




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



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

**Strengthening Support for Palestinian Self-Determination and
Statehood**



Front Cover Image:

Coat of Arms of the State of Palestine

Rear Cover Image:

The Palestinian Delegation in Canberra

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THE AMBASSADOR'S FOREWORD




2017 witnessed an increased interest by the Australian Government towards the Israeli-Palestinian



conflict. This was reflected by the visit of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the leader of the Labor Opposition, Bill Shorten, to Palestine in November this year. During their visit, Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Shorten met with the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine Dr. Rami Hamdallah in the presence of Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi.

The talks between the two sides were frank and both parties exchanged information and analysis on the challenges facing the Middle East peace process as well as the role of Australia in this regard. The recognition of the state of Palestine was noted as an especially important step that needs to be taken in order to save the two-state solution and give the Palestinian people hope that their struggle, alongside their right to self-determination, are of interest to both Australia and the international community.

In this context, the year also witnessed positive developments for Palestine on the Australian front. One of the most notable developments of 2017 was the fact that all of the state branches of the opposition Labor party called on the General Conference of the party, to be held in the middle of this year, to pass a motion recognizing the state of Palestine if the party wins the next Federal Election, which is to be held in 2019.




This development was accompanied by the visit of several parliamentary and popular delegations to Palestine. The most important of these was the visit of a parliamentary delegation including several Australian parliamentarians and senators organized by the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra. The delegation was led by the Chair of the Australian-Parliamentary Friends of Palestine and the Deputy Speaker of the ruling Coalition government, Mr. Mark Coulton.

This important visit had a positive political impact in terms of increasing the recognition of the challenges faced by Palestinians under occupation and the ongoing Israeli violations of human rights in Palestine. Many members of the delegation also translated what they had seen on the ground into important political initiatives that expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Another Labor Party parliamentary delegation headed by MP Tony Burke also embarked on an important visit to Palestine organized by the Australia Palestine Advocacy network (APAN). During the visit, Mr. Burke witnessed the difficult realities faced by Palestinians on the ground due to Israel's continued construction of illegal settlements and other Israeli human rights violations.

The increased support for and interest in the Palestinian struggle has been reflected by Australian officials alongside growing public support for the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian right to self-determination in an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The decision of US President Donald Trump to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel failed to change the positions of Australia, New Zealand and even the positions of some Pacific countries regarding their support for the two-state solution and their considering of East Jerusalem as an integral part of the 1967 occupied territories and one of the final status issues.



It is important to note that the popular attitude in Australia and New Zealand, especially the position of the Islamic, Arab and Palestinian communities, is one which rejects the recent unilateral decision made by President Trump as a flagrant violation of international law and international legitimacy

2017 also witnessed an initiative by the Palestinian Embassy to unify, strengthen and empower the Palestinian community through Community Consultation Workshops. These workshops resulted in the establishment of several state-based Palestinian Community Coordination Committees and the election of Palestinian representatives from each state. The workshops were a precursor for the upcoming National Consultation Workshop. This national workshop will include all of the elected state representatives and aims to establish a National Palestinian Community Coordination Committee which will result in the coordination of the efforts and programs of the Palestinian community and all of its stakeholders at the Federal level

The success of this initiative depends on the commitment and seriousness of the members of the Palestinian community and their desire to make their voice heard by all government and non-government actors, particularly regarding Palestinian national and political rights.

Elsewhere, the New Zealand government continued to support the principle of a two-state solution and the self-determination of the Palestinian people despite a change in the ruling party and the formation of a new government following the victory of the New Zealand Labor Party. The New Zealand government also criticised Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and voted in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution to reject his decision. Australia abstained from the vote.

To emphasise their commitment to the two-state solution, the Government of New Zealand continued to provide aid to the Palestinian people through UNRWA alongside grants to strengthen the English language skills of the Palestinian diplomatic corps. Furthermore, the New Zealand government decided to send an expert on renewable energy to Palestine to work with the Palestinian government in this important development sector.

This has been another year of success, commitment and hard work full of important and influential achievements. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank Palestinian embassy staff and our wonderful interns for their commitment, professionalism and the quality outcomes they have achieved. Furthermore, the embassy has seen genuine support from the Palestinian community and civil society organizations in Australia and New Zealand which I highly appreciate.

I am looking forward to another fruitful year with more political achievements in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Izzat Abdulhadi



Ambassador of the State of Palestine

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



POLITICAL CONTEXT



2017 witnessed a number of difficult political developments for Palestine internationally, with Trump's decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel the most striking. However, despite the abhorrence of this decision, 2017 also saw increasing public support for the Palestinian plight in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Positive developments such as the Labour Party Conference motion calling on the party to recognise the State of Palestine if they win the 2019 Federal Election should not be ignored as they highlight the increasingly untenable nature of President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu's worldview. This includes their denial of Palestinian rights.

Australia

Major events took place in 2017 with regards to Palestinian issues and the Israeli Palestinian conflict. **In the first half of the year, numerous State Labour members expressed their support for the recognition of Palestine** at State Labour Party conferences. The second major event was Trump's unilateral decision to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in contravention of international law and international consensus on the two-state solution.

Regarding support for the recognition of Palestine by State Labour branches, the South Australian parliament voted in favour of a resolution encouraging the Australian government to recognise the State of Palestine. Furthermore, Labour party members in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia all voted on a decision urging the leaders of the Federal Labor Conference to recognise the State of Palestine if the party wins the upcoming Federal Election in 2019.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten with Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah in Palestine.

These decisions elicited varying reactions from political actors both within and outside the government. The Israeli Embassy expressed its discontent with these decisions, as did the Zionist lobby and large sections of the Jewish community. This culminated in a campaign from these actors against the decisions made by the State Labor branches. In response to this, the Embassy of the State of Palestine and

advocacy groups ran a counter-campaign highlighting the importance of the recognition of the State of Palestine for achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. The campaign also highlighted the importance of recognition in saving the two-state solution which has been jeopardized by the continuation of Israeli settlement policies.

Considering this, it is expected that the Labor Party will adopt a resolution in its forthcoming Conference in 2018 in Adelaide/South Australia that will oblige the next Labor government to recognise the State of Palestine if it wins the Parliamentary election in 2019. It is worth mentioning that these decisions align with the opinions of the Australian public, with the results of three consecutive public opinion polls on Palestine, conducted by Roy Morgan Research, highlighting overwhelming support from Australians for the recognition of a Palestinian state, with 73% of those surveyed in favour.



Malcolm Turnbull meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Furthermore, despite this year's visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Australia and the warm welcome he received from the current coalition government, alongside his friendly meeting with opposition leader Bill Shorten, several previous prime ministers and foreign ministers have placed pressure on the government to re-think their approach to Palestinian statehood.

Bob Hawke, Kevin Rudd, Gareth Evans and Bob Carr, using media channels and formal letters, urged the Australian government to recognise the Palestinian state, save the two state-solution and guarantee the self-determination of the Palestinian people by ending the 50-year Israeli occupation.

This year also witnessed a visit from Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to Palestine on the 1st of November which was an important step in deepening bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine.

During the visit, the Palestinian and Australian sides discussed several important issues such as Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and their violation of international law, prospects for the revival of the political process, Palestinian reconciliation and prospects for bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The Leader of the opposition Labor Party Bill Shorten also visited Palestine and held extensive talks with Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah.



Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah meeting with Malcolm Turnbull in Ramallah.

The first half of the year also witnessed a visit to Palestine, in April, by a parliamentary delegation with members from both the Labor and National parties. Led by Nationals MP and Deputy Speaker Mr Mark Colton, this visit was organized by the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra and highlighted the importance of the recognition of the State of Palestine. During their visit, the Delegation members observed and consequently were able to better understand the political situation on the ground. The delegation of Parliamentarians also met with several Palestinian officials including the Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah alongside the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr. Riad Malki, and Palestinian parliamentarians and local civil society members. The participating delegation members have been very active in moving motions regarding Israeli violations of human rights and delivering speeches in the Australian Parliament following their return. They have also given several talks to the Australian public highlighting Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights.



The Foreign Minister of Palestine Dr. Riad Malki Meeting the Parliamentary Delegation that visited Palestine

The Palestinian Embassy was instrumental in all of these meetings, preparing all the paperwork and talking points for the visits. All of these important meetings were attended by Ambassador Abdulhadi.

The Trump administration's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and its decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was an unpleasant surprise for the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic peoples. The decision saw varied reactions within Australia and New Zealand. However, the most prominent reaction from politicians and civil society was a steadfast commitment to Australia's official position in which the settlement of the legal and political status of Jerusalem is subject to final status negotiations between Palestine and Israel. In accordance with this position, the Australian government announced that it will not move its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as stated by Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. Despite this, Australia took a tepid stance in the UN General Assembly by abstaining on a vote which called upon the international community to condemn President Trump's unilateral decision. There have also been many peaceful demonstrations against Trump's repulsive decision in all of Australia's states condemning the decision as contrary to the principles of international law and noting that it risked jeopardising the United States' international legitimacy. Despite this unfavourable announcement, popular support for the national and political rights of the Palestinian people remains strong as evidenced by the continuation of campaigns being carried out by numerous advocacy and civil society groups and organizations in solidarity with the Palestinian people.



Members from the Australian and Palestinian communities protesting Trump's decision to move the Palestinian Embassy to Jerusalem.

On another front, the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Australia is currently working towards a professional program of bilateral cooperation between Palestine and Australia which focuses on trade and cooperation in the education and health sectors. Furthermore, the developmental and technical cooperation program between Palestine and Australia continues with the Australian Government maintaining its support for the agricultural sector in Palestine and working with the Palestinian government to develop professional procedures in the Ministry of Finance. The Australian government is also continuing its cooperation with Palestine in the educational sector, providing 10 scholarships annually to Palestinian students.



The BDS convention held at the University of Sydney, attended by prominent academics and members of the Palestinian community.

The most prominent campaign by Australian civil society and advocacy groups was the important conference on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions [BDS] movement against Israel held by Australian civil society, advocacy groups and solidarity organisations at the University of Sydney. Participants developed a general conceptual framework and action plan to promote BDS and to persuade decision-makers to adopt it as a peaceful strategy towards ending the 50-year long Israeli occupation. This conference culminated in the establishment of a steering committee which will oversee the implementation of the BDS work plan and manage relationships with stakeholders. However, it is important to note that no political party in Australia agrees with the BDS strategy.

The ruling Liberal party has been especially vocal in its opposition, labelling the campaign anti-Semitic. The document also consistently highlights Australia's desire to focus on its own geo-political environment in the Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, the White Paper reaffirmed Australia's focus on deepening bilateral relations with the rest of the world, with Pacific Island countries and India of particular importance. In addition to these efforts, the final half of the year saw the beginning of serious efforts by the Embassy of Palestine to strengthen and empower the Palestinian community in Australia and to promote coordination and cooperation among Palestinian institutions by organising workshops in various Australian . This important project aims to raise the voice of the Palestinian community and enhance its social and political role by establishing a unified body in Australia as a strong partner to all stakeholders.

June 2017 also saw the conclusion of the mission of the Australian ambassador to Israel, Dave Sharma. Chris Cannan has been assigned as his successor. Ambassador Abdulhadi met with the newly assigned Ambassador before he left for his post. During the meeting, both ambassadors discussed the current political situation in Israel-Palestine and prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Regarding the recently released Australian Foreign Policy White Paper, the document included important elements of the strategic relationship between Australia and the United States of America that have indirect effects on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, the document focused, to a certain extent, on topics such as terrorism and counter-terrorism efforts in the Middle East as well as growing trade relations with the Middle East, with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) mentioned explicitly.

Another overarching theme of the White Paper was Australia's growing trade relationship with the People's Republic of China and the impact of China's rise on the regional order. Australia stressed the importance of its relationship with China for Australian prosperity and security. However, the White Paper concluded that Australia's primary alliance remains the United States of America, which may create friction between China and Australia.

Furthermore, another important development that took place this year was Australia's securing a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council. Many Arab countries supported Australia's endeavour. However, Australian membership to the council has been subject to external and internal criticism due to its ongoing offshore detention policies and its position on the political, economic and social rights of Indigenous Australians. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop highlighted that Australia will focus on furthering gender equality, the abolishment of the death penalty and securing Indigenous rights globally during its tenure. Furthermore, Ms. Bishop noted that Australia aimed to be a pragmatic and consultative member of the Council.

Ultimately, this year saw a qualitative development in bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine, from both official channels and the public, towards promoting Palestine's right to self-determination through the establishment of an independent state on Palestinian land with Jerusalem as its capital. There has been little change in the Australian government's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Australia maintains its support for a two-state solution and the continuation of direct negotiations to resolve all final status issues .

New Zealand

The most prominent political event in New Zealand this year has been the formation of a coalition government led by the Labor Party. The new coalition government includes the Labor Party, led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the New Zealand First Party [NZ First] led by Winston Peters, and the Green Party from outside the Coalition.



Prime Minister Ardern after winning the General Election.

Mrs. Ardern leads the 52nd government of New Zealand and is the country's 40th Prime Minister. Her ascension followed a difficult phase of negotiations with other parties given that the opposition National Democratic Party [NDP] led by former Prime Minister Bill English received the most votes at the election. The NDP won 44.4% of the vote translating into a plurality of 56 seats whilst the New Zealand Labor Party came in second with 35.8% of the vote, translating into 46 seats. To form a majority government, a party needs 61 seats in the 120-member parliament, meaning no party could do so according to the results. Ultimately, NZ First, having won 9 seats, became the power broker as the Green Party, which secured 7 seats, was unlikely to lend its support to the NDP. NZ First eventually settled the outcome in Labor's favour by agreeing to join a Coalition government with Ms. Ardern as leader.

Known to be socially conservative and economically protectionist, NZ First leader Mr. Winston Peters will serve as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Peters has already served as Foreign Minister between 2005 and 2008. During his last tenure, he improved New Zealand's relationship with the United States and urged the US to become more engaged in the South Pacific. Mr. Peters also expressed his desire to raise New Zealand's voice and standing in international forums particularly when it comes to issues such as the crisis in North Korea.

In late December 2016, New Zealand co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemned Israel's continued settlement expansion and noted the illegality of the policy under international law. This decision compelled Israel to re-call its ambassador to Wellington and launch an intensive diplomatic campaign against New Zealand's role in sponsoring the resolution.

However, New Zealand has consistently re-affirmed its strong support for the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine based on the 1967 border alongside its position towards Israeli settlements, highlighting their illegality under international law. It is in this context that New Zealand's former representative to Palestine Mr. Jim McLay visited Palestine in May to re-affirm New Zealand's supportive position towards Palestinian political and national rights including its right to establish an independent state on its land.

Immediately after the conclusion of former ambassador Jim McClay's mission to Palestine on the 26th of September 2017, The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Dr. Riad Malki received the credentials of New Zealand's new non-resident ambassador to Palestine Mr. Barnaby Riley. Mr. Riley will be performing his duties from Egypt. Ultimately, the ascendance of the New Zealand Labor Party will contribute to the improvement of bilateral relations between New Zealand and the State of Palestine because of its clear policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly in its support for the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine

It is important to note that New Zealand took a strong stance against the unilateral decision by President Trump to move the Embassy of the United States from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Prime Minister Ardern criticised the move calling it “unhelpful [...] taking us backwards not forwards” and noted that New Zealand would not be bullied into abandoning its principles by the United States. New Zealand also sided with the international community in the UN General Assembly by voting with 127 other states to reject the decision by the United States to move its Embassy and recognise Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Furthermore, Mr. Peters re-affirmed that New Zealand will continue to manage its diplomatic relations with Israel from Ankara and, accordingly, will not move its Embassy to Jerusalem.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Government of New Zealand continued to provide aid to the Palestinian people through UNRWA alongside grants to strengthen the English language skills of the Palestinian diplomatic corps. Furthermore, the New Zealand government decided to send an expert on renewable energy to Palestine to work with the Palestinian government in this important development sector.

Following her election, Prime Minister Ardern stated that the government's political program will focus on reducing child poverty and will seek to reduce the number of immigrants and international students coming to New Zealand whilst concurrently implementing free university education. Furthermore, the government aims to place restrictions on foreign investors in the real estate sector, revise and potentially reverse tax cuts, protect the environment and limit the impact of climate change.



New Zealand Foreign Minister Leader Winston Peters

This year also witnessed New Zealand's participation in the APEC summit in Vietnam where Mrs. Ardern held many bilateral meetings with leaders from the region. During the APEC summit, The Prime Minister pointed out the importance of rescuing the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) particularly following the withdrawal of the United States in early 2017. The Prime Minister also noted the importance of tackling climate change and stressed that the climate crisis was the biggest challenge facing the Asia Pacific and this generation. She stressed that the region has the largest number of people exposed to climate change in the world and highlighted the fact that the impacts of climate change could already be felt throughout the region and beyond.

Within the Asia-Pacific Region, New Zealand also participated in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] summit in the Philippines. Addressing ASEAN in a speech, Prime Minister Ardern announced that New Zealand seeks to strengthen and deepen relations with ASEAN, highlighting the Philippines as a particularly important partner.

Prime Minister Ardern also strongly criticized Australia's refugee policies and its handling of the closure of the Manus detention centre and offered \$1.8 million to provide basic services to refugees and asylum seekers in Manus and Nauru. Prime Minister Ardern reiterated her offer to Prime Minister Turnbull for New Zealand to receive 150 refugees from Manus and Nauru. It is important to note that in November 2017 Prime Minister Turnbull rejected Prime Minister Ardern's offer to resettle the refugees in New Zealand, despite his previous expressions of support for the proposal.



Prime Minister Turnbull meeting with Prime Minister Ardern at the ASEAN summit in June .

Pacific Islands

The Palestinian Embassy in cooperation with the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA) and the Palestinian Foreign Ministry continued its efforts to begin professional development cooperation with five Pacific countries. This project aims to deepen ties between the Palestinian Embassy and Pacific states by pursuing a south-south model of development cooperation. This mode of development cooperation involves a mutual transfer of expertise and knowledge that benefits both countries. After analysing the development needs of five Pacific Island nations, namely Fiji, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Samoa, the Palestinian Embassy discerned that the significant human resources possessed by Palestine can be used to assist these Pacific states in the following sectors: agriculture, health and education. Ultimately, this project is expected to promote and enhance bilateral and multilateral relations between the Palestinian government and the Pacific nations mentioned above.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with the Samoan high commissioner in Canberra

Fiji:

One of the most important events that occurred in the Pacific Islands in 2017 was Fiji's chairmanship of the United Nations Climate Change Conference [COP 23]. Fiji's main priority was to save the Pacific Islands from the threats posed by sea level rises due to the accelerated melting of ice in the North and South poles.

A pre-COP23 meeting was held in Nadi in October this year with the participation of political leaders and key advisors. During the meeting climate change was discussed as well as the threat of sea level rise and the threat climate change poses to fisheries. It is important to note Fiji is one of the Pacific countries that is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.



Embassy staff meeting with Fijian officials at the high commission of Fiji in Canberra

East Timor:

On 22 July, the East Timorese voted in their fourth parliamentary elections since independence. What distinguishes this election is the fact that it was characterised by order and calm and was run by the East Timorese government without outside interference. The new president of East Timor Francisco Guterres was the first presidential candidate to win an open majority in the first round of elections since Xanana Gusmão was elected with an overwhelming majority in East Timor's first elections in 2002. These presidential and parliamentary elections were the first in East Timor since the conclusion of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in East Timor in 2012. East Timor remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with about 40% of the population living below the poverty line. It is worth noting that East Timor regularly votes in favour of resolutions supporting the Palestinian people in the United Nations and other international bodies.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with the Ambassador for East Timor, Abel Guterres in Canberra

Papua New Guinea:

Contrary to the elections in East Timor, elections in Papua New Guinea were marred by numerous irregularities and allegations of corruption and vote-rigging. On 2 August 2017, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill was reappointed for his second term. Although Mr. O'Neill is the seventh Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea he is only the third Prime Minister since 1975. Papua New Guinea's financial situation is very worrying and the country needs to embark on many reforms and take immediate steps to correct previous mismanagement of both the federal and state budgets according to many resources. Regarding the relationship between Papua New Guinea and Israel, intensive consultations were conducted in 2013 to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. These consultations resulted in the signing of agreements on this matter by Peter O'Neill and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. Whilst the State of Papua New Guinea recognised the state of Palestine in 1985, official diplomatic relations have yet to be established between the two countries. It is worth mentioning that Papua New Guinea voted in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution rejecting Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which is a notable development.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with the Charge d'Affaires of Papua New Guinea, in Sakias Tameo.

Solomon Islands:

President Manasseh Sogavare was deposed in a vote of no-confidence as Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands. The no-confidence motion was presented by the opposition leader Derek Sikua and was sparked by a series of resignations by MP's opposed to Sogavere's rule. The no-confidence vote was approved by 27 out of 50 members.

Supporters of the no-confidence bill said that they lost confidence in the Prime Minister because he did not respond to their concerns regarding the stalled development process in the country. On 20 November 2017, Parliament elected Mr. Rick Houenipwela as the new Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands. Rick Houenipwela was a supporter of the no-confidence motion which was opposed by just 23 MP's.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with the High Commissioner of the Solomon Islands in Canberra

The new Prime Minister highlighted that his priorities would be maintaining political stability, eliminating corruption and improving the country's financial health. This is exemplified by public statements he made following his election where he noted that "corruption has caused inefficient government operations and has undermined public confidence in the government [...] vital resources have been taken from our schools and hospitals".

Mr. Houenipwela has been a member of parliament for seven years. His previous roles include Governor of the Central Bank, Minister of Finance and Treasury and, finally, Chairman of the General Accounts Committee. Before entering Parliament, Mr. Houenipwela worked at the World Bank in the United States where he served as a Chief Advisor to the Executive Director.

Detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru:

Australia has been subject to widespread international criticism for human rights abuses against refugees residing in Australia's shelters on both the Island of Nauru and Manus Island, the latter belonging to Papua New Guinea.

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNCHR] has called on the Australian Government to protect refugees at its Manus Island shelter in the state of Papua New Guinea. In a public statement, the UNHCR highlighted that it was alarmed by reports of violence against refugees who were being held in Australian detention centres on the island, noting that Australia needs to take full responsibility for its refugees and provide them with effective protection and security and work towards a sustainable, long-term solution to the problem in cooperation with the authorities of Papua New Guinea. Ultimately, this resulted in the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea ruling that the Manus Island shelter was illegal, eventuating in its closure on 31 October. Refugees have been living in the shelters on Manus Island and Nauru for nearly four years

Following the decision of the Supreme Court, the authorities in Papua New Guinea allocated three shelters for the refugees in Lorengau, the main city on the island of Manus. However, many refugees refused to move to these shelters, arguing that they would be attacked by the inhabitants of the city. Since October the 31st, Papua New Guinean authorities have cut off water, electricity, food and medical supplies to residents at the old refugee centre. Australia uses the detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru to detain asylum seekers trying to reach its coast. The government argues that those arriving by sea will never enter Australian territory even if they are found to be eligible for asylum because it would encourage human traffickers in Asia and increase deaths at sea.

The centres are home to asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Syria. In the last months of 2017, the inmates announced that following the closure of the centre on Manus Island, their food supplies have been confiscated and they have had to resort to drinking rainwater. It is important to mention that about 100 refugees have become ill due to poor treatment and harsh living conditions.

The Australian government proposes that the Manus Island refugees should either re-settle permanently in Papua New Guinea, be transferred to a detention centre in Nauru, or be relocated to a third country such as Cambodia. If these options are not accepted then the government argues that they should be returned home. Australia's recent election as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2018-2020 period may leave Australia particularly exposed to further charges of violating basic human rights due to its treatment of refugees.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



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

The strategic objectives to achieve this were as follows:

1. Further enhance and institutionalise bilateral relations with the foreign affairs ministries and policy-making bodies of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
2. Strengthen relationships between the GDOP and the Arab and international diplomatic corps.
3. Further enhance and institutionalise relationships with civil society in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.
4. Further enhance and institutionalise relationships with the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic communities in Australia. The Delegation strives to improve the ability of the GDOP to operate efficiently and effectively through the streamlining and institutionalisation of managerial, financial and consular processes.

Mode of Operation

1. To initiate and engage in heartfelt strategic dialogue with the Coalition Government members including the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Julie Bishop MP, DFAT leaders, Coalitions MPs, among others. The Coalition's foreign policy is unlikely to be sympathetic towards the Palestinian situation. For this purpose, a position paper that discusses the main components of Australia's foreign policy and its impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be prepared and future dialogue with the government will be based on it. The GDOP believes that a clear position, agreed upon by the GDOP, Palestinian civil society

and Palestinian business societies, must be determined before the GDOP approaches the new government to initiate official dialogue.

2. To create and sustain a more effective relationship with the New Zealand Government through robust dialogue and the development of a clear working plan that engages all stakeholders.

3. To work closely with the Pacific Island states, with more direct visits and improved bilateral coordination with their representatives in Canberra. The implementation of an active and inclusive regional strategy by Palestinian missions in the Pacific region would substantially improve relations between Palestine and various regional actors. Stronger lines of communication between the GDOP and the U.N. observer missions in both New York and Geneva would also lead to marked improvement in relations with relevant states. The GDOP hopes to participate more directly in discussions already taking place in New York and Geneva.

4. To develop an institutionalised strategy and implement an active method to engage with various Palestinian advocacy groups. The GDOP hopes that such strategy will specify a clear, overarching political vision and definite, unanimous political messages that can be impressed upon decision-makers in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Furthermore, developing an information sharing mechanism on Israeli human rights violations and other issues of concern will support these groups in their advocacy.

5. To empower and encourage the Palestinian community to take a stronger role in political life in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. A politically adept Palestinian community would theoretically form strong bonds with decision-making agencies, such as parliaments, ministries of foreign affairs, civil society groups and other institutions. Organising the Palestinian community and working to improve the leadership skills of its members is a high priority for the GDOP. In this regard, the GDOP will particularly focus on youth groups, which are integral to the community's future. The GDOP aims to assist in establishing an Australian Palestinian Community Council as a framework of representation for the Palestinian community, also to be used as a model for the region. Such a council should facilitate the community's ability to play a more prominent role in the

political life of Australia. The council should also provide beneficial social services to members and assist with local level engagement with councils and institutions.

6. Given the considerable influence of the Jewish community in Australian society, maintaining a productive and amicable relationship between this community and the GDOP is extremely important. The GDOP believes that robust and earnest dialogue with the Jewish community will lead to greater common understanding. Such dialogue could potentially influence and moderate the political positions of the Jewish community. Ultimately, a sustainable strategy for engagement could eventually lead to important long-term changes of the positions and policies of the Jewish community in regard to the Palestinian question.

7. The GDOP has worked diligently to connect with media and has made some progress with print media, resulting in the publication of numerous articles and interviews. The GDOP is pleased with this limited outreach, achieved without a dedicated media department. However, the GDOP believes that a dedicated media strategy would generate a much stronger impact and be far more effective at influencing public opinion within Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. At present, the capacity and strategy includes little more than a contact list for various media representatives in Australia and New Zealand. Undoubtedly, it is essential to involve the media and to keep them, and therefore the public, informed and interested. Furthermore, the proper utilisation of social media on platforms like Facebook and Twitter is essential, particularly if the GDOP hopes to connect directly with the public in any meaningful and influential way.

8. To prioritise those events and tasks within the GDOP's program with the most impact, in a bid to manage constraints on the GDOP's financial and human resources. In order to further respond to these constraints, the GDOP has launched a new program to engage volunteers/interns who are able to offer their valuable expertise in exchange for experience. These volunteers, most of whom are recent university graduates from a variety of fields, have been engaged to cover particular areas of work through a focus on research. The involvement of volunteers — all of whom work under guidance of the GDOP's professional staff—could significantly alleviate the human resources problem facing the GDOP, especially if coupled with effective general management of the GDOP's program, annual plan, and targeted outcomes.

ACTIVITIES



BILATERAL RELATIONS: AUSTRALIA

1. On the 13th of January, the Ambassador and Embassy staff met with the Assistant Secretary for the Middle East and North Africa Division Mr. Greg Ralph to brief him on the latest political developments of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. They emphasised Israel’s continuing human rights violations and its failure to curtail the construction of illegal settlements in the West Bank.
2. On the 26th of January Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a function celebrating Australia Day, upon invitation by Australian Prime Minister Hon. Malcolm Turnbull. Prime Minister Turnbull delivered a speech highlighting Australia’s foreign policy and the great achievements of Australians, especially in the fields of Economics and Trade. Ambassador Abdulhadi spoke briefly with Prime Minister Turnbull about the current situation in Palestine and Israel. The Prime Minister mentioned his visit to Ramallah in 2004 and they agreed to hold a meeting together as soon as the Prime Minister's schedule permits.



Malcolm Turnbull delivering a speech on Australia Day

3. On the 6th of February, the Ambassador met with the head of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, Maria Vamvakinou, to discuss joint plans for 2017. The expected visit of Australian parliamentarians from the group to Palestine was also discussed.
4. On the 7th of February, at the invitation of members of the National Party, Ambassador Abdulhadi gave a comprehensive presentation on the key components of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which included the Palestinian vision and strategy for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as well as the position of the Palestinian Government on final status issues. Final status issues are the main obstacles to the resumption of negotiations between the two parties. Ambassador Abdulhadi also urged members of Federal Parliament to recognize the state of Palestine in accordance with 1967 borders. This position aligns with international law and resolutions with international legitimacy.
5. On the 13th of February Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a working dinner held by the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Lebanon in the presence of a group of MPs, headed by Mr. Michael Sugar, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Treasury and Mr. Greg Lundy, Assistant Minister of Multiculturalism in Australia. During the dinner, they exchanged views on Arab-Australian relations and prospects for their development.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the working dinner with the Charge d'Affaires of Lebanon in Canberra

6. On the 15th of February, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a United Nations Interfaith Harmony event, hosted by the Parliamentary Committee of Multiculturalism in Partnership with the Canberra Interfaith Forum and Religions for Peace Australia. Emeritus Professor John Warhurst delivered the keynote address on the topic of “Government, Leaders and Faith in Australian Politics”. A robust discussion took place at the event on the importance of interfaith dialogue and finding common ground between all faiths and religions to enhance harmony and social cohesion.



Speakers at the United Nations Interfaith Harmony Forum at the Australian Federal Parliament.

7. On the 28th of February, the Ambassador met with several Parliamentarians including Mr. Peter Khalil from the Australian Labour Party. Both parties discussed the importance of Australia recognising the State of Palestine and continuing to engage in dialogue with the Labor party over the issue.

8. On the 1st of March as part of the Embassy's public relations campaign regarding the situation in Palestine, the Delegation distributed the incitement report of the PLO's cultural and media department. This report highlighted statements by Israeli officials that constitute incitement against the Palestinian people. The incitement report was distributed to members of Parliament in Australia and New Zealand, to members of the Arab and International Diplomatic Core, Civil Society and Advocacy Groups and Arabic and Islamic community members.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet have made numerous comments inciting violence against the Palestinian people.

9. On the 8th of March 2017, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Counsellor Suheir Gedeon celebrated International Women's Day at the residence of the Moroccan Ambassador and in the presence of a large number of members of the Arab and international diplomatic corps, representatives from civil society and public figures. During the occasion, the Moroccan Ambassador delivered an important speech highlighting the economic, social and political achievements of Moroccan women and their effective role in public life. The Australian-Moroccan artist Fatima Kellin also exhibited many of her oil paintings, which impressed the audience and included drawings of Palestine.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the Moroccan Embassy for International Women's Day

10. On the 22nd of March, the Ambassador of Qatar invited Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Parliamentary Delegation planning to visit Palestine to a dinner at Parliament House. During the dinner the Ambassadors discussed the final arrangements for the visit of the Parliamentary delegation to Qatar and Palestine and agreed on the program for the visit.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy Staff attending dinner with the Parliamentary Delegation that visited Palestine.

11. On the 29th of March, the ambassador gave a speech to the New South Wales parliament discussing the importance of recognising the state of Palestine. This event was attended by several NSW parliamentarians. Following the speech, Julia Finn MP and heads of the Parliamentary friends of Palestine in the NSW parliament invited Ambassador Abdulhadi and other staff members from the embassy to attend a working lunch.

12. On the 6th of April, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a reception held by the Lebanese Embassy in Canberra to welcome His Excellency Mr. Gibran Bassil, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Lebanon, in the presence of Arab Ambassadors, a group of Lebanese community leaders and representatives of the Australian Foreign Ministry. Mr. Bassil gave a speech in which he discussed the Syrian refugee crisis and its negative repercussions on the demographic, economic and socio-political situation in Lebanon.



The reception welcoming the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gibran Bassil

13. On the 28th of April, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon, accompanied by Mr. Jamal Nabulsi met with staff from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT] to discuss the hunger strike that was being held by Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Mrs. Gedeon presented facts about the hunger strike, highlighting Israeli violations of international law and the human rights of the Palestinian prisoners. Furthermore, Mrs. Gedeon outlined the legitimate demands of the prisoners' hunger strike. Ms. Gedeon called upon the Australian Government to condemn Israeli violations of international law and to ask the Israeli Government to meet the fair demands of the strike.

14. From the 24th of April to the 1st of May, within the framework of enhancing the relationship between the Palestinian embassy and parliamentarians and improving the understanding of the parliamentarians' knowledge of the situation on the ground imposed by the Israeli occupation, a delegation of seven parliamentarians, from both the National and Labor parties, visited occupied Palestine. Accompanied by the Ambassador, the delegation met with several government officials from the Palestinian government including Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah, Minister of Foreign and Expatriate Affairs Dr. Riad Maliki and MPs from the Palestinian legislative council. In addition to this, the delegation met with Palestinians from all walks of life alongside representatives from the local community, civil society, academia, local governments and committees against settlements as well as representatives from Jewish NGOs and Arab Knesset members. The delegation visited the cities of Hebron, Bethlehem, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Jaffa. The delegation witnessed the negative impact of the separation wall as well as Israel's colonial occupation policies on the social and economic life of the Palestinian people. It's important to mention that the delegation also visited the memorial for fallen ANZAC soldiers in Beersheba.



Members of the Parliamentary Delegation to Palestine at the Separation Wall and in Sebastia.



Images from the highly successful trip to Palestine with the Australian Parliamentary Delegation. Some locations in the images above include Beer'Sheva, the Christian village of Taybeh and the apartheid wall in Bethlehem

15. On the 5th of June the Members of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Palestine issued a joint statement regarding their recent trip to the occupied State. In the statement, the group expressed their gratitude to their Palestinian hosts and the Ambassador and noted the professionalism and maturity of Palestinian civil society and their emphasis on the need for peace to take place within a pluralistic democratic society. Furthermore, the delegation urged for the implementation of the two-state solution, before the process of settlement encroachment makes any Israeli disengagement from the occupied territories an impossibility, or hollow gesture. Finally, they noted that they would strive to ensure that the bipartisan approach within Australian politics will remain the implementation of the two state solution and to lobby for Australian recognition of the Palestinian State.



Members of the Parliamentary Delegation to Palestine receiving recognition for their efforts in promoting Palestinian human rights.

16. From the 14th – 16th of June, Ambassador Abdulhadi paid a visit to Queensland where he participated in an Iftar dinner organised by the Blue Star Intercultural Foundation in the Queensland Parliament. While in Queensland, the Ambassador also met with the Speaker of the Queensland Parliament and a number of MPs to discuss the establishment of a Queensland branch of the Australian-Palestinian parliamentary friendship group. The Ambassador also discussed the current political situation in Palestine and the possibility of resuming the peace process between Israel and Palestine. During the visit, Ambassador Abdulhadi also met with representatives of the Palestinian community and solidarity groups.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with Queensland Parliamentarians

17. On the 19th of June, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended an Iftar dinner sponsored by the Leader of the opposition in NSW, Mr. Luke Foley, and the chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, Ms. Julia Finn MP. Mr. Foley welcomed and acknowledge the presence of the Ambassador and Ms. Finn talked about the Palestinian plight and the necessity of Australia recognising the State of Palestine. The Iftar was attended by several religious leaders, politicians and Muslim, Arab and Palestinian community leaders.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with NSW MP and Leader of the Opposition in NSW Luke Foley

18. On the 27th of June, a policy forum on Palestine sponsored by the NSW Labor Party was conducted in Sydney. The forum, hosted by Anthony Albanese MP and Tony Burke MP with a keynote speech by former Foreign Minister Mr. Bob Carr, was attended by Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Mrs. Noura Saleh from the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra. It was also attended by members of the Labor Party and Arab and Palestinian community members. Bob Carr was the main speaker and delivered an excellent speech highlighting the urgent need to end the Israeli occupation and achieve Palestinian self-determination in a sovereign and independent state based on 1967 borders. He reiterated the Labor Party's

position that Israeli settlements are illegal according to International law and the Fourth Geneva convention. Mr. Carr noted that the continuation of the Israeli occupation is poisoning Israeli society, violating the human rights of the Palestinian people and increasing their suffering. He indicated that the continuation of the Israeli occupation and the current settlement activities will lead to an apartheid system in Palestine similar to that which existed in South Africa. In this regard, he called on the Australian government to recognize the State of Palestine, noting that such an act would constitute an investment in comprehensive and durable peace in the region. Furthermore, Mr. Carr called on the forthcoming NSW Labor Party conference to adopt a clear resolution on the importance of recognizing the State of Palestine to save the two-state solution, avoid Israeli Apartheid and provide hope to the Palestinian people.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with prominent members of the Federal Labor Party and the Hon. Bob Carr

19. On the 19th of July, Ambassador Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh met with Mr. Lock Wild and Warren Howe, officials of the Department for International Development of the Australian Foreign Ministry, at the Palestinian Embassy in Jerusalem. The two sides discussed the development of the Agricultural Support Program in Palestine funded by the Australian Government.
20. Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff attended a dinner that was organised by the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network [APAN]. Deputy Speaker and Nationals MP the Hon. Mark Coulton, Labor MP Ms. Maria Vamvakinou and Labor MP Mr. Ross Hart spoke passionately about their visit to Palestine earlier this year, which was organised by the Palestinian Embassy. Greens Senator Janet Rice also spoke eloquently of her unique experience visiting Palestine with APAN. The dinner was widely attended by parliamentarians, diplomats and civil society representatives.
21. The Queensland Parliament joined the Federal Parliament, alongside other State Parliaments across Australia, in forming a Parliamentary Friends of Palestine group. The launch of the group was a great success. Excellent speeches were delivered by Palestinian-Australian lawyer Ms. Roba Rayan about her recent trip to Palestine through an international law program and Ambassador Abdulhadi about the recognition of the State of Palestine. The event was widely attended by Queensland MPs, Palestinian community members and members of other groups such as the Queensland Labor Friends of Palestine. Special thanks to Mr Peter Russo MP and Ms Wendy Turner for their work in organising the event.



APAN
Australia Palestine
Advocacy Network

22. On the 1st of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a meeting between Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah in Palestine. This meeting was important in deepening bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine.



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull with the Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and Ambassador Abdulhadi at a meeting in Ramallah.

During the meeting, several important issues were discussed such as Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and their violation of international law, prospects for the revival of the political process, Palestinian reconciliation and prospects for bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Furthermore, the Australian leader of the opposition Bill Shorten also met with Dr. Rami Hamdallah and Ambassador Abdulhadi in Ramallah on the same date. During the meeting, Mr. Shorten was briefed about the illegal Israeli settlements as the main obstacle to peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Shorten also reiterated his support for a two-state solution and promised that the Australian Labor Party, if they win the next election, will assist in implementing the two-state solution. The current reconciliation process between Fatah and Hamas was also a central topic of the discussions. While in Palestine, Mr Shorten also visited the Aida refugee camp, where he spoke with Palestinian children and was informed of the Palestinian right of return.



Opposition leader Bill Shorten with Prime Minister Hamdallah in Ramallah

During this period, members of the Parliamentary delegation visiting Palestine also met with Prime Minister Hamdallah, reflecting the increasing interest being shown towards Palestinian issues from Australia.



**The meeting between the Australian Parliamentary Delegation and the Prime Minister of Palestine,
Dr. Rami Hamdallah.**

23. On the 16th of October, under the patronage of Ambassador Abdulhadi and in the presence of First Secretary Ms. Noura Saleh, the Palestinian community in NSW organized a large function to acknowledge and appreciate the work of the Hon. Bob Carr in supporting the rights of the Palestinian people. The function was attended by NSW MPs, civil society representatives, and members of the Muslim, Arab and Palestinian communities. In his welcoming speech to Mr. Carr, Ambassador Abdulhadi thanked Mr. Carr for his consistent support for the Palestinian people, including his support for the recognition of the State of Palestine and his ability to mobilise the Labor leadership and the wider Australian public. Mr. Carr praised the dignity and resilience of the Palestinian people and talked about his journey in supporting Palestinian rights and the huge challenges that



Ambassador Abdulhadi and Mr. Bob Carr

he faced on this journey. He reiterated his support for the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, while condemning Israeli settlements and Israeli policies that are leading us to an apartheid system.

Mr. Eddie Zananiri, representing the Palestinian community, praised the work of Mr. Carr and his endless support for the Palestinian people. In addition, he appreciated the historical shift of the

Labor Party position towards supporting Palestinian rights and expressed the interest of the Palestinian community in engaging in a robust discussion with the leadership of the Labor Party. Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Palestinian community also provided Mr. Carr and some NSW MPs with awards as acknowledgement and appreciation for their incredible achievements for Palestinians.

24. On the 22nd of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Advisor Suheir Gedeon met with a senior officer of the Federal Police and Interpol official to discuss Australia's support for Palestine's membership of Interpol at the Palestinian Embassy headquarters. Ambassador Abdulhadi gave an important presentation on the benefits of Palestine joining Interpol and the importance of this move in enhancing the professional and police capabilities of the Palestinian police force within the framework of building Palestinian institutions.



25. On the 5th of October, representatives from the International Development Service [DFID] of DFAT gave a presentation highlighting the outcomes of the agricultural sector support program in Palestine. The presentation highlighted the challenges facing the program under a changing political reality and in a difficult political environment.

26. On the 13th of October, Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh and Jamal Nabulsi met with the Director General of the Ministry of Education at the Ministry's headquarters in the presence of the Representative of the Director of Development Department of the Australian Foreign Ministry. The two sides discussed the possibility of bilateral cooperation in the education sector. In particular, the parties discussed the possibility of using Australia's experience in the education sector to benefit Palestine. Ambassador Abdulhadi presented the components of a program document highlighting the vision of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Palestine and the needs and priorities of the education sector. The Australian side also offered the services provided by the Ministry of Education and other relevant bodies in the education sector. The two sides agreed on the necessity of regular and continued communication to elaborate on specific programs in support of the education sector in Palestine.

27. On the 14th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi, accompanied by Counselor Suheir Gedeon and Jamal Nabulsi, met with Mr. Matthew Neuhaus, Deputy Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs and Mr. Lloyd Broderick, Director of the Middle East Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting was held at the request of the Australian Foreign Ministry to discuss and evaluate the outcomes of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's meeting with the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine Dr. Rami Hamdalah, with the participation of Ambassador Abdulhadi. Recent developments of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were also discussed.

30. On the 30th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi met with staff from the Middle Eastern Department of the Australian Foreign Ministry alongside the Deputy Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, Mr. Matthew Neuhaus. Roving Ambassador Dr. Safieh, Counselor Suheir Gedeon, First Secretary Noura Saleh and Jamal Nabulsi also attended the meeting. Mr. Neuhaus welcomed Ambassador Abdulhadi, Ambassador Safieh and the Embassy staff and noted the importance of the meeting.



Embassy Staff and Roving Ambassador Dr. Safieh with Mr. Matthew Nahos and Foreign Ministry Officials.

31. On the 30th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi accompanied by Roving Ambassador Dr. Safieh, met with the Shadow Foreign Minister, Ms. Penny Wong, in her office at the Federal Parliament. Both Ambassadors thanked the Labor Party for supporting the two-state solution and the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people. Ms. Wong also stressed the position of the Labor Party on the Palestinian issue, stressing the illegality of Israeli settlements under international law and Labor Party support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Both Ambassadors also met with the Director of the Office of the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Philip El Bassoon and discussed the challenges facing the peace process and Israeli violations of human rights.

32. Roving Ambassador of the State of Palestine Dr. Afif Safieh had a successful visit to Canberra. While in Canberra, Dr. Safieh had the opportunity to be the keynote speaker at the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, where he delivered a powerful speech on the plight of the Palestinian people, the peace process and his hopes that someday soon the Palestinian people will no longer need a day of solidarity. Dr. Safieh also conducted productive and engaging meetings with an array of staff from DFAT, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon Senator Penny Wong and a Senior Adviser of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During his final evening in Canberra, Dr Safieh had the pleasure of sharing a dinner in his honour with Arab Ambassadors and leaders of the Canberra Palestinian Community.



Dr. Safieh and Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with NSW MPs

33. On the 6th of December, The Australian Foreign Ministry held a Christmas celebration at the Ministry's headquarters in Canberra. The Palestinian Ambassador participated in the celebration, where the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop delivered a speech in which she talked about the most important components of Australian foreign policy contained in the "White Paper" document as well as the special relationship between the Ministry and the international diplomatic corps in Canberra.



Foreign Minister Julie Bishop giving a speech at the Australian Foreign Ministry in Canberra and Ambassador Abdulhadi Participating in the celebrations.



**Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and the Minister for Trade and Industry Steve Ciobo
at the DFAT Christmas Party.**

34. The Palestinian Embassy and the Palestinian Community carried out several events in response to Trump's announcement declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel. These were as follows: first, a press release on the subject was distributed to MPs in Australia and New Zealand as well as to the international and Arab diplomatic corps, civil society organizations and solidarity groups with the Palestinian people alongside various media outlets. Second, the Palestinian Embassy prepared a letter to be sent to the Australian Foreign Minister and the Foreign Minister of New Zealand and to the Council of Arab Ambassadors. This letter was also presented to the OIC Group. Third, an emergency meeting of the Steering Committee of the OIC Group was held to discuss Trump's remarks.



Ambassador Abdulhadi speaking to the media at the Embassy

During this meeting, it was agreed that the OIC Summit Statement would be sent to the Australian Foreign Minister, accompanied by the letter agreed upon by members of the OIC Group prepared by the Palestinian Embassy.

Fourthly, Ambassador Abdulhadi conducted numerous media interviews in Australia and New Zealand. In this context, the ABC interviewed Ambassador Abdulhadi where he explained the position of the Palestinian leadership on Trump's reprehensible, and ultimately futile, decision and its implications for the future of the political process in the Middle East. Channel 10 also held a television interview with Ambassador Abdulhadi on the same subject. Alongside this, Radio National Australia and Radio National New Zealand also interviewed the Ambassador. Finally, many local radio stations in Australia also brought in the Ambassador for comment.



Ambassador Abdulhadi commenting on the announcement by President Trump to move the capital of Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

BILATERAL RELATIONS: NEW ZEALAND

35. On the 26th of September, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Riyad Malki was presented with the credentials of New Zealand's new non-resident Ambassador to Palestine, Mr. Barnaby Riley, after the expiration of the duties of the former New Zealand Ambassador, Mr. Jim McClay.
36. On the 5th of October, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a symposium organized by the New Zealand Embassy in Canberra on the upcoming New Zealand elections and the socio-economic reality in New Zealand. Mr. Colin James, a renowned journalist and strategist for economic and political affairs in New Zealand, gave an insightful lecture on civil society in New Zealand and the prospects for New Zealand's economic development.
37. On the 2nd of November, the Governor-General of New Zealand the Rt. Hon Patsy Reddy met with Palestinian Prime Minister HE Dr Rami Hamdallah and Ambassador Abdulhadi in Ramallah. The discussion centred around the results of the recent parliamentary elections in New Zealand, the status of women in Palestine, and education as a survival strategy for the Palestinian people. The Prime Minister briefed the Governor-General on the current political situation in Palestine and the urgent need for the international community to put pressure on Israel to cease its widespread violations of the human rights of Palestinians. The Prime Minister also thanked the New Zealand government for its continuous support for the Palestinian people.



**Rt. Hon Patsy Reddy meeting with Prime Minister Dr Rami Alhamdallah and
Ambassador Abdulhadi in Ramallah**



Rt. Hon Patsy Reddy meeting with , the Palestinian Prime Minister

Dr. Rami Alhmdallah in Ramallah

38. On the 30th of November First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in a meeting organized by The Embassy of New Zealand in Canberra. The protocol chief of New Zealand's state department, Mr. Michael Sonny, delivered a speech at the meeting, in which he presented the most important political developments in New Zealand, especially the formation of the new government headed by the Labor Party and the New Zealand First Party. The meeting was attended by many members of the Arab and International Diplomatic corps.

BILATERAL RELATIONS: PACIFIC ISLANDS

39. Throughout March, Ambassador Abdulhadi, with the participation of Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh, held a series of meetings with the Ambassadors of Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, East Timor and Papua New Guinea. The parties discussed the recognition of the State of Palestine as well as the prospects for development and professional cooperation between the Pacific Islands and the State of Palestine.

40. On the 29th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh met with the High Commissioner of Fiji, His Excellency Mr. Yogesh Punja, and other staff of the Fijian High Commission. Together, they discussed potential development cooperation between Palestine and Fiji. Ambassador Abdulhadi outlined the proposal and its objectives, which was welcomed by the Fijian High Commissioner, and both parties agreed to take the necessary action to make this development cooperation a successful endeavour. Following this meeting, a Palestinian delegation from Ramallah will soon visit Fiji to further discuss bilateral relations between the two countries.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh meeting with the Fijian High Commissioner

BILATERAL RELATIONS – ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC CORPS

41. On the 25th of January, Ambassador Abdulhadi, in his role as Vice-President of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra, attended the group's plenary meeting at the Indonesian Embassy upon invitation from the President of the OIC Group Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Nadjib Riphath Kesoema. At the meeting, Ambassador Abdulhadi presented the formal structure of the group and its various by-laws. Ambassador Abdulhadi also bade farewell to outgoing Ambassador Kesoema and thanked him kindly for his excellent work as President of the OIC Group. Ambassador Kesoema reported on the group's activities that were implemented in 2016 noting, in particular, the letter to Foreign Minister Hon. Julie Bishop introducing the group. Ambassador Kesoema also presented the group's planned activities for 2017. These included a meeting with Foreign Minister Bishop in March and a meeting with Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells. The group discussed the importance of the relationship with the Muslim community in Australia and suggested regular consultation meetings with Muslim community leaders. They stressed the importance of changing Islamic stereotypes, both in Australia and globally. This plenary meeting also saw the missions of Pakistan and Bangladesh join the group's Steering Committee.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the OIC with the Indonesian Ambassador.

42. On the 31st of January Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in the farewell of the Indonesian Ambassador together with other members of the Arab and International Diplomatic Corps and representatives from the Australian government. It's important to highlight the excellent professional relationship between the Ambassador of the State of Palestine and the Ambassador of Indonesia due to cooperation stemming from their joint leadership roles in the OIC group.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at a dinner held in honour of the robust Lebanese Australian community media.

43. On the 31st of January, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a dinner held in honour of the Lebanese-Australian community media upon invitation by Charge d’Affaires a.i. of Lebanon, Mr. Giscard El Khoury. The dinner was attended by Arab media outlets, members of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Multicultural Affairs Hon. Senator Zed Seselja, NSW MP Mr. Jihad Dib and other prominent guests. Senator Seselja delivered a speech about the importance of multiculturalism and the contribution of Arab, especially Lebanese, communities to the success of Australia.
44. On the 3rd of February Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a Council of Australian-Arab Relations (CAAR) morning tea at DFAT upon invitation by the Chair of CAAR, Ms. Sue Ismiel. The morning tea was attended by the executive board of CAAR, leaders of DFAT and members of the Arab diplomatic corps. Ms. Ismiel introduced to the attendees the objectives and programs of CAAR for 2017 and expressed the willingness of CAAR to work closely with the Council of Arab Ambassadors in Canberra. Attendees also had a chance to network and exchange views and ideas on a broad range of topics.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with the Council of Australia—Arab relations at DFAT

45. On the 13th of February Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a working dinner held by the Chargé D'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Lebanon in the presence of a group of MPs, headed by Mr. Michael Sugar, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Treasury and Mr. Greg Lundy, Assistant Minister of Multiculturalism in Australia. During the dinner, they exchanged views on Arab-Australian relations and prospects for their development.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at a working dinner held by the Charge' d'Affaires of the Lebanese Embassy.

46. On the 14th of February First Secretary Noura Saleh and Mr. Jamal Nabulsi attended the Annual Sports Activities Morning, hosted by the Embassy of the State of Qatar at the Australian Institute of Sport, in celebration of the State of Qatar's National Sports Day. The representatives of the General Delegation of Palestine both participated in and cheered on the sports activities that took place on this enjoyable morning.

47. On the 1st of March Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh attended the International Women's Day celebrations in Canberra organised by the United Nations Information Centre [UNIC] in collaboration with the Multicultural Social Forum and the Multicultural Women's Forum.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh at International Women's Day Celebrations.

48. On the 8th of March Ambassador Abdulhadi and Counsellor Mrs. Suheir Gedeon attended an International Women's Day morning tea at the residence of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. Mr Karim Medrek. The event celebrated the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of Moroccan Women and highlighted the fantastic work of Moroccan-Australian artist Mrs. Fatima Killeen,

49. On the 25th of March Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the Annual Gala Dinner for the Sydney Chapter of the Future Movement. The dinner was held at the Orion Centre Reception Lounge and was attended by several parliamentary representatives from Lebanese political parties as well as representatives from different religious sects and the media alongside guests from the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic communities.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with members from the Future movement in Sydney.

52. On the 5th of April, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a farewell lunch for H.E. Mr Nabil Mohamed A. Al Saleh, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, hosted by Dr. Ibrahim Abu Mohamed, the Grand Mufti of Australia. The lunch was held in the function room of the Australian National Imams Council and was attended by many prominent diplomats and religious figures.

53. On the 6th of April, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a reception for H.E. Mr. Gebran Bassil, Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, hosted by the Lebanese Embassy at Old Parliament House. The reception was widely attended by diplomats, bureaucrats and politicians, who listened on as Foreign Minister Bassil delivered an excellent and engaging speech.



The Reception for Gebran Bassil at Old Parliament House.

54. On the 24th of May Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a reception for the occasion of Africa Day at Albert Hall, hosted by the Tunisian Ambassador, Dean of the African Group Heads of Mission. The event was widely attended by the International Diplomatic Corps, civil society organisations, as well as esteemed guests H.E. the Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, H.E. the Hon. Julie Bishop MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senator Penny Wong, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr Stuart Horne, Head of the Middle East Division of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The event showcased African culture through food and music. The speeches at the event highlighted the growing relations between Australia and African countries, especially in the areas of climate change, poverty alleviation and counter terrorism.



Africa Day! A highly enjoyable and informative occasion.

55. On the 31st of May, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the Latin American Flavours Festival, hosted by the Ambassador of Colombia, the Dean of the Latin American Group. The event included a live band and a variety of artistic performances, representing the Latin American nations of Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba and Brazil. The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, also delivered a speech. The event was widely attended by the International Diplomatic Corp, civil society organisations and Parliamentarians such as Ms. Maria Vamvakinou MP and Senator Lee Rhiannon.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the Latin American Flavours Festival with Ms. Maria Vamvakinou MP and Senator Lee Rhiannon.

56. On the 20th of June, The Council of Arab Ambassadors in Canberra organized a multicultural and multi faith Iftar dinner in Canberra at the Old Parliament House. Ms Julie Bishop, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was the Guest of Honour and delivered a speech highlighting growing relationships between Australia and the Arab World and the effective participation of Australia in countering terrorism in Iraq and Syria. Ms Bishop condemned all forms and acts of terrorism including the Islamophobic terror attack against Muslim prayers in London. She also indicated that those who commit terror in the name of Islam do not represent the great values of the religion. The Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors also addressed the audience praising Australia for its multicultural society and its principle of the 'fair go' and acknowledged the role played by Arab and Muslim communities in the development and prosperity of Australia. The function was attended by governmental officials, members of the International Diplomatic Corps, civil society representatives and religious and community leaders, among others. It is worth mentioning that this was the first time the Council of Arab Ambassadors collectively organized such an Iftar dinner which was greatly appreciated by all attendees.



The multicultural and multi-faith Iftar dinner at Old Parliament House in Canberra.



The multicultural and multifaith Iftar dinner!



Iftar with the Palestinian Community

57. On the 21st of June, DFAT organized a reception to celebrate Ramadan at its premises. The reception was attended by the Muslim and Arab diplomatic missions, DFAT staff and other governmental officials. Ms. Frances Adamson, Secretary of DFAT, delivered a welcome speech highlighting the significance of Ramadan and its importance in promoting tolerance, harmony and coexistence. Mr. Nabil Lakhal, the Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, also delivered a speech highlighting the values of Islam and its message of mercy and unity. Ambassador Abdulhadi, Suheir Gedeon and Noura Salah attended the reception representing the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra.

58. On the 24th of June, at the invitation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a reception commemorating World Refugee Day in Canberra. The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Adam Bogorami, a Palestinian who had emigrated to Australia from Yarmouk camp in Syria. In his speech, Mr. Bogorami pointed out the suffering of refugees in general and Palestinian refugees in particular. He also thanked the Palestinian embassy in Canberra for its efforts in facilitating the transfer of his family from Syria to Australia.



Ambassador Abdulhadi commemorating World Refugee Day with the inspirational Mr. Adam Bogorami.

On the 21st of July, First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in a workshop organized by the United Nations Information Office in Canberra on the Pacific States and the development challenges they face, with their responsiveness to the Millennium Development Goals of particular focus, at the headquarters of the United Nations Centre .

59. On the 2nd of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi met with the Indonesian Ambassador at the Embassy of Indonesia to welcome the new Ambassador and to discuss the work plan of the OIC Group of Embassies in Canberra. Ambassador Abdulhadi and his Indonesian counterpart devised the work plan of the group, its organizational structure and management plan for 2017.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with the Indonesian Ambassador discussing the work plan of the OIC group.

60. On the 3rd of August, Palestinian Ambassador and First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in a workshop organized by the cultural attaché of the Saudi Embassy in Canberra. The workshop explored practical and academic options after postgraduate studies, highlighting the importance of adapting academic studies to market requirements.

61. On the 10th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, took part in a seminar organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the headquarters of the Turkish Embassy, which focused on the situation of the Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The Ambassadors of the three countries, in addition to representatives of UNCHR, delivered speeches on the subject, which focused on the challenges and difficulties faced by the Syrian refugees as well as the host countries, especially the financial issues posed by large influxes of refugees. UNCHR delegates also spoke of the importance of preserving the rights of refugees and the need to provide them with the necessary support and the responsibility of the international community towards the crisis.

62. On the 24th of October, Ambassador Abdulhadi, accompanied by the staff of the Palestinian Embassy, participated in United Nations Day at Old Parliament House in Canberra. Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop gave a speech in which she praised the role of the United Nations. She also referred to Australia's membership in the United Nations Human Rights Council and the role that Australia plays as a member, particularly in the promotion of opportunities for equality between men and women. The Director of the United Nations Information Centre, Mr. Christopher Woodthorpe, also delivered the speech of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which highlighted the most important achievements of the United Nations for the year 2017 and the tasks entrusted to it in the future.



Julie Bishop speaking at United Nations Day

Christopher Woodthorpe delivering the Secretary-General's speech.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the Egyptian Embassy.

63. On the 14th of November, at the invitation of His Excellency the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a working dinner in honour of the Minister of International Development and Multiculturalism, Ms. Conchita Wells, at the residence of the Egyptian Ambassador. During the meeting, many important issues related to current Islamist trends in the Arab world and the hijacking of Islam by extremist groups were raised. The current relationship between the Australian government and the Muslim community in Australia was also discussed. In this regard, the importance of a serious and respectful dialogue between the two parties was noted as was the imperative that this dialogue be conducted in a way that did not inflame tension between the two communities so as to reduce the impact of terrorist groups and build positive relationships between Australia's Muslim Communities and the rest of Australian society.

64. On the 25th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in the Indonesian Culture Festival at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. During the celebration, many cultural events were held in the presence of the Indonesian Ambassador and a number of foreign ambassadors. The Indonesian Ambassador welcomed Ambassador Abdulhadi and considered the ambassador's participation to be an affirmation of the close ties between the two countries.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Ambassador of Indonesia at the Indonesian Culture Festival

65. On the 28th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in an important symposium at the headquarters of the Palestinian Embassy on the fall of King Farouk and its impact on successive Egyptian policies.



The Seminar on the fall of King Farouk

The seminar was attended by many members of the Arab and International Diplomatic Corps, representatives of civil society and the Arab and Egyptian communities in Canberra. HE the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt delivered a speech in which he thanked the audience and addressed some key milestones of the political history of Egypt.

66. On the 29th of November, The embassy, in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre, hosted the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People event. The event was a wonderful success, with an excellent speech by the keynote speaker HE Dr Afif Safieh, an incredible dance performance by the Canberra Palestinian Community Dabkeh group, the reading of the United Nations Secretary-General's message on marking the day, and additional speeches by Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors. The event was eloquently MC'd by Diana Abdel-Rahman.



Pictures from the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People event, hosted by the Palestinian Embassy.



More pictures from the highly successful and enjoyable evening!

67. On the 19th of December, following the announcement by US President Trump of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the Palestinian Embassy took urgent action with the Arab embassies in Canberra and the group of embassies of the OIC. The Arab Group sent a letter to Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop on the circumstances of this declaration and its violation of the principles of international law. Furthermore, the letter noted the potential for Trump's declaration to increase violence in an already volatile region. This letter was adopted by the OIC Group of Embassies, where Ambassador Abdulhadi is the Vice President.



Meeting with members of the OIC to discuss the official letter from the Palestinian Embassy dealing with President Trump's announcement.

68. At a meeting with the OIC on the 21st of December, Ambassador Abdulhadi gave a detailed presentation on the components of the White Paper and the main criticisms that were addressed to it during this meeting. Arab Ambassadors and representatives of Arab embassies participated actively during this meeting, where they presented many important observations about the document, especially its lack of focus on the Middle East. The Arab ambassadors also agreed to develop a strategy to strengthen cooperation and consultation with the Australian government on the basis of this document.



Ambassador Abdulhadi meeting with Arab Ambassadors to discuss the components of the Foreign Policy White Paper.

RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

69. On the 4th of January, Ambassador Abdulhadi welcomed Mr. Greg or Henderson at the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra to discuss the current political situation in Palestine and the aims of the future visit to Palestine by a joint team constituting the United Church and members of the Jewish community. Mr Henderson emphasised the position of the Uniting Church in support of the self-determination of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. Mr. Henderson told the Ambassador that the aims of the visit by the joint group to Palestine were to experience and better understand the situation on the ground in the framework of the current dialogue taking place between the Uniting Church and the Jewish community.
70. On the 30th of January, the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra issued a press release on the day of solidarity with the Palestinian community in Israel. The statement highlighted Israeli violations of the rights of Palestinian citizens in Israel and the systematic policy of racial discrimination against the Palestinian minority in Israel.



Land Day Protestors

71. On the 20th of February, the Ambassador of the State of Palestine together with First Secretary Noura Saleh met with members of the Uniting Church and the Jewish community to hear the briefing on the results of the joint trip to Palestine at the Uniting Church's headquarters in Sydney. They discussed the outcomes of the 3-week trip in which the joint group met with Palestine officials such as the Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah as well as members of Palestinian civil society where they were briefed about the facts on the ground. Of particular focus were the impacts of Israeli settlements on the viability of a two-state solution. In this context, it is important to mention that dialogue is taking place between the Uniting Church of Australia – which adopts a pro-Palestinian position – and the Jewish community, which adopts a pro-Israeli position. In the briefing, one of the positive impacts was that one of the speakers, a conservative Jewish Rabbi, emphasised the threat posed by settlements to the feasibility of a lasting solution in a speech at his Synagogue.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh with members of the Uniting Church.

72. On the 21st of February, the Embassy participated in Canberra's Multicultural Festival; our theme was to promote tourism in Palestine. We held a photographic exhibition that highlighted the most important tourist and religious sites in Palestine, with Al-Aqsa mosque, the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, the Hisham Palace in Jericho and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other important archaeological sites of particular interest. Our stall also included Palestinian handi-crafts and traditional foods. The stall was admired and praised by the attendees of the festival. The Multicultural Festival in Canberra is a massive event and is visited annually by around 300,000 visitors from all around the country. All other diplomatic missions also take part in the event as do important civil society organizations.



Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and Jamal Nabulsi at Canberra's multicultural festival.



Pictures from the Palestinian stand at the Multicultural Festival.

73. On the 1st of March, Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh attended the International Women’s Day Celebrations in Canberra organised by the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in collaboration with the Multicultural Social Forum and the Multicultural Women’s Forum.

74. On the 8th of March, Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh attended a lecture organised by the ANU featuring Dr. Mohammad Sabah, the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait, entitled “Regional Security in a Turbulent World: A GCC Perspective”. The lecture addressed the Israeli – Palestinian conflict as a critical factor contributing to instability in the region and Dr. Sabah recommended a just and comprehensive peace to the Israeli – Palestine conflict as a means of guaranteeing security and stability in the region.



Ambassador Abdulhadi attending a lecture at the ANU entitled “Regional Security in a Turbulent World: A GCC Perspective.”

75. On the 17th of March, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon represented Palestine at Hughes Primary School's Harmony Day. Over 44 different nationalities were represented at the school. The Palestinian Delegation displayed photos of Palestine, Palestinian olive-wood carvings, ceramics and embroidery and provided Palestinian food for the over 450 students and teachers who attended the event. Ambassador Abdulhadi visited the event and met the principal of Hughes Primary School, thanking her for organising the event.



Counsellor Suheir Gedeon attending Harmony Day at Hughes Primary School

On the 18th of March, Ambassador Abdulhadi presented at, and other Palestinian Delegation staff participated in, an advocacy workshop that was organised by the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network and the Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine. Ambassador Abdulhadi's presentation at the workshop focused on the different elements of advocacy, including constituency building, engaging with the media, and lobbying key decision-makers. Participants in the workshop learned together about strategic and focused advocacy, including how to form SMART strategic goals, develop practical lobbying skills, and how to deal with difficult questions.



The APAN advocacy workshop helping Palestinians in Australia develop essential advocacy and lobbying skills.

76. On the 22nd of March, Palestinian Embassy staff attended a book launch for *A Lover's Country* by Stuart Rees, hosted by the Federal Parliamentary Friends of Palestine. Deputy Speaker the Hon. Mark Coultan launched the book, with additional speeches by Ms. Maria Vamvakinou MP and Professor Stuart Rees himself. The event was well attended by Federal MPs, the International Diplomatic Corps and members of the Palestinian Community.
77. On the 24th of March, the Ambassador participated in a large religious celebration for the Feast of Annunciation organised by the Mennonite and Maronite Patriarchs. The Patriarch thanked the ambassadors for attending and Ambassador Abdulhadi for taking part in the event, and praised the Christian-Islamic interfaith harmony of the event, expressing its importance.

78. On the 28th of March, Ambassador Abdulhadi was a speaker on, and the Embassy staff attended, the Arab Ambassadors' Panel, hosted by the National Security Students and Alumni Association (NSSAA) at the Australian National University. The other ambassadors that spoke on the panel were those of Egypt, Qatar and Tunisia. Each speech lasted for fifteen minutes and was followed by a thirty-minute question and answer session. A wide range of topics were covered by the speakers, focusing on the Middle-Eastern security challenges under the Trump Administration. Ambassador Abdulhadi's speech was received with great enthusiasm by the students, who asked the Ambassador a number of pertinent questions during the seminar.



Ambassador Abdulhadi attending the Arab Ambassadors' Panel at the Australian National University.

79. On the 5th of May, Embassy staff attended a roundtable discussion held at the Australian National University on the topic of "the fascination with Arab women and their lives, the misconceptions that abound, and how Arab women respond". The discussion was centred around the recently released book *Beyond Veiled Clichés* authored by Palestinian-Australian writer Amal Awad. The roundtable also featured prominent Arab feminist figures Joumanah El Matrah and Raihan Ismail.

80. On the 24th of June, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) observed World Refugee Day at Albert Hall in Canberra. The function was attended by representatives of the ACT government, diplomatic corps, refugee families and the local community. Mr. Thomas Albrecht, the representative of the UNCHR to Australia, spoke on the occasion highlighting the current tragedy of thousands of refugees worldwide and the necessity for the international community to take immediate measures to protect the rights of refugees and provide them with the necessary services for a decent life. Mr Adam Bujairami, the key speaker and an immigrant with a Palestinian background, talked about his story emigrating to Australia from Yarmouk refugee Camp in Syria as a result of the civil war. His story highlights the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees who have been expelled from their home land, and accordingly lost their identity. It was a story of resilience that also highlighted the difficulties that face refugees from all over the world. Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the event and congratulated Adam for his impressive and inspiring journey.

Mr. Adam Bujairami delivering an inspiring speech at World Refugee Day



81. On the 26th of July, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the launch of Peter Manning's book *Janet Venn Brown*. The event was a great success and was widely attended by New South Wales MPs and prominent members of the community. Ambassador Abdulhadi delivered a speech at the event in which he spoke passionately about the life of Janet Venn Brown, highlighting her love for Palestinian activist Wael Zuaiter and her commitment to the cause as a human rights issue. Ambassador Abdulhadi also talked about the discussions currently taking place within the Australian Labor Party about potentially recognising the State of Palestine, and recent political developments on the ground in the Occupied Territories.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at the book launch for *Janet Venn Brown*.

82. On the 28th and 29th of July, First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in the first Australian Conference on Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions [BDS] held at the University of Sydney. During the conference, she presented several working papers that pointed to the importance of the boycott strategy as a means of forcing Israel to end its occupation of Palestine and as an important means to inform the Australian public of Palestinian rights. This workshop resulted in the establishment of a special committee to strengthen the boycott approach and follow up its activities.

83. On the 11th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi discussed the current situation in Palestine in a webinar, hosted by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN). More specifically, Ambassador Abdulhadi spoke of Israeli settlements as illegal by international law and the main obstacle to peace, the positions of Palestine and Israel on the final-status issues, and the importance of Australia recognising the State of Palestine to save the two-state solution. PIEN is a network of Australian Christians seeking lasting peace and justice for the people of Palestine and Israel. On the 15th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended a fundraising dinner organized in Sydney to support the Gaza Surf Project, which aims to train Gazan youth in surfing and hopes to create a surfing centre in Gaza in the future.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and participants in the Webinar with PIEN.

84. On the 16th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi, in the presence of Counsellor Suheir Gedeon, First Secretary Noura Saleh and Jamal Nabulsi, participated in the Gala dinner of the Australia-Palestine Advocacy Network [APAN], which was organized in Canberra in honour of the parliamentary delegation that visited Palestine this year.



Speakers at the APAN annual Gala dinner. The dinner was held in honour of the parliamentary delegation that visited Palestine this year, and one that consistently speaks out in support of the Palestinian people.



85. On the 25th of August, at the invitation of the United Nations Foundation in Australia, an Australian non-governmental organization, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in the annual dinner hosted by the Foundation. The speakers praised the presence of Ambassador Abdulhadi and noted the importance of the United Nations in resolving international disputes and the necessity of international support for the institution. The dinner provided Ambassador Abdulhadi with the opportunity to learn about important figures representing different business, academic and civil society in Australia.

86. On the 30th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff attended a wonderful theatre production entitled *Where the Streets Had a Name*, based on the novel by renowned Palestinian-Egyptian-Australian author Randa Abdel-Fattah. The play tells the story of a young Palestinian girl who sneaks into Jerusalem to bring to her ailing grandmother a handful of soil from her beloved hometown. It details the many challenges that her and her friend face along the way due to the occupation. The story highlights the trauma that Palestinian children face because of the Israeli occupation and also how, as with other oppressed peoples, the 'personal is political' for Palestinians.



Ambassador Abdulhadi attending the theatre production *Where the Streets Had a Name*.



87. On the 1st of September, Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Embassy staff participated in the opening ceremony of the Arab Cinema Festival at the National Film Hall of the Australian National University. The representative of the Australian Foreign Ministry delivered a speech in which he praised the quality of the films presented, all of which reflected the economic, cultural and social life and complexities that the Arab world is currently experiencing. The organizers also welcomed the audience and thanked the Ambassador of Palestine for attending the festival, especially that the opening of the festival included a presentation of the film "Gaza Surf Club". It should be noted that the Arab Film Festival is organized annually and includes films from various Arab countries, which are displayed in all Australian states.



**Ambassador Abdulhadi attending the Film “ Gaza Surf Club”
At the openings of the Arab Film Festival in Canberra**

88. During his stay in Brisbane, Ambassador Abdulhadi conducted an interview in Arabic with an important radio station for the Arab and Palestinian public in Queensland. During this meeting, Ambassador Abdulhadi highlighted the most pressing challenges facing the Palestinian people today as well as the importance of consolidating, strengthening and empowering the Palestinian community in Australia.



Ambassador Abdulhadi being interviewed on the radio in Brisbane.

89. On the 6th of September, The Women's Forum for Multiculturalism, held in Canberra, in collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre, organized a seminar on the importance of integrating women into the concept and applications of multiculturalism in Australia. In this context, attendees discussed how intercultural compatibility in Australia and a common value system in Australia unite its residents. First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in the meeting.

90. On the 13th of September, Embassy staff attended the performance of the *Remembering Palestine* theatre production. The show was sold out and the cast put on an incredible performance in front of a packed crowd. *Remembering Palestine* is a verbatim community theatre project, which explores the lives, stories and experiences of Palestinian immigrant women who have settled in Brisbane.

91. On the 29th of September, student delegates from the National Capital Model United Nations (NCMUN) visited the Embassy as part of their 2017 conference. The visit was a great success, as the Embassy staff explained the role of the Embassy, the current political situation in Palestine, and the Palestinian approach to achieving peace. The student delegates asked many excellent questions about the political orientation of Palestine, the relationship between Palestine and Australia, and careers in diplomacy.



Student delegates at the Embassy interested in careers in diplomacy!

92. On the 13th of October, upon invitation by the Middle Eastern Culture Society, Ambassador Abdulhadi delivered a lecture to students of the Australian National University. The Ambassador spoke about the modern history of Palestine, including the Nakba, the Six-Day War, the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Oslo Peace Process. He then discussed the current Palestinian strategy, in light of this history. The lecture was well attended by students and staff, with Ambassador Abdulhadi also engaging with students informally at the post-lecture reception



Ambassador Abdulhadi delivering a lecture on the Palestinian side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the ANU.



Students attending Ambassador Abdulhadi's engaging lecture

93. On the 17th of October, as part of the Palestinian Embassy's strategy to enhance the Australian community's knowledge of the history and components of the Palestinian cause and the details of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon gave a lecture to students at Narrabundah College in Canberra. The lecture was attended by many students who thanked Counsellor Gedeon for the valuable information they received and for her thoughtful answers to their inquiries. It should be noted that Counsellor Gedeon has delivered similar lectures in the past.

94. On the 17th of October, Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh met with the Italian-Australian director Ms. Anne Tsoulis at the Palestinian Embassy. Ms. Tsoulis directed *From Under The Rubble*, which tells the story of a girl from the Gaza Strip and the challenges she faced during the Israeli aggression in 2008 alongside the general emotional and humanitarian dynamics of the siege. The film talks about the impact of armed conflict on the psychology of civilian populations and focuses on the resilience of the people of Gaza and their steadfastness in the face of Israeli aggression.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and Jamal Nabulsi meeting with Ms. Tsoulis.

95. On the 25th of October, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in the opening of the Arab Film Festival organized by the Moroccan Embassy in Canberra. The film *Rock the Kasabah* was shown during the festival. It highlights the different experiences of womanhood in Morocco by exploring six different Moroccan women from vastly different walks of life.
96. On the 26th of October, the staff of the Palestinian Embassy participated in the meeting organized by the Internship Program at the Australian National University, during which samples of work from interns at the Palestinian Embassy were presented.
97. On the 27th of October, Embassy staff had the pleasure of welcoming Ms. Suad Amiry to the embassy premises, as part of her visit to Australia for the Palestinian Film Festival. Ms. Amiry is a highly distinguished Palestinian writer and architect. Between 1991 and 1993 she was a member of a Palestinian peace delegation in Washington, D.C. and has been engaged in other major peace initiatives.



Suheir Gedeon and Noura Saleh meeting with Ms. Suad Amiry at the Embassy.

98. On the 30th of October, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in a symposium organized by the Australian National University entitled *Alternative to the Extreme Novel* by Ahmed Abdeen from Morocco. The lecturer spoke about the possible alternatives to the radical Islamic narrative, which is used in particular by preachers, and replacing it with the moderate rhetoric of true Islam. A number of academics and students participated in this important symposium.

99. On the 19th of November, during his visit to Perth, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in the “Run for Palestine” initiative alongside members from the Palestinian community and First Secretary Noura Saleh and Jamal Nabulsi. Attendees of the jog stressed their support for the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. Ambassador Abdulhadi opened the initiative by thanking the organizers for coordinating such an important initiative.



Ambassador Abdulhadi, First Secretary Noura Saleh and Jamal Nabulsi geared up to run for Palestinian Human Rights.



The Run for Palestine event in Perth



100. On the 29th of November, the Embassy, in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre, hosted the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People event. The event was a wonderful success, with an excellent speech by the keynote speaker H.E. Dr Afif Safieh, an incredible dance performance by the Canberra Palestinian Community Dabkeh group, the reading of the United Nations Secretary-General's message on marking the day, and additional speeches by Ambassador Abdulhadi and the Dean of the Council of Arab Ambassadors. The event was eloquently MC'd by Diana Abdel-Rahman.



Dr. Safieh at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People event.

RELATIONS WITH THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY

102. On the 30th of January, the Embassy of the State of Palestine commemorated the Solidarity Day for Palestinians in Israel by issuing a press release regarding the systematic discrimination faced by the Palestinian people living in Israel. The press release highlighted Israeli violations of the human rights of indigenous Palestinians living in Israel and its apartheid policies towards all aspects of their lives.



Protesting for Palestinian Rights

103. On the 19th of February, Ambassador Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in a festival organised by the Fatah movement in Sydney. Ambassador Abdulhadi gave a comprehensive speech in which he discussed the objectives of the modern Palestinian revolution and the lessons learned from the Palestinian National Struggle and its impact on the collective Palestine consciousness.



Commemorating the 52nd Anniversary of the commencement of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement.

104. On the 25th of February, Canberra's Palestinian community together with the Embassy of the State of Palestine gathered at the park on the shore of Lake Burley Griffin. The gathering was an informal one in which Palestinian food and culture were shared. This initiative was taken to enhance the networks between the Palestinian community in Canberra and the Embassy.



Picnic with the Palestinian Community.

105. On the 9th of March, The Palestinian Delegation hosted the Palestinian futsal team who were champions of the Hyatt Embassy Futsal Competition. Ambassador Abdulhadi presented the team members with trophies, then the team and the staff of the Palestinian Delegation enjoyed some Palestinian food and great conversation together.



The champions of the Hyatt Embassy Futsal Competition and the coveted trophy below.



106. On the 18th of March, Ambassador Abdulhadi presented at, and other Palestinian Delegation staff participated in, an advocacy workshop that was organised by the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network and the Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine. Ambassador Abdulhadi's presentation at the workshop focused on the different elements of advocacy; including constituency building, engaging with the media, and lobbying key decision makers. Participants of the workshop learned together about strategic and focused advocacy, including how to form SMART strategic goals, developing practical lobbying skills, and learning how to deal with difficult questions.

107. On the 30th of March, the Delegation released a statement commemorating the anniversary of Land Day. Every year on this date, Palestinians demonstrate their resistance to the Israeli seizure of Palestinian land. During the first Land Day in 1976, Palestinians in Israel protested against the Israeli seizure of 2,000 hectares of Palestinian land in the Galilee. Six Palestinian protestors were killed and 100 were injured as Israeli forces sought to suppress the protests. The commemoration of Land Day is a source of unification between Palestinians within Israel, those in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and diaspora Palestinians, all of whom have suffered from the loss of their land in some form.



Ambassador Abdulhadi being presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Palestinian Association of Victoria in Melbourne.

108. On the 8th of April, Ambassador Abdulhadi had the pleasure of attending a function in Melbourne, hosted by the Palestinian Association of Victoria, held in celebration of the next generation of Palestinian Australians. Young Palestinians were presented with awards for their educational achievements in graduating from their respective programs. Ambassador Abdulhadi also had the great honour of receiving an award of appreciation for his continuous support of the Palestinian community in Victoria.

109. On the 4th of May, an intern at the Embassy conducted research on the cohesiveness and effectiveness of Palestinian community groups in Australia. A focus group for this research was held at the Embassy, where important data was gathered about the Palestinian community in Canberra. Insightful findings were attained regarding the current state of the community in the ACT and Australia more broadly.

110. On the 6th of May, First Secretary Noura Saleh and Mr Jamal Nabulsi attended a dinner organised by the General Union of Palestinian Workers, the Australian Palestinian Club and the Australian Palestinian Graduates Association. The event was both a commemoration of Al Nakba and a celebration of young Palestinians who have recently graduated from university degrees and completed their HSC. First Secretary Saleh delivered a speech at the event, congratulating the graduates on their achievements and framing their successes as resistance to the oppression of Palestinians. Excellent speeches were also delivered by the Hon Mr Bob Carr, former Foreign Minister of Australia, Senator Lee Rhiannon, and others. The event also included a show of traditional Palestinian dress, a play, and an award ceremony for the graduates.



Jamal Nabulsi and First Secretary Noura Saleh attending a dinner organised by the General Union of Palestinian Workers, the Australian Palestinian Club and the Australian Palestinian Graduates Association



First Secretary Noura Saleh with the Hon Bob Carr

111. On the 21st of May, The Embassy of the State of Palestine hosted the Canberra Palestinian Community (CPC) commemoration of the 69th anniversary of the Nakba. The event was widely attended by Palestinian community members, Arab Diplomatic Corps staff and other friends of Palestine. It included thoughtful presentations by children from the Palestinian community, a short video on the Nakba, speeches by Ambassador Abdulhadi and the CPC President, as well as a robust political discussion.

112. On the 6th of June, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff attended the Islamic Charity Projects Association (ICPA) Ramadan Iftar. The event was a great success with delicious food and excellent speeches by the Hon Chris Hayes MP, Mr Paul Lynch MP, Ms Melanie Gibbons MP and ICPA representatives. The event was widely attended by members of the Islamic community, Palestinian community, politicians and many more prominent guests.

113. On the 11th of June, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff attended a Ramadan Iftar, hosted by the Canberra Palestinian community. It was a great opportunity to gather with fellow members of the community and enjoy the company of friends and family, celebrating the holy month of Ramadan. The Palestinian cuisine was excellent and represented the Palestinian culture, which persists in our community in Canberra.

114. On the 1st of July, the Palestinian community in Canberra and their friends gathered to celebrate Eid Al Fitr. A scrumptious dinner followed by desserts was served and “Amo Eid” passed out gifts to the children. Representatives of the Palestinian Embassy attended the event in a display of support and solidarity with the community.



Scenes from the wonderful Eid al Fitr dinner attended by Embassy staff.

115. From the 29th of June to the 3rd of July, Ambassador Abdulhadi, upon invitation by Australia Arab Association, conducted a successful visit to Perth, Western Australia (WA). The Ambassador attended and participated in the Eid Al Fitr Festival which was organized by the Australian Arab Association in partnership with the Palestinian community in WA. Ambassador Abdulhadi delivered a speech where he highlighted the importance of the work of the Arab and Palestinian communities and praised Australia for its unique multiculturalism, cohesion and tolerance. The festival exhibited different aspects of Palestinian culture and heritage including embroideries, handicrafts, traditional industries and traditional food. The Festival also included a performance of Palestinian traditional dancing (Dabkeh), which inspired the audience who expressed their admiration for the wonderful dancing. During his visit, Ambassador Abdulhadi also met with WA officials such as the Minister for Tourism, Small Business, and Multiculturalism and discussed the possibility of development cooperation between the WA government and Palestine. He also met with Many WA MPs with whom he discussed the possibility and feasibility of establishing a Parliamentary Friends of Palestine in WA, and the importance of Australia's recognizing the State of Palestine. The Ambassador also met with the board and members of the Australian Arab Association. Together they discussed future cooperation between the Palestinian Embassy and the Association as well as potential cooperation between the Council of Arab Ambassadors and the Association. Overall, the visit was highly successful and was marked by warm and welcoming hospitality from the Australian Arab Association and the Palestinian community.





Ambassador Abdulhadi alongside the Australian Arab Association in Perth.



Ambassador Abdulhadi at a fundraising dinner to support surfing projects in Gaza.



Ambassador Abdulhadi in Perth

116. On the 14th of August, Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a fundraising dinner in Sydney to support a surfing project for the youth of Gaza. On this occasion, Ambassador Abdulhadi highlighted the importance of community programs in strengthening and empowering local communities, especially youth and young women. Ambassador Abdulhadi also highlighted the undeserved suffering of the people of Gaza due to the unjust siege imposed on them that has continued for more than ten years. The Palestinian Ambassador also noted the importance of national unity and ending division and the negative impact that these divisions have had for the achievement of Palestinian national rights.

117. From the 3rd of September to the 20th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff facilitated a number of community consultation workshops with the Palestinian communities of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia. These consultation workshops resulted in the establishment of State Coordination Committees, which serve the function of unifying the Palestinian communities of each state by amplifying the voices of Palestinian youth and women and providing a platform through which representatives from major state-based Palestinian organisations can congregate and discuss their goals and visions for the Palestinian community. These State Coordination Committees are a precursor to the establishment of a Federal Coordination Committee which will take place in 2018. These bodies will increase the advocacy power of the Palestinian community and facilitate consensus on the advocacy goals of the community.



Strengthening advocacy potential at the Palestinian community Consultation Workshops



Various photos from the highly successful community consultation workshops which resulted in the establishment of State Coordination Committees, an achievement that will profoundly improve the ability of the Palestinian community to communicate and coordinate around shared goals.



118. On the 13th of September, First Secretary Noura Saleh and Jamal Nabulsi attended a play showcasing the lives of Palestinian women in the diaspora entitled *Remembering Palestine*. The play was performed at Bankstown Theatre in Sydney by a group of young Palestinian women and told the stories of a number of their relatives and their journeys in seeking asylum from Israel after the Nakba.



Jamal Nabulsi and First Secretary Noura Saleh attending *Remembering Palestine* in Bankstown.

119. On the 16th of October, under the patronage of Ambassador Abdulhadi, the General Federation of Palestinian Workers and the Palestinian Australian Club organized a ceremony honouring the Hon Mr Bob Carr, the former Australian Foreign Minister, in recognition of his noble stance in support for the Palestinian people and his continued support for Palestine's right to self-determination, with its right to establish an independent state on its territory heavily emphasised. The Palestinian Ambassador delivered an important speech during the ceremony, in which he praised Mr. Carr and his courageous attitudes towards the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian Ambassador also honoured him by presenting a shield from President Mahmoud Abbas. Mr. Carr also delivered a speech, in which he praised the struggle and steadfastness of the Palestinian people and their determination to fulfil their legitimate national rights. In the same context, Eddy Zananiri, a prominent Palestinian community representative, delivered a speech on the occasion, where he praised the positions held by Mr. Carr.



Ambassador Abdulhadi with the Hon Mr Bob Carr

120. On the 15th and 21st of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended events in Melbourne and Sydney celebrating Palestinian National Day. Both events were very successful and included performances from Palestinian artists displaying the diversity of Palestinian culture. Ambassador Abdulhadi gave a speech at the Melbourne event where he noted the incredible work of the Palestinian community and advocacy groups in organising the event and the steadfastness and determination of the Palestinian people. Many prominent figures from the Arab and Islamic communities and Australian public life spoke at the events including Roving Ambassador of the State of Palestine HE Dr. Afif Safieh, the Hon Bob Carr, Senator Lee Rhiannon and Mr. Eddie Zananiri. The main speaker during the ceremony was the Palestinian Ambassador, Dr. Afif Safieh, who addressed the challenges facing the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve the right to self-determination and to establish an independent state on its land with East Jerusalem as its capital.



Palestinian National Day celebrations in Sydney and Melbourne!



PICTURED ABOVE: Highlights from Palestinian National Day and the ceremony honouring Mr. Bob Carr.

121. On the 20th of November, Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff had a productive and enjoyable visit to Perth. During the visit, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the Palestinian Film Festival, catching the wonderful *Stitching Palestine*, which explores the stories of twelve prominent Palestinian women through the motif of Palestinian embroidery. The Ambassador addressed the audience before this film and spoke of the vibrant Palestinian film industry. Ambassador Abdulhadi and Embassy staff also participated in the *Run for Palestine* event in Perth, with the Ambassador delivering a speech at the event about the importance of advocacy for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.



Ambassador Abdulhadi attending a screening of *Stitching Palestine*

122. On the 9th of December, the Palestinian Embassy participated in an end-of-year celebration organised by the Palestinian community in Canberra. During the celebration, many social and recreational activities were organized for children and young people, and participants got to experience a taste of Palestinian food and culture.

Institutional Development of the Embassy:

123. In commemoration of International Women's Day, the Palestinian Embassy organized a luncheon for its employees, where they talked about the challenges faced by Palestinian women under Israeli occupation and in the diaspora, and the important role of Palestinian women in the national and social struggle.

124. The Palestinian Embassy continued to prepare numerous reports on the most important political topics and developments in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

125. The Palestinian Embassy continued to provide quality consular services to members of the Palestinian community and others.

126. The Palestinian Embassy maintained an active participation in the various activities of the Arab and International diplomatic missions, especially in the national days of these missions.



The Consular Mrs. Suheir Gedeon
With Her Excellency Ambassador
Of Pakistan.



Ambassador Abdulhadi With Ambassador
of Pranay

127. The Palestinian Embassy continued to cultivate close and amicable relations with Islamic, Arab and Palestinian communities.

128. On the 25th of August, the Palestinian Embassy organized a special political seminar in the presence of the Embassy staff and interns to discuss the current political situation and the components of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These political seminars are an important part of the strategy to strengthen the political capacity of volunteers at the Palestinian Embassy.

129. The Palestinian Embassy continued to monitor the major political events in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific and to provide a coherent analysis to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the most important of these events. In this context, the Palestinian Embassy provided a comprehensive analysis of the positions of the Labor opposition in Australia and the most important outcomes of its regional conferences, especially with regard to the debate over the recognition of the State of Palestine. The Palestinian Embassy also produced detailed reports on the federal elections in New Zealand.

In addition, the Embassy provided reports on the political situation in the Pacific countries, such as elections in East Timor and New Guinea.



In UAE National Day

130. The Palestinian Embassy continued to develop its media policy, especially through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The Palestinian Embassy covered the most important Palestinian events and official positions and published them on its various social media accounts. Furthermore, the Palestinian Embassy has strengthened the relationship with the media in Australia and New Zealand. The Ambassador has participated in numerous televised interviews on the most important Palestinian political events and positions.



Ambassador Abdulhadi talking to the Australian media.

131. The Palestinian Embassy continued its flexible internship program by hosting a number of interns, especially students of political science and international relations, in partnership with the Australian National University. The Embassy provided these students with valuable information and expertise while benefiting significantly from their contributions. The internship program has resulted in numerous research reports that have enriched the Palestinian Embassy's program. You can view these reports through the Embassy's website: www.Palestine-Australia/home/publication/policy-reports.

132. The Palestinian Embassy continued to promote institutional development and professionalism in its work, especially in financial procedures, using a new accounting system called Xero. This system has contributed to enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the Embassy's financial management and accounting processes.

133. The Palestinian Embassy has developed its contact lists by adding several civil society organizations to these lists, with trade unions, civil society and non-governmental organisations of particular focus.

134. The Palestinian Embassy continued to disseminate information on Palestine to all stakeholders on a regular basis.

135. The Palestinian Embassy continued to enhance its procedural performance through the issuance of program documents, annual plans and monthly staff meeting reports in order to discuss the management of programs and projects, including planning, implementation, follow-up and evaluation.

136. The Palestinian Embassy responded to all correspondence from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with high efficiency. The Palestinian Embassy also contacted all stakeholders to publicise Palestine's accession to international organizations such as Interpol, the World Trade Organization, and others.

137. The Palestinian Embassy prepared several reports on the development needs and priorities of Pacific countries in order to start preparing and implementing a broad program of development and professional cooperation between the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Palestinian Agency for International Cooperation and a group of Pacific countries.

ANNUAL EVALUATION OF THE WORK CONDUCTED BY THE EMBASSY



Evaluation:

The Embassy of the State of Palestine believes that 2017 was a year full of influential achievements and outcomes in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. It's difficult to quantify and summarise all the achievements of the year in one document, however, we are confident that the Embassy increased its impact and that these achievements were recognised and appreciated by most stakeholders. In order to highlight the success of the Embassy's programs and activities, this section will evaluate them according to five key criteria: Relevancy, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact.

1. Relevancy



According to our evaluation, most of the objectives, activities and results of the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra responded effectively to the current political developments in Palestine, Australia and New Zealand. This response was necessary in order to enhance diplomatic impact and achieve concrete and appropriate political outcomes. Furthermore, the Palestinian Embassy also responded to the directives of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs representing the policy of the Palestinian government. This official policy includes the continuation of attempts to promote the recognition of the State of Palestine by the international community within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In aligning with this policy, the Palestinian Embassy enhanced its efforts to focus considerably on achieving the recognition of the State of Palestine in Australia, New Zealand and some Pacific countries. The efforts of the Palestinian Embassy in addition to other partners has led to a bold discussion regarding the significance of recognising the State of Palestine by various branches of the opposition Labor Party in all of Australia's states. Reflecting this profound shift, the Labor Party's state branches all put forth a motion calling on the next General Conference, to be held in July 2018, to commit to recognising the State of Palestine if the Labor Party wins the 2019 Federal Election.

Additionally, the current Liberal government has continued to support the two-state solution, which includes the establishment of a Palestinian State. This is exemplified by several statements made by Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. Continued support for the two-state solution comes despite Australia's close relationship with the United States, led by President Trump, who strongly supports Israel.

The government of New Zealand has also, more than once, reiterated its firm position in support of the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. This is a position that is supported unambiguously by both major parties.

It is also important to note that the objectives and activities of the Palestinian Embassy coincide with public opinion in both Australia and New Zealand. The public in both countries strongly supports the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

2. Effectiveness



The Palestinian Embassy has seen great success in ensuring that its activities are consistent with one another and with the general vision and objectives of the Embassy's mandate. Although some activities responding to political emergencies may not have aligned with the Embassy's general plan as prepared by Embassy staff at the beginning of 2017, most of these unexpected activities and campaigns (undertaken at the request of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), served the Embassy's overarching goal and increased the impact of its diplomatic work on the political environment in Australia, New Zealand and some Pacific countries.

Furthermore, the strategic planning process carried out by the Palestinian Embassy at the beginning of each year and the recurring duties of the staff who review, monitor, follow up and evaluate the implemented activities, have contributed significantly towards ensuring that the activities of the Embassy correspond with the vision and objectives set by the Embassy and the Palestinian government.

3. Efficiency



A thorough analysis of the inputs of the Palestinian Embassy program, including its allocated budget and available human resources, compared to the outputs of the Embassy shows, beyond doubt, the efficiency of the Palestinian Embassy and its staff. The staff of the Palestinian Embassy consists of three diplomats and only two local staff members, with no more than five staff members employed at a time.

The Palestinian Embassy covers Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific countries through a comprehensive, multi-layered program that includes bilateral relations, public diplomacy (relations with solidarity groups, civil society organizations and the Islamic, Palestinian and Arab communities), aid management and coordination, the consular services and finance and administration. Although many activities have been carried out with limited budgets and human resources, we must recognize that we do not implement an equal amount of activities in all the countries covered by the mandate of the Palestinian Embassy.

Whilst we conduct many activities in Australia, our efficiency and activity is lower in both New Zealand and in the Pacific. In order to be able to perform our duties in these countries effectively, budgets must be increased in a quantitative manner and the number of local staff employed by the Palestinian Embassy increased. Furthermore, to increase efficiency, the professional and technical capabilities of the Embassy staff should be strengthened. This capacity building objective will be impossible with the current heavy work load of the staff and the limited financial resources of the Embassy.

4. Sustainability



A key indicator of the sustainability of the Embassy's programs has been the institutionalization of the programs' outcomes and the administrative, financial and consular procedures of the Palestinian Embassy. The various tools, strategies, approaches and implementation modalities utilized within the Palestinian Embassy's programs, in areas such as bilateral relations, public diplomacy, conventional and social media and aid management, have been institutionalized and are becoming permanent components of the mandate of the Palestinian Embassy. In this context, the institutionalisation of two important programs is particularly noteworthy, consular and financial procedures. Furthermore, it is possible to discern the sustainability of the Embassy's social media strategies through the increased outreach and activity seen on the Embassy's website alongside its Facebook and Twitter pages in recent years.

Additionally, it is important to note that the Embassy has established a regular consultative and institutionalized process with the Palestinian community this year. This has been achieved through the creation of coordination committees in all of Australia's states which were the result of a cooperative process between the Palestinian Embassy and the Palestinian community. The establishment of these coordination committees has boosted the long-term sustainability of the Embassy's relationship with the Palestinian community whilst simultaneously deepening it. Furthermore, the future establishment of a unified federal coordination body will ensure the sustainability of the Embassy's relationship with the Palestinian community.

5. Impact



Numerous factors, both internal and external, influence the political environment in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Discerning the impact of external factors on the positions of the governments and societies of Australia and New Zealand towards the Israeli- Palestinian conflict is beyond the scope of this evaluation. Rather, the concentration of this evaluation is on the role of the Palestinian Embassy in shaping and influencing the political environment in Australia and New Zealand in favour of the Palestinian people's rights.

The Embassy's advocacy program, lobbying campaigns and other political activities have had a significant impact on the Australian and New Zealand governments' positions towards Palestine. Furthermore, these programs have had a positive impact on the broader Australian and New Zealand communities, increasing their support for the Palestinian position.

One of the most important programs of the Palestinian Embassy, which has had a clear impact on the political positions of Australia towards Palestine, is the program to strengthen the relationship with members of Parliament both at the federal and state levels.

The visit of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Palestine at the beginning of this year may also be an important indicator of the political influence of this program. Following their return, the Delegation members delivered several speeches in the Federal Parliament in favour of Palestine. They also spoke about Israeli violations of human rights in more than one seminar and meeting, and issued numerous statements in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination

Another example of the impact of the Palestinian Embassy on the macro level was the visit of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to Palestine and the discussion that took place between him and the Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Rami Hamdallah. This meeting resulted in a greater understanding by Mr. Turnbull for the key elements and substance of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the challenges facing the peace process. A similar visit was made by the Labor opposition leader, Bill Shorten, which was also considered important, particularly due to his hesitant stance towards recognizing the Palestinian state.

Further exemplifying the impact of the Palestinian Embassy and its steady and continuous work, as stated in the report, is its broad campaign to persuade Labor members to recognize the State of Palestine. This campaign of persuasion has utilised both publications and direct meetings with members of Parliament from the Labor Party. Furthermore, the Embassy has been conducting consultations and coordination meetings with the Islamic, Arab and Palestinian communities – as well as with other civil society organizations in Australia - in order to involve these actors in lobbying the Labor party to recognise the State of Palestine and help the Embassy achieve its goals.

Perhaps the main weakness of the Palestinian Embassy is its inability to effectively influence decision-making in the Pacific countries, especially their vote in favour of Palestine-related resolutions at the United Nations. Despite this, the voting record of the Pacific countries remains largely positive.

The impact of the Palestinian Embassy is also reflected through its intensive and ongoing media campaign. The tangible impact of the Embassy's media campaign can be seen in both traditional and social media. In the former domain, the increasing number of news-media interviews conducted by the Ambassador exemplifies the increasing influence of the Palestinian Embassy on government and civil society.

In the latter domain, the increasing number of visits that have been observed on both the Palestinian Embassy's official website and its Facebook and Twitter pages, are further evidence of the increasing capacity of the Palestinian Embassy to reach out to wider society and consequently, to influence.

In the same context, the program of consolidating, strengthening and empowering the Palestinian community through state-based consultation workshops and the establishment of state coordination committees is a powerful tool for strengthening support for Palestinian rights. By facilitating shared goals amongst the Palestinian community, these committees will create a more unified Palestinian voice that will increase the impact of the Palestinian community on the positions of government and civil society in Australia and New Zealand.

Empowering the Palestinian community and making its voice heard by decision-makers will undoubtedly influence the public positions, policies and attitudes of Australia and New Zealand towards Palestinian rights. Ultimately, whilst there are many more indications of the significant impact of the activities of the Palestinian Embassy on the political positions of Australia and New Zealand, there is not enough room here to highlight them all.



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