



The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Annual Report 2020



His Excellency Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff at an event commemorating United Nations Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in Canberra.



Annual Report 2020

Front Cover Image

Coat of Arms of the State of Palestine

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Annual Report 2020

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The Ambassador's Foreword

2020: A year with global challenges, threats and difficulties

The Year 2020 witnessed the spread of bushfires in Australia and the Coronavirus pandemic in the whole Endo Pacific region.

The 2020 Australian bushfires were devastating. They burned over 17 million hectares, resulting in the deaths of approximately 480 people and almost 3 billion animals, and also significantly impacting Australia's economy. This unprecedented natural disaster raised important questions on Australia's climate change policies.

This year also witnessed the spread of the Coronavirus Pandemic in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. It is needless to say that the socio – economic impact was immense and has caused dramatic societal changes throughout the region. As a result of the Pandemic, Australia's economic losses during the year 2020 were an estimated AUD\$100 billion, and New Zealand's economy went into a recession. Although the strategy adopted and implemented by Australia and New Zealand to confront the Pandemic has been classified as the best in the world, it is still imperative to observe how Pandemic has changed the lives of the people in the entire region.

On the Palestinian front, the Pandemic has had huge impacts on the lives and economy of the Palestinian people. The spread of the Pandemic in Palestine has expanded the consular work at the General Delegation of Palestine (GDOP) the repatriation process of Palestinian visitors to Australia and New Zealand and the students who wanted to go back home. In this context, I would like to thank the Australian and New Zealand governments and other Australian and New Zealand NGOs for their support to the Palestinian people

during the Pandemic.

Another important development of 2020 was the so-called “Trump Plan” and the Israeli annexation plan. The GDOP was extremely encouraged by the responses of the various parties in Australia, New Zealand and Pacific countries, including their official positions, as well as the responses by civil society and local communities. Most of these responses were critical of the “Trump Plan” and Israeli annexation plan, as being a flagrant violation of International Law and Palestinian human rights.

In another issue, the GDOP has closely followed the political developments in the Asia Pacific region especially the Australia–China tension and its impact on the peace and stability in the region and the globe. In this context, the GDOP strongly believes that the implementation of International Law should be the only reference to solve any conflict and it should be applied systematically and not selectively.

We are very proud at the GDOP of the achievements and meaningful outcomes of 2020. I would also like to seize this opportunity to thank my staff at the GDOP and our impressive interns for their excellent work during a very difficult year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Izzat Abdulhadi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Izzat Abdulhadi

Ambassador of the State of Palestine

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

Australia Political Context

Australian Domestic Affairs

Bushfire Crisis



In the summer of 2019–2020 Australia encountered the first of two crises that would have a major impact on its economic, social and political welfare. The breakout of large-scale bushfires across the country caused heavy loss of life, property, animal and agricultural wealth, forests, and other natural resources. These bushfires are considered to be the worst natural disaster to occur in Australia in decades. 33 people lost their lives in the fires and a further 445 later passed as a result of smoke inhalation.

The health effects of the bushfires extended beyond the fire site as thick blankets of toxic smoke swept across vast territory. Though there was much speculation as to the cause of the fires, the majority of Australian analysts and environmental experts concluded that the major reason behind these fires is cli-

mate change and Australia's failure to adopt a clear policy towards the reduction of emissions, especially from Australia's continued production of coal.



These immense fires reduced the popularity of the current Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, who was accused of not pursuing a balanced climate change policy, in addition to not allocating sufficient resources to overcome this natural disaster or a plan to compensate those affected by this disaster, especially those towns located in the south coast of the country.

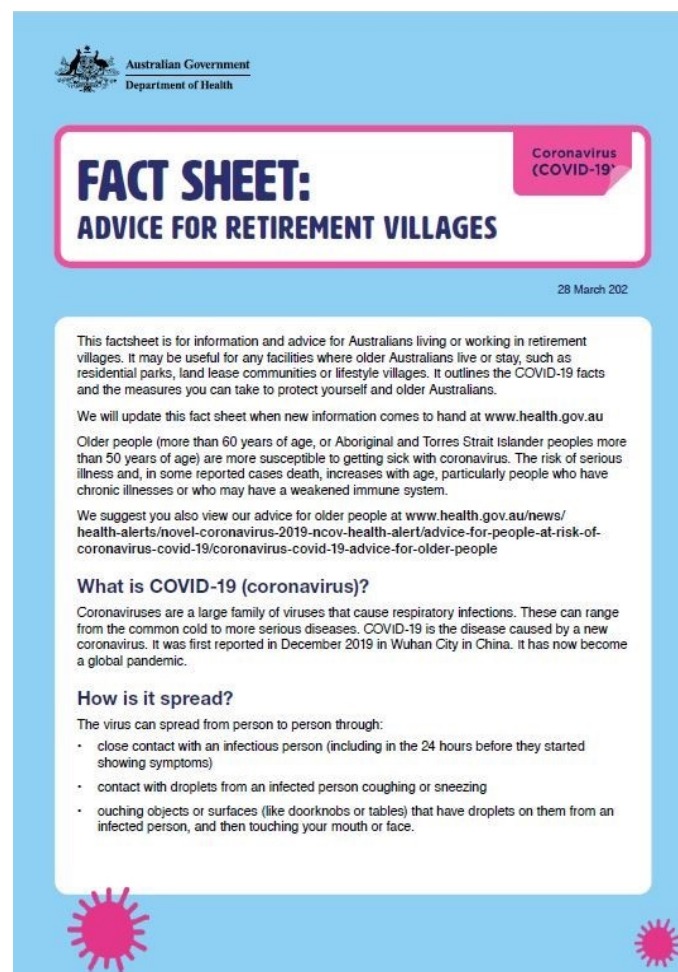
COVID-19 Pandemic in Australia

The second major crisis was the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). As of



December 2020, more than 28,171 people were infected, and 908 people had died across the country. The Australian government has taken effective measures to stop and prevent the spread of the pandemic, including the clo-

sure of suburbs, the prohibition of gatherings, and the closure of all social, cultural and sports facilities, and other measures that have led to a reduction in the number of infections and deaths. In addition, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the Minister of Health have announced that the borders will not be opened until a vaccine or treatment for Coronavirus is developed. It is worth noting, the positive response of the Arab, Islamic and Palestinian communities to the government's actions, especially the closure of mosques and the self-decision to prevent performing Friday prayers collectively.



These measures were applauded by the Australian public and raised the credit and popularity of Scott Morrison and his government.

The Economic Impact of COVID-19

In 2020 Australia entered and emerged from its first recession in nearly 30 years. Australia's economic loss due to the Coronavirus pandemic was estimated at around AUD\$100 billion. More than 227,700 jobs were lost in just one month, and unemployment increased from 6.4% in April to 7.1% in May, resulting in about a million people losing their jobs during the Coronavirus crisis.

It is reported that the unemployment rate in Australia has reached its highest level in 22 years, 7.5% in July of this year.



In response to this, Australia has pledged billions of dollars in tax cuts and job-enhancing measures to help pull the economy out of its current recession. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government set aside 300 billion Australian dollars in emergency stimulus to support growth this year after the coronavirus outbreak meant that no budget surplus could occur as expected.

The government's financial support this year helped restore consumption and business confidence and lower the unemployment rate to 6.8%. After a surprising 0.7% decline in the unemployment level from 7.5% to 6.8% in August.

By September the Australian GDP had risen by 3.3%. Treasury Secretary Josh Friedenbergh noted that "In the face of a once-in-a-century pandemic which caused the biggest economic shock since the Great Depression, Australia's health and economic performance was better than almost any other country in the world." Despite the minister's optimism, the country has not yet finished its economic recovery phase.

Shadow Treasury Secretary Jim Chalmers said the new quarterly GDP numbers were good news but Australians were still struggling during a very difficult year. "So the most important here is the human aspect and the humanitarian consequences of this deep and harmful recession, as well as recovery" Chalmers added.



Party Popularity

Popular support for Prime Minister Scott Morrison rose to its highest level, peaking at 60% in November. Meanwhile the popularity of opposition leader Anthony Albanese has decreased, according to an opinion poll conducted by The Australian newspaper, with only 28% support in the November poll. The Liberal – National coalition also maintained its progress with regard to the preferred party and ranked 51% compared to 49% in favor of Labor, indicating little change since the November poll.



Some took advantage of this poll to criticize Albanese's performance as leader of the opposition, with some suggesting that it was time for opposition Treasury spokesperson Jim Chalmers to take the lead of the Labor Party.

Climate Change

Despite the global pandemic dominating headlines, concern about the impact of climate change is at a record high in Australia, where 80 percent of people believe they are already facing problems caused by climate change, and 83 percent support the closure of coal-fired power plants.

Additionally, 79 percent of Australians agreed that climate change was “happening” more than at any other time during the history of this survey, according to the Nation Climate Report by the Australia Institute. In fact, 71 percent now believe Australia should be a world leader in climate action. The report also noted that, “Australians want a quick transition to a zero-emissions economy.”



The bushfires of 2019–2020 were the biggest cause of concern among respondents, jumping from 76 percent last year to 82 percent this year. Rebecca Colvin, from the Australian National University, reports the survey showed that COVID–19 has not made people forget about climate change. "I think it's surprising how it shows that climate change is not just a fad that people care about when everything else is stable," she added.

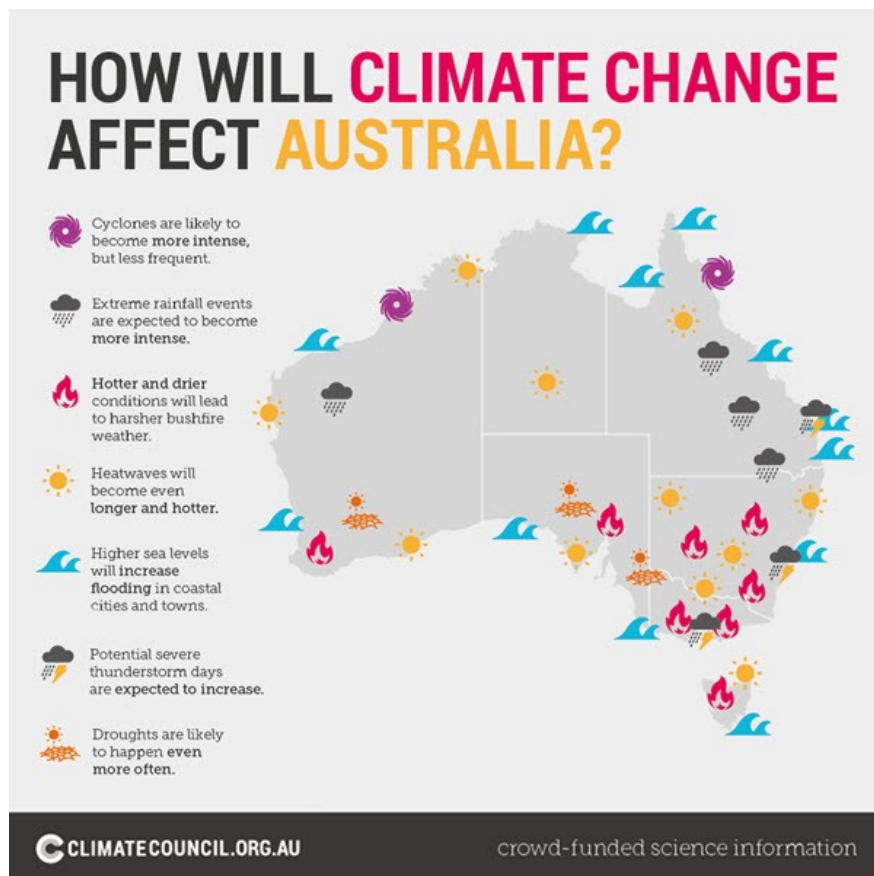
Another report by Deloitte Access Economics revealed that inaction on climate change will cost the Australian economy over the next 50 years 4.3 trillion Australian dollars (4.2 trillion US dollars) and lose more than 880,000 jobs.

Analysts at the consulting firm painted a bleak economic picture, saying that "failure to tackle climate change will reduce, on average, economic growth in

Australia by 3 percent annually and cause about 310,000 job losses annually." They estimate that by 2070, Australia's GDP will shrink by 6 percent.

The newly released report also provides an alternative outlook if the government sticks to a policy of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 – in line with the policy of the European Union and many of Australia's major trading partners.

If Australia worked to set average global warming at 1.5 ° C alongside the rest of the world, it could create 250,000 jobs and the economy would grow by \$ 680 billion, the report said.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison is under mounting international pressure to set more ambitious emissions-cutting targets.

Australia was excluded from the United Nations Climate Change Summit via the Internet, with the participation of 70 world leaders, for lack of Australia's commitment to clear goals to curb climate change.

Meeting Paris target for emissions well on track



This criticism was compounded following the September release of the Morrison government's 'gas-fired' COVID economic recovery plan.

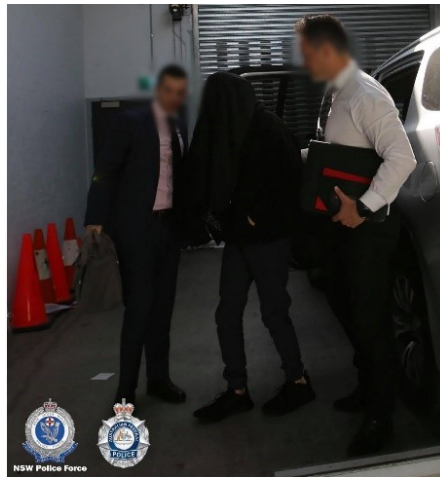
Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne confirmed that her country's government is working with its British counterpart to confront the repercussions of climate change and adapt to its potential impacts on ecosystems and economic sectors.

The Threat of Right-Wing Extremism

An emerging concern in the Australian national security sphere is the threat of right-wing extremism. A new parliamentary investigation examines the issue of the increasing influence of the extreme right in Australia, in order to limit the occurrence of hate speech and hatred, especially due to the increased risks of the extreme right and its significant increase in activity.

Recently, an individual was arrested on terrorism-related charges by the Australian Federal Police and NSW State Police. Mr. Taylor is accused of pub-

lishing materials that incite terrorism and was collecting information about bomb-making for the purpose of carrying out terrorist acts. He also expressed support for the ideas of the terrorist arrested in New Zealand who caused the killing of dozens during the attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.



According to police investigations, Mr Taylor supports neo-Nazism and the supremacy of the white race. The accused will be charged with terrorism-related activities and will remain in custody until the completion of the investigations, and he will be brought before the court on 02/26/2021.



The Australian Secret Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) indicated in a report late last year that the threat of the "far right" is high in the country. The Direc-

tor of ASIO, Mike Burgess, has spoken of a 40% increase in the risk of right extremism since 2019.

It should be noted that Australia is the only country in the Five Eyes Intelligence Group that has not yet included any extreme right-wing organizations on the list of "banned terrorist organizations".

According to Dr Maryam Farida, a counter terrorism expert and lecturer at the University of New South Wales, though the funding for research from the intelligence apparatus is "good" it is focused mostly on "Islamic extremism". This is because during the past four years the threat of extremist organisations arising from the Middle East was a significant concern. However, now there is need for a change. The direction of research is to look at the growing threat of the far right.

Australian–Palestinian Relations



There have been several changes to Australia's approach in its relations with Palestine in 2020. Over the course of the year Australia has increasingly parted from the global consensus on Israel–Palestine affairs.

In this context, the Governor–General of Australia visited the State of Palestine during his visit to Israel to attend the ceremony honouring the victims of the Holocaust, which was held in Jerusalem. The Governor–General had lunch at the table of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, who presented the guest visitor with an account of the political situation in the region, especially

the developments of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict and the dangers arising from the so–called Trump plan.

Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin, received a warm welcome during his visit to Canberra, where he held meetings with the Governor–General of Australia David Hurley, Prime Minister Scott Morrison, and Leader of the Opposition, Australian Labor Party, Anthony Albanese.



The Governor–General of Australia meeting with HE President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah

During his meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, the Australian Prime Minister pointed out the importance of deepening bilateral relations between Israel and Australia, especially in the areas of information technology, cyber–crime, anti–terrorism, agriculture, water, and more.



Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison meet in Canberra, Australia

Morrison also noted the continued protection and support of Israel at the United Nations in the face of its "singling out" according to his claim and his pledge, therefore, to vote against any resolutions against Israel as they strengthen anti-Semitism.



Solidarity groups with the Palestinian people in addition to Palestinian community organizations have widely criticized this visit. Representatives of these organizations held demonstrations in front of Parliament House, attended by some parliamentarians, in protest against this visit as well as in protest of Israel's violations of human rights and its continued occupation of the Palestinian territories and its racial discrimination policies in Palestine.



Palestinian activists and parliamentarians protest the official visit

Australian Aid to Palestine



As for Australian aid to Palestine, no final decision has been reached yet, and the Australian Government is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its international aid assistance.

It appears that as a result of the economic crisis which Australia is experiencing due to the impact of natural disasters and COVID 19, Australia may deliberately reduce its international aid including aid to Palestine.

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia has urged the Australian Government to continue its financial aid to Palestine, especially for UNRWA.

Additionally, the Australia–Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) submitted a memorandum to the Australian Government urging it to continue aid to Palestine, especially to UNRWA.

Australia's Position on Israeli Annexation Plans



Long after Israel announced its plans to annex significant parts of the occupied West Bank, the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Marise Payne, issued a statement entitled "The Situation in the Middle East" in which she referred to Australia's position on recent Israeli plans. Payne expressed concerns about taking unilateral steps to change the status of the West Bank. The statement also indicated that the Labor Party has long supported and continues to support the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that the Labor Party continues to demand the parties of the conflict refrain from any actions that impede the achievement of a peaceful solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict.

This delayed and tepid response prompted condemnation from political actors, civil society and academics. Among the critics was new leader of the Australian Green Party, Adam Bandt. Bandt issued a press release entitled "Australia must condemn Israeli annexation plans quickly" in which he explicitly and publicly condemned Israeli annexation plans, saying: "There has been an increasing and overwhelming chorus of global voices condemning the Israeli Government's plans to annex parts of the West Bank as soon as 1 July."

"Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump have virtually no support on the international stage from leaders across the political spectrum, including many Jewish supporters of Israel internationally and in Australia. Yet the Australian Government remains resolutely silent, offering tacit approval for a plan that is an indisputably grave breach of international law, thwarts Palestinians' right to



Australia sees the Vision for Peace as a first step, and we commend all parties to resume good faith discussions towards peace and a two-state solution.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne

self-determination, destabilises the entire region and further jeopardises the prospects of a two-state solution.”

The statement ended, saying: “Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Foreign Minister Marise Payne must make clear to the Israeli Government that serious breaches of international law have diplomatic consequences, including the possibility of Australia joining internationally coordinated sanctions should annexation proceed.”

Australia must urgently condemn Israel's annexation plans: Bandt

MEDIA RELEASE ADAM BANDT / 26 JUN 2020 / FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SHARE

The Greens call on the Australian Government to add its voice to global calls and forcefully speak out against the Israeli Government's plans to annex parts of the West Bank in clear violation of international law.

Leader of the Greens Adam Bandt said: “There has been an increasing and overwhelming chorus of global voices condemning the Israeli Government's plans to annex parts of the West Bank as soon as 1 July.

“Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump have virtually no support on the international stage from leaders across the political spectrum, including many Jewish supporters of Israel internationally and in Australia. Yet the Australian Government remains resolutely silent, offering tacit approval for a plan that is an indisputably grave breach of international law, thwarts Palestinians' right to self-determination, destabilises the entire region and further jeopardises the prospects of a two-state solution.”

“This plan is not only a further blow to Palestinian human rights after decades of occupation and de facto annexation through settlement construction. It is also detrimental to Israel's security – a point made by many in Israel's security establishment – and it is a disaster for Israel's democracy.”

“The misguided and dangerous plan for annexation is driven by the far right in Israel and the US. It is designed to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state, not to create conditions for peace. It's well past time for Australia to show some leadership and speak out. Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Foreign Minister Marise Payne must make clear to the Israeli Government that serious breaches of international law have diplomatic consequences, including the possibility of Australia joining internationally coordinated sanctions should annexation proceed.”

“This annexation is not a done deal – pressure from countries like Australia can make a difference. There has never been a more critical time for the Australian Government to speak against this gross breach of international law.”

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd also called on the Australian government to condemn Israel's proposed annexation of large parts of the West Bank, which he said would undermine the common goal of a two-state solution and violate international law. Rudd, a longtime supporter of Israel's right to exist in peace and security, added “I urge the Israeli government to urgently reconsider this proposed course of action”. Rudd also said, the Morrison government is obligated to “speak” in defense of international law as a responsible middle power,

citing Australia's history of speaking up when the most basic international standards were violated.



RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
MEMBER FOR CORIO

SENATOR PENNY WONG
LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY IN THE SENATE
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
LABOR SENATOR FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

LABOR OPPOSES ANNEXATION OF WEST BANK LAND

Labor opposes the annexation of land in the West Bank by the Israeli Government.

Annexation of any part of the West Bank will weaken the viability of any future Palestinian state, undermine the prospect of a two-state solution, violate international law and risk destabilising Israel's neighbours, which the world cannot afford.

We expect the Australian Government to join with likeminded countries including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Spain in making these concerns clear.

Labor is a strong supporter of the state of Israel – that will never change.

We share the concern expressed by the Global Jewish Coalition and the Commanders for Israel's Security – a group of 293 retired Israeli generals, admirals, and leaders from Mossad, Shin Bet, and the police – that unilateral annexation would jeopardise Israel's security.

Labor has a long and proud history of supporting a just and durable two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We continue to call on both sides of the conflict to refrain from any actions that hamper peaceful outcomes for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

TUESDAY, 30 JUNE 2020

Yet another Australian critic is Professor Ben Saul, head of the Department of International Law at the University of Sydney. He published an important article in the Sydney Morning Herald entitled "Why should Australia join the global condemnation of Israeli annexation plans?". In his article, Professor Saul noted that the annexation was in stark contrast to international law, especially the

United Nations Charter of 1945, which states that it is illegal to use force to impose sovereignty on foreign lands. He concluded that Australia needs to defend the system of rules it says it believes in, not only against China or Russia, but also against "friends" like Israel and the United States of America.

A group of academics and artists in Australia issued an important statement, published in local newspapers, about the illegality of the Israeli annexation plans. More than 900 intellectuals and academics signed an open letter denouncing the illegal Israeli annexation plans and condemning the Australian government for its "complicity".



Jewish groups, including the Australian Zionist Youth Council also spoke out against the annexation. The CEO of the New Israel Fund Australia, a Jewish-Zionist organization, Liam Getrio, spoke to ABC News, saying: "Supporting annexation is not a pro-Israel perspective, but rather a pro-settler perspective, support for Israel means support for a two-state solution, means support for a Palestinian state ultimately, it means supporting Israeli democracy, the annex-

ation that the Prime Minister is planning now undermines all these attempts and solutions.”

Most of the solidarity movements with the Palestinian people condemned the Israeli plan for the annexation project and published important articles on the results of the annexation policy on the two-state solution and the possibility of establishing a viable Palestinian State, and many educational seminars were organized on the harms of the Israeli annexation.



Australia's Request to the International Criminal Court



Australia filed a request to the International Criminal Court in which it criticized the process of conducting an investigation of possible Israeli war crimes in the

Occupied Palestinian Territories, claiming the court had no mandate or authority to carry out such an investigation. Many solidarity groups with the Palestinian people, civil society organizations, and the Islamic, Arab and Palestinian communities criticized this action by Australia.



ICC Pre-Trial Chamber decision on jurisdiction in relation to the 'Situation in Palestine'

Statement
06 February 2021

Australia has deep concerns with the ruling of the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court that it has jurisdiction in relation to the 'Situation in Palestine'.

Australia does not recognise a 'State of Palestine', noting that matters relating to territory and borders can only be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

We made clear in our observations submitted to the Pre-Trial Chamber that Australia does not therefore recognise the right of any so-called 'State of Palestine' to accede to the Rome Statute. The International Criminal Court should not exercise jurisdiction in this matter.

Australia also indicated in its request that it does not recognize the State of Palestine, which called for a strong response from the Ambassador of Palestine and Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, Izzat Abdulhadi, that Australia's position is unfortunate and shameful and is in the interest of the United State of America and Israel.

Australia has also come under harsh criticism from civil society organizations and Arab and Palestinian communities for opposing resolutions on Palestine in the United Nations Human Rights Council.

On the other hand, Colin Rubenstein, Executive Director of the Australia Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, commented on Australia's submission to the Court, saying that "Australia has demonstrated its recent position on its support for the rule of law and demonstrated strong moral leadership."

Australia's Position on Arab-Israeli Normalization Agreements



The signing of peace agreements between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain has been well-received by Australian political leaders. The Australian government, through Foreign Minister Senator Marise Payne, expressed a warm welcome to this important historical development.



Marise Payne ✓
@MarisePayne

Australia welcomes the historic announcement of the normalisation of relations between Israel & Bahrain. It is a courageous step forward for peace & security in the Middle East. [@bahdiplomatic](#) [@Gabi_Ashkenazi](#) [@ABZayed](#)

11:54 am · 12 Sep. 20 · Twitter for iPhone



The Australian opposition also expressed, through a statement by Shadow Foreign Minister Senator Penny Wong, its welcoming of the normalization agreements in the hope of providing new opportunities to promote stability and peace in the Middle East region, in addition to making meaningful and tangible progress to achieve a just and durable two-state solution.

However, many researchers and academics emphasized that Palestinian rights should be the focus of the conflict in the Middle East, and that reaching a just and durable solution to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict must be based on principles of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra discussed this issue based on the important statement issued by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, through which it reaffirmed the basic references for resolving the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, especially international law, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Australian newspapers have also addressed this issue in many articles, some were supportive and some held reservations about these agreements in terms of their role in promoting international peace and security in the Middle East and supporting the two–state solution in accordance with international law and internationally recognized decisions.



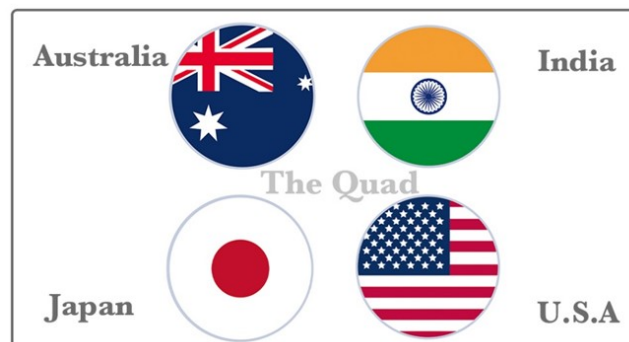
The Australian National Imams Council and Mufti of Australia also issued statements denouncing the signed agreements and calling for finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict on the basis of international references and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Australian International Relations

The Quad

The US State Department hopes to form an alliance in the Indo–Pacific region similar to NATO, called “The Quad” between the USA, India, Japan, and Australia. The Quad alliance aims to reduce dependence on trade with China in the context of the growing tensions between Australia and China. Australia’s

entry into this alliance has further deteriorated its diplomatic relations with China



US Deputy Secretary of State said that South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand might eventually be invited to join this alliance. He also said that the formation of The Quad is a defining moment for the Indo-Pacific region and the world, and will likely pose a major obstacle to China expanding its sphere of influence.



Foreign ministers of India, Japan, Australia, and the USA

During a meeting in Tokyo in October, the foreign ministers of India, Japan, Australia and the USA agreed to work together with a joint goal of achieving peace in the Indo-Pacific region.



Marise Payne ✓ @MarisePayne · Oct 6, 2020

...

Today in Tokyo, @SecPompeo & I had our 3rd meeting this year, building on the excellent discussions at #AUSMIN 🇦🇺🇺🇸 in July. We spoke about our ongoing cooperation to promote peace, stability & prosperity in our region. Thanks to 🇯🇵 & our friend @moteging for hosting #Quad.



US Foreign Minister Pompeo and Australian Foreign Minister Payne in Tokyo

In a subsequent tweet, Payne praised Japan's role as a "force for good in international affairs," writing that, "We value its leadership in our region & look forward to bringing our two nations even closer together under PM Suga."

Japanese Prime Minister Suga noted that, "In light of the multiple challenges that the international community faces in trying to confront the COVID-19 pandemic, it is time to deepen coordination with as many countries as possible that share our vision."

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar also tweeted, "We will work together for stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific." And US Secretary of State Pompeo said, "A free and open Indo-Pacific is the foundation of regional peace and stability."

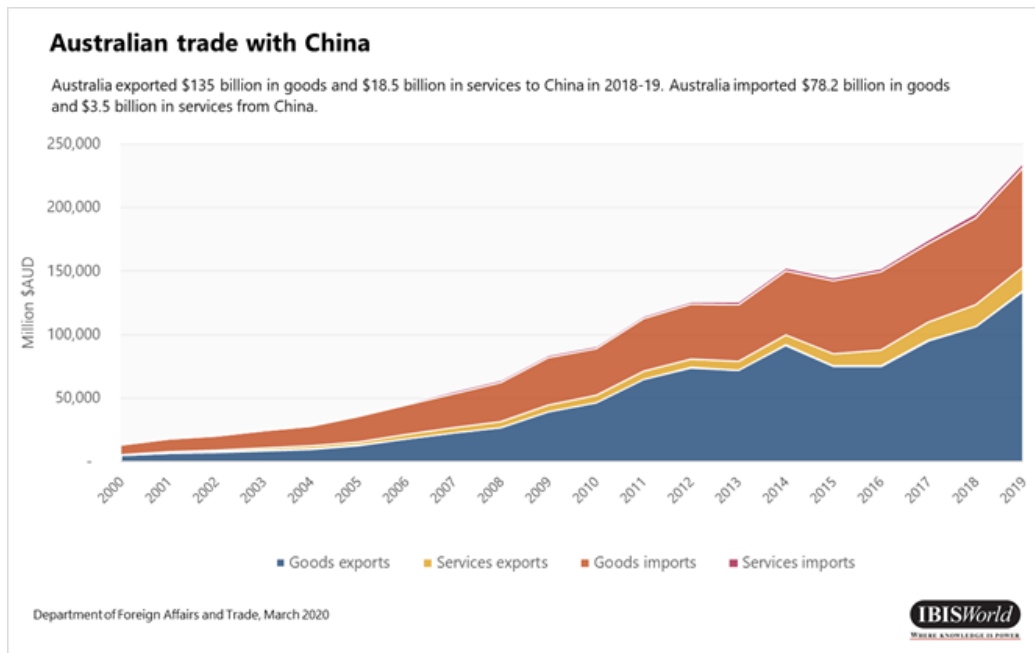
Australia–China Relations

Tensions between Australia and China escalated significantly in 2020 following PM Scott Morrison's call for an investigation into possible origins of COVID–19 in China. A range of diplomatic and economic tactics have been employed by both states.

On China's end, there has been halting of certain imports and imposition of high customs, which make up a significant portion of Australian exports; excessive wait times for ship traffic from Australia, also impacting Australian exports; encouraging Chinese students, who contribute greatly to the financial situation of Australia's universities, not to study in Australia; and accusations of espionage.

Australia has also taken action by obstructing the sale of Australian dairy giant Lion Dairy & Drinks to China; suspending of the Hong Kong extradition treaty; strengthening the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue; and introducing legislation giving the Federal Government authority to review and reject agreements between China and Australian states that conflict with Australia's national interest and national security.

It should be noted that China is Australia's largest trading partner. During the last fiscal year, China imported about 26 percent of total Australian exports, valued at AU\$235 billion.



Trade Minister Birmingham had previously said that if China were to discriminate against Australian products, it would be in breach of its obligations to the World Trade Organization or the China–Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Shadow Foreign Minister Senator Penny Wong, indicated that the Australian government should defend Australian exporters, and said, "We are very concerned about the implications of these developments for the Australian economy." She emphasized that if any country blocks Australian exports, Australia must act either through the World Trade Organization or through bilateral relations between the two countries or more generally.

Additionally, Senator Wong pointed out that urging Australian exporters to find other markets is not a sufficient response. In this context, Chinese officials disclosed a list of complaints, calling on Australia to address them to stop the deterioration of relations between the two countries.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has rejected criticisms that Australia is acting on US instructions with regard to foreign policy. "This is illogical," Morrison told Network Seven. He added, "Australia is a sovereign country and

we make decisions based on our national interests." "I can assure you that we will always be Australian and act as our interests dictate and according to our values."

Australia–New Zealand Relations



Australian Foreign Minister Payne met with her New Zealand counterpart, Foreign Minister Mahuta, as part of a biannual Zoom consultation. During the virtual meeting, they discussed close cooperation in the Indo–Pacific region and Australia and New Zealand’s shared interests in an open and prosperous region.

Foreign Minister Payne also expressed her willingness to work with New Zealand to strengthen the rules–based international order, strengthen global institutions, and build international and regional cooperation, including through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the East Asia Summit, the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Pacific Islands Forum.

Both parties reaffirmed their shared commitment to supporting access to COVID–19 vaccines across the Pacific, and supporting the region economic recovery from the pandemic. Minister Payne also emphasized an interest in working closely with Minister Mahuta on their shared commitment to promoting women’s leadership and gender equality across the Pacific.

Australia–India Relations



In the context of strengthening Australian–Indian relations and in particular strengthening the role of Australia in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi through an online platform.



The two parties discussed strengthening trade relations between the two countries, especially as India is heading towards becoming Australia's first trade partner.

Australia–Arab Relations



2020 saw the deterioration of Australia's relationship with Qatar. After the inspection incident at Hamad airport, Qatar stopped providing millions in support to an Australian industrial sector. In what was reported as a "surprising" step, Qatar cancelled a subsidy program worth 300 million dollars annually that it was providing to the mutton industry in Australia.

The support program was supposed to end in 2023, but Doha decided to cancel at the end of next December. Financial Review cited the sudden halt as a blow to Australian growers and meat processors already struggling with a Chinese import ban. This comes after the inspection and violation of Australian travellers, which the Australian government protested.



According to foreign media reports, after finding a newborn baby at Hamad International Airport on October 2, Qatari authorities at the airport forcibly subjected a group of female passengers on 10 flights at to an invasive search and examination in an ambulance to identify the infant's mother.

In the statement published on its website, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Women in Australia Maris Payne made a phone call on October 30 to discuss the incident at Hamad International Airport.

In the statement, Foreign Minister Al Thani made it clear that "the incident is a violation of the laws and values of the State of Qatar and that the relevant officials have been referred to the Public Prosecution."

He also "expressed his deep sympathy to the female passengers affected by the inspection at the airport and renewed the State of Qatar's apology to them."

Qatar acknowledged the existence of "irregularities in the procedures followed" in the incident of inspecting female passengers at Hamad International Airport indicating that it referred the incident and those responsible for the abuse to the competent Public Prosecution.

Australia–Indonesia Relations

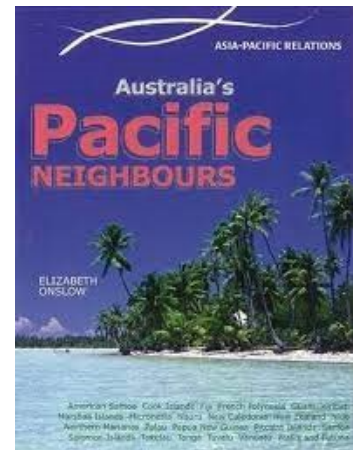


The Indonesian President visited Australia, holding official consultations with the Australian Prime Minister, where the two parties discussed prospects for joint cooperation and ways to enhance bilateral relations.

It should be noted that the Prime Minister of Indonesia had indicated during his visit Indonesia's support for the right of peoples to self-determination, especially the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state on their land with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Australia and the Pacific

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne delivered a statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council, representing the orientation of Australia and 15 Pacific countries, namely the Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.



According to the statement, which was published on the official website of the "Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs", these Pacific countries are committed to respecting human rights within their countries and at the global level. The statement added that a strong and effective multilateral system needs to include the diverse voices and the equal and full participation of all states, civil society and all components of the wider society.

It also stated that the Pacific region has increased its representation in the Human Rights Council from zero to three members over the past three years, "a testament to the commitment of these countries to respect and promote human rights." Climate change and its human rights implications are of particular concern to Pacific countries.



These countries are on the front lines of climate impacts, and they welcome real and lasting partnerships to support regional initiatives in the Pacific region, according to the statement.

Simon Birmingham, Australian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Investment and Minister of Finance, in a joint media release with Australian Foreign Minister Payne issued on December 13, 2020, marked the entry into force of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus).

Birmingham has indicated that “PACER Plus” has been a major step in strengthening Australia's relationship with its Pacific partners and will play an important role in supporting the region's recovery from COVID-19. He also stated, “This trade deal guarantees greater market access and lower tariffs across a range of products that will benefit communities, farmers, fishermen, companies and investors in our region.”

The entry into force of the agreement provides important opportunities at a time when the region has been focusing on the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, said Foreign Minister Payne.

“We will continue to work closely with the Pacific family to revive the agreement. The next phase of “PACER Plus” represents another opportunity to present our shared vision of the blue ocean,” she added.

Australia will also support our Pacific partners to implement the trade agreement, increasing opportunities for their domestic businesses to access export markets.

Funding under the “PACER Plus” agreement will allow more countries to access an innovative program focused on improving market access in Australia for specific agricultural products. By helping Pacific countries meet biosecurity and quality requirements, these countries will be able to maintain export mar-

kets for agricultural products and its development, an important opportunity to support livelihoods through trade.

It should be noted that Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and New Zealand are parties to the agreement. The countries that have not yet signed are Nauru, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

New Zealand Political Context

New Zealand Domestic Affairs

COVID-19 Pandemic



Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

The New Zealand model in tackling the Coronavirus crisis was considered the best in the world. The most important components of the New Zealand model to combat the Coronavirus pandemic were nationwide closure; comprehensive tests; use of technological applications to track and trace infections and close contacts; effective communication with citizens; and effective economic and financial procedures.



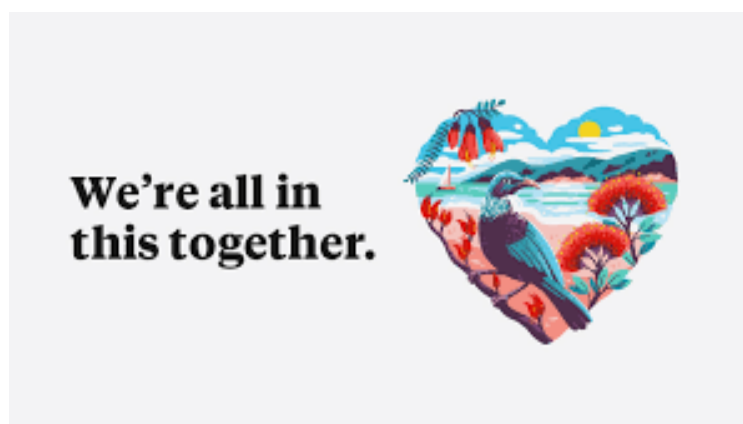
New Zealand started the process of comprehensive closure in March, when schools were closed, businesses stopped, people were forced to work from home while restricting travel and banning any kind of mass gatherings, and

closing the borders completely. New Zealand also declared a state of emergency and gave leaders and officials new powers for the purpose of strict protection.

The New Zealand government has also invested more than half a billion dollars in health services to fight the spread of the pandemic. In a poll surveying satisfaction with government responses to the pandemic, New Zealand ranked higher than the world average.

The success of the New Zealand model in fighting the pandemic is due to the wise, prudent and transparent leadership of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who has called for unity and belonging and urged people to "collaborate and unite to combat the epidemic" using the expression "our five million team."

Prime Minister Ardern often appeared Live on Facebook, saying that she wanted to "reassure that everyone is well", and appeared positive and in casual clothes, while sharing excerpts from her personal life. Professor Michael Piller of the University of Otago described Jacinda Ardern, as "a compassionate leader with communication skills with others, and because of this leadership style there was a high level of compliance with her decisions" and added, "For the response to this crisis to be successful, science and leadership must be a parallel process".



New Zealand National Elections



Labour Leader Ardern and Liberal Leader Collins

In the wake of her landslide election victory, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern pledged to carry out the reforms she pledged during her first term.

The Labor Party led by Ardern won 49.1 percent of the vote during the last elections, which qualifies it for an absolute majority in Parliament.

The popular Prime Minister emphasized that her landslide victory, the most important for the Labor Party since 1946, means that more voters support her party and her reform program.

In this context, Nanaia Mahuta became New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs after Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced the names of the ministers in her new government and appointed Mahuta as the first woman (and first Maori woman) to hold the position of Foreign Minister in New Zealand.



NZ Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta

In 2016, after participating in a Maori tattoo design ceremony, Mahuta became the first member of parliament to have a tattoo known as "Moko Kwai" on her face. Moko tattoos are increasingly common in contemporary New Zealand society. Tattoos often carry cultural significance for people as they tell a visual story that connects the indigenous people to their ancestors. Each person's tattoo is unique from others and may be related to their social status, job, or even personal or family history.

The intricate designs indicate lineage, with marks on the left and right sides of the face indicating paternal and maternal lineage, respectively. In the case of Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta, her tattoos are linked to the tattoos of the late Maori Queen Te Atairangikaahu, and also the current Maori King Te Arikinui Tuheitia Pahi.

The new cabinet reshuffle announced by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern includes experienced ministers to fill the main portfolios responsible for economic recovery and facing COVID-19. "The next three years will be very difficult for New Zealand as the global outlook deteriorates, we will not be immune to the continuing impact of Covid-19 around the world," Ardern said at a

press conference.

Ardern added that the two main priorities of the new Labor government are to advance the economic recovery from Covid-19, and to continue the health response, in order to preserve New Zealanders' safety from the virus.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern estimated the government's ambitious goals would add NZ \$ 44 billion (about \$ 30.36 billion) in exports to the food and fiber sectors over the next 10 years and create 10 percent more jobs in the country's primary sector, by 2030.

Ardern also noted the importance of New Zealand's signature on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. "The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will increase opportunities for our exporters, reduce red tape and advance a single set of trade bases across the Asia-Pacific region, and this will lead to an increase of nearly \$2 billion in New Zealand's GDP overall," Ardern said.

Recession in New Zealand

New Zealand recorded the largest decline in GDP in 29 years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the government's official statistics authority. The authority stated that the gross domestic product decreased by 1.6% in the first three months of the year. Chief director of Statistics New Zealand, Paul Pascoe, said the results showed a significant decline in economic activity, with continued travel restrictions and the country's move toward lockdown. He added that this is the largest quarterly decline since the decline that occurred in March 1991, which was down by 2.4%. The shutdown saw a halt of all non-essential business activities on March 24th, leaving many components of the economy unable to function normally.



Justice for Victims of the Christchurch Massacre

2020 saw the deliverance of justice for survivors and loved ones of those victimised in the Christchurch Massacre of March 15th 2019. In August 2020, Brenton Tarrant, the terrorist who killed 51 people and wounded dozens more at the Al-Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Months later, the Royal Commission to Investigate the Christchurch Massacre in New Zealand issued a final report.

The report indicated that the country's intelligence agencies had failed to predict the extremist threats in the country before the attack. It showed that the government was not aware of the dangers posed by the far-right in the country. It criticized the security agencies' efforts to pursue the threat posed by Islamic extremists, which was disproportionate to the danger posed by this threat. The report also found some problems in granting police licenses to carry weapons but determined that there was no way for the authorities to know that an attack was about to take place.

Leaders of the Muslim community in Christchurch expressed their acceptance of the report's recommendations, stressing that its findings are worrying. "We have known for a long time that the Muslim community has been targeted with

hate speech and hate crimes, and this report indicates that we were right," said Abidjani Ali, a spokesman for the Islamic Society of Canterbury.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern pledged that her government would implement all recommendations in the report by March and issued an apology for the exaggerated surveillance the Muslim community was subjected to prior to the attack. "For many years, the Muslim community has expressed concern about this unequal monitoring. The report confirms that there has been an inadequate distribution of resources," she said.



Picture of the Christchurch massacre victims

Maori Call for Apology

In 1863, New Zealand, which was a British colony at the time, passed legislation allowing the confiscation of Maori lands on the grounds that their tribes participated in a revolt against the Queen. Māori representatives, representatives of the indigenous New Zealand population, demanded an official apology from the state for the acts committed against them in the past.



"I stand here as a descendant of a people who survived the genocide," Debbie Ngarywa Packer, co-leader of the Maori Party, told the New Zealand parliament. She added, "[This was done] under the auspices of this Council and the members of Parliament whose pictures are still hanging on the walls ... they sought to exterminate us and put in place legislation to achieve this."

Packer also noted that many Maori are either unemployed, struggling to survive, or having to work two or three low-paying jobs. She continued, "In this council, we have the ability not to repeat the mistakes of the past that caused a lot of suffering to our people ... and to transform Aotearoa (New Zealand) for the better."

Muslim Veil Added to NZ Police Uniform

New Zealand police have introduced the veil (Hijab) into their uniforms to encourage more Muslim women to join their ranks, and according to New Zealand reports, Zina Ali, a 30-year-old new recruit, will become the first police-woman to wear a formal veil.

The New Zealand police confirmed that it aims to create a comprehensive service that reflects the diverse society in the country, such as the Metropolitan Police in London and the Police of Scotland, which give policewomen the option to wear a uniform headscarf. In the United Kingdom, the Metropolitan Po-

lice in London agreed to wear the headscarf in 2006 and the Scottish Police in 2016, and in Australia, Maha Sugar from the Victoria Police wore the headscarf in 2004.

In this context, New Zealand Police indicated that work to add the veil to their uniforms began in late 2018 in response to a request from police officers who visited high schools. "Diversity is essential in order for us to effectively meet the needs of New Zealand communities, now and in the future," the New Zealand Police statement added.



Zeina Ali

Zeina Ali was the first female police officer to apply to wear the hijab as part of her police uniform, and she was invited to participate in the process of designing and developing an official uniform that includes an easy-to-wear headscarf without hindering the performance of the duty of policewomen while working.

Zeina Ali, who was born in Fiji and moved to New Zealand when she was a child, told the New Zealand Herald that she decided to join the police after the Christchurch terrorist attack, and assured the newspaper that she realized that there was a need for more Muslim women in the police. "It feels great to be able to go out and show the New Zealand police headscarf as part of the uniform. I think seeing that, more Muslim women will want to join, too," she added.

LGBTQIA+ Representation in NZ Parliament



New Zealand has nine LGBT identifying MPs out of 120 New Zealand seats. This makes up 10 percent of New Zealand elected members. The proportion of LGBT members in the previous parliament was only 7 percent, but now the New Zealand Parliament has the highest representation in the world. These members belong to the ruling Labor Party and the Green Party, while the opposition National Party does not have any LGBT members. New Zealand's parliament has a history of great progress in terms of LGBT rights, having legalized marriage equality in 2013 by a great majority.

NZ and the Middle East

New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nanaia Mahuta, reaffirmed via her Twitter account that “New Zealand’s long-standing position on Western Sahara is unchanged and we remain strongly supportive of the United Nations peace process.”

New Zealand Former Foreign Minister Winston Peters announced the closure of the New Zealand Embassy in Baghdad at the end of June.

The official New Zealand government website quoted Peters as saying that "the final closure of the embassy was not taken lightly and does not in any way indicate any change in the value that New Zealand attaches to its relationship with Iraq."

He pointed out that, "The embassy was opened in 2015 to support the military deployment of the New Zealand Defense Forces in Iraq, and with the withdrawal of the majority of the forces from Camp Taji earlier this year, it is no longer necessary to continue the work of the embassy in Baghdad and New Zealand will exercise its relationship with Baghdad through its embassy in Abu Dhabi".

New Zealand–Palestinian Relations



There has been no new change in the nature of the bilateral relations between Palestine and New Zealand, nor on the New Zealand position in support of the rights of the Palestinian people. This was clearly reflected in the New Zealand affirmative vote on all resolutions relating to Palestine at the United Nations.

It should be noted that President Mahmoud Abbas had sent a congratulations letter to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, on her landslide victory in the parliamentary elections.

His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr. Riad Al-Malki also congratulated his New Zealand counterpart on her new position as Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand.

On the other hand, the New Zealand government welcomed the normalization agreement between Morocco and Israel.

New Zealand Former Foreign Minister Winston Peters also welcomed the Emirati–Israeli agreement. He shared a tweet saying, “We welcome the agreement of the UAE and Israel to normalize relations, and Israel suspends annexation plans. Any initiative that promotes peace and security in the Middle East region is a positive step.”



Tweet from NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Despite the affiliation of Foreign Minister Mahuta’s predecessor, Winston Peters, with the “New Zealand First” Party, known for its support of Israel and influence by the Zionist lobby in New Zealand, the official position on Palestinian rights remains unchanged.

New Zealand has also continued its support of Palestinian refugees by supporting UNRWA and providing technical assistance to Palestine in the field of alternative energy.

This position was demonstrated during the recent visit of the Palestinian Ambassador to New Zealand, where the staff of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated their position in support of the two–state solution, and considering East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.



Palestinian Ambassador with New Zealand Director of Protocol in Wellington

Although the New Zealand government has not issued an official statement regarding the so-called Trump plan, their position remains in support of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

New Zealand Position on Israeli Settlements

New Zealand has joined a growing list of countries that have expressed "grave concern" about Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank. The statement issued by New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Winston Peters, regarding New Zealand's position on Israeli plans to annex settlements, the Jordan Valley and the North of the Dead Sea, to Israel, included the position of the New Zealand government, which considered that the annexation would seriously undermine the two-state solution and violate international law and pose great risks to regional security.



J-LINK Aotearoa has called on all democratic countries to follow Aotearoa–New Zealand's footsteps against Israel's illegal plan. The Solidarity Network with Palestine, Aotearoa also welcomed the statement of Foreign Minister Winston Peters, in which he expressed his deep concern over the Israeli plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank.

However, the Jewish lobby in New Zealand attacked the recent Foreign Minister's statement regarding opposition to the annexation plans, as well as New Zealand's recent positive vote on UN resolutions, including the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and opposition to Israeli annexation plans.

Palestinian Community and Solidarity Movements in New Zealand

The Palestinian community in New Zealand, in cooperation with the Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa, observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which falls on November 29 each year.

A large number Palestinian community members and New Zealanders in solidarity flocked to the Garden Western Springs Hall in Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand.

Mr Iyad Taqia, one of the activists in the Palestinian community, inaugurated this event by welcoming the attendees and presented an overview of the Day of Solidarity and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, urging the attendees to be active in order to lift the injustice of the Palestinian people.

A variety of speakers from all different backgrounds gave their impassioned support of Palestinian liberation. Among these was New Zealand indigenous singer and activist, Moana Maniapoto, who spoke at the ceremony, calling for continuous work to support the Palestinian cause.

Former Member of New Zealand Parliament, Clare Curran, also spoke about the situation in the Middle East, calling on the New Zealand government to support the Palestinian people in order to obtain their rights to freedom and establish their independent state.

Further, a young Palestinian girl, Rahaf Joudeh, spoke about the suffering of Palestinian children and the injustices they are facing, and called on the international community to work to help Palestinian children lead a normal life like all children of the world. Joudeh also addressed the United Nations, asking whether a day of solidarity with Palestine would suffice, in response to the negative and demanding the international community and all civil society institutions to assume its responsibilities towards the children of Palestine.

The Jewish Lobby in New Zealand



The Zionist lobby attacked New Zealand's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade for its continued support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

This lobby, in a statement, indicated the need for the New Zealand Human Rights Commission to investigate New Zealand funding for schools that use textbooks that promote hatred and incite violence.

"The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade ignored the issue for a long time (and provided \$7 million over the past five years to the organization in charge of the schools) and initially tried to justify the funding on the grounds that the Palestinian Authority was producing textbooks."

The statement added that the Zionist lobby informed the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade who said that they are awaiting the results of a report funded by the European Union before doing anything else about financing schools. This is despite years of evidence from the Institute for the Monitoring of Peace and Cultural Tolerance in school education, monitoring the United Nations, and others.

The Israeli Institute in New Zealand also published an article entitled, "New Zealand joins the bullies against Israel again at the UN," which claims that New Zealand has participated in the disproportionate attack on Israel continued at the United Nations.

The United Nations General Assembly issued 17 resolutions in which it condemned the Jewish state, while only 8 states were mentioned in 7 other resolutions. Those countries were Iran, Syria, North Korea, Myanmar, the United States (due to their embargo on Cuba), and the Crimea. There were no decisions concerning China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam, Algeria, or any of the other 192 member states. In the past five years

there have been nearly 100 resolutions against Israel in the General Assembly, and New Zealand has not found it appropriate to vote against any of them.

Despite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade admitting that one of the resolutions “lacks balance in that it focuses exclusively on Israeli actions,” there appears to be no political will to vote against anti-Israeli resolutions at the United Nations.

This is in contrast to its traditional allies and Five-Eyes Partners. According to the UN Watch database, Australia voted against 37% of the decisions, the United Kingdom voted against 3%, the United States voted against 87% and Canada voted against 80% of the decisions against Israel.

New Zealand International Relations

New Zealand Relations With Australia

New Zealand, Australia’s close neighbour, was also affected by the bush fires that swept through Australia, as toxic smoke reached its atmosphere. In addition, New Zealand witnessed the eruption of a large volcano on White Island, which led to the death of 21 people including both tourists and New Zealanders.



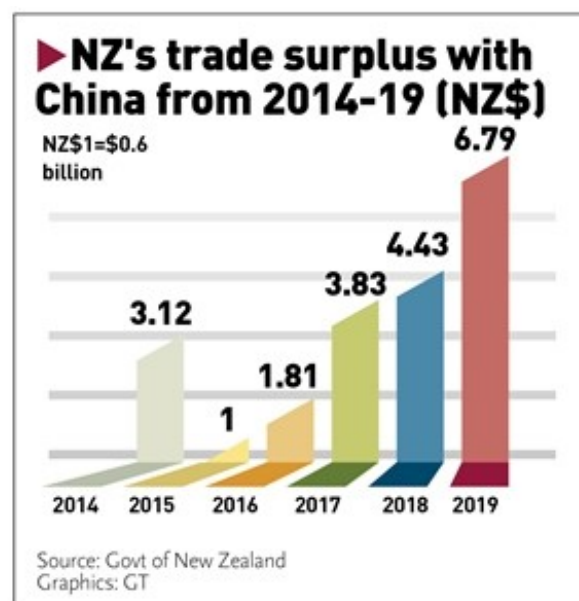
Meeting with Australian Prime Minister Morrison

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern also made a quick visit to Sydney, Australia, where she held meetings with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

There is tension currently between the two countries, largely due to Australia's deportation of New Zealand citizens residing in Australia, who have committed crimes in Australia, back to New Zealand.

New Zealand has rejected this concept and considers that the deportation of those who have lived most of their lives in Australia and who have little to no connections in New Zealand, would promote organized crime in New Zealand.

New Zealand Relations With China



Following the passage of a controversial national security law by the Chinese government which criminalised forms of political protest in Hong Kong, New Zealand suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

Foreign Minister Winston Peters said that China's new national security law undermined the principles of the rule of law and constituted a violation of China's obligations to the international community, arguing that New Zealand's

decision to suspend the treaty was justified because, “New Zealand can no longer trust the independence of Hong Kong’s judicial system from China.” He said that New Zealand would strengthen restrictions on the export of military equipment to Hong Kong and warned its citizen against travelling there.

New Zealand’s partners in the “Five Eyes” intelligence alliance, Canada, Britain, and Australia, have also suspended extradition agreements with Hong Kong, and the US has stated its intentions to do the same.

In response, China has accused New Zealand of violating international law. A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in New Zealand described New Zealand’s decision as a "serious violation of international law and the main standards regulating international relations." The statement added that any attempts to pressure China on the Hong Kong issue will not succeed.

Aside from this issue, New Zealand’s relationship with China has been largely positive.



Former Foreign Minister Winston Peters

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she was pleased to see strong export data for New Zealand's high-quality products to China despite some downturn caused by COVID-19. Trade relations exceeded 32 billion NZ dollars (20.8

billion US dollars) over the past year. New Zealand meat exports to China also witnessed an increase of 24 percent in May and 16.8 percent in April this year compared to last year.



New Zealand dairy exports to China increased by 25% in the first five months of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, according to Ardern.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on China and New Zealand to sign a protocol to modernize the free trade agreement, speed up consultations, agree on concrete plans for cooperation in the field of the Belt and Road Initiative, and promote new areas for cooperation in bilateral fields.

China-NZ relations

China NZ's largest trading partner



NZ exports to China worth **\$16.6b** last year



Volumes of major export products; dairy, wood, meat **increasing** year on year



About **448,000** Chinese visited NZ last year



More than **130,000** Kiwis visited China last year



NZ home to approximately **290,000** Chinese nationals

New Zealand Foreign Minister Mahuta noted that relations between the two countries have become increasingly stable and are mutually beneficial. She reiterated New Zealand's firm adherence to the one-China policy, the mutual respect between the two countries, and the support and assistance of each other in combating COVID-19.

Foreign Minister Mahuta added that New Zealand praises Chinese President Xi Jinping's proposal to achieve carbon neutrality and welcomes China's pioneering role in combating climate change. She also expressed New Zealand's readiness to actively participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, strengthen cooperation with China in areas such as vaccine research and development, implement trilateral cooperation in Pacific island states, and promote the establishment of a rules-based multilateral trading system.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi has called on China and New Zealand to sign a protocol to update the free trade agreement, speed up their consultations, agree on concrete plans for cooperation regarding the Belt and Road Initiative, and suggested new areas of cooperation in Bilateral fields.

Foreign Minister Wang expressed his appreciation for Mahuta's recent remarks, which made the task of building understanding with China a top priority shortly after taking office. He noted that over the years, China and New Zealand have shared appreciation, respect, understanding and trust in each other, adding that bilateral relations have maintained good momentum in terms of development and have become a model for mutually beneficial cooperation between different countries of social systems, development progress and economic scale.

He also emphasised China's readiness to work with the international community, including New Zealand, to promote democracy in international relations, guide reform and improve globalization in a more inclusive way. He noted China's support of New Zealand hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in 2021, indicating China's readiness to cooperate with New Zealand to promote the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement to enter into force as soon as possible.

Foreign Minister Wang also expressed China's happiness to see New Zealand play a more important role in international and regional affairs, stressing China's willingness to work with New Zealand to carry out mutually beneficial cooperation on climate change and Pacific Island countries' affairs.

New Zealand Relations With the USA

BIDEN-HARRIS TRANSITION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2020

Readout of President-elect Biden's Call with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

President-elect Joe Biden spoke this evening with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand. The president-elect thanked the prime minister for her congratulations, offered his own on her re-election, and expressed his intent to strengthen the U.S.-New Zealand partnership. He noted that he looks forward to working closely with her on common challenges, including containing COVID-19; tackling climate change; reinforcing multilateralism; strengthening democracy, and maintaining a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. The president-elect also praised the prime minister's extraordinary leadership after the 2019 Christchurch massacre, on COVID-19, and as a working mother and role model.

###

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern briefed US President-elect Joe Biden on her country's experience in combating the Coronavirus pandemic during a phone call made by Ardern to congratulate Biden on winning the presidential elections.

Ardern described the call, which lasted about 20 minutes, as "friendly", noting that Biden expressed his "admiration for how New Zealand handled the Coronavirus pandemic."

She added that Biden wanted to talk at length about ways to combat Coronavirus in her country, but she indicated that "the New Zealand model cannot be replicated everywhere."

New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific Region



Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) considered that free and fair-trade practices are essential for economic recovery during the Coronavirus pandemic. The members represent 21 countries in the Economic Cooperation Organization "APEC", and made it clear in a joint statement that any emergency trade measures designed to deal with the coronavirus must be targeted and not create unnecessary barriers to trade.

The APEC summit was held less than a week after the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Trade Agreement. The signatory countries include the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand,. They hope that the agreement will help their economies, exhausted by the COVID-19 epidemic, to recover.

Pacific Countries' Political Context

COVID-19 Pandemic in the Pacific



Pacific countries have not been affected by the pandemic in the same way as neighboring countries, especially Australia and New Zealand. Perhaps one of the most important reasons for this is the region's geography and the prohibiting of travel there from Australia and New Zealand early. However, these factors did not prevent the virus from reaching Pacific countries entirely. Australia and New Zealand have provided important assistance to these countries to reduce the spread of the virus.



Since the beginning of this year, Australia has worked with Pacific countries to help them respond to the pandemic. Australia has also adapted its relief and humanitarian programs to provide immediate relief for an efficient response to the health, economic and social challenges arising from the spread of COVID-19, including medical supplies and health services.

Australia and New Zealand jointly funded the response plan for COVID-19 in the Pacific region through the World Health Organization, where the two countries provided around one million dollars.



Tourism is the most important sector contributing to GDP's in the Pacific. Therefore, Australia and New Zealand, as well as China, have taken many measures to counter the negative economic consequences of COVID-19. Measures include the continued granting of visas to workers from the Pacific in both Australia and New Zealand and the provision of increased financial assistance and most importantly, the continued tourism of these countries taking into account the necessary health measures.

However, the comprehensive closures and embargo of cruise ships have had a heavy cost to the economies of the Pacific countries.

The Chinese Foreign Minister indicated that China will continue its strong support to Pacific countries in combating COVID-19. Pacific leaders have expressed appreciation for China's assistance by supporting the leading role of the World Health Organization in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May, medical supplies donated by China arrived in the Pacific countries through the Jack Ma Foundation and the Ali Baba Foundation, and reached the airport in Dili, the capital of East Timor. China also donated medical supplies to Fiji to help fight the pandemic. Furthermore, China provided 400,000 US dollars to support the Fiji government in fighting the pandemic.

The USA has provided nearly USD\$40 million to help the Pacific Islands prevent and control COVID-19. The US Secretary of State has announced the US' support for setting up laboratories, infection control and public health communications.

It should be noted that the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased tension in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, especially in light of the escalating tension between China and both Australia and the USA. These tensions escalated after Australia demanded the formation of an independent commission to research the origin of the pandemic, which China considered interference in its internal affairs. The dispute escalated further after accusations by US President Trump of China of being responsible for the pandemic and lack of transparency.

Economic Situation in the Pacific

After months of strict lockdowns imposed by COVID-19, the country of Fiji was opened. Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama announced that his country of 300 islands is seeking to attract visitors to help restore a paralyzed economy that relies heavily on tourism, according to the British Guardian newspaper.

The Fijian Prime Minister announced that his country welcomes visitors from private planes or yachts, tweeting: "So, you say you are a billionaire looking to fly with your private plane, lease your own island and invest millions of dollars in Fiji. If you follow all preventive measures and are able to bear all the costs associated with that maybe you have a new home to escape from the epidemic to heaven."

Bainimarama had hoped to create Bula Bubble, or Bula, a word that means good morning in Fijian, allowing travel between Australia, New Zealand and Fiji in a carefully controlled and safely isolated manner. He explained that wherever they go, it will be safe while staying away from Fijians and other tourists who may go to the archipelago.

But Bainimarama and other Pacific leaders were frustrated after Australia and New Zealand announced only to open a travel bubble between their two countries at first before considering extending it to Pacific islands.

40% of Fiji's GDP depends on international tourism, and although the country has so far managed to avoid the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of the international borders of many countries of the world impeded the growth of the economy and negatively affected the entry of tourists to the country.

The Asian Development Bank stated that the economies of Asia-Pacific countries will contract this year, for the first time in nearly six decades, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Manila-based bank reported that the region's gross domestic product would decline by 0.7 percent in 2020, the first negative economic growth since the early 1960s. Furthermore, about three-quarters of the region's 46 economies are expected to record negative growth in 2020.

The bank explained that economic growth is expected to rise to 6.8% in 2021, "partly due to the fact that growth will be measured in relation to 2020, which

is a marginalized economy, indicating that production next year will remain below pre-pandemic expectations." "The economic threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic remains strong," said the bank's chief economist, Yasuyuki Sawada.

Vanuatu Calls on the International Community for Debt Exemption

In a pre-recorded speech shown via video at the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Vanuatu Prime Minister Bob Loughman called on the international community to exempt his country from debt. He stressed the need for the international community to work together to overcome the unprecedented challenges posed by the Pandemic.



In his speech, the Prime Minister noted that Covid-19 has created increasing debts in countries that are least able to afford to service it and it is imperative that multilateral financial institutions provide debt forgiveness and debt relief. This should be accompanied by dedicated and affordable funding and grant packages. "These measures must ensure the ability of developing countries to

overcome the current crisis and finance the implementation of sustainable development priorities," said Bob Loughman.

Women's Rights in Fiji



A survey revealed that women in Fiji are denied access to an equal voice in national decision-making.

The survey, released by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, showed that women make up only 21 percent of the 192 members of the 38 councils in the republic. It also found that 42 per cent of regional councils have no women at all and 26 per cent in these councils have less than a third of women representation.

The movement's director, Nalini Singh, said the poll results do not reflect equal population diversity and gender equality in Fiji. "We also want to see our government's position regarding gender equality and consider providing more opportunities for women."

We also believe that the state should do what it pledges to, not just talk about gender equality and how to advance women's empowerment. We now have the opportunity to move forward. "

She also clarified that the survey did not "shed light on the gender gaps in the top management of the government or in the private sector, although these sectors deserve more research."

New Caledonia Remains French



More than 53.26% of the population of New Caledonia voted on 4 October in favour of remaining part of France and opposing full independence. This is the second referendum of its kind after the first one in 2018.

The far-right French political party, National Rally, led by Marine Le Pen has cast doubt on the ability of a country of 300,000 people to resist powerful neighbours who use all means to control New Caledonia's resources. Prior to the referendum, the leader of the extreme nationalist assembly in France, Marine Le Pen, warned that the victory of the pro-independence side would lead to a state of uncertainty, danger and tears.

The October referendum is the second of three possible public referendums under the 1998 Nouméa Accord, which provides for a phased and irreversible transfer of power from Paris to Nouméa. In the first referendum in 2018, just over 56% voted against independence.

The territory of New Caledonia witnessed years of violence in the eighties of the last century between the pro-independence forces, who are supported

mainly by the Kanak people, who are the original inhabitants of the New Caledonia region, and the pro-French forces, which are supported largely by descendants of European settlers.

The violence ended with the Peace Agreement of 1988, which provided for self-government in three regions, two of which are predominantly Kanak people. Later, an accord in 1998 expanded autonomy, recognizing historical grievances against the Kanak people, and set a deadline of 2018 for a vote on independence with two additional votes by 2022.

The Worsening Political Crisis in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste is suffering from a difficult political crisis as the government recently resigned due to the failure of the approval of the budget for two consecutive years.

It should also be noted that 2019 witnessed the holding of parliamentary elections twice as a result of the resignation of the government and also the intense disagreements between the political parties.

Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister in Danger of Losing Power

The Australian Financial Review reported that Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, James Marape, is in danger of losing power, following a mass defection of lawmakers from his ruling coalition to join the opposition.

Bloomberg News reported that the opposition is able to halt the work of Parliament in the capital, Port Moresby, although parliamentary rules mean that they cannot proceed with a no-confidence vote against Marape until December 1. The move came as a shock to Marape, but he vowed to confront it. The move poses a risk to a visit by Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison to Papua New Guinea. Resource-rich Papua New Guinea, with a population of about

nine million, is one of the largest and most influential countries in the South Pacific region.

Pacific–Palestinian Relations

There has been no significant change in the political position of the Pacific countries towards the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, especially the two countries that have full diplomatic relations with Palestine, Vanuatu and Timor–Leste.

The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi made an official visit to the Democratic Republic of Timor–Leste, where he met with the Foreign Minister and discussed with him the position of the Timorese Government on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, especially Trump’s plan.



Palestinian Ambassador and Timorese Foreign Minister

The Timorese Foreign Minister restored his country's steadfast stance towards Palestinian rights, especially the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, as a right stipulated in the country's constitution. They also discussed the importance of developing developmental and technical cooperation between the two countries within the South–South cooperation.

Civil society in Timor–Leste is very much in solidarity with the Palestinian people, as its representatives expressed to the Palestinian Ambassador, during his visit, their willingness to carry out intensive campaigns in favour of Palestinian rights. However, there is the growing influence of both the Zionist lobby and the evangelicals (Christian Zionists) on foreign policy, not only in Timor–Leste but in all Pacific countries.

The President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, congratulated the Governor General of Papua New Guinea, Sir Bob Dadae, on Papua New Guinea’s celebration of Independence Day. In his congratulatory message, His Excellency expressed his appreciation for Papua’s stances in support of the Palestinian people and their right to freedom and independence. Mr Abbas wished the President of Papua Guinea health, happiness and development of the friendship and appreciation between the two peoples and the two countries.

As part of Israel’s growing influence campaign in the Pacific, the Israeli President Reuven Rivlin paid an official visit to the Republic of Fiji, where he met the Prime Minister and some representatives of the Pacific countries and held with them a summit that focused on the growing relations with Israel.



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin on his official visit meeting with Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama

Although the Pacific countries avoided issuing any statement related to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, the Israeli President urged states to vote against Palestinian decisions at the United Nations, indicating that the United Nations has become an anti–Semitic organization. Mr Reuven Rivlin also urged these countries, during the summit, to recognize unified Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, but the closing statement of the summit was devoid of any mention of this issue. Even Fiji, which has close ties to Israel and which usually abstains in the UNGA, has voted alongside three resolutions in favor of Palestine at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Pacific and China

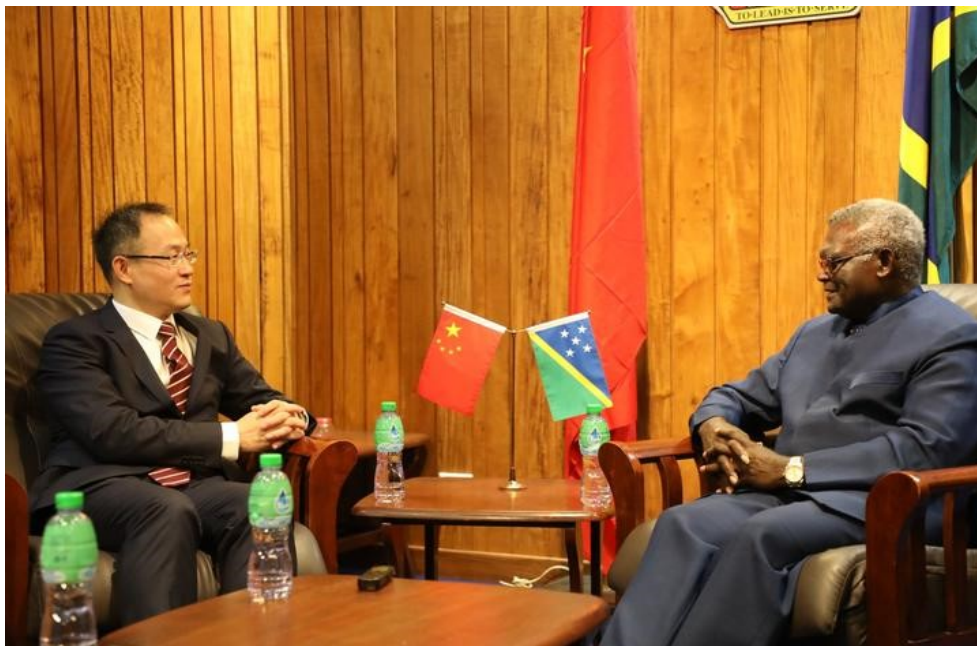


CHINESE EMBASSY IN KIRIBATI
中国驻基里巴斯大使馆

Though the China–US polarization still has a major impact on the foreign policy of the Pacific countries, China–Pacific relations are progressing significantly. China recently opened an embassy in the Solomon Islands, after the two agreed to establish official diplomatic relations, stressing the importance of strengthening trade exchanges and development cooperation between the two countries in all fields. Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the Solomon Islands President Manasseh Sogavare on October 9 2019 in Beijing and reached an important consensus with him on strengthening relations between the two countries.

Kiribati, a remote island in the Pacific Ocean and home to 110,000 people, also saw the opening of the Chinese Embassy, which is the third in the country after Australia and New Zealand.

It should be noted that Kiribati had replaced its official recognition of Taiwan with its recognition of China, after President Taneti Maamau won a second presidential term on June 24, 2020.



Solomon Island Prime Minister receives the Chinese ambassador

This progress comes at the expense of the United States and Australian interests in the Pacific. Pacific countries continue to adopt a pragmatic approach, attempting to establish balanced relations with all countries within the concept of "zero enemies". The aforementioned island nations align themselves with the United States and its ally Australia, however, in recent years Beijing has begun to create diplomatic and economic relations with these islands, which has led to geopolitical tensions in this region.

Beijing has tried to extend its influence in these islands, and has pledged to give money and medical aid to countries such as Samoa and Fiji to help fight

COVID-19. Australian politician and Liberal party member, Dave Sharma, said that the Pacific countries still see Australia as their first partner, but that the strategic competition in the Pacific is alive and strong as China and other countries seek to play a greater role there.

Australia is the largest donor to the Pacific countries, allocating approximately \$6.25 billion between 2011 and 2017, followed by China, which granted approximately \$1.21 billion, out of the \$5.7 billion they had pledged.

The Pacific and the USA



In a joint statement US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Australian Foreign Minister Maryse Payne expressed their "common concerns about China's deceptive activity in the Pacific and Indian oceans." This took place at the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue discussions in Tokyo. 'The Quad' refers to a largely symbolic alliance between the US, Australia, India and Japan. In a joint statement, the Quad wrote they are committed to "promoting a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond."



Former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

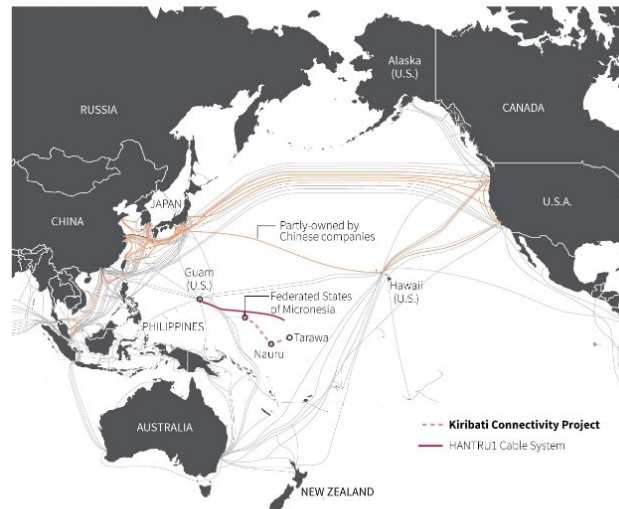
Submarine cables, which have a greater capacity to transmit data than satellites, have emerged as a sensitive area of diplomacy in the Pacific Ocean, given their central role in international communications. The United States of America has warned Pacific island countries of the security threats posed by the low-cost offer of the Chinese company Huawei Marine to build an internet connectivity submarine cable.

The construction of this cable comes within the framework of the international development project in the region supported by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to improve communications in Nauru, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Washington sent a diplomatic note to Micronesia in July expressing its strategic concerns about the project because Huawei Marine and other Chinese companies are required to cooperate with Beijing's intelligence and security services. The memo came after an earlier warning by Micronesia and development agencies in Nauru, an ally of Taiwan, about Huawei Marine's participation in the project.

Undersea cables in the Pacific

China's Huawei Marine is bidding for the World Bank-backed East Micronesia cable project, raising concerns in the US.



Sources: TeleGeography; World Bank
Staff, 16/12/2020

REUTERS

The FSM government said in a statement that it is in talks with project partners, some of whom spoke of the need to ensure that the cable does not harm regional security by opening or failing to bridge cyber security gaps. Under the Free Association Agreement, a decades-old agreement between the United States and its former Pacific territories, Washington is responsible for the defense of the Federated States of Micronesia. A Nauru government spokeswoman said that the offers are under examination and that stakeholders are addressing technical and administrative issues to ensure the progress of the project, without going into details. The third country involved in the project, the Republic of Kiribati, is viewing Huawei Marine's offer favorably after cutting diplomatic ties with Taiwan last year in favor of China.

Asia Pacific Forum



The 27th meeting of economic leaders of the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) was held in November 2020. The meeting brought together 21 Pacific Rim countries which account for 60 percent of global GDP, including the United States and China, the two largest economic powers in the world.

Participants stressed the importance of strengthening solidarity and deepening cooperation to face the challenges resulting from COVID–19, especially in terms of securing vaccines. Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that the Asia–Pacific region should view post–2020 as a new starting point and launch a new phase of joint cooperation.

The members added, "We recognize the importance of a free, open, fair and transparent environment for trade and investment that is non–discriminatory and predictable to lead economic recovery at such a difficult time."

The APEC summit was held shortly after the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Trade Agreement. This is the world's largest free trade agreement including China and 14 countries in Asia and the Pacific. The agreement, which does not include India and the United States, is a victory for China, and is a sign of China's growing influence in global trade.

The New York Times wrote that the new agreement shows that the rest of the world will not wait for the United States and that as other countries sign new agreements, American exporters may gradually lose their power.

Putin's Message on the Pacific

Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed the need to cooperate and work collectively between countries to maintain security in the Asia–Pacific region, according to Russian News Agency. "It is important to respect the principles of

international law and the interests of the other party," he added, noting that Russia, on its part, is open to dialogue on strategic stability with every country, stressing that the US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty has increased security risks at the global level.

He continued, "In an effort to establish stability and prevent a new arms race, Russia has unilaterally announced the cessation of the deployment of medium and short-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific regions and other regions of the world as long as our American partners refuse to do so."



The Pacific and the Arab World

The Saudi Council of Ministers, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, announced the approval of establishing diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Tonga at the level of non-resident ambassador. Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Tonga at the headquarters of the Kingdom's mission in New York City, USA.

On October 21, 2020, the UAE, represented by the General Civil Aviation Authority, signed an air transport services agreement in its initials with the Civil Aviation Authority in the Kingdom of Tonga, at the authority's headquarters in Dubai. This agreement aims to implement an open skies policy. It is the new-

est addition to the air transport services agreements that the UAE has signed, bringing the total of the signed agreements to 185, more than any other state.

The agreement also aims to expand trade and tourism links and support national carriers, which have recently increased to six. This is indicative of the size of the UAE's civil aviation sector in the country.

International Advocacy on Climate Change



International lawyers seek to develop a legal definition of "environmental genocide". The aim of this project is to try to propose a legal definition of "environmental genocide" that complements other existing international crimes such as crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. This project aims to criminalize the destruction of the world's ecosystems and attract support from European and island nations that are at risk of rising sea levels.

The project, called by the Stop Ecocide Foundation at the request of Swedish parliamentarians, coincides with the 75th anniversary of the start of the Nuremberg war crimes trials of Nazi leaders in 1945.

French President Emmanuel Macron also supported the idea and the Belgian government pledged to support it. UK Shadow Secretary of Justice, David

Lamy, the opposition Labor party also called for environmental genocide to be incorporated into law.

The International Criminal Court, based in The Hague, previously promised to give priority to crimes that lead to "destruction of the environment", "exploitation of natural resources" and "illegal expropriation of land." However, one of the challenges facing the drafting committee was to determine the point at which environmental genocide could be considered a crime and put into practice. For example, cutting down one tree over a green village would not be enough: "This must include mass, systematic or widespread destruction."

GDOP Activities: 1 January to 31 December 2020

Activities Related to Bi-lateral Relations

1. At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Australia, Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi and his wife participated in a flag raising ceremony followed by an Australia citizenship ceremony on 26 January. The ceremony included raising the Australian flag and granting Australian citizenship to a number of immigrants to Australia.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison during the ceremony

The ceremony also featured a distinguished military parade and speeches by both the Governor General of Australia and the Australian Prime Minister.

The Palestinian Ambassador seized this opportunity to speak with the Governor-General, Mr. David Hurley, who recently returned from his visit to Palestine and Israel, where he met President Mahmoud Abbas for a formal lunch.



The Palestinian ambassador and his wife with Governor General of Australia David Hurley

2. The Palestinian Ambassador held many media interviews during this period centered around the Trump Peace Plan, where the Palestinian Ambassador explained the reasons for the rejection of this plan based on its negative and destructive impact on a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

3. The Palestinian Ambassador also held a meeting with the co-chair of the Palestinian Parliamentary Friendship Committee, Mrs. Maria Vamvakinou, on 13 February. The two parties discussed Trump's plan and the necessity to organize concrete activities in parliament to explain this plan and its devastating effects on the two-state solution and the Middle East peace process.

4. On 22 February, the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra participated in the National Multicultural Festival, which occurs annually in Canberra. Every year, more than 300,000 people come from all over Australia to visit the Festival.

The Palestinian stall included many components this year, the most important of which was a photo exhibition centered on the political and civil rights of Palestinian refugees, especially the important services provided by UNRWA in this regard. The stall also featured exhibits of Palestinian embroidery, handicrafts and Palestinian folk cuisine.



Part of the Palestinian pavilion at the Canberra Multicultural Festival

In addition, the Palestinian Embassy organized a special show that demonstrated a traditional Palestinian Henna night (Bridal shower), in which a group of girls and women from the Palestinian community performed expressive dances of Palestinian folklore and explained the story of the Palestinian bride Henna night.

The special performance impressed the audience, who long applauded the girls and women and expressed great admiration for the Palestinian culture and heritage.



Part of the Palestinian pavilion at the Canberra Multicultural Festival





Traditional Palestinian Henna night (Bridal Shower)



Part of the Palestinian pavilion at the Canberra Multicultural Festival



5. The Palestinian Ambassador, during the period 20–26 February 2020, made an official visit to the Democratic Republic of Timor–Leste, where he held important meetings with officials in this country.

In this context, the Ambassador attended two important receptions organized by the President of Timor–Leste and the Foreign Minister in honour of the International Diplomatic Corp accredited to Timor–Leste.



Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of East Timor during the ambassador's visit to East Timor

The Palestinian Ambassador met at length with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Dionísio Babo Soares, where the two parties agreed to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries, especially in the fields of agriculture, education, religious tourism and political issues.

The Palestinian Ambassador also discussed with the Minister of Foreign Affairs many political issues, especially the negative consequences of the Trump's Peace Plan and its devastating impact on the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, which runs along 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Timorese Foreign Minister reaffirmed his country's position in support of Palestinian rights, especially its right to establish a state on its own soil.



Palestinian Ambassador and President of the Republic of East Timor

The Palestinian Ambassador also met with the President of the Timorese Parliament, Julio Tomas Pinto. They discussed the current political situation and Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights. In addition, the Palestinian Ambassador mentioned the obstacles that Israel poses to the organization of Palestinian presidential and parliamentary elections in East Jerusalem.



Palestinian Ambassador and Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of East Timor

Also, the two parties discussed the possibility of establishing a committee for a Palestinian–Timorese parliamentary friendship group, soon.

The Palestinian Ambassador also met with a number of civil society representatives in Timor-Leste and agreed with them on a plan to advocate and defend the rights of the Palestinian people through the implementation of many important activities.



The Palestinian ambassador during the celebration of the National Day of the Republic of East Timor



The Palestinian ambassador during his meeting with the director of the NGO Network in East Timor

6. The Palestinian Ambassador paid an official visit to New Zealand between 11–16 March, during which he met with several New Zealand officials.

The Palestinian Ambassador met with the Director of the Middle East and Africa Department, Mr. Stuart Horn, at the headquarters of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the two parties discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries, especially increasing New Zealand support and technical assistance to Palestine.



The Palestinian ambassador meets with the Director of the Middle East Department at the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Palestinian Ambassador also thanked the New Zealand Government for its principled position in support of the rights of the Palestinian people, especially the right to establish their independent state on their land within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestinian Ambassador also gave an important lecture at the headquarters of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was attended by representatives of the various departments in the ministry. The subject revolved around the Trump's Peace Plan and the strategy of the Palestinian leadership to counter this plan.

Further, the Palestinian Ambassador met the Co-Chair of the New Zealand–Middle East Parliamentary Friendship Committee, Dr. Duncan Webb, with whom he reviewed the current political situation in Palestine, the topic of Palestinian national unity, presidential and parliamentary elections and other related topics. The Palestinian Ambassador, also, discussed with Dr Duncan Webb the possibility of establishing a New Zealand–Palestinian parliamentary friendship committee in the New Zealand Parliament.



The Palestinian ambassador during his meeting with member of New Zealand parliament, Dr. Duncan Webb

In addition, the Palestinian Ambassador met with representatives of civil society and advocacy groups in New Zealand, where they discussed mechanisms and ways to conduct advocacy programs in support for Palestinian national rights.

The two parties also agreed on a mechanism for organized coordination between the New Zealand–Palestinian Network for Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra.



The Palestinian ambassador during his meeting with representative of the Palestinian–New Zealand Network of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

In another related issue, the annual memorial service for the victims of the two mosques targeted during the terrorist attack in Christchurch in March 2019 which killed 51 people, in which the Palestinian Ambassador was intending to participate, was unfortunately cancelled.

7. The Palestinian Ambassador met the chairperson of the Australian–Palestinian Parliamentary Friendship Committee Maria Vamvakinou at a working dinner on 13 July in the presence of Senator Kim Carr, one of the most important leaders of the opposition Labor Party.

The meeting discussed the Israeli annexation plans and the effects on the two–state solution and the Middle East Peace Process. In addition, the two sides discussed Australia’s position on the annexation process.

8. The Palestinian Ambassador met on 11 July with the leader of the opposition, the Labor Party, in New South Wales, Ms Jodi McKay, and a number of opposition Labor Party representatives at a working dinner at the home of Mr. Kasim Shalabi, an advocate in the Palestinian community.



Meeting of the Palestinian ambassador with the leader of the Labor opposition and other members of the NSW Parliament in Sydney

The meeting was attended by the former Secretary of State, Senator Bob Carr, who delivered a speech condemning the Israeli annexation plans for significant parts of the West Bank. The Palestinian Ambassador also explained to the attendees the dangers of the Israeli annexation on the future of the two-state solution, stability and security in the Middle East region.

All expressed their opposition to the annexation plan and urged that the Palestinian Ambassador communicate with them continuously to put them in the latest developments in this regard.



Former Foreign Minister Senator Bob Carr

9. Ambassador Abdulhadi continued to hold meetings with parliamentarians throughout August. The meetings discussed the continued threat of the Israeli annexation plan of significant parts of the West Bank. The two parties agreed to follow up on this regard and hold future meetings to follow any future developments.

10. On 26 August, Ambassador Abdulhadi and GDOP staff held a meeting with the Director of the Levant section at DFAT, Ms Kate Luxford, Assistant Director of the Levant Section, Mr Andrew Dollimore and Ms Pilar Cassio at the premises of DFAT to discuss Australian aid to Palestine.

The GDOP and DFAT had a fruitful discussion about current and future Australian aid assistance to Palestine. Main points of discussion were AMENCA 3 program, scholarships to Palestinian students, Australian Aid Investment Plan and Australian support to UNRWA. The two parties agreed to meet again to further discuss these matters.



After completing the meeting with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra

11. On 15 October, Australian representative in Ramallah, Mr. Mark Bailey and Ambassador Abdulhadi discussed bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine and Australian aid to Palestine.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and Mr. Mark Bailey

12. On December 4, at the invitation by the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in an important seminar on bilateral and multilateral relations between Australia and the countries of Asia and the Pacific, marking the end of the year 2020. Members of the international and Arab diplomatic corps, representatives of civil society and a number of official figures participated in this event.

During this occasion, the Foreign Minister of Australia, Senator Marise Payne, delivered an important speech in which she shed light on the development of Australian relations with the countries of Asia and the Pacific.



Senator Marise Payne delivering her speech

13. In light of the funding cuts to UNRWA by The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the GDOP issued a press release and sent letters to Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, in addition to other Ministers and Senators, highlighting the significant impact that these funding cuts will have on the humanitarian assistance received by Palestinian refugees.



Arab and International Diplomatic Corps

1. On June 17, 2020, Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi met with a number of Arab ambassadors, representing the Council of Arab Ambassadors, Dr. Angela Macdonald, First Assistant Secretary of the Middle East and North Africa at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), to discuss Israeli annexation plan and its impact on peace opportunities between Israelis and Palestinians, security and stability in the Middle East region and to hand over a letter to the Australian Foreign Minister in this regard.



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra, Australia

All ambassadors participating in the meeting expressed the same position rejecting these unilateral plans and pointed out the importance of respecting international law and UN resolutions related to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, especially the Arab peace initiative. The Arab ambassadors also expressed their absolute rejection of these plans and reaffirmed the importance of supporting the two–state solution in accordance with international law and UN resolutions.

The Palestinian Ambassador also spoke during this meeting, explaining the Palestinian position in rejecting these plan, calling on the Australian government to take a clear position in this regard and on the basis of references to international law and United Nations’ resolutions.

Dr Angela MacDonald reiterated the position of the Australian government, stressing support for a two–state solution, including the establishment of a future Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem.

2. As part of explaining the position of the Palestinian leadership and people on Trump's Peace Plan, the Ambassador of the Lebanese Republic, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iran, and many other delegates visited the Palestinian Embassy to know more about Trump’s Plan.

3. The Council of Arab Ambassadors held an emergency meeting to discuss the different aspects of Trump’s plan on 12 February at the residence of His Excellency the Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, where the Palestinian Ambassador discussed the components of the

plan and its devastating effects on the rights of the Palestinian people as well as the security and peace of the Middle East region.



Arab Ambassadors at the emergency meeting to discuss Trump Plan

The Arab Ambassadors expressed their absolute rejection of this plan based on the Arab League statement, issued by Arab Foreign Ministries' meeting held in Cairo, which rejected this plan and reaffirmed the importance of the two-state solution and the establishment of a Palestinian sovereign independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In the same context, the Arab Ambassadors met with the Assistant Secretary of the Middle East and Africa Department at the Australian Foreign Ministry on 13 February to convey the decisions of the Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting regarding the Trump's Peace Plan.



Arab Ambassadors at Australian Foreign Ministry to discuss Trump Plan

The Palestinian Ambassador spoke during this meeting, clarifying the Palestinian position and calling on the Australian Government for a clear position on this plan based on international law and UN resolutions.

The Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, the Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Ali Kraishan, also focused on the Arab Governments' rejection of this plan.

All the ambassadors present expressed the same position and pointed out the importance of respecting international and regional references for the peace process, especially the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Assistant Secretary of the Middle East and Africa Department referred to the position of the Australian Government, saying that it is still in a stage of consultation and its position remains the same: in support for the two-state solution, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with a capital in East Jerusalem.

4. On 19 February, at the invitation of the Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Ali Kraishan, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a business dinner organized in honour of Bishop Yasser Ayyash, Bishop of the Catholic Church in Palestine and Jordan.

The bishop informed the Arab Ambassadors of Israeli violations of human rights in occupied Palestine, especially Israeli measures for the Judaization of Jerusalem.



Palestinian Ambassador and Bishop Yasser Ayyash during a dinner at the Jordanian ambassador's residence



Ambassador Abdulhadi during a dinner at the Jordanian Ambassador's house

5. The Palestinian Embassy staff continued to engage in the activities of the international diplomatic corps, especially attending the national days of embassies, meetings, and cultural activities, the most important of which were, but not limited to, the participation in the national days of the State of Kuwait, Japan, Cuba, Brunei, and Ghana. In addition to participating in the cultural festival organized by the Italian Embassy, among others.









6. On June 25, the Palestinian Embassy held an emergency meeting of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra at the headquarters of the Palestinian Embassy to discuss Israeli annexation plan for important parts of the occupied West Bank.



The meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra at the Premises of the Palestinian Embassy

In line with the official position issued by the OIC on Israeli annexation plans, members agreed on an urgent plan of action to raise this issue at all official levels. They also expressed deep concern about the negative consequences of the annexation plans. In this context, the meeting agreed on the importance to request a meeting with the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Marise Payne, and ask her to clarify Australia's official position on this issue.



The meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra at the Premises of the Palestinian Embassy

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Heads of Mission Group in Canberra met again at the Indonesian Embassy to further discuss the content of the Aid Memoir and the letter regarding the Israeli annexation plan, to be sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia.



The meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra at the Premises of the Indonesian Embassy

7. Celebrated on 3rd July at the Venezuelan Embassy, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the annual Venezuela National Day. This event was celebrated by many Ambassadors and their partners in Canberra. Ambassador Abdulhadi and GDOP staff also attended the Venezuela flag raising ceremony.



Celebrating Venezuela's Independence Day



Celebrating Venezuela's Independence Day

8. The Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group presented its Aide-Memoire to the Deputy Secretary of DFAT, Mr Tony Sheehan, to present to Foreign Minister Marise Payne. The Aide Memoire called on the Australian government to adopt the following positions:

- Not to recognise the status of Israeli settlements, which are illegal by international law, on the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, nor help to sustain it in any way.

- To ensure accountability measures for Israel, with a view to ending the Israeli colonial occupation and realizing national independence of the State of Palestine on 4th June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem/Al Quds al-Sharif as its Capital.
- To reject the Israeli future plans to annex West Bank settlements, Jordan Valley and North of the Dead Sea, as a violation of international law, various UN Security Council Resolutions, and the human rights of the Palestinian people.
- To support self-determination for the Palestinian people including the establishment of a sovereign, independent and contiguous Palestinian State on 4th June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- To work with the international community, Arab League, Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), European Union (EU), United Nations (UN) and others, to support a multilateral approach to solve the Israel– Palestine conflict according to international law and UN Resolutions.
- Finally, to recognise the State of Palestine, as soon as possible, based on the 4th of June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem



The Heads of Mission Group, members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, during their visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

9. On 16 September 2020, the Steering Committee of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra met at the Indonesian Embassy to discuss the forthcoming meeting with Shadow Foreign Minister, the Honourable Senator Penny Wong, to address the

recent Israel annexation plan for West Bank settlements, Jordan Valley and North of the Dead Sea and the current political situation in the Israel Palestine conflict.

Ambassador Abdulhadi briefed the Steering Committee of the Palestinian government's position on the normalization agreements signed by Israel, Emirates and Bahrain recently in Washington. Ambassador Abdulhadi clarified the reasons behind the rejection by the Palestinian government of these agreements, in particular the agreement's violation of international law, the Arab Peace Initiative and Palestinian human rights.

The members of the steering committee also discussed the organisation of the OIC Day on 7 October.

10. On 23 September, Ambassador Abdulhadi had the privilege of participating in a virtual meeting with the Steering Committee of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra and Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Australian Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The meeting discussed the position of the Labor Party towards Israel Palestine conflict, in particular the de jure and de facto Israeli annexation plans and the future for the two-state solution. Ambassador Abdulhadi was encouraged by the huge support from his colleagues, the Ambassadors.



Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group members in Canberra

11. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in the celebration of the National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 23/09/2020 at the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Canberra.



During the celebration of the National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

12. On August 7, a delegation from the Council of Arab Ambassadors paid a visit to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Lebanese Republic, Mr. Milad Raad, to express their broad solidarity with the Lebanese people during the ordeal of the Beirut Port explosion and to offer condolences to the victims of this disaster.



Arab Ambassadors visiting HE the Lebanese Ambassador

13. The observance of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Day on October 7 in Canberra, was another opportunity to confirm the principled position of the OIC Heads of Mission Group in Canberra towards the right of the Palestinian people in self-determination according to Interna-

tional Law and UN resolutions. This position and commitment reflected in the speech of the president of the OIC Group, H.E. the Ambassador of Indonesia.



The Palestinian ambassador and the Indonesian ambassador during the celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation



Celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation



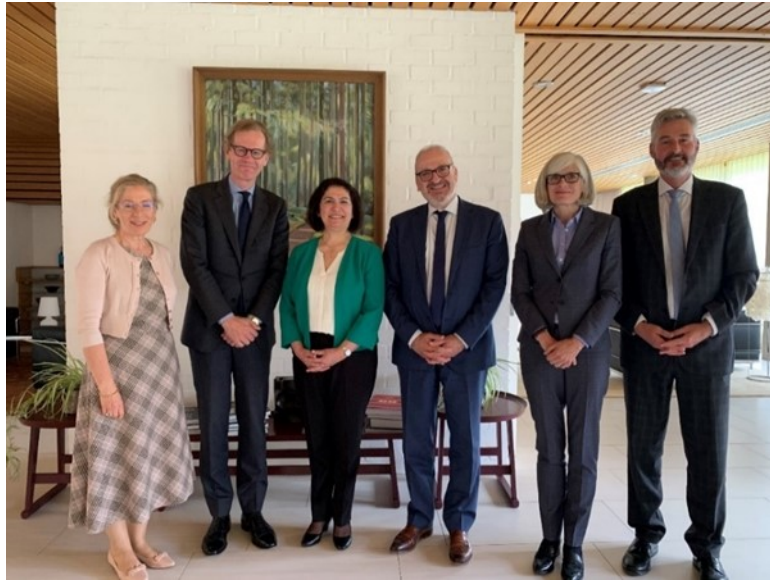
Celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

14. On October 22, Ambassador Abdulhadi and his spouse attended a farewell dinner organised by Ambassador of Turkey to bid farewell the outgoing Moroccan Ambassador.



Farewell dinner for the ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco at the Turkish ambassador's residence

15. On October 29, Ambassador Abdulhadi and his spouse participated in a business lunch organised by the Swiss Ambassador to Australia and the Swiss Ambassador to the Pacific, attended by the Swedish Ambassador and spouse. The Israel and Palestine conflict and the situation in the Middle East were discussed.



Business lunch at the residence of the Swiss ambassador

16. On 14 October, H.E. the Ambassador of Timor Leste, Ms Inês Maria de Almeida, paid a visit to the General Delegation of Palestine to hold a meeting with H.E. Ambassador Abdulhadi. They discussed the importance of enhancing bilateral relations between Palestine and Timor-Leste and the latest developments in Israel Palestine conflict.

H.E. the Ambassador of Timor-Leste also reaffirmed the support of Timor-Leste for the Two-State solution and to the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination and statehood.



The Palestinian ambassador receives the Ambassador of East Timor at the Palestinian Embassy

17. Ambassador Abdulhadi visited the Embassy of Kuwait on Friday 2nd October to pay tribute to the passing of His Royal Highness Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, a genuine friend of the Palestinian people.



The Palestinian ambassador offering condolences on the death of Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

18. On October 17, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a memorial service to pay tribute to the passing of the Ambassador of Belgium, Mr Marc Mullie.



Memorial Service for Ambassador of Belgium, Mr Marc Mullie

19. It is with great sadness that the Palestinian leader Dr Saeb Erekat, Secretary General of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and member of the Central Committee of Fatah, passed away on 10th November at the age of 65 years.



The late Dr Saeb Erekat

Dr Saeb Erekat spent years defending Palestinian national rights and was an experienced negotiator for justice in all regional and international forums.

Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi and the Delegation's staff offered to his Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, to the family of Dr Saeb Erekat and his esteemed relatives the deepest condolences.

On 13th and 16th of November, the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, received deep condolences from embassies and high commissions on the passing of Dr Saeb Erekat.



The Irish ambassador offers condolences on the death of the late Dr. Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian embassy in Canberra



Zambia's ambassador offers condolences on the death of the late Dr. Saeb Erekat at the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra

20. On 19th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi, Ms Suheir Gedeon and Ms Noura Saleh, attended a farewell lunch for the Deputy Head of Mission at the Egyptian Embassy in Canberra.



During the farewell ceremony for the Chargé d'Affairs of the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt

21. On 10th November, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a celebration event to commemorate the National Unity Day of Russia.



The Palestinian ambassador participating in the Russian Unity Day

22. The General Delegation of Palestine, in coordination with the United Nations Information Centre, and the Council of Arab Ambassadors hosted an event to commemorate the United Nations Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29th November, in Canberra.

The event began with a reception at ANU's Badger and Co., followed by speeches by Ms Louise Aubin, Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Acting Director of United Nations Information Centre in Canberra, H.E Dr Ali Kraishan Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors and H.E. Izzat Abdulhadi Ambassador of the State of Palestine.

It also included the screening of the film: "1948: Creation and Catastrophe". Through the personal recollections of Palestinians and Israelis, this film accurately recounted the events of 1948 and provided a first-hand account of the creation of a state and the expulsion of a nation. Overall, the event was a great success.



Counselor Suheir Gedeon presenting the speakers and introducing the event



Reception of the Event



The Palestinian ambassador and Embassy staff during the Event



At the Celebration





At the Celebration





Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Acting Director of United Nations Information Centre in Canberra, Ms. Louis Aubin during her speech



His Excellency Dr Ali Kraishan, Dean of the Council of Arab ambassadors and Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, during his speech



His Excellency the Palestinian Ambassador during his speech

23. On 11th December Ambassador Abdulhadi hosted an End of Year gathering to celebrate the year 2020. Many diplomatic representatives, government officials attended this event.

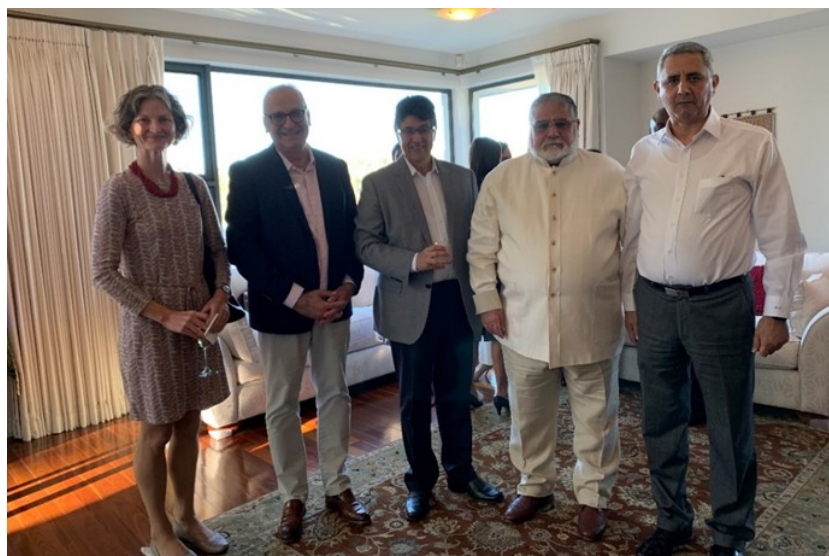


End of the Year 2020 Celebration at the residence of the Palestinian ambassador





End of the Year 2020 Celebration at the residence of the Palestinian ambassador





End of the Year 2020 Celebration at the residence of the Palestinian ambassador





The Palestinian ambassador during his speech on the occasion of the end of the year

24. On 4th December, Ambassador Abdulhadi and staff attended an End of Year gathering at the Venezuelan Ambassador's residence.



At the End of Year gathering at the residence of the Venezuelan Ambassador

25. The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Australia held a symposium entitled "Empowering Women in the Kingdom" on October 26, through which it aimed to introduce the Australian community to the role Saudi Arabia plays in empowering Saudi women.

Many Australian officials, diplomats' wives and women's community in Australia attended this symposium, in addition to a group of businesswomen who are members of the Saudi Australian Busi-

ness Council, and a group of academics and postgraduate students in Australian universities and research centres interested in this matter.



Zeina Abdulhadi, wife of the Palestinian ambassador, participating in the women empowerment symposium

26. On October 22, Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in the celebration of the National Day of the Republic of Hungary by attending a documentary film about the Prague Spring and the Hungarian resistance to the Russian invasion.



During the celebration of the National Day of the State of Hungary

27. On December 4, the Palestinian Ambassador's wife, Mrs. Zeina Abdulhadi, participated in a lunch hosted by the wife of the Governor-General of Australia for the group of diplomatic ambassadors' wives and representatives of accredited missions in Canberra, this occasion was an end of year celebration.

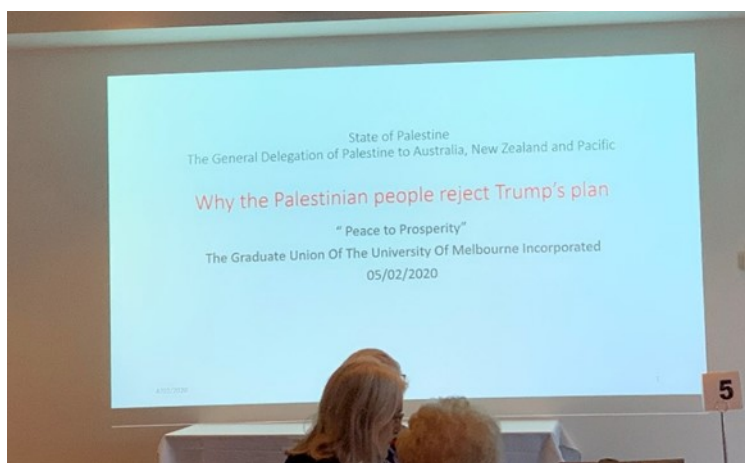


End of Year Celebration for wives of diplomatic ambassadors and representatives of missions in Canberra

Activities related to Civil Society

1. The Palestinian Ambassador gave an important lecture at the University of Melbourne on February 5 about the reasons for the Palestinian leadership and people's rejection of Trump's so-called "Peace for Prosperity" plan.

This lecture was attended by many faculty members at the university and a number of students who showed a strong interest in this topic. The majority of them expressed their reservations of this plan which is aimed at liquidating the national rights of the Palestinian people.



The lecture at the University of Melbourne

The Ambassador's lecture discussed many topics, the most important were the historical context of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict and Trump's plan being in clear violation of international law and UN resolutions. In addition, the Palestinian Ambassador discussed the Palestinian leadership's vision and strategy to confront this plan and implement the Palestinian peace plan.



The Palestinian ambassador during his lecture at University of Melbourne

2. To advocate against the Israeli plans to annex important parts of the West Bank, The Palestinian Embassy in Canberra undertook a wide range of activities to inform the Australian and New Zealand public, Australian and New Zealand official institutions, civil society organizations, Arab and international diplomatic corps, media, and Islamic, Arab and Palestinian communities with the components and results of the Israeli annexation plan.

The Palestinian Embassy called for urging these official and unofficial bodies to adopt a clear position on the Israeli annexation plan based on the principles of international law, UN resolutions and Palestinians human rights.



Ambassador Abdulhadi during an SBS interview

In this context, the Palestinian Embassy carried out the following activities:

The Palestinian Ambassador conducted several media interviews during this period, which focused on Israeli annexation plans. Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi explained during his interviews the grave threat that the annexation plans pose to the two-state solution and the future of the Palestinian State. Ambassador Abdulhadi also discussed the position of the Australian government and the opposition regarding the annexation plans and urged them to issue an official position in this regard.

During the month of June, Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi held several meetings via Zoom video call with members of the Australian Parliament. The meetings discussed the current political context, the threat posed by Israel's annexation plans to the two-state solution, and the reaction of the Labor Party and the Australian government towards this. The meetings also discussed the need to follow up this matter further.

In addition, the Palestinian Embassy carried out an effective advocacy campaign during the past month in response to the Israeli annexation plan, implementing the following activities:

- Press releases on the annexation and the responses of the Palestinian leadership to this have been produced and circulated.
- A position paper issued by the General Delegation of Palestine was developed and published, based on the directives of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates.
- Ambassador Abdulhadi met with members of the Australian Parliament to discuss the Israeli annexation plans and clarify Australia's position in this regard.
- The Palestinian Embassy hosted a meeting with the heads of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group in Canberra to discuss the response of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation Group to the Israeli annexation plan.
- The Council of Arab Ambassadors held a meeting with the First Assistant Secretary of the Middle East and North Africa Department, Dr. Angela MacDonald to discuss the annexation plans and Australia's response.
- Letters addressing Israeli annexation plans sent to members of the Australian and New Zealand Parliament and other political parties.
- A sample letter against annexation has been sent to members of the Palestinian community and advocacy groups for them to send to their local representatives and federal parliamentarians.
- A letter on the Israeli annexation plan was sent to non-governmental organizations, churches, Arab and Islamic communities, and others.
- A fact sheet containing questions and answers on annexation was distributed to the various influential parties prepared by the Negotiation Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization.
- A set of videos was prepared in which a number of Australian and New Zealand politicians spoke about the Israeli annexation plans, at the request of the Negotiations Affairs Department / PLO.
- A newsletter on annexation was prepared and distributed to all stakeholders.

3. The GDOP continued its advocacy campaign against the Israeli de jure and de facto annexation plan. This campaign aimed to highlight the impact and consequences of de-facto annexation on Palestinians and their land and on the future of a solution for Palestine and Israel.

It also aimed to further examine the impact that de-jure annexation would have on the West Bank and the various scenarios around this.

4. The Palestinian Ambassador met on July 27 in the city of Sydney with His Eminence the Mufti of Australia and New Zealand, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, on a working lunch, where the Palestinian Ambassador briefed the Mufti on the current situation, especially the Israeli plans to annex important parts of the West Bank to Israel.

His Eminence has shown a great interest in the issue and stated his complete opposition and condemnation of these plans and confirmed his willingness to send a letter to the Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne in this regard. Other issues related to the Muslim community were also discussed during this meeting.

6. The Palestinian Ambassador also met with the President of the Australian National Imams Council, Sheikh Shadi Suleiman, in the city of Sydney on July 20, where the two parties discussed the Israeli annexation plans and the responses of the Islamic communities regarding this issue.



Meeting of the Palestinian ambassador with Sheikh Shadi Suleiman

Sheikh Shadi Suleiman expressed full solidarity with the Palestinian people in these challenging times and promised to indorse the counter annexation campaign. It was also the first visit of the Palestinian Ambassador to the United Muslims of Australia Center (UMA) headed by Sheikh Shadi

Suleiman, where the Ambassador viewed the center's facilities and its role in serving the Islamic community.

7. On August 3, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Delegation staff hosted a meeting at the premises of the General Delegation with a member of the Australian community, Ms Danielle Gehrman, who donated items which were originally acquired in Palestine during World War 2 by the grand uncle of Ms Danielle Gehrman during his military service in Palestine 1941.

These items will be displayed at the Delegation's premises. Displaying and celebrating embroidery items, such as these, is an essential part of demonstrating the ingenuity and rich history of the Palestinian people. It is also demonstrating the historical relations between the Australian and Palestinian peoples.



Meeting of the Palestinian Ambassador with Ms. Danielle at the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra

8. Organised by the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin in partnership with United Nations Information Centre in Canberra, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in observing International Day for Peace held in Canberra on September 21. The main theme was the prerequisites to sustainable peace and mechanisms for conflict resolutions. The speakers, in particular Ms Louise Aubin, the regional representative of the UNHCR, read a message from His Excellency Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr Antonio Guterres, who reiterated the position of the United Nations of the necessity to have a peaceful world and solve international conflicts according to just peace.



Celebrating the International Day of Peace in Canberra

9. The Ambassador conducted a series of radio and television interviews related to the normalization agreements signed between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain.



Ambassador Abdulhadi during an interview

10. Girls Run the World Event at the GDOP: On 29th October two participants for Girls Run the World Event organised by the Girls Leadership Network in Canberra, attended the Delegation for a day to learn from GDOP staff about the work of the Delegation, Palestinian history, culture and food and to gain deeper understanding of the Palestine Israel conflict.



The Palestinian ambassador and embassy staff during the visit of the "Girls Run the World" delegation

The two participants had the opportunity to participate in some of the weekly work of the Delegation by presenting summaries of past intern reports in the staff weekly intern report meeting. This successful event provided many opportunities for both staff and participants to learn from each other.



During the visit of the "Girls Run the World" delegation

11. On 13th November, Ambassador Abdulhadi and staff attended the Jesus Laughing and Loving Exhibition, an art exhibition displaying an important collection of paintings, known as “the laughing Jesus paintings”.

“This exhibition is a step towards liberating the person of Jesus from the traditional other-worldly image so that his power and relevance for modern living might be rediscovered and enjoyed.



Jesus Laughing and Loving Exhibition

12. At the invitation of the Australian Institute for International Affairs, on December 9, 2020, the Palestinian ambassador participated in an important symposium on the reality and prospects of Australian foreign policy and the most important challenges that Australia faced during the year 2020, on the occasion of the end of the year and Christmas.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the AIIA event

13. At the invitation of the Australian National Museum, on December 16 the Palestinian Ambassador participated in the annual ceremony organized by the museum annually to honor a number of important personalities whose work and activities led to a significant change in the lives of local communities.

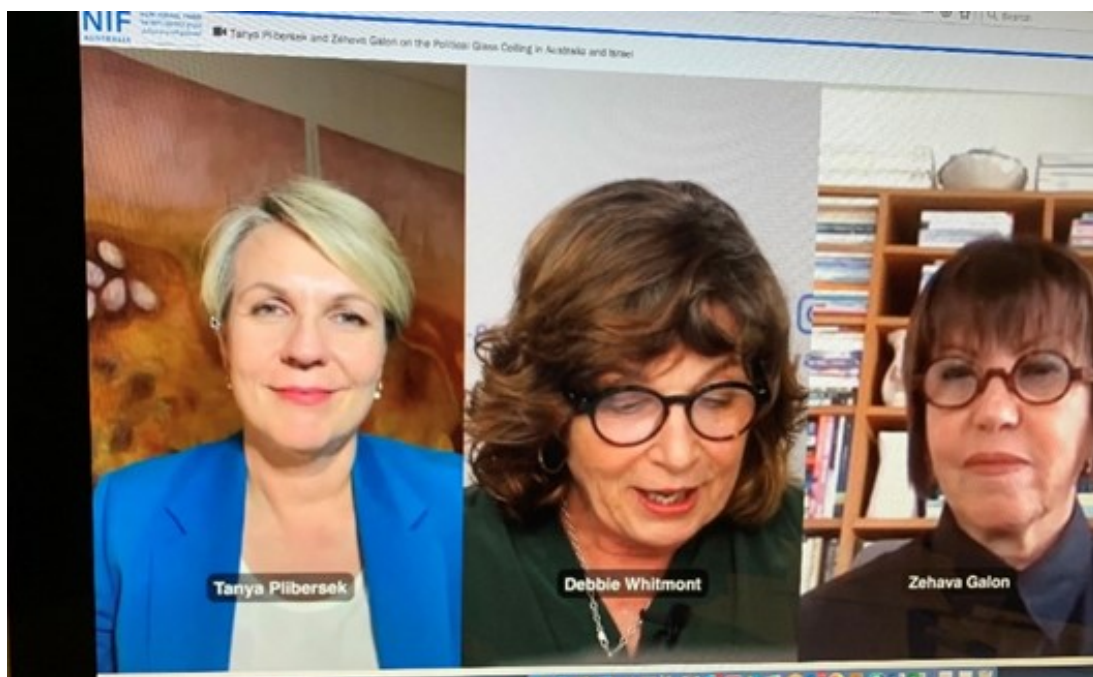


During the ceremony at the Australian National Museum

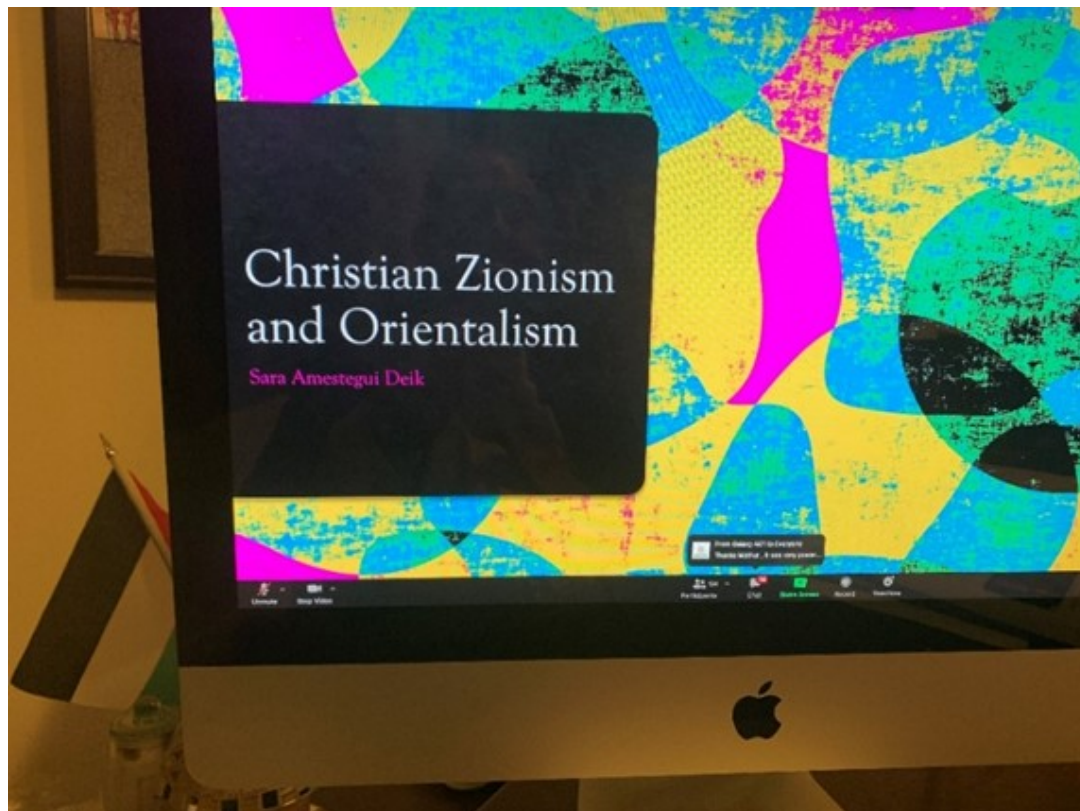
14. The Ambassador of the State of Palestine and the embassy staff also participated in many seminars through Zoom technology, which included many topics and global issues as well as issues related to the Palestinian issue.



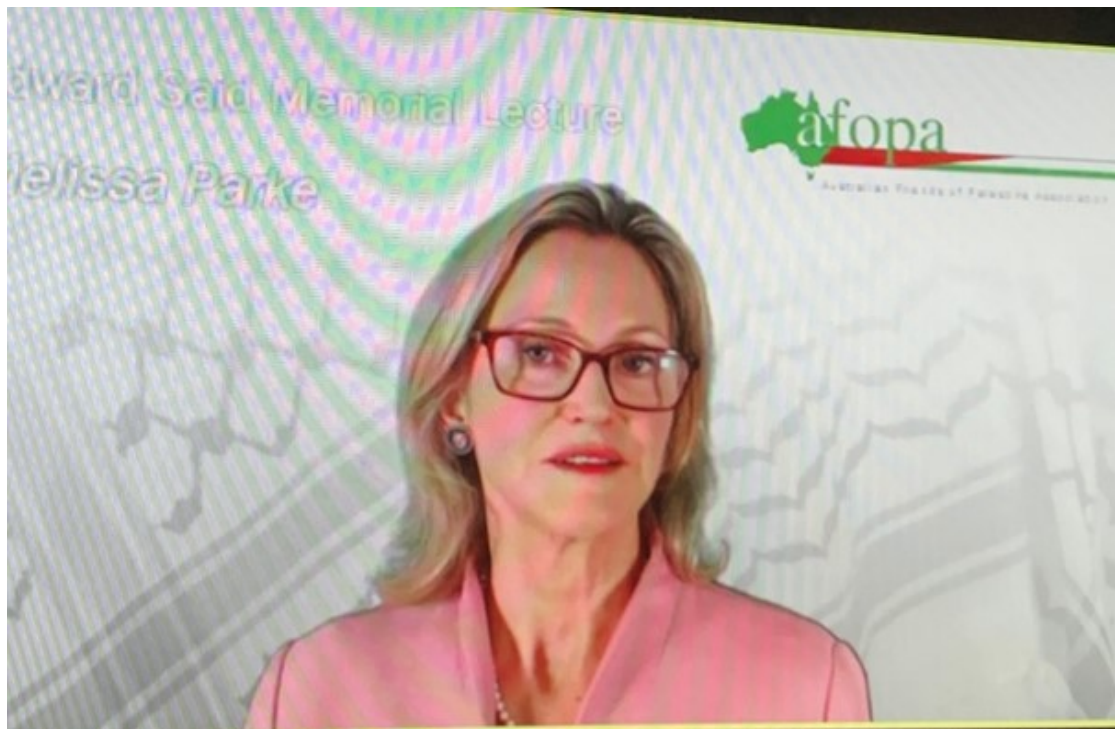
Ambassador Abdulhadi attending a webinar on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict



New Israeli Fund Webinar



Webinar discussing Christian Zionism and Orientalism



The Edward Said Memorial Lecture by afopa



Konrad Adenauer Lecture 2020

Activities related to the Palestinian Community

1. On 20 March, Palestinian Embassy staff received representatives of the Palestinian Al Nayzak Foundation (Meteorite) who were visiting Australia with the support of the Council of Australia Arab Relations (CAAR) for ten days. The “Meteorite” representatives presented to the Palestinian Embassy staff an itinerary regarding the objectives, outputs, program of the visit and how to use Australian expertise in the field of information technology to enhance this sector in Palestine.



The Palestinian ambassador during meeting with the Palestinian meteorite crew

2. During this visit to New Zealand from 11–16 March, the Palestinian Ambassador met with representatives of the Palestinian community in Wellington and Auckland, where they agreed to establish a committee to coordinate the activities and initiatives of the Palestinian community in New Zealand, as well as an effective framework for consultation and coordination between the Palestinian community and the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra.



The Palestinian Ambassador meeting with Palestinian Community in Auckland

3. The Palestinian Embassy continued to provide consular services to the Palestinian community and respond to any emergencies. The most important of which was the bush fires in Australia and the follow-up on the health and safety of the Palestinian community during this crisis, in addition to providing the community with information related to protecting themselves during this time.

In addition, the Palestinian Embassy remained up to date on the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, especially relating to health and safety issues for the Palestinian community, in addition to providing them with the necessary information, following up on Palestinian scholarship students and enquiring about their situation and responding to any concerns.

In addition, following up on what is happening in Palestine and implementing the instructions of the Prime Minister Office and the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this topic.

**General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific**
24 March 2020 · 🌐

الإخوة والأخوات، الطلاب الذين يدرسون حاليا في الجامعات الأسترالية والنيوزيلندية،
تهديكم السفارة الفلسطينية في كانبيرا تحياتها الحارة وتتمنى لكم دوام الصحة والعافية في هذه الظروف
الصعبة بعد إنتشار فيروس الكورونا
بهدف التواصل معكم وتبادل المعلومات وتقديم المساعدة، نرجو تزويدنا بأرقام هواتفكم أو عناوين بريدكم
الإلكتروني من خلال الإتصال بالسفارة من خلال هاتف: 0404444410
أو البريد الإلكتروني: Palestinian.delegation@palgov.org
شاكرين لكم تعاونكم،
البعثة العامة لفلسطين في أستراليا ونيوزيلندا والباسفيك

**General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific**
17 April 2020 · 🌐

Australia's travel restrictions for dual nationals seeking to leave Australia

Australian citizens and permanent residents cannot travel overseas due to COVID-19 restrictions. Dual nationals, or foreign nationals with permanent residency status in Australia, need to secure an exemption from the ABF Commissioner before they can leave Australia, even if using the passport of their other nationality.

Individuals can apply online for an exemption on the Department of Home Affairs website:
<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/.../covid19-enquiry-form>.

Applications should include as much detailed information and supporting documentation as possible. For example, individuals should include proof that they do not usually reside in Australia through evidence of working arrangements, school/university enrolments or property ownership.

The application should include other compelling and compassionate grounds as appropriate, including details on the reasons compelling the individual to travel – for example, care for elderly parents who live overseas, other family circumstances or medical issues. Any supporting documentation to verify family relationships and other claims will help to strengthen their case.

Facebook Announcements regarding COVID-19

3. COVID-19 Response:

- The Palestinian Embassy contacted the leaders of the Palestinian community in Australia and New Zealand and called on them to provide assistance to the Palestinian community in need.

Also, urging them to comply fully with the safety and protection measures established by the Australian and New Zealand governments.

- The Palestinian Embassy contacted scholarship students and reassured them about their living and health conditions.
- There are no financial problems for Palestinian students in Australia due to the payment and support conditions of the Australian and New Zealand governments and host universities.
- The Palestinian Embassy also urged the Palestinian students not to return home due to the flight ban and also to continue with their university education.
- The Palestinian Embassy has published many messages on social media, inquiring about the health of members of the Palestinian community and Palestinian students studying in Australian and New Zealand universities.
- The Palestinian Embassy followed up on any infected members of the Palestinian community or among students studying at universities in Australia and New Zealand.
- The Palestinian Embassy has also provided contact e-mail and phone numbers to the Australian and New Zealand Palestinian community through social media.
- The Palestinian Embassy published important information about Coronavirus in Arabic and Ewhich it had received from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In addition, the Embassy received a set of government instructions from the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding how to deal with COVID-19, and this information was also circulated to individuals and organizations of the Palestinian community and the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Palestinian Embassy, through social media targeting the Australian and New Zealand Palestinian communities, urging its members to contact them in the event of any emergency.
- The Palestinian Embassy has taken internal administrative measures to maintain the safety of its diplomats and staff.
- The Palestinian Embassy also launched an effective campaign to raise funds for the benefit of the Palestinian people during the pandemic, in addition to securing 20 ventilators with all complementary medical equipment, as well as sending many letters to the Australian and New Zealand foreign ministries to urge them to donate to Palestine in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic.

- The Palestinian embassy supported the "Waqfat Ezz Fund" initiative, which is a national fund aimed at collecting donations from the private sector and members of the Palestinian community and the Palestinian diaspora to assist Palestinians during the Coronavirus crisis. The Palestinian Embassy helped with this by publicizing this initiative and introducing the goals of the fund, including through the distribution of messages and information to members of the Palestinian community in Australia and New Zealand.
- The Palestinian Embassy has regularly monitored the conditions of the stranded Palestinian visitors and students in Australia and New Zealand and secured their travel in coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Ministries in Australia and New Zealand.
- The GDOP continues to provide support and assistance to Palestinian community members who are stranded due to COVID-19 and wish to travel back to Palestine. During this month, many Palestinians were able to return back to Palestine through coordinated efforts between the GDOP, Palestinian Foreign Ministry and other relevant parties.

4. On May 15, the Palestinian Embassy issued a press release on the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of the Nakba, as it represents a continuous reality and struggle for the Palestinians to obtain their human and political rights, especially their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on their land.

5. Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff welcomed a graduate student who has completed her MA study at the Australian national University in Canberra. This student is one of more than 50 students who benefited from the Australian government scholarships' scheme.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and embassy staff with one of our scholarship awarded students in Canberra

7. On July 12, the Palestinian Ambassador met in Sydney with a number of representatives of the Palestinian community, especially the leadership of the Fatah movement and the Palestinian General Union of Workers, where he briefed them on the existing political situation and the Palestinian Embassy's plan to counter the Israeli annexation plan. The two parties also agreed to coordinate and strengthen efforts to carry out an efficient campaign to clarify the risks of the annexation plan and its negative impact on the right of the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

8. Ambassador Abdulhadi met with the President of the Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS) movement, Mr Hilmi Dabbagh, on 7th July. The president of the group briefed the Palestinian Ambassador on the group's strategy, activities and the challenges it faces. They agreed to continue the discussion through constant and regular consultations.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with the president of the BDS movement

9. The 15th of November is the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine. On this occasion, the GDOP issued an Instagram post to raise awareness of the occasion of this day.

10. Held on 29th November, the annual "Run for Palestine", hosted by Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine (AJPP), was a great success. This annual event is a great family day out to raise awareness of the Palestinian plight and 100% of proceeds are donated to humanitarian programs in Palestine.

The event began at Lennox Gardens Canberra and included a 5km/10km run or walk around the iconic Lake Burley Griffin. The event began with speeches by members of the Palestinian community followed by a speech by Ambassador Abdulhadi.



Run for Palestine





Run for Palestine





Run for Palestine





The Palestinian ambassador during his speech on the Run for Palestine program

6. The Ambassador of the State of Palestine participated in a zoom session with members of the Palestinian community in New Zealand, during which the ambassador thanked the Palestinian community and the solidarity movements with the Palestinian people for the successful organization of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on November 29, which was attended by a large number of people from the Palestinian community and civil society groups in New Zealand.

The parties also expressed during the meeting the importance of organizing the Palestinian community and increasing its effectiveness in terms of advocacy and promoting the Palestinian narrative and Palestinian rights.



Part of the celebration organized by the Palestinian community in New Zealand on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



Part of the celebration organized by the Palestinian community in New Zealand on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

11. At the invitation of the General Union of Palestinian Workers, the Palestinian – Australian Club and the Palestinian Graduates Association, on November 25, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in the celebration of the Palestinian Independence Day in Sydney, in the presence of a large number of Australian parliamentarians, representatives of civil society groups, solidarity movements with the Palestinian people, and a large number of representatives from Islamic, Arab and Palestinian communities.



At the Celebration of Palestinian Independence Day

Many speeches were delivered on this occasion, from some Australian parliamentarians, the Ambassador of the State of Palestine, and representatives of the Palestinian community in Sydney such as Mr. Eddie Zananiri. The speeches focused on the importance of the right of self-determination

for the Palestinian people and the completion of their struggle for the state and the return. Speakers also referred to the Israeli annexation and settlement plans as a clear violation of the principles of international law and the historical, legal and political rights of the Palestinian people.



Palestinian ambassador during the celebration of Palestinian Independence Day

The speakers also called on the Australian government to recognize the Palestinian state, in order to save the two-state solution.



Celebration of Palestinian Independence Day



Celebration of Palestinian Independence Day

12. On the 29th of October, Ambassador and staff of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific conveyed their warm congratulations to the Muslim and Palestinian communities in Australia, New Zealand and abroad on the occasion of Prophet Muhammad's birthday: We hope to commemorate the occasion next year when the Palestinian people are safe and well and closer to achieving their objective of freedom and liberation.

Admin, Finance, Consular and Social Activities

1. The GDOP offers a successful and enriching internship program. GDOP interns often complete an internship program alongside their undergraduate or graduate studies and have the opportunity to work alongside Delegation staff and enrich their knowledge of diplomacy, international relations, politics of the Palestine– Israel conflict and the relations between Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific and Palestine.



End of year gathering with GDOP interns

2. On June 12, staff of the Palestinian Embassy organized a farewell lunch for one of its interns, Georgia, at the premises of the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra. Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Embassy staff expressed their gratitude for the tireless work of Georgia, and she expressed her appreciation for the internship opportunity at the Embassy.



During a farewell lunch



During a Farewell Lunch



Ambassador Abdulhadi Saying Farewell to Valued Intern, Bridget

3. Weekly intern report discussion meetings: Each week one report is analysed and discussed amongst staff. A brainstorming session is held in order to develop a plan to best utilise the report to assist the GDOP with its work. The reports discussed include:

- Recognising the State of Palestine
- Palestine Civil Society Groups in Australia: A Profile
- Israel's Nation State Law
- Palestine and the Indo-Pacific: How can the State of Palestine enhance its role within the Indo-Pacific region through a bold regional policy and approach?
- The role of the Palestine Delegation: Engagement Strategies between Australian Jewish and Australian Palestinian communities
- How Organisations can use Social Media to increase Youth Civic Engagement in the Australian-Palestinian community.
- Foreign Aid to Palestine under the Coalition Government
- Settlement Expansion: the Australian position and the Peace Process
- Australian Foreign Policy and the Israel-Palestine Conflict: The Case for Good International Citizenship
- Civil Society in Fiji
- Civil Society in PNG

18. The GDOP effectively and systematically responded to MOFA's instructions. For example:

- Sent periodic reports on the most important political, economic and social developments in Australia and New Zealand focusing on the implications of COVID-19 and reactions to the Israeli annexation plan for important parts of the West Bank.
- Completed the political, economic and social country Profiles for Australia and Vanuatu, while continuing to complete the country profiles for New Zealand and East Timor.
- Continued to prepare financial and administrative reports and work plans and send them to the Palestinian Ministries.
- Completed the Embassy's annual report for 2019 in Arabic and English and distributed it to all stakeholders.

4. The Palestinian Embassy prepared a plan for the years 2020 and 2021 for the activities of the Palestinian Embassy using the Logical Frame Analysis and Key performance indicators (KPI's) table for the first time. This tool is important for the design, implementation and evaluation of the Embassy' programs.

5. The General Delegation of Palestine issued three editions of its newsletter, which included the Ambassador's Foreword, the activities of the General Delegation of Palestine, and the latest developments in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

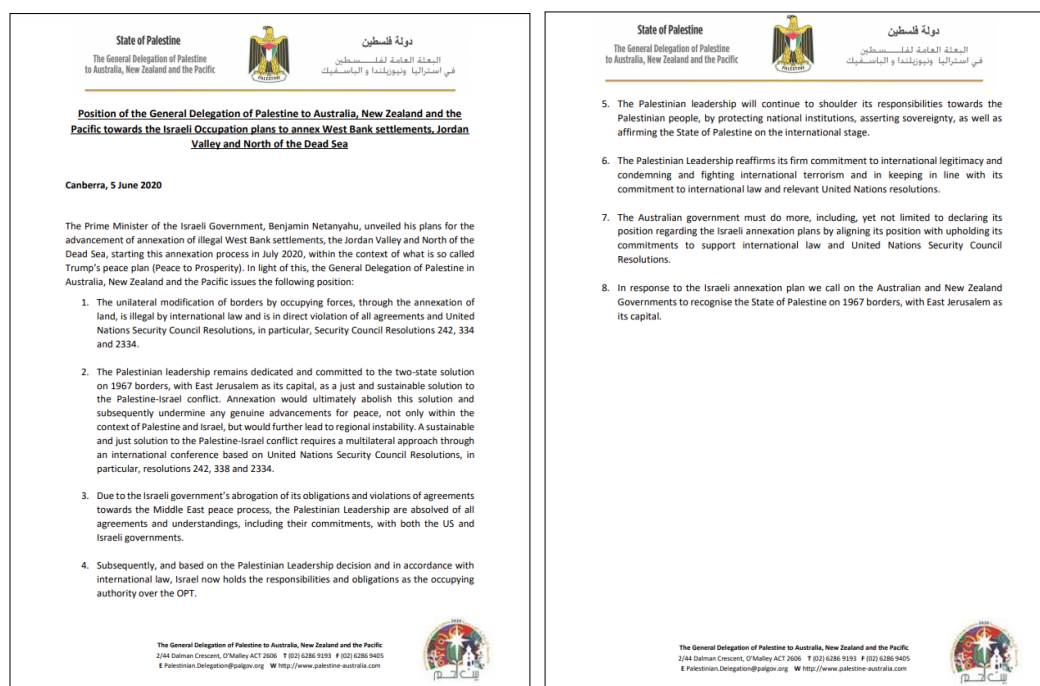


November 2020 Newsletter Cover Page

6. The General Delegation of Palestine continued to implement its media strategy through social media. Social media continues to be used to cover the most important activities of the General Delegation of Palestine and its political positions. The GDOP also uses social media to cover Palestinian activities, civil society activities in Palestine and the Palestinian community in Australia and New Zealand.

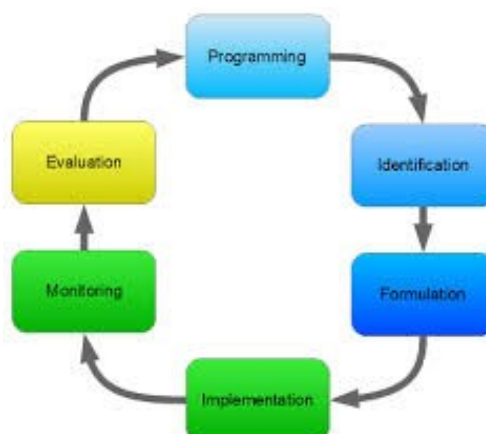
7. Updates of the filing system contact lists and the Embassy website.

8. The Palestinian Embassy has also published many materials and documents as part of the Palestinian Embassy's campaign against Israeli annexation plans, particularly press releases made by many members of parliament and political parties in Australia and New Zealand and many other prominent voices.



GDOP Position Paper regarding Israeli annexation plans

9. On 24th September, GDOP staff held a brainstorming session about program management and prioritized GDOP activities for the remainder of 2020. Ambassador Abdulhadi highlighted the importance of program management and how it links to outcomes and results. He outlined the various aspects of the program management cycle, including: planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and linked this to its importance at the GDOP and its implemented mandate and activities and administrative method in enhancing the professionalism, sustainability and impact of these programs in the General Delegation of Palestine.



10. GDOP End of Year Evaluation Meeting: On the 15th December, the staff of the GDOP held an end of year evaluation meeting, to discuss the activities of the year 2020. The outcomes of this meeting will provide an indication of the activities for the year 2021. This meeting was also an opportunity for GDOP staff to reflect on the past year and the successful outcomes of many of the GDOP activities.

11. Ambassador Abdulhadi interview with the Australian SBS 24 station. The program "On a Cup of Coffee" was hosted by the Palestinian ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, who spoke during the interview about his long diplomatic experience in Australia and the most prominent stations in his political and diplomatic life during his tenure as the ambassador of the State of Palestine to Australia.



The Palestinian ambassador during the television interview

12. The Palestinian Embassy has organized some social activities for its staff and volunteers to enhance fraternal and social relations between them in order to allow the development of diplomatic and administrative work in the embassy.





