitable relationship will exist between Palestine and Israel.*

*Resuming the negotiations that lie at the heart ofr the peace process and the two-state solution, Palestinian statehood strengthens the vale and effectiveness of negotiations.*

*The theft of 80% of Palestine's water can be addressed. The gouging of Palestinian land can be addressed. The mushrooming of settlements can be addressed and the tragic expulsion of Palestinians from their own land and homes can be overcome.*

*. . . Refusal to support recognition of Palestinian statehood would be to choose a position counter to peace . . . It would deny the self-determination to which the world has already agreed Palestinian people are rightfully entitled.*

*Were Australia to support recognition of Palestinian statehood, it would be coming together with the overwhelming majority of its fellow nation states that have recognized the importance of Palestinian statehood. Australia would address . . . a vital concern for relationships with the Middle East, a concern that is both moral and grounded in real commitment to creating a stable Middle East.*

*Recognition of Palestinian statehood will advance peace, create the two-state solution and uphold the just and equitable rule of law and the value of negotiations between neighbours as the pathway to a just and durable peace.*

Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi  
*Statehood is the Path to Peace*  
 The Australian 19 September 2011

Newspaper articles, media interviews and all other presentations were underpinned and informed by the strong understanding developed through participation in the Palestinian Ambassador's Summit Conference convened in Istanbul between 22 July – 25 July. The benefits of this summit conference continue to flow into the strategy, the lobbying, and the media messaging planned for 2012.

### OBJECTIVE TWO

**Develop and deepen accurate understanding of Final Status Issues and of challenges to the peace process**

**The second objective of accurate understanding of final status issues and the challenges posed to the peace process, was most strongly engaged through the strategic pathways of: decision makers and policy making institutions, the Council of Arab Ambassadors and strategic communications and civil society partnerships.**

**1. The General Delegation of Palestine continues to implement its program with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,** focused on the peace process, specific political support for the two-state solution and the position of the Australian government in relationship to final status issues.

Four meetings were conducted with the General Delegation explaining Palestinian positions, critiquing Israel's positions and Israel's systematic violation of the established parameters of the peace process including international law, and prejudicing of final status issues. The General Delegation supports all meetings and discussions, with accurate and responsive written documentation.

The General Delegation of Palestine considers this bilateral diplomatic relationship to be one of its most important programs. The advice provided by DFAT to the Australian government and the communications flowing between DFAT and the Australian government regarding Palestine, make this program pivotal to sustaining influential representation for Palestine in government policy and decision-making.

In assessing this program and relationship, it is worth noting that the work of the General Delegation of Palestine has measurable impact on the Australian government position regarding final status issues. Where it had previously not been possible to establish specific Australian positions on final status issues, Minister Rudd issued a media release on 1 October titled *Israeli Settlements*, condemning Israel's settlement expansion and describing Israel's settlement expansion as counter-productive to the Middle East Peace Process. Minister Rudd called on Israel to end settlement activity.

Additional to this media release, His Excellency Gary Quinlan Australian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, delivered a statement on 30 November outlining Australia's position on borders and settlements. Ambassador Quinlan's statement clearly stated that final status issues and not statehood based on 1967 borders, are the subject of negotiations. Significantly, the statement by Ambassador Quinlan specifically ties the security of Israel to the two-state solution and a Palestinian state.

Discussions conducted with DFAT and these discussions in conjunction with Minister Rudd's 3 visits to Palestine, discussions with President Mahmoud Abbas, Minister Malki and Palestinian officials, and the visit of Dr Ghassan Khatib to Australia, have clearly influenced and moved Australia's position.

**2. The General Delegation of Palestine conducted a Federal Parliamentary program designed to deliver maximum face-to-face contact and discussion with Members of Parliament and Senators.** Face-to-face meetings have been critically important in situating the Delegation as the authoritative voice on Palestine and ensuring the General Delegation of Palestine is sought after by government, media and civil society and particularly in relationship to accurate information on the peace process.

In excess of 30 meetings with Members of Parliament and Senators were held. Persuasive information on final status issues, negotiations, the peace process and Palestinian statehood, was provided to MPs and Senators. These meetings enabled face-to-face lobbying and the result of these meetings has been the circulation of accurate information on these matters, within the Australian Parliament.

The work of the General Delegation of Palestine that is conducted within the Australian Federal Parliament has been particularly challenging, given the reality that the Government has held power through a fragile coalition with a majority of 1 vote in the House of Representatives and no majority in the Senate.

The conservative Opposition has used every available issue to attack the government, including recognition of Palestinian statehood. Members of the Government, and also members of the Greens Party in the Senate, have come under repeated attack within the Parliament regarding Palestine.

The Opposition used the media to real effect on the matter of Palestinian statehood, and particularly by the Honourable Julie Bishop, MP Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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*The Coalition has called for Australia to stand against moves in the United Nations to recognise Palestine as a country in its own right.*

*Liberal deputy leader Julie Bishop said Australia should support Israel, which has opposed the Palestinian bid.*

*"I fear it will be a highly counter-productive exercise," Ms Bishop said of the Palestinian move.*

The Hon Julie Bishop MP  
Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs  
*Coalition Opposes Palestinian Bid* The Age  
20 September 2011

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The General Delegation has worked assiduously to ensure accurate information is received by Members of Parliament and Senators, and also that non-polemic messaging is delivered, in order to reinforce the necessary role of Palestinian statehood in ensuring a secure and just two-state solution for both Palestine and Israel.

Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine is foundational to the General Delegation's work within the Parliament. The Members of Parliament who traveled to Palestine in April 2011 have been central to supporting and disseminating accurate

information and lobbying within the Parliament.

**3. Ambassador Abdulhadi presented at La Trobe University's conference: *The Obama Middle East Peace Initiative: Lessons Learnt and Implications for a Dialogical Roadmap for Peace*.** Ambassador Abdulhadi's 24 June presentation titled *Roadblocks towards a Negotiated Settlement*, addressed the failure of bilateral negotiations alone to produce a secure and just settlement for Palestinian people, due to Israel's systematic violation of UN resolutions, international law, and internationally sanctioned agreements between Palestine and Israel.

Accurately and properly situating negotiations within the whole framework of the peace process, Ambassador Abdulhadi reinforced the reality that self-determination through statehood, is not subject to negotiation. Final Status Issues of settlements, refugees, water, borders, security and Jerusalem, are the subject of negotiations which must be conducted within a clear and enforceable framework, if they are to be meaningful and effective. Israel's actions, which prejudice resolution of final status issues, are in direct and systematic contravention of all international frameworks and agreements for peace.

The 2 day conference attracted a high level audience, including Australian and international academics, leaders of the Melbourne Jewish community, and civil society leaders.

**4. Ambassador Abdulhadi was increasingly invited to present at high level seminars addressing Palestinian statehood, the peace process and final status issues**, in recognition of the General Delegation of Palestine as the authoritative voice on Palestine. Of particular note was the seminar titled: *The Palestinian Dilemma: Where to now?* convened on 5 October at The Wheeler Centre, a publicly funded think-tank in the City of Melbourne.

Chaired by Mr Tony Walker International Editor of *The Australian Financial Review* which is the second Australia-wide daily newspaper, Ambassador Abdulhadi presented to a capacity audience of leading and influential public figures. The seminar format of structured Q & A enabled Ambassador Abdulhadi to deliver a pointed and highly responsive critique of Israel's position on Palestinian statehood and Israel's consistent prejudicing of final status issues. Ambassador Abdulhadi pressed home statehood as wholly consistent with the peace process and foundational to Palestinian self-determination. The seminar was also made available as a podcast.



*The Palestinian Dilemma: Where to now?*

From left: Mr Tony Walker International Editor of *The Australian Financial Review*, Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, Meir Itzhaki Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Israel, Professor Dennis Altman Professor of Politics and Director of the Institute of Human Security at La Trobe University in Melbourne.

**5. The dialogue between the Council of Arab Ambassadors and DFAT, based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Arab League and Australia, has focused extensively on Palestine.**

Extending this MOU-based dialogue into the Parliamentary arena, the General Delegation of Palestine has been central to the formation of the *Australia-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group*. The General Delegation of Palestine researched and drafted the objectives, the action plan, the organizational structure and is following the implementation of these. The Hon Kevin Rudd, MP Minister for Foreign Affairs, spoke at the launch of the Australia-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group, which was held on 23 November at Australian Parliament House.



Maria Vamvakinou, MP Chair of the Australia– Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group, speaking at the 23 November Launch.

From left: The Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Susan Ley, MP Deputy Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, Maria Vamvakinou, MP, His Excellency Hassan Talat Nazer Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors and Chair (Diplomatic) of the Australia-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group.

As Deputy Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, Ambassador Abdulhadi's experience within the Australian Parliament means the General Delegation holds a central role in supporting the Dean and guiding the Friendship Group.

**6. The proposal for the commencement of a strategic dialogue including final status issues, between New Zealand and Palestinian National Authority.** This proposal, made on 7 July by the Hon. Murray McCully Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, is being nurtured, facilitated and moved forward by the General Delegation of Palestine.

Meeting with Ambassador Abdulhadi in Canberra, Minister McCully proposed the dialogue and also sought more information on the Palestinian push for recognition of statehood. Proposed in the dialogue is discussion of aid and development support and clarity on New Zealand's position in relationship to the peace process, final status issues and Palestinian statehood. New Zealand currently holds a position similar to Australia with regard to settlements. Seeking clarity on final status issues will make it more easy to predict and rely on New Zealand support in specific matters in the international arena.

The General Delegation has prepared a draft Memorandum of Understanding outlining the objectives of the dialogue and proposed pathways for the dialogue. The draft Memorandum is currently under discussion with all parties, to ensure the vision for the dialogue is shared by all parties and maximum outcomes are achieved.

### OBJECTIVE THREE

#### Increase material support for Palestinian National Authority state building and development in Palestine

**1. The outstanding achievement within the framework of Objective 3, is the finalization and signing of the *5 Year Development Partnership Agreement* between the Australian government and the Palestinian National Authority. Delivered through AusAid, the agreement delivers 340 million dollars over 5 years or 60 million dollars per annum.**

This assistance places Australia in the top 10 countries supporting Palestine and is an outstanding commitment by Australia to Palestine. Signed in New York on 18 September by HE Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, the agreement is made up of a number of components.

The objectives of the agreement were developed in direct cooperation between the Palestinian Ministry of Planning and the General Delegation of Palestine.

The priority areas agreed upon and established under the agreement are:

- Provision of basic services and humanitarian and emergency assistance to refugees and other vulnerable groups
- State-building and support for the peace process, with a focus on improving governance and capacity of the Palestinian Authority
- Development of civil society, with a focus on reducing vulnerability, particularly for Palestinian women, children, and youth

The agreement consists of direct budget aid to the Palestinian Authority, increased stable future funding for UNRWA and other specific components such as education funding. Significantly, for the first time Australia is directly supporting the national budget of Palestine with direct aid to the Palestinian National Authority

**2. Fifty fully-funded postgraduate scholarships are included in the 5 year Development Partnership Agreement, with 10 scholarships available in each year of the agreement.** The scholarships enable students to enroll at Australian universities and are available in the domains of public administration and financial management, and legal and jurisprudential studies.

The scholarships will develop Palestinian skills in these areas and strengthen governance within Palestinian institutions. It is expected that the first 10 students will begin their studies in February 2012.

**3. The Australian Leadership Award Fellowships offered by AusAid, were taken up by Marrickville Council and Bethlehem Municipal Council.** Marrickville Council hosted Mrs Dina Nasser, Director of Administrative and Employees Affairs, with Mrs Nasser observing best practice governance, environmental and economic sustainability and pathways to develop international cooperation.

The ALAF program provides funded opportunities for Australian organisations in partnership with Palestinian organizations, to bring senior and mid-career Palestinian professionals to Australia to develop professional expertise. Preferred fellowship domains include education, governance, water and sanitation, agriculture, management, food security, health, gender, disability, and development.

The General Delegation of Palestine continues to promote the ALA Fellowship program as an important pathway for immediately extending Palestinian expertise, and for building long-term development relationships with Australia.

**4. The General Delegation of Palestine continues to support and inform the Australian Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement 2 — AMENCA 2.**

AusAid funds Australian NGOs working in Palestine whose work is in alignment with Palestinian Authority development priorities. Partners include Care Australia, APHEDA, ActionAid Australia and World Vision, Palestinian NGOs include ARIJ and Ma'an. Funded projects improve food security and livelihoods, short and long-term agricultural production, strengthen community organisations providing basic services, and promote the role and status of women. The most recent addition to AMENCA 2 is a partnership with UNIFEM, addressing sanitation issues such as adequate toilets, that are preventing females from attending formal education in areas in the north of the West Bank.

**5. Promoting the relationship between the Law School of the University of New South Wales and the Law Schools of Palestinian universities, the General Delegation of Palestine supported UNSW's application to the Council of Australia-Arab Relations to bring 5 Palestinian Law Deans to Australia to study legal education.**

Emeritus Professor Hal Wootten AC QC and Professor Andrew Byrnes are seminal to UNSW's partnership with Palestinian university Law Schools at An-Najah University in Nablus, Arab-American University in Jenin, Al Quds University in Jerusalem, Palestine Ahliya University in Bethlehem and BirZeit University at Ramallah. The partnership shares Australian legal education expertise in order to upgrade legal education in Palestine. The project targets the education of future legal practitioners who will be the providers of the legal framework for a modern constitutional state.

The General Delegation held a reception to welcome the Law Deans to Canberra, promote the partnership, and introduce the Law Deans to the Canberra legal fraternity and public service. Represented at the reception was the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Attorney-General's Department, AusAid, Australian National University, The Law Society, the Council of Arab Ambassadors, the European Union, and members of the Canberra Palestinian Community.



Dr Akram Daoud, Dean of Law at An-Najah University with Ms Lynette Wood Assistant Secretary DFAT

*I've had a lot of projects in Palestine dealing with rule of law but the most important one is the Australian one which works through sustainable development of law in Palestine preparing people to be ready to build a state.* Dr Akram Daoud, Dean of Law at An-Najah University

*Palestinian Law Schools look to Australia for Constitution Insight*

Jen Rosenberg

The Sydney Morning Herald 24 September 2011

**6. The General Delegation of Palestine provided *ad hoc* support for the professional development of Zayed Yazan and Momen Bani Fadel, 2 Palestinian medical students.** Winning placement in a Vascular Unit at Wollongong Hospital, the General Delegation in conjunction with APHEDA, requested the assistance of the Palestinian community to financially and socially support the students during their professional development bloc. The students successfully completed their study bloc and have returned to conclude their medical degrees at An-Najah University, Nablus.

**7. New Zealand assistance for Palestinian state-building is a key element of the strategic dialogue facilitated by the General Delegation of Palestine.** New Zealand aid and development assistance for state-building was first proposed in discussion between Minister McCully and Ambassador Abdulhadi in Canberra on 7 July.

New Zealand's interest was re-iterated during the visit of HE Dr Riyad Malki to the Pacific Islands Forum in September. Preliminary areas of assistance have been proposed, and it is anticipated the dialogue which will explore these proposals, will commence in early 2012.

### OBJECTIVE FOUR

**Strengthen existing relationships and develop new relationships with civil society organisations in Australia and in New Zealand, including the Australian-Palestinian community**

Recognising the central role of civil society organisations, including the Palestinian community, within a diverse and robust democracy, the General Delegation of Palestine committed significant resources of time and staff skills to supporting the work of civil society organisations and the Palestinian community.

**1. Australia-Palestine Advocacy Network was formed in April 2011. Supported by the General Delegation of Palestine since it was first proposed in 2009, APAN is the first Australian advocacy organization to incorporate and represent sectoral interests within a networked organization.** APAN includes representatives of Churches and church-related organizations, trade unions, NGOs, solidarity groups, the Palestinian community, academics, business representatives, and municipal interests. APAN's voice and work will be vital to Palestine advocacy in Australia.

Having supported and participated in the consultations and workshops that preceded APAN's creation, the General Delegation continues to take an active interest in APAN's work. Formalising the relationship between the General Delegation of Palestine and APAN, the General Delegation will meet 3 times a year with APAN to discuss advocacy strategy and share information. APAN's parliamentary lobbying conducted in November, focused on Australian recognition and support for Palestinian statehood.

Preceding this lobbying, APAN proposed and conducted an Australia-wide petition requesting the Australian government support Palestinian statehood. Alongside the petition, APAN included a statement of public support from prominent Australians.



Further advocating for Palestinian statehood and self-determination, APAN in conjunction with other organisations, funded a public opinion poll on a range of questions on support for Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The results of the poll conducted by Roy Morgan Research were conclusive: broad understanding and support exists within Australian society for recognition of statehood as the means of self-determination for Palestinian people.

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*. . . We met with politicians across the political spectrum. We were encouraged both by the level of understanding about the suffering of Palestinians . . . APAN urged Parliamentarians to see that the excesses of Israel are met with condemnation from the Australian Parliament; to support the Palestinian's UN bid for recognition of Statehood; and to visit Palestine.*

APAN in Canberra  
November 2011  
[www.apan.org.au](http://www.apan.org.au)

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**2. Meeting with New Zealand civil society organisations during the visit of Dr Ghassan Khatib, the General Delegation of Palestine has made the contacts necessary to build relationships in 2012.** A range of civil society organisations within New Zealand, are advocating for Palestinian self-determination.

An example of the work of New Zealand civil society, is a photographic exhibition held in Wellington in August and September, of images of Palestine. This exhibition was also placed online. The high quality of work of New Zealand organisations is indicative of their commitment and energy. The General Delegation is highly conscious of the need to work systematically with these organisations, similar to the work that has been conducted in Australia. Additional resources are needed, if work with New Zealand civil society organisations is to be effective.

**3. Hosted by NSW Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, Ambassador Abdulhadi met with a large cross section of civil society organisations to accurately explain the Palestinian position with regard to statehood.** This meeting which was held on 23 September, brought together the Palestinian community, civil society organisations and their leaders, and Members of the NSW Parliament. A podcast of Ambassador Abdulhadi's presentation has been placed online at: <http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2011/09/23/public-forum-on-palestinian-statehood-bid-audio/>

Asking for systematic Australian advocacy for Palestinian statehood, Ambassador Abdulhadi responded to a range of questions regarding statehood. Organisations and persons were equipped with accurate information, detailed understanding and appropriate strategies through which to advocate on Palestinian statehood, its place in the peace process, and the relationship of statehood to final status issues.

**4. Working in close relationship with the *Australia-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry* — AACCI, the General Delegation of Palestine participated in the 2 day AACCI Forum in Melbourne, on 5 and 6 May.** A key feature of the General Delegation's participation in the AACCI Forum was coordination with the Ministry of National Economy and business groups in Palestine. This coordination and information sharing paved the way for Palestinian introduction to the major industrial, commercial and agricultural sectors in Australia, and commercial possibilities that exist between Palestine and Australia.

HE Dr Ismail Du'iek Minister for Agriculture, and his Senior Advisors had planned to attend the Forum to investigate reproductive technologies used in the Australian sheep industry. However due to last-minute demands, it was not possible for Minister Du'iek and his advisors to attend the Forum.

Recognising the importance of Palestine within the Arab world, the AACCI funded the participation of Australian-Palestinian business studies students in the Forum, in order to encourage future commercial relationships between Australia and Palestine.

**5. The General Delegation of Palestine supported the activities of the *Australia-Arab Business Network* – AABN through attending the AABN Gala Dinner as a Guest of Honour and presenting to the AABN on commercial opportunities available in Palestine.**

Attended by business persons and professionals of Arab background, on 8 June, Ambassador Abdulhadi presented on commercial opportunities in Palestine. Focusing on the Palestinian Authority's sectoral priority areas of Public Sector Governance and Accountability, Social Priorities such as health and education, Infrastructure Priorities, and the Economic Priorities of tourism, IT, agriculture, and antiquities.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with Mr Radwan Hamdan, President of the Australia-Arab Business Network.

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A key aspect of the presentation was overcoming inaccurate and negative perceptions of Palestine as a commercial destination. In Q & A, Ambassador Abdulhadi comprehensively addressed these perceptions. The General Delegation has been invited to present again in 2012 on commercial opportunities in Palestine, and in more detail.

**Cultural activities were a particular focus in the work of the General Delegation of Palestine in relationship to the Palestinian community and the broader Australian community. Cultural activities are vital to political success. Palestinian culture shows the human face of Palestine and its people and reinforces the long-standing claim of Palestinian people to their own land, and their own freedom in their own land.**

**6. Opening the year with the Canberra Multicultural Festival on 7 February, the General Delegation of Palestine in conjunction with the Canberra Palestinian community, presented an excellent and beautiful cross-section of Palestinian culture.** At the 1 1/2 day event which attracts in excess of 200,000 people, the General Delegation recreated the interior of a traditional Palestinian home and displayed a selection of handcrafts including embroidery, ceramics and brassware. Information on Palestinian culture and tourism was distributed, to enable members of the public to learn more about Palestine.



Young Canberra Palestinian community members in Palestinian costumes at the Canberra Multicultural Festival, 7 February 2011

Under the guidance of the General Delegation and with the *pro bono* assistance of a former fashion model, younger members of the Canberra Palestinian community presented a truly beautiful parade of traditional Palestinian costumes. This parade was a highlight of the Festival. The standard of performance demonstrated by the participants was impressive. In addition to the costume parade, the performance of a highly skilled Dabkeh dancer was warmly received by the predominantly Australian audience.

**7. Presenting the Palestinian narrative through culture, the General Delegation of Palestine held a photographic exhibition of archival images of Jerusalem and Palestine titled, *I am Jerusalem*.** Mr Rami Méo, a Jerusalemite now living in Sydney, loaned parts of his extensive historical and personal collection of archival photographs and objects - **Boulos-Méo Collection** — to the General Delegation. The collection was shown between 25 May and 10 June at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Gallery, located in the Canberra city center.

Opened by the Honourable Joy Burch MLA and ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs, in conjunction with Ambassador Abdulhadi, the exhibition exceeded all expectations.

Attendance at the opening night exceeded the formal capacity of the gallery and was strongly supported by the International Diplomatic Corp. Attendance throughout the exhibition, attendance at public lectures given by Rami Méo, public feedback, the feedback of the management of the gallery and public officials and the follow-on from the exhibition, all exceeded the benchmarks expected of the exhibition.

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Speaking at the opening of *I am Jerusalem*, The Hon. Joy Burch MLA and ACT Minister for Multicultural Affairs, discussed the importance of Jerusalem's multi-ethnic and multi-religious history.

Jerusalem's diverse and tolerant history provides an example to multicultural Australia. Minister Burch encouraged the Palestinian community who hold and live this rich narrative and experience of tolerance and diversity, to share it proudly.

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The success of the exhibition indicates the level of interest in Palestine and the Palestinian narrative presented through the lens of human experience. Demonstrating the deep and real interest in the Palestinian narrative and the uniqueness of the collection, an approach was made to Rami Méo by an editor of ATF Press who attended the opening night, regarding publishing a book on the collection. Work on this is underway and will continue into 2012.

**8. Invited to present the Palestinian narrative and experience to secondary students, the General Delegation of Palestine has delivered presentations in ACT Secondary Schools.** Focusing on the 20th century, students in Public Schools studying History and students in Independent Schools studying Religious and Values Education, have been immersed in the Palestinian narrative. These presentations have opened discussion about Palestine to an entirely new audience.

However, introduction of the National Curriculum in Australia may lessen opportunities such as this within Public Schools. In 2012, the General Delegation of Palestine will investigate opportunities for presentations within the social justice education programs of Independent Schools.

**9. Highlighting the importance of the launching of the Palestinian liberation movement and the creation of Fateh, Ambassador Abdulhadi delivered a speech at the Sydney-based dinner celebrating this seminal event.** The dinner which was held on 28 January, was attended by Federal and State Members of Parliament including the Honourable Anthony Albanese, MP Leader of the House and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, public leaders and figures, and the Palestinian community.

Ambassador Abdulhadi spoke on the importance of the memory of this occasion, and of continually renewing the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. Palestin-

ian identity crosses all geographical and political boundaries. The struggle for recognition of Palestinian identity and freedom brings Palestinian people together in their common cause of liberation, and its representation by the PLO.



The Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. at the 28 January Dinner. Minister Albanese spoken on the importance of the Palestinian struggle for liberation and Australian support for justice and Palestinian self-determination.

**10. The General Delegation of Palestine supported the reinstatement of Nakba commemorations**, and in particular the commemoration held at the Palestinian Workers Club in Sydney on 13 May. Ambassador Abdulhadi attended and spoke at the commemoration, remembering this tragedy which lies at the heart of Palestinian experience.

Emphasising the importance of retaining the memory of the Nakba and using the memory of the Nakba as a powerful part of Palestinian identity and the Palestinian experience, Ambassador Abdulhadi suggested projects for remembering the Nakba. The personal narrative of the Nakba as oral history can be made more accessible and more socially and politically powerful through the intentional preservation and presentation of personal stories. Personal stories and family histories can be documented and shown through photos and artifacts.

**12. Celebrating Palestinian Independence Day, the General Delegation of Palestine participated in celebrations held in the NSW Parliament and in the Victorian Parliament.** Supported by the State Parliamentary Friendship groups in each state, the NSW celebrations held on 9 November were attended by the Diplomatic and Consular Corp, civil society representatives, public figures, and the Palestinian community.

Independence Day celebrations in the Victorian Parliament were celebrated jointly with the UN Day of Solidarity and the formal launch of Victorian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine. Again, significant numbers of the Consular Corp attended the

Unable to be present due to the launch of the Australia-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group, a speech was delivered by Palestinian community representative Mr Imad Sukkar, on behalf of Ambassador Abdulhadi. The speech celebrated Palestinian people's commitment to the struggle for liberation, and extended warm appreciation for the work of Australian organisations and persons in this work.

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*Palestinian statehood is not and never was, negotiable. Each achievement that recognises and enforces our rights, is a step towards a democratic, sovereign, viable and independent Palestinian state and the right to live freely within our own state.*

*Australian people have a long-standing commitment to human justice, to fairness and to the rule of law. Australia's moral framework has dictated its long-standing support for the two-state solution, dating back to support for UN Partition Resolution 181. Australia's moral compass demands material commitment to the right of our own people to determine our future in our own state – the missing half of the two-state solution.*

Message from His Excellency Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi on the Occasion of Palestinian Independence Day Celebrations in the Victorian State Parliament  
23 November 2011

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**13. Celebrating the UN Day of Solidarity in Sydney, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended an event organized by the *Australian Palestinian Professionals Association – APPA*.** This community-based celebration was attended by NSW State MPs, NGO representatives, public figures, Palestinian community representatives and Australian advocates for Palestine.

Speaking to a responsive community audience, Ambassador Abdulhadi explored and explained the 3 tracks for Palestinian statehood. Failing in the short term to achieve full UN Member state status in the General Assembly, is not a weakening or withdrawing from the goal of full, internationally recognised Palestinian statehood.

The move towards statehood will continue and through all 3 tracks. Local strategies which advocate and build support for Palestinian statehood, must address the Australian context and integrate with the 3 tracks, in order to be most effective. Australian organisations and especially Palestinian community organisations, have a key role to play in this work.

**14. Strengthening communication and the relationship with the Australian-Palestinian community, the Ambassador Abdulhadi held 3 community meetings at the General Delegation of Palestine and community meetings in Melbourne and Sydney.**

The 1st community meeting at the General Delegation of Palestine on 9 April, was an open invitation to all members of the Australian-Palestinian community in Australia to see the newly acquired General Delegation premises, and to enable Ambassador Abdulhadi to explain the work undertaken by the General Delegation.

The 2nd meeting was held on 1 August, in conjunction with the visit of Dr Ghassan Khatib Special Envoy of HE President Mahmoud Abbas. Dr Khatib spoke to the community about the objectives of his visit to Australia and New Zealand, Palestinian

Statehood, and the quest for full Member state status for Palestine in the General Assembly.

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The Reception Room of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, located at 2/44 Dalman Crescent O'Malley, Canberra.

The General Delegation premises and the Ambassador's Residence, are the first permanently and independently owned Diplomatic properties for Palestine, in Australia.

Mr Archie Tsirimokos, the Solicitor representing the General Delegation of Palestine, worked with Ambassador Abdulhadi, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the ACT Land Titles Office, to enable the registration of the General Delegation premises and the Ambassadors Residence, in the name of *The General Delegation of Palestine on behalf of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation*.

A gallery of pictures of the General Delegation premises is available at: <https://picasaweb.google.com/117707503055929650525/TheGeneralDelegationOfPalestine#slideshow/5657406626302930434>

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The 3rd meeting, which closed the year, was held on 17 December. This community gathering thanked the Australian-Palestinian community members for their involvement and assistance in 2011.

In particular, this meeting was an opportunity to build a stronger relationship with younger members of the Australian-Palestinian community. Young members of the community who assisted the General Delegation at the Multicultural Festival and *I am Jerusalem*, were formally recognised at the community gathering.

These young members of the Australian-Palestinian community will plan and manage the Palestinian stall and cultural performances at the 2012 Multicultural Festival, building community engagement and sharing the richness of Palestine and its people, with other Australians.

## Objectives & Outcomes

Following are the names of only some of the Members of the Australian-Palestinian community who have generously given their time and skills to assist the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific:

Mr Issa Shaweesh, Mrs Samira Ghabar, Mr Samer Gedeon, Ms Liyana Kayali, Dr Obada Kayali, Mr Mohammad Zakout, Ms Tala Abdulhadi, Mr Salah Abdulhadi, Mr Amin Abbas, Dr Jamileh Abu-Duhou, Mr Rami Méo, Mrs Hilda Méo, Dr Ibitisam Abu-Duhou, Mr Mohammad Zakhout, and the Zakout Family, the Al-Sweity Family, Mr Issa Hassan and Mrs Lamia Hassan, Mr Eddie Zaniniri, Mr Ashraf Arouf, Mr Imad Sukkar, Mr Daoud Sammour, the Hijazi Family, Mr Samr Smier and Mr Hilmi Dabagh.



Volunteers from the Canberra community were recognised in a small ceremony held on 17 December, at the General Delegation.

From left: Miss Ahlam Al-Sweity, Mr Khaled Al-Sweity, Ambassador Abdulhadi, Miss Baraa Al-Sweity.

In addition, The General Delegation of Palestine organised meetings with the Australian-Palestinian community in Sydney and Melbourne. In these meetings, Ambassador Abdulhadi discussed political issues and developments, focusing on statehood and final status issues. In particular, Ambassador Abdulhadi incorporated significant time for Q & A, in order to respond in-depth to political issues and questions.

Structured meetings with the Australian-Palestinian community are central to the work of the General Delegation. The community is able to inform Ambassador Abdulhadi of their concerns, their interests, and their perspectives. Ambassador Abdulhadi is able to explain the work of the General Delegation and in particular, the work done in the Parliament and with Government.

The Australian-Palestinian community has a central and strong role to play in advocacy within Australia and in partnership with the General Delegation of Palestine. 2012 will see the General Delegation of Palestine working to support the creation of a representative community organisation, a Palestinian Community Council.

Contacts will also be made with the Palestinian community in New Zealand. to begin to foster a similar outcome in the future.



**OBJECTIVE FIVE**

**Improve the ability of the General Delegation of Palestine to perform its role through increasing professional skills, administrative rigor and management performance**

**Continual improvement of the performance of the General Delegation of Palestine is critical to the on-going success of the work carried out in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.**

2011 saw a re-conceptualisation and reconfiguring of management and administrative procedures, to enable the General Delegation to achieve maximum impact from the very limited financial and human resources provided to the Delegation. These include:

1. Development of clear job descriptions and roles for diplomatic and local staff to ensure staff fully understand their job parameters, demands and performance requirements.
2. Development of reporting frameworks and formats for periodic and annual reports, ensuring systematic reporting and critical performance-based evaluation of the work of the General Delegation.
3. Creation of special issues reports providing analysis and recommendations regarding specific issues as they arise.
4. Upgrading of the financial reporting procedures. Financial reporting is grounded in professional accounting procedure, thus strengthening the transparency and accountability of the General Delegation and ensuring full accordance with the policies and procedures of the Palestinian National Fund.
5. Development of an information storage system that is cost-effective and responsive to the every-day and long-term needs of the General Delegation of Palestine.
6. Review of the consular section to enhance record keeping
7. Updating and ongoing management of the General Delegation of Palestine website. Continual upgrading and strong management of the website ensures that the most-frequently accessed public face of the General Delegation of Palestine is always an authoritative, accurate, informative and persuasive voice for Palestine in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region. Difficulties with the Arabic side of the website have occurred due to matters internal to the web design company. However the General Delegation has opted to maintain its relationship with the web design company, due to the very high quality of their work.
8. On-going furnishing of the General Delegation premises and Ambassador's Residence. This activity has been driven by the need for furnishings suitable for diplomatic representation, work-place effectiveness and financial cost-effectiveness. Basic furnishings including window coverings have been purchased through seeking multiple quotes to ensure the best value is obtained for the very limited finances available.

The General Delegation of Palestine has been in continual communication with the Palestinian National Fund and MOFA to inform and consult and ensure the General Delegation operates within all diplomatic guidelines and procedures.



# EVALUATION & LESSONS LEARNED

**The 2011 achievements of The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific are outstanding.**

**When the work of 2011 is considered in relationship to the multiple challenges within Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region, the achievements of the General Delegation of Palestine are additionally impressive.**

Working within a very complex and challenging environment where historically established political positions, domestic issues and regional interests often override more international issues and concerns, the General Delegation has succeeded in:

- 1. Creating sustained critical and productive debate within national parliaments and governments, regarding Palestine**
- 2. Beneficially moving government positions on the right of Palestinian people to their own state based on 1967 borders**
- 3. Beneficially moving government positions on Final Status Issues**
- 4. Creating broad-based, in-depth, informed and supportive public discussion regarding Palestinian self-determination and statehood**
- 5. Facilitating financial assistance to Palestine, currently totaling 340 million dollars per year over the next 5 years**
- 6. Beginning strategic discussions regarding statehood and full bilateral diplomatic relations with a number of Pacific nation states**

These successes have occurred because of the range and scope of strategic activities undertaken by the General Delegation of Palestine and the transformative impact of these systematic, strategic activities.

Political discussion in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, has clearly been strengthened and has moved in favour of Palestine, and particularly in relationship to positions on final status issues and the indisputable right to self-determination through a state based on 1967 borders. Development commitments to Palestinian state-building are genuinely impressive and will continue to deliver benefits long into the future.

The General Delegation of Palestine has established an authoritative, clear and enviable platform from which it can further strengthen and build support for Palestinian self-determination, commitment to the missing aspect of the two-state solution; an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state based on 1967 borders, and recognition of this state.

**In evaluating the work of the General Delegation of Palestine in 2011, the most important aspects are:**

- Genuine, robust, and extended debate within the Australian Government regarding recognition of Palestinian statehood and the issue of full Member state status within the General Assembly.
- Real and in-depth interest and commitment demonstrated by Australian Federal Members of Parliament and Senators, the National Parliament of Timor-Leste and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade led by the Hon. Murray McCully. This interest and commitment is demonstrated most clearly in the visit to Palestine by members of Australian Federal Parliamentary Friends of Palestine. On returning to Australia, the MPs who participated in the visit, con-

sistently spoke out in influential speeches, presentations and statements and clearly exercised real influence within political and public debate on Palestine.

- The opening of previously strongly held political positions to robust debate and difference, as demonstrated in the divergence between Prime Minister Gillard and Foreign Minister Rudd. This divergence and its public effect of stimulating further critical discussion, demonstrated the importance of Palestine and the importance of possible Australian recognition of Palestinian statehood.
- The high level of media interest within Australia and New Zealand regarding Palestinian statehood, and the sustained commitment of Delegation staff skills and resources to maximising this engagement and interest. The sheer number and range of media requests, written articles, radio interviews and television coverage, shows the importance of the General Delegation's media presentation. The 2011 usage statistics for the General Delegation website show exponential increases in usage as the year progressed. These statistics and the increased email traffic via the website, demonstrates the importance of the development work done on the website and the importance of integration of the General Delegation's own digital media with external, mainstream media.
- The importance of visits by high-level Palestinian Authority leaders e.g. HE Dr Riad Malki and Dr Ghassan Khatib. Personal meetings with Palestinian Authority leaders are a profoundly effective way to stimulate both decisive governmental discussion and informed supportive public discussion on Palestinian self-determination and statehood, to feed into government decision-making.
- The development of cohesion between solidarity groups and the Palestinian community, enabling a stronger and more broadly representative voice to be heard by democratically elected officials.
- A real decline in the level of public support for the Israeli political narrative. The Israeli political narrative which is most strongly promoted by Jewish community organisations, was shown to be inconsistent, highly flawed and morally self-interested. The work of the General Delegation of Palestine in combination with the work of civil society organizations and excellent media coverage, was more factually, politically, and morally convincing.
- The high level of public understanding and support demonstrated in both the petition to the Australian Parliament asking for the Australian government to recognise Palestinian statehood, and in the opinion poll asking Australians about their understanding of Palestine and the quest for statehood.
- Public expression of a clear position regarding the right of Palestinian self-determination through an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state and the commencement of specific positions on final status issues.

**In critically evaluating the work undertaken and the outstanding success of 2011, the most pressing feature is the need for the General Delegation of Palestine to sustain and consolidate the real and significant gains that have been achieved. Consolidation demands follow-up and the formalization of the gains in General Delegation programs and relationships.**

**However, without significantly increased financial and human resources and greater information sharing and coordination with other stakeholders, consolidation and further increase may not be possible and the gains of 2011 may be lost.**

The increasing costs of operating the General Delegation of Palestine in combination with the declining value of the US dollar in relationship to the Australian dollar, has

meant that the funding provided to the General Delegation has dropped in real terms. Both the salaries of diplomatic staff, and the funds available for the employment of local staff dropped in real terms.

Three examples of the impact of this funding drop are:

- The inability of the General Delegation to recruit appropriately skilled local staff as it cannot pay competitive salaries
- The inability of the General Delegation to fund the installation of IT that would more properly and efficiently support the work of the General Delegation of Palestine. More suitable IT would enable all staff to work more efficiently and productively.
- A negative impact on morale, as staff are asked to deal with rapidly increasing workloads, and to do this with less resources

Systematic information sharing, consultation and strategic coordination are needed to strengthen the work undertaken in the Pacific and to make the work effective and successful.

Regional interests, issues, relationships and organisations dominate in the Pacific region, and this regional focus exists in combination with the reality of face-to-face culture. If transformative change is to be achieved in relationship to UN voting, recognition of Palestinian statehood, and the establishment of full bilateral diplomatic relationships, the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, must work in strategic cooperation.

## LESSONS LEARNED IN 2011

**The programs, job descriptions, roles and tasks within the General Delegation of Palestine must be more clearly defined in order to ensure that the work undertaken is the most influential, the most effective and will most strongly further the goal of Palestinian self-determination through an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state based on 1967 borders.**

Diplomatic staff and local staff must be appropriately skilled to undertake a flexible and demanding work load requiring multiple skills.

Diplomatic staff must not be posted without consultation and selection in conjunction with the Ambassador, in order to ensure that the intended diplomatic staff do possess the skills required for working within the increasingly complex and demanding Australian, New Zealand and Pacific context.

The operational budget of the General Delegation of Palestine must be increased to cover the increasing cost of operating an expanding diplomatic mission.

Increased basic running costs, the cost of funding a rapidly increasing scope of work that requires both human and financial resources, and the cost of more frequent travel within Australia, are 3 of the factors underpinning the need for an increased operational budget.

Significant increases in both human and financial resources are needed to ensure the General Delegation's highly influential diplomatic representation and lobbying continues to grow in effectiveness and influence.

Appropriately skilled local staff cannot be recruited and retained without increased funds for local salaries to ensure the competitiveness of the salaries offered by the General Delegation of Palestine.

Formal internships at the General Delegation of Palestine can assist in carrying the workload of the General Delegation. Formal internships would enable Australian volunteers to share their real and valuable skills within a structured learning environment. Formal internships will also create stronger and more supportive long-term relationships with Australian persons and organisations.

In order to produce the most change possible in nation states within its diplomatic scope, the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific must be a part of strategic cooperation and information sharing between all stakeholders. Other stakeholders are: relevant organisations are working with Pacific nation states and their representatives

Strategic cooperation including increased and more systematic information sharing, would enable the work of all stakeholders to be more targeted, more effective, and more transformative.

The General Delegation of Palestine must continue to internally strengthen its work and management practices to deliver the maximum impact for Palestinian people in their quest for self-determination, liberation, and the freedom to live in their own independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian state based on 1967 borders.

# PRIORITIES FOR 2012 & 2013

**Assessing the outstanding work in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region, The General Delegation of Palestine has established the following priorities for 2012 and 2013.**

**Establish strategic and key relationships and programs within formal frameworks in order to most effectively further the relationships and programs and their highly influential outcomes, for example:**

- Periodically consult and dialogue with both the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Council of Ministers of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste.
- Work with the Australian Parliamentary Friendship Groups, both the Federal and State Parliamentary Friends of Palestine and the Australia-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group. The Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Groups specifically further the interests of Palestine. The Australia-Arab Parliamentary Friendship Group enables the interests of Palestine to be represented within the context of regional relationships and the growing Parliamentary relationship with the Arab States.
- Formalise the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine Delegation to Palestine. This visit gave Australian MPs persuasive first-hand experience of Palestine, Palestinian National Authority leadership and the people of Palestine.
- Request the formal establishment of a program of periodic visits by high-ranking Palestinian Authority leaders, to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. High-level Palestinian Authority leaders provide are profoundly influential in stimulating critical, highly informed and beneficial government and public discussion regarding Palestinian self-determination, the peace process, statehood and final status issues.

**Work closely with civil society organisations in order to strategically support local civil society advocacy on Palestine.**

- Within democratic societies, civil society organisations are the public voice on Palestine, and are a powerful indicator for democratically elected officials, the media, and government departments, of the public view on Palestine.
- The most appropriate relationship between the General Delegation of Palestine and civil society organisations is an informed and consultative relationship that supports both the work of civil society organisations and the work of the General Delegation of Palestine.

**Work closely with the Palestinian Community to establish a Palestinian Community Council.**

- A peak Australian-Palestinian community body would be the face and voice of the Palestinian narrative and experience within Australia.
- A strong and effective Australian-Palestinian community body can work in partnership with the General Delegation of Palestine and be an influential body in advocacy, in changing public opinion and in effecting change in government decision making.

**Implementation of the most effective management and work practices**

- Choose only the most effective qualitative activities i.e. those activities that create maximum authoritative influence, voice and presence for the General Delegation of Palestine, and which support existing relationships, programs and activities.
- Refuse emergency or *ad hoc* activities that take substantial staff time away from the core and most influential activities.
- Create clearer job descriptions and task frameworks to ensure all staff are able to increase their ability to work independently.
- Encourage commitment to on-going professional development and flexible learning, and institute comprehensive and on-going staff evaluation to enable staff to assess their own development.

**Increase the human and financial resources available to the General Delegation of Palestine to enable the General Delegation to most properly fulfill its rapidly expanding scope of work.**

- Institute more effective executive support for the Ambassador, to enable the fullest utilisation possible of the Ambassadorial role, skills and time in representation and lobbying within the countries represented diplomatically by the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
- Reduce the amount of time spent by the Ambassador on lower-level administration tasks and in assisting staff in their skill development.
- Increase the number of appropriately skilled and experienced staff to enable the rapidly expanding scope of work of the General Delegation, to be undertaken in the most effective manner. Appropriately skilled and experienced local staff are able to work more independently and more productively as they bring an informed understanding of the context of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, to their work.
- Appropriately skilled and experienced local staff enable the representational work of the diplomatic staff to be performed more effectively.



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Multicultural Festival 2011  
By Layla Al-Sweity