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



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern after Christchurch massacre



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Front cover image:

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

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

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The Ambassador's Foreword

Australian Parliamentary elections and Christchurch massacre are two significant events in 2019



The year 2019 witnessed two significant events: first, the Australian Federal Parliamentary Election, which saw the Liberal-National coalition win the election, and second, the horrific terrorist crime in Christchurch, New Zealand, which killed 51 members of the Muslim community.

Contrary to all expectations and opinion polls, the Liberal-National coalition won the parliamentary elections in Australia for the third time in a row, winning 78 out of 151 seats in the House of Representatives. Consequently, Mr Scott Morrison, leader of the Liberal party, was able to form his second government in less than a year.

The opposition, the Labor Party, admitted defeat and elected a new leader, Mr Anthony Albanese to replace former leader, Mr Bill Shorten.

There is no doubt that the results of the parliamentary elections in Australia will cast a shadow on the work of the General Delegation of Palestine in Australia. Particularly because of the current government's strong relationship with the State of Israel as well as its continued failure to recognise the State of Palestine.

We also have concerns that, in light of the victory of the Liberal-National Coalition, the current government will reciprocate the current directions of the American Administration headed by Donald Trump regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Especially the Trump Administration's attempt to impose its political vision to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the expense of Palestinian rights in the so-called "Deal of the Century."

Although the current government has affirmed, up to now, its support for the Two-State Solution and its commitment to the rules and principles of international law regarding the Middle East Peace Process, we cannot ignore the possibility of this government responding to US plans in the Middle East contrary to what was expected of the Labor Party, if it had won the federal elections.

These political developments make it imperative for the General Delegation of Palestine to formulate a clear strategy for working with the current government and its ruling party, as well as with the opposition, to minimize harm and maximize diplomatic gains.

However, the most important aspect to this is to enhance the role of the General Delegation of Palestine in public diplomacy and to develop and enable relations with civil society organizations, solidarity groups, Arab and Muslim communities and the Australian public in general.



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The General Delegation of Palestine also intends, based on the existing political situation, to also strengthen its relations with the Palestinian community and to work hard to enhance coordination between its various organizations and individuals.

The second most significant event during the past six months was the terror attack on the two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. This incident marked a momentous stage in the lives of New Zealanders and it resulted in serious debate about the increasing frequency of terrorism, intolerance, Islamophobia and hateful populism.

The admirable leadership of the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has had a great impact in curtailing the profound negative effects of this terror event and, similarly, its harmful impact on the relationship with the Muslim community in New Zealand.

Jacinda Ardern has shown great courage and wisdom in assimilating the event towards strengthening the bond and ties between all aspects of society in New Zealand. She also presented a unique leadership style based on vision and values that would serve as a new global standard to emulate.

The death of 6 Palestinians and seven wounded during this horrific event has triggered the feelings of anger and sadness for the Palestinian people and their government. The staff of the General Delegation of Palestine rushed to offer condolences and support, necessary to strengthen and comfort the families of the wounded and to provide necessary services to them in order to help them overcome the effects of this traumatic event.

I, as the Ambassador of the State of Palestine to New Zealand, was quick to travel to Christchurch to offer condolences on behalf of the Palestinian government and Palestinian people, denouncing this heinous act and warning against the spread of Islamophobia and hatred of others.

However, we in the General Delegation of Palestine have supported the courageous steps of the Prime Minister of New Zealand and stressed the importance of interdependence and cooperation in these circumstances and the need to reject hatred and affirm the slogan "We are all one" raised by the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

I reaffirm that the fixed line of the General Delegation of Palestine is to encourage tolerance and harmony among all components of the social fabric in New Zealand and for everyone to stand together in the face of extremism, terrorism, hatred, racism, Islamophobia and populism in all its forms.

Izzat Abdulhadi

Ambassador of the State of Palestine

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



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Political Context

Australia

Australia's 2019 Parliamentary Elections

After several opinion polls over the past two years have predicted a major victory for the Australian Labor Party in this year's parliamentary elections, the ruling coalition (Liberal Party and National Party, led by Prime Minister Scott Morrison) have succeeded in achieving a landslide victory and ensured their re-election for the third time in a row.



Australian Parliamentary elections 2019

The victory of the ruling coalition during this election, which took place on 18 May 2019, was considered a “miracle” as described by the leader of the coalition, Scott Morrison.

There have been numerous reasons for the failure of the opposition (Labor Party) led by Bill Shorten to the parliamentary elections.



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Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and new Labor leader Anthony Albanese

This came at a time where there were sharp political divisions within the Coalition which were becoming more and more visible, especially within the Liberal Party following the change of three prime ministers during over the course of the past three years.

However, most political commentators agreed that the Australian public was unhappy with the ambitious and sometimes adventurous policies of the Labor Party and thus refused to support those policies, which led to the failure of some of the party's powerful candidates to secure parliamentary seats, and effectively sway the election in the ALP's favour. In addition, the low popularity of party leader, Bill Shorten, and the rising popularity of current Prime Minister Scott Morrison had contributed significantly to this failure of the Labor Party.

Ultimately, the failure of the Labor party can be summarised in three points, overcrowded agenda, weak strategic policies and an unpopular leader.



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Further, the new Labour leader Mr Anthony Albanese supported the assessment and recommendations on the report issued by the Labour Party at the end of this year proposing a new strategy for the Party.



**Minister Greg Emerson and Gaye Weatherly present
the results of the report**

All this is taking place within an effort led by the Party to reformulate and prepare itself for the forthcoming elections in 2022.

During a speech at the National Press Club in Canberra, Mr Albanese admitted that the Party should change in order to regain the trust of the Australian People. He stated that “The Labour Party is looking forward to build a new culture of optimism for a better future”. He further added “We were mistaken! Not everything was wrong of course, we should have won”. Regrettably, it was a common belief that the party’s policies were far too ambitious and hence unrealistic in the eyes of the Australian public.



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Foreign Minister and Minister for Women, Marise Payne, and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Penny Wong

Australia position on the Israel-Palestine conflict

There have been no significant changes to the Australian Government's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict following the Federal Election on 18 May 2019. This came in spite of predictions that the Australian Labor Party would win the election. It was thought that the Labor Party would bring a fresh perspective, and tangible changes to Australia's position on the Palestinian cause, particularly with regard to the recognition of the State of Palestine along the 1967 borders. However, these speculations have been put to rest upon the re-election of the Coalition Government, which maintains its traditional support for Israel.

The General Delegation of Palestine respects the will of the Australian people and its choice of electing its representatives and will certainly work closely with the ruling Coalition Government as democratically elected government. However, it cannot overlook the negative impact of Labor's failure in the past elections, and the subsequent impact it will have on the agenda of the General Delegation of Palestine in Canberra.



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In December 2018, the opposition led by the Labor Party took a decision during its National Conference, to officially recognise the State of Palestine, and that such recognition would be placed on the agenda of the new government, should the ALP win the elections.

Such a decision would, if implemented, create an enabling political environment that would allow the Palestinian Delegation to push forward its national agenda and advance the national and political rights of the Palestinians forward, both regionally and internationally.

However, despite this challenge, the victory of the Liberal Party will not prevent the General Delegation of Palestine in Australia from formulating a realistic, yet effective strategy to work together with the current government in obtaining support for Palestinian national and political rights. This is especially considering that the Coalition Government still officially supports the two-state solution, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with its capital in east Jerusalem and as of yet, has not made any moves toward the relocation of the Israeli Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Regrettably, however, various statements made by Mr Morrison have raised doubts about the Australian Government's commitment in supporting the two-state solution. There are several signs of this, perhaps the most important being the escalation of Australian support for Israel at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and Australia's objections and abstention from voting for various resolutions relating to Palestine.

Notably, Mr Morrison stated during an official visit to the United States that Australia is set to take an "even stronger stand" against the "biased and unfair" targeting of Israel at the UN General Assembly.



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Furthermore, Mr Morrison gave a speech to the House of Representatives to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the recognition of Israel, during which he accused the UN of having an “anti-Semitic agenda”. He also stated that under his Government, Australia would not continue its history of abstaining from resolutions critical to Israel.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s unequivocal support for Israel resulted in his receiving of the “Jerusalem Prize” by the Zionist Council in NSW and Zionist International Organisation through an official ceremony on 21 November 2019 in Sydney.

The Jerusalem Prize is awarded to a person who has provided extraordinary contribution in developing bilateral and diplomatic relations between Australia and Israel.



Prime Minister Scott Morrison receiving the Jerusalem Award from the Zionist Federation of Australia



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**The Chairman of the Zionist Federation of Australia, Jeremy Leibler, with
Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison**

This provoked strong reactions from and within Arab, Islamic, and Palestinian communities who criticized the Prime Minister accepting the prize in the name of Jerusalem. Jewish leaders in Australia praised Prime Minister Scott Morrison's position in supporting Israel, his continuous and solid support to Israel and its people and in particular his recent statements in which he drew the attention of the UN of "the anti-semitic" agenda during the official commemoration of 70 years of diplomatic relations with Israel.

Regrettably, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has accused the UN of practicing a "bullying" attitude towards Israel, in addition to recognising West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Unfortunately, as demonstrated, Mr Morrison continues to support measures that are often blatant violations of international law and which explicitly ignore UN resolutions.



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Furthermore, Australian support of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has also been called into question, after Australia declared that its financial aid would be contingent on the results of both the ongoing UN investigation, and Australia's own investigations. This concern is based on the belief by some conservative Australian politicians that UNRWA has adopted terrorist materials within its school curriculum.

However, it is worth noting that Australia did not vote against renewing the role of UNRWA but abstained from voting. However, this position in itself was not satisfying for many Palestinian solidarity groups and representatives of the Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Communities in Australia.

Nevertheless, the Labor Party's failure to win the previous elections will also not prevent the General Delegation of Palestine in Canberra from developing an equally effective strategy to work with the Labor opposition in order to advance Palestinian rights.

Based on our current analysis, we do not expect a fundamental and radical change in the current government's position on the two-state solution. This comes despite fears that the current US administration is exerting pressure on the Australian Government to support the so-called "deal of the century". A deal that runs counter to the Palestinian National Program for Self-Determination, alongside the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

This prompted a number of former Australian diplomats to send a strong message to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison asking him not to support the "Deal of the Century" Plan.

This message which came in the form of an official letter signed by more than 27 diplomats, highlighted the importance and the right of the Palestinian people for self-determination in their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Diplomats also considered the transfer of the US Embassy to Jerusalem as an act of hostility against the Palestinians, including Australia's participation in the recent Bahrain Economic Workshop.

The diplomats also expressed their view that the conflict is essentially political, based on Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories and the systematic deprivation of Palestinian human rights.

Therefore, Australia should not support the US "Deal of the Century", which excludes Palestinians and offers Israel a cover to bypass its commitments to peace.



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Nevertheless, it is expected that the current Coalition Government will continue to work with the General Delegation of Palestine in Australia. Hence, there is a continued need to strengthen the role of the General Delegation in the field of public diplomacy, particularly in developing stronger relationships with members of the Australian Federal Parliament, civil society organisations and Palestinian advocacy groups, in addition to engaging with Palestinian people and media institutions.

Mainly, coordinating and working with Muslim, Arab and Palestinian communities alike is particularly important in supporting the programs and activities of the General Delegation of Palestine in Australia and to further enhance its legitimacy. Regrettably, however, the Muslim and Arab communities are divided along political and sectarian lines, and therefore it is difficult to establish a unified body to work with them in support and advocacy of Palestinian rights in Australia.

Unfortunately, the political influence of Palestinian advocacy groups and Palestinian community organisations is still very weak, and unable to wield effective influence on decision making bodies. The division within the Palestinian community has hindered its ability to act as a unified body with an agreed and realistic, political vision and agenda.

As a result, the General Delegation of Palestine is revising its strategy for the coming period, particularly by developing working strategies with the ruling Coalition as well as the Opposition Party. However, the focus in this respect is on public diplomacy as a key strategy in bringing about change and in influencing the current Government.



APAN
Australia Palestine
Advocacy Network



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Nevertheless, it is the hope that the excellent relations between the General Delegation of Palestine and the various Islamic organizations operating in Australia may indeed help facilitate the establishment of a unified coordination framework for the defence of Palestinian rights. Especially at this pivotal moment in the history of the Palestinian people in which their national cause is subjected to liquidation by the current American administration.

In regards to the Palestinian community, despite the relentless attempts by the General Delegation of Palestine to promote coordination among all the components and organizations of the Palestinian community over the past years, the General Delegation of Palestine has not yet succeeded in creating a coordinated body between all these components based on a realistic political vision consistent with the program of the PLO's political Program, whose basis is built on the two-state solution and the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

The General Delegation of Palestine remains hopeful however, as the involvement and influence of the Palestinian community organisations and solidarity groups has steadily increased and become more influential over the past years.



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Australia's relations with China

As the bilateral relationship between the current Australian Government and the current US administration deepens, relations between Australia and China are facing continued deterioration. There are numerous challenges facing the bilateral relationship between China and Australia.

Despite the Australian Prime Minister's remarks ahead of his participation in the G20 summit which was held in Japan recently, in which he noted the depth of political and trade ties with China and his support for the "Belt and Road" initiative, there have been significant challenges that have overshadowed the relationship of both states.

These differences have mostly been based on China's expanding influence within the Pacific region and the South China Sea, as well as the ongoing trade war with Washington. All of which has constrained Canberra's relationship with Beijing and have proven to be challenges that both states have to overcome in order to maintain a sustainable relationship with each other.

Australian officials have repeatedly declared that they fear the increasing influence of China in Australian internal affairs, and in the Pacific Islands' affairs.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison during his meeting with Chinese President XI Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Japan



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Many Australian politicians, from various parties, highlight the importance of Australia's bilateral relationship with China. Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, said that Beijing's economic growth is in the interest of Australia and that it is welcomed with the contribution of the "Belt and Road" initiative to regional infrastructure investment and regional development.

This is considering that China is the largest economic partner to Australia and dominates its steel and coal export market in addition to agricultural produce. It is worth mentioning that China buys one third of the Australian gross exports.

Mr Morrison reassured Australia's commitment to deepening its overall strategic partnership with China. However, it is a sensitive and sensible balance relations that Australia is trying to establish and maintain with China and the United States to ensure its overall political, security and economic interests.

However, Australian-Chinese analysts clearly see that, despite Australia's seemingly balanced policy towards China and the United States, its ideological, political, economic and security ties are much greater with Washington than they are with Beijing at this current stage.



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Regrettably, statements made by the Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, upon his recent visit to the US, mirrored the current position of the Trump Administration. This included support for changes to the current international order as they pertain to China, particularly China's designation as a developing state by the World Trade Organisation.

The Labor Party criticised the statements made by Mr Morrison, contending that China should still be considered a developing nation irrespective of its economic prosperity. The Labor Party asserted that Mr Morrison's comments were completely unexpected and tarnish the relationship between Australia and China.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison during his meeting with President Donald Trump during his visit to the United States of America



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At the same time, the Australian Government has reaffirmed its position on China as a strong business partner to Australia, as well as Australia's support for free and open markets. This contradicts the current position of the US Administration toward China, in light of the ongoing trade war. Australia has expressed its concern about the trade dispute between the two states, suggesting that Australia could play a mediatory role due to its historically strong relations with both the US and China.

Some political commentators believe that the US has now lost its strategic primacy in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and can no longer guarantee protection for its regional allies, including Australia and Japan. On top of this, China's increase in foreign aid to Pacific Island nations has given rise to concerns about its influence over these States. Australia in particular fears its strategic power in the Pacific Ocean, a region that both Australia and the US consider within their spheres of influence, is diminishing.

In another related issue, Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms Marise Payne have both condemned the maltreatment of the Uighur Muslim community living in Xinjiang Province, China. Chinese Ambassador, Cheng Jingye, defended China during a press conference against the accusations that are haunting China in regard to breaching the human rights of the Muslim minority (Uighur) living in China's Xinjiang Province.



Chinese Ambassador to Australia Cheng Jingye



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The Chinese Ambassador, noted that the claims of detaining one million people in Xinjiang Province are “untrue news”, again in a series of well-articulated answers, reflecting his government’s position that insists that these huge centres are not “detention centres” but rather vocational training schools providing to combat extremism.

Upon the insistence of Australian journalists to raise questions regarding the activities taking place inside these training centres, Ambassador Jingye answered that the Chinese procedures in Xinjiang Province “has no relation with human rights”, and that the approach adopted by China to combat terrorism is similar to the one adopted by western countries.

These declarations made by the Chinese Government contradict the series of information leaked recently which unveils that joining these “schools” are not voluntary, and the documents show that these centers are highly invigorated detention centres whereby Uighur community members are forced to learn Chinese and subjugated to identity abolishment.



Wang Liqiang, the alleged former Chinese spy



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Further, while Australia and China declared that they will work together on improving their relations, this has been negatively influenced by the cyber-attacks led by Beijing and its trial to intervene in the internal affairs of the Australian Government.

Australian Intelligence discovered that China was responsible for a cyber-attack on the Australian Federal Parliament in addition to the three major Australian Parties.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has denied any relation or engagement in these cyber-attacks and added that the cyber world is full of theories that are hard to follow up. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison considered the accusations related to Chinese interference “of deep concern and annoying” and stated to the media that “Australia is not naïve in facing the threats it faces”. As a result, the Australian Parliament adopted laws that aim at combating external intervention and the reformation of intelligence apparatus.

Labor Party Leader at the House of Senate, Ms. Penny Wong, declared that Australian Chinese relations are becoming more complicated amongst the mutual accusations between the two countries concerning the proposed Chinese intervention in the Australian Affairs.

Ms. Wong further added by saying that the current government is incapable of managing the complicated relation with China, highlighting that the government refused a request she submitted, in her capacity as a Parliamentarian, to access intelligence information regarding the proclaimed Chinese intervention.

It will be interesting to see if Canberra will manage to maintain balance relations with both Beijing and Washington in order to safeguard its political, security and economic interests.



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Australia's relations with Pacific Islands:

The Pacific Islands are considered an area of strategic importance. Australia views the Pacific region as its own backyard and thus, it is crucial for Canberra to advance and maintain developing relationships with its close neighbours making it a top priority for the current Australian Government, as well as future ones to come.

In this context and following the recent election victory, Mr Morrison appointed Mr Alex Hawke as Minister for International and Pacific Development in a clear indication of Canberra's commitment to its partners in the region.

Relations with its Pacific Island neighbours remain a focal point of Australia's foreign policy in the Pacific Ocean. As such, Australia provides significant development assistance to these islands. Australia has continued its support to the Pacific Islands through an increase in official visits and financial assistance, in order to consolidate its role in the region and attempt to contain Chinese expansion.

The Australian Prime Minister, Mr Scott Morrison, announced that Australia will upgrade its naval base in Timor-Leste and will help provide high speed internet services to the country. This is the latest attempt by Australia, a US ally, to gain influence in the region. Similar aid packages have been announced for Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, with Australia seeking to reduce China's aid investment to the resource-poor Pacific Islands.

Mr Morrison was present at an official ceremony in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste, to commemorate its independence from Indonesia. In a statement, Mr Morrison declared that "this is a new chapter for Australia and Timor-Leste that is based on our shared respect, interests and values".

After renegotiating maritime border treaties with Australia, it was agreed that Timor-Leste, one of the poorest nations in the region, would receive a greater share of natural gas revenues under the new agreement, and access to millions of dollars as a result.



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The Australian financial assistance package was announced to include two patrol boats, and funds for a new wharf and accompanying facilities on the coast of Timor-Leste. Australia has also promised to assist in developing the internet service infrastructure for Timor-Leste (population: 1.25 million), where the present internet service is dependent on expensive and unreliable satellites. Australia will fund the engineering and design of fiber-optic cables, that will connect Timor-Leste with the existing North-West cable system, which extends from Darwin in the Northern Territory to Port Hedland in Western Australia.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison with his counterpart James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

There were many bi-lateral visits between Australia and Pacific nations over the course of 2019. One of the most important of these was a visit from the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Mr James Marape, to Australia on 24 July 2019. The two parties discussed the future of the Australian immigration detention centre in Papua New Guinea, and the Papua New Guinean position on closing the centre. This was in addition to discussions about Australia's aid program to Papua New Guinea.

The Australian Government has so far rejected the possibility of accepting New Zealand's proposal to re-settle 150 asylum seekers from Manus Island and Nauru. However, the new government of Papua New Guinea has not ruled out the possibility of a direct agreement with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to solve this humanitarian crisis.



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Refugee Detention Center on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea

The current Australian Government has imposed a very strict policy regarding asylum seekers, adopted 6 years ago, which stipulates that every person who tries to reach Australian shores by boat will be detained in Manus Island or Nauru.

Despite eventually resettling a number of asylum seekers, the frustration was too much for some, with 450 men still on Manus Island and a spate of suicide attempts in recent times. There are 350 people still on Nauru. This official visit coincided with protests in Australia against the continued detention of refugees on Manus Island and Nauru.

Australia and the US are also cooperating with Papua New Guinea to renovate a marine base on Manus Island, to counter-balance Chinese capabilities in the region. In response to a question raised regarding increased Chinese activity in Papua New Guinea, Mr Morrison said his Government would provide “an equal playing field for every investor as long as they subscribe to the rules and regulations of our country”. He continued by saying that “Chinese investors will not receive any special treatment and preference, just like Australian investors will not receive any special favour or treatment”. Mr Morrison described the relationship between the two states as ones of “family” and “true friends”.

Australia is considered an essential donor to Papua New Guinea, with Australia providing more than half a billion dollars per annum to the country. Both parties agreed to continue discussions on an annual basis, in the shared goal of maintaining the important bilateral relationship.



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In other regional developments, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne paid a visit to Fiji a few days after her reappointment as Foreign Minister in another indication of the new Australian Government's interest in the Pacific and its efforts in ensuring that Australia's regional influence in those island countries is maintained.

"Developing relationships with close neighbours will be one of the new government's key priorities," Foreign Minister Marise Payne said about Morrison's visit to Solomon Islands and her visit to Fiji at the same time. She also noted that Australia has a variety of ongoing initiatives in the region that cover various fields such as security, economic, diplomatic, development and as well as other initiatives, all based on "long and historic relationships and friendships."



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison as he meets Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama at the Australian Federal Parliament

The Prime Minister of Fiji Mr Frank Bainimarama made a formal visit to Australia on 20 September 2019. Discussions focused on the issue of climate change and Australia's responsibility toward reducing carbon emissions. Australia's sustained production of coal poses an existential threat to these small Pacific Island states, which risk being drowned by the rising sea levels caused by global carbon emissions.



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Mr Bainimarama declared in a speech at the Australian Defence College that he hopes that Australia and the Pacific “can eventually find more common ground in our vuvale (family) on the climate issue”. He added that “we all need to be far more ambitious in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing global warming”.

Mr Bainimarama was quoted by the Guardian newspaper as saying that he understands “politics is the art of the possible” and that he understands “the depth of feeling in coal-producing communities in Australia and the wider economic imperatives at state and federal level”.

However, he ultimately called climate change “the greatest threat to our security in the Pacific and for my own people, and other Pacific Islanders”, adding that the impact of global warming is “really starting to bite.” Mr Bainimarama’s visit comes at a time when the Australian opposition party is considering abandoning its policy of reducing carbon emissions by 45% by the year 2030 to reach 2005 levels of emissions.

In another related note, despite the various attempts by the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra to establish diplomatic relations and increase cooperation with these countries, there is a clear hesitation to foster these relations and recognise the State of Palestine.

This is due to pressure from the US and Israel, as well as the lack of lobbying from China and the Arab States on behalf of Palestine. In addition to that, the rise of some Christian Evangelical groups has made the establishment of relations with Palestine exceedingly difficult.

For these reasons, the General Delegation of Palestine is exploring another strategy which focuses on engaging civil society and local communities in these countries. This is in addition to building relationships with Churches outside the Evangelical denomination.



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Australia relations to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Australia and New Zealand both participated in the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok on 9 September 2019. The summit affirmed the importance of economic partnerships with key allies, in particular with the US, China, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. This is with the aim of reaching sustainable development and economic growth, in line with the interests of all parties concerned.



ASEAN leaders during the summit in Bangkok, Thailand

Key topics discussed in the summit included: rising tensions in the South China Sea, the Rohingya crisis, nuclear weapons program in North Korea, anti-terrorism, sustainable development and natural catastrophes' management. ASEAN leaders also highlighted the importance of regional stability and security, alluding to China in this respect. However, the ASEAN communiqué did not mention the tensions between China and other member-states, instead focusing on sustainable development opportunities within ASEAN countries.

The leaders of fifteen countries from South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and China agreed on ratifying a trade agreement, considered the largest globally, regardless of India's decision to not be part of this agreement. This trade agreement, supported by China, will replace "Pan Pacific Ocean Partnership" agreement. India has refrained from joining this agreement due to its fears from subjecting small Indian companies to extreme damages with the inflow of Chinese cheap products according to the new agreement.



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The new comprehensive economic regional partnership agreement includes around 30% of the World GDP and includes half of the world population. It includes all ASEAN countries in addition to China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.

On another note, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad declared, during the ASEAN Summit, that the continuation of Asian immigration to Australia will make Australia closer to “Asian continent rather than the European”.



Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir Mohamad

Mr bin Mohamad mentioned, in a press interview with an Australian newspaper, The Sydney Morning Herald, that irrespective of what the white Australians think, the truth remains that Australia’s geography is rather Asian than European. He further added that “They try to protect their culture and language but the inflow of Asians to Australia will definitely change the nature of population and its demography in Australia”.

Moreover, the Australian newspaper has mentioned that Mr bin Mohamad statement is supported by 2016 census, which is highlighted the transformation in the demographic figures in Australia in light of the vast number of Asians immigrating to Australia. The new born children of Chinese, Indian, Philippines, Vietnamese, Malaysian and Sri Lankan immigrants are among the 10 top ethnicities of highest child birth rates in Australia.



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Australia and the rise of Islamophobia

Recent debate in Australia over the attitude towards Islam and Islamophobia has been severely exacerbated, especially after the massacre in Christchurch which killed over 50 people from New Zealand's Muslim community.



Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Foreign Minister Marise Payne during their visit to an Islamic center in Sydney in solidarity with the Muslim community after the Christchurch city Massacre

The debate has a broader dimension within Australia, especially that the criminal, who committed this heinous act, was an Australian citizen. However, the rising level of racism and Islamophobia in Australia has escalated in recent times, especially with statements by some Australian politicians about the Islamic threat and the need to close down Islamic schools, as well as allegations that Islam is an allegedly unacceptable and incompatible ideology within Australian civil society.

These racist statements have led to strong reactions from various Muslim community organizations within Australia, which have called for a clear stance to address the rising issue of Islamophobia, but also the broader issues of Xenophobia which has been gaining traction over the past couples of years.



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Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his wife during their participation at the national memorial for the victims of the two mosque massacres that took place in Christchurch, New Zealand

These racist campaigns against Islam have had a strong impact on the extent to which Australian society could support Palestinian rights. Some Australians consider the Palestinian cause to be an Islamic one, and the damage done by these campaigns also directly affects popular support for the Palestinian cause in general.

Canberra maintains a strong position against any form of violent extremism. The Australian Prime Minister and Opposition Leader have called for the respect of Islam and its institutions as a vital pillar in promoting cultural and religious pluralism within Australia. They also strongly criticized the racist tendencies of some small parties and called for the fight against extremism, whatever its source.

The establishment of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Heads of Mission Group in Canberra was a very important initiative for dialogue between the Australian Government and the broader Muslim communities. It also allows to enhance coordination between the various Islamic organizations.

Furthermore, this dialogue is working tirelessly in changing the stereotypical image of Islam, while emphasizing that Islam is "a mercy to the worlds".



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Lakemba Mosque in Sydney

The annual report on Harmony and Social Cohesion, issued by Scanlon Institution at Monash University, highlighted the negative stands towards Muslims which is still existing in Australia. The report raised the issue that the vast majority of Australians agree on the principle of multiculturalism and its importance within the Australian context.

Regardless of the confirmation of adopting the principle of Multiculturalism in Australia, the report confirmed that a part of Australian society still witnesses “negative” or “very negative” stands towards Muslims in Australia. Upon surveying the negative stands of religions, 21-25% of the participants declared their negative stands for Muslims and Islam.



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The aggressor as he confronted his victims

The report highlighted that this percentage has increased to 40% among the participants when interviewed through the internet and not over the phone. This percentage is similar to the percentage of the general survey of 2018, whereby 23% of the survey participants declared their negative stands of Muslims in Australia, but this percentage went up to 39% when participants were interviewed through the internet and not through phone.

Also, the results of the 2017 survey concluded similar results. Professor Marcus Andur, from Monash University, further added that these results pinpoint the fact that there is concern of the people's stratum regarding certain subjects that they do not address openly, including fear from Islam and Muslims.

Furthermore, a recent study conducted by researchers from Charles Stuart University, highlights the increasing phenomenon of Islamophobia in Australia. This phenomenon is reflected in the attacks and humiliation against veiled women. Moreover, the study shows that 96% of women subject to sexual and physical harassment are veiled women.



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Anti-Islam demonstration in Sydney

This report was issued a few days after a veiled Muslim lady was attacked by a person in a public place in Sydney. Mrs. Rana Al-Asmar, of a Lebanese decent, had been subject to an attack by a person while sitting with two of her friends in a coffee shop in Parramatta suburb of Western Sydney.

Also, a video section taped by a camera showed the man brutally assaulting a pregnant veiled woman inside a restaurant in Sydney. The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils described the attack as Islamophobia.

Further, Charles Stuart University published its second report regarding the influence of Islamophobia in Australia in 2019. The report highlighted the Australian Muslims' experience with respect to Islamophobia or hatred towards Muslims.

The report analysed 349 incidents registered as Islamophobic incidents between 2016 and 2017, whereby the research study pinpointed that 70% of victims were females and mostly wearing veils.

Dr. Daria Ilyer, the Chief researcher at the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilization at Charles Stuart University, highlighted that the hatred incidents are not only a problem facing the Islamic community in Australia, but is a problem facing every Australian and requires a national collaboration in solving it, if Australia is keen to protect its social cohesion and integrating of its multi-cultural heritage.



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The report highlights the danger coming from the hatred discourse which led an Australian terrorist to commit terrorist attacks at Christchurch City in New Zealand, earlier this year, in addition, to the spread of this discourse in Australia for the past three to five years.

According to the results issued, many people expressed via the internet and through other occasions their desire to kill all Muslims, and in spite of that none of these people were investigated. This has raised important questions regarding the suitability of the current laws with takes place on ground.

The Minister of Immigration, Mr. David Coleman, issue a communique in which he expressed his resentment of racist models against Australian Muslims, and as portrayed in the report. He further stressed on the importance of protecting religious freedom in Australian society.

Further, the Australian Labour Party condemned, through a communique, racism in all its manifestations and the maltreatment of Muslims, adding that “Islamophobia should be condemned in Australia by the strongest terms”.

The Australian Federal Islamic Council (AFIC) warned from the increasing cases of racism against Muslims, requesting the Australian government to provide further protection under the umbrella of the draft law of religious freedom.

The Council, which is a federal entity representing a group of Muslim communities in all Australian regions, has sent alarm regarding the increasing phenomenon of Islamophobia or fear from Islam. The Head of the Council, Dr. Rateb Jneid made a statement in which he declared that the content of the Law of Religious Freedom is not enough to combat the escalating racism Australia is witnessing.



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Political Context

New Zealand

Christchurch Terror Attack

The unprecedented terror attack on the two mosques in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand have dominated the public and political scene in New Zealand over the past year.



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and New Zealand Governor General Patsy Reddy during the National Commemoration Ceremony that was held on 29/3/2019 following the Christchurch massacres

The massacre rocked the diverse and interconnected social fabric of New Zealand's civil society, when on 15 March 2019 an Australian terrorist attacked the Al-Nour Mosque and The Linwood Mosque in Christchurch, killing 50 people and injuring 42 during Friday prayers. This incident led to strong local and international condemnation, as well as immense global sympathy for the families of the victims, the New Zealand Government and the broader community.

A national memorial service was held in Christchurch, New Zealand on 29 March 2019, to pay tribute in honour of the victims of the terrorist attack. Residents of Christchurch flocked to the mosques to lay flowers and pay their respects to the 50 victims.



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The New Zealand Prime Minister offers condolences to a victim's family

During the ceremony, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern asserted her condemnation of racism and extremism in all its forms, saying that "Racism exists but it will never be welcome here. The attack on the freedom of any of us in his or her prayers or religion is unwelcomed here."

Prime minister Ardern added that the stories of the victims have become part of the collective memory of New Zealanders, while stressing on the need to take responsibility in the face of racism, extremism, and Islamophobia.

Dozens of government representatives from various countries, including the Australian Prime Minister, as well as members of New Zealand's Muslim and Christian communities, attended the memorial service, it was estimated that around 20,000 people attended the ceremony.

The mosque attacks almost immediately introduced new stricter gun laws in New Zealand. Due to the extent of the attack and the impact it has had, political ramifications continued to play out for some time in Parliament. The New Zealand Prime Minister announced the plan by stating that "All semi-automatic weapons used in the terrorist attack will be effectively banned in New Zealand".



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In addition, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced the introduction of the new Arms Legislation Bill to Parliament on 13 September 2019, increasing the restrictions on owning and purchasing firearms. This comes as New Zealand commemorates six months since the Christchurch attack. The draft law introduced new regulations for arms-sellers and individual owners, particularly with regard to firearm licenses, and the reduction of the license renewal period from 9 to 5 years.

Mosques and state institutions in New Zealand witnessed unprecedented solidarity with the victims of the terror attack, with thousands attending tributes and observing two minutes of silence in memory of the victims.



Memorial demonstrating New Zealand solidarity in front of the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch

New Zealand Police Commissioner Mike Bush attended an event at Kilburne Mosque to pay tribute to the victims of the Christchurch terrorist attack. During the event, attendees held a human chain outside the mosque after Friday prayers to show solidarity with the victims and their families. Approximately 200 people attended the Al-Mustafa Mosque in the Utaho district of Auckland, in northern New Zealand, to participate in a memorial service for the victims of the Christchurch massacre.



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Among the participants in the event at the Mosque of Mustafa was the mayor of the city, Phil Goff, who stressed that "The reaction to the attack in Christchurch is the greatest form of community solidarity he has ever seen." New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern also announced the raising of Islamic "Azan" Prayers on national television and radio, as well as two minutes of silence on the one-week anniversary of the horrific massacre in her country, where two minutes of silence were chosen rather than the traditional minute of silence, due to the scale of the tragedy.

It is with great sadness that that Palestinian community lost six victims, with six others also injured. This led the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi to immediately travel to Christchurch in order to convey his condolences on behalf of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian leadership to the Islamic, Arab, and Palestinian community residing in New Zealand, while strongly denouncing this horrifically tragic and criminal attack.



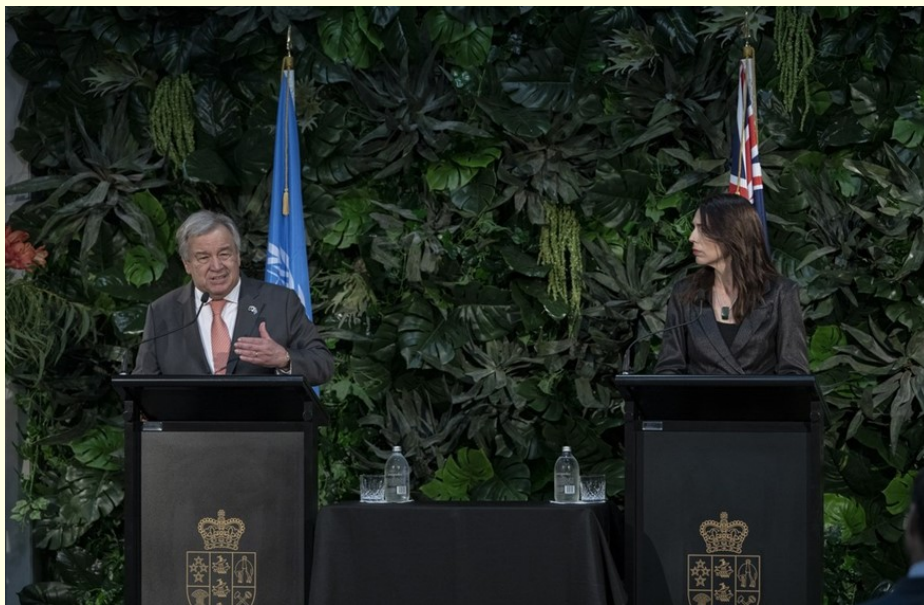
The Palestinian Ambassador during his visit to Christchurch after the massacres at the two mosques

Prime Minister Ardern played a leading role in containing the crisis, and has received renowned international and regional support for her display of humanity, compassion, leadership and responsibility by shifting the focus entirely on victims and their humane stories, while reducing the media coverage on the criminal perpetrator of the horrific attack whom she vowed to never "mention his name" ever again.



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The Prime Minister also described the incident as one of the darkest days in New Zealand's history and announced that the perpetrator of the terrorist attack would be tried in New Zealand and would not be extradited to Australia. Ardern also announced an international campaign called "Christchurch Appeal" to call on social platforms to act against the spread of terrorism, extremism and violence through the Internet and social media and to prevent the usage of such platforms for the sake of spreading hatred and extremist ideologies.



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres's visit to New Zealand on 12 May 2019 was overshadowed with the events of the terror attack, which led him to highlight the need to combat hate speech in all of its forms.

The Secretary-General expressed his deepest condolences and solidarity to the families of the victims, stating that: "A tribute to their courage and strength and also to the extraordinary unity and message of solidarity sent by the people and government of New Zealand." Guterres praised Ardern's admirable leadership of the crisis and the very strong messages she sent to her people and to the rest of the world after these bloody attacks.



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Sympathizers of victims of the massacres lay flowers in front of the New Zealand Embassy in London

"Hate speech is spreading through social media like wildfire, and there is no place for hate speech through or outside the Internet," the UN secretary-general added.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison also stated that: "The perpetrator of the attack on the two mosques in New Zealand was an Australian citizen who described himself as a right-wing and violent extremist terrorist."

Scott Morrison also announced that the Australian government will allocate AUD\$55 million to take additional security measures to protect places of worship and religious educational institutions, including equipment such as sophisticated cameras, sufficient lighting, alarms and security systems. Morrison also warned of a growing tribal culture in Australian society, which could help radicalize and entrench the perpetrators ideas in civil society. He also called for a civilized approach to public debates on the issues of multiculturalism and migration.

The Grand Mufti of Australia and New Zealand, Dr. Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, also appealed for the commemoration of the massacre of the two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, which killed 50 people. The Mufti also called for a memorial and suggested documenting and dating the occasion so that it will never be forgotten.



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Similarly, Australia instituted new regulations in the wake of the mosque shooting. The Australian authorities ordered internet service providers block eight internet sites that had broadcast content related to Christchurch massacre, to deny terrorists publicity and glorification for their crimes. This was the first occasion that these powers had been used since ratifying new surveillance laws. According to Julie Inman Grant, the Australian e-safety Commissioner, a number of websites were banned for allowing videos of the massacre to be uploaded, and for publishing the manifesto of the terrorist. Authorities have requested a number of other sites to delete content related to these attacks.



Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand

Ms Inman Grant noted that “The remaining rogue websites need only to remove the illegal content to have the block against them lifted”. In defence of the new surveillance laws, Prime Minister Scott Morrison stated that “(This) type of abhorrent material has no place in Australia and we are doing everything we can to deny terrorists the opportunity to glorify their crimes, including taking action locally and globally.”

The Mosque shootings created more widespread debate in New Zealand and Australia about the prevalence of Islamophobia and the importance of combating it, as well as combating hate speech and intolerance during the deliberations that followed the criminal incident. As seen in Australia, this is a continuing challenge.



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New Zealand's relationship with Palestine

There have been no new developments regarding New Zealand's political stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict, a stance which maintains support for the two-state solution and international law. New Zealand has continued to support all resolutions and decisions made by the UN with regard to Palestine.

New Zealand maintains a strong position in considering settlements a clear violation of international law and a main obstacle in achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. New Zealand renewed its commitment to its position by a letter sent by New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Winston Peters, to the Ambassador of Palestine, Izzat Abdulhadi.

Mr. Peters highlighted in his letter New Zealand's position regarding the two-state solution and in considering the settlements illegal. He further added that New Zealand's position will not change with respect to these subjects.

This can also be concluded from the positive voting of New Zealand, recently, on the resolutions related to Palestine, at the United Nations including the resolution related to condemnation of settlements being against International Law.

New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs has previously sent a letter to Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Riyad Al-Malki, regarding the recent statements made by US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, who declared that Israeli settlements are not in contradiction with principles of International Law. In his letter, New Zealand Foreign minister reiterated his position that settlements are illegal by International Law.



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A march in support for Palestine in Auckland, New Zealand

Furthermore, New Zealand declared its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) by pledging a further one million dollars in funding, while also continuing to provide technical support for renewable energy in Palestine. New Zealand has maintained a consistent position in supporting all UN resolutions relating to Palestine in all major international forums. Including with New Zealand's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Craig Hawke, recently signing a three-year financial commitment (2019-2021) under which Wellington has pledged to provide NZ\$3 million to support major UNRWA programs.

Ambassador Greg Lewis has submitted credentials to the Palestinian Foreign minister, Dr Riad Malki in Cairo, to represent New Zealand to the State of Palestine, and several other states in the Middle East and North Africa region, as of 13 September 2019.



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His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Riyad Malki, while receiving the credentials of the new Ambassador of New Zealand to the State of Palestine in Cairo

Ambassador Lewis stated that he looks forward to fostering bilateral relations with the Palestinian leadership and people. New Zealand also continues to support Palestinian industrial capabilities with regards to renewable energy, demonstrated by the establishment of a renewable energy plant in the Gaza strip.

The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi met with renewable energy experts from New Zealand in Ramallah during his most recent visit to Palestine. The two parties discussed the participation of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department for Asia, Australia and the Pacific in the development of the project and its progress so far.

In a remarkable position, and in light of the military Israeli escalation on Gaza Strip, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its deep concern for the rockets fired from Gaza Strip on Israel, considering targeting civilians as unacceptable and that the New Zealand Government condemns these attacks. Also, the New Zealand Government urged all parties to calm down and refrain from military escalation.



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In another political development, the New Zealand Ministry of Immigration recently sparked outrage in Israel after it published a map of Palestine, without mentioning the State of Israel, which prompted the New Zealand Minister of Immigration to make a formal apology to Israel. The New Zealand Ministry of Immigration website published a map of the Middle East region without the presence of the State of Israel on the map, which only mentions Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.



A picture of the map, which was published on the website of the New Zealand Ministry of Immigration

The map also included the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, which was referred to entirely as Palestine. The New Zealand Jewish community has pressured the New Zealand government to remove the information page from the official New Zealand website, which the Foreign Ministry has acknowledged and has since then removed.



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New Zealand relationship with Middle East

New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Winston Peters, made an official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) recently whereby he met his UAE counterpart. During his visit, Mr. Peters discussed with his counterpart means and ways of fostering bilateral relations between UAE and New Zealand, and mechanisms of developing and strengthening these relations in all domains including renewable energy. Both parties confirmed their commitment to combating extremism and terrorism, supporting regional and international efforts and to work on identifying values of tolerance and peace in the world.



A meeting with New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters, and his Emirati counterpart, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan



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On a different note, New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs criticised the Turkish intervention in North Syria. Although he recognized the security challenges facing Syria, Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted that “the Turkish actions across the borders bear risk by bringing harm to civilians, these acts bring further instability and increase humanitarian needs”.

He further added that “these procedures supersede the gains realized in the battle with Daesh”. In this context, NZ Foreign Minister added that Daesh is still a threat and there are risks it will abuse the Turkish attack to reinstate its infrastructure in Syria, asking Turkey to abide by International Law including the United Nations covenant and the International Human Rights Law. He further pointed that the only way to establish peace for the Syrian People lies in finding a political solution for the crisis.

Furthermore, the New Zealand government has decided to withdraw its symbolic forces operating in Iraq by June 2020, which is classified by the New Zealand Ministry of Defence to be a "non-combat force", which consists of 95 counter-terrorism trainers in Iraq.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said earlier this year that it was time to end New Zealand's military presence in Iraq after the New Zealand force completed its primary mission of training 40,000 Iraqi police forces at the Taji military complex since the start of the operation in 2015.

The New Zealand government also plans to reduce its military staff in Afghanistan from 13 down to 11 by March 2020, before preparing for a complete withdrawal of its forces while retaining only three New Zealand experts which will be mainly working on providing family support for Afghan women through a peace and security initiative in Afghanistan.

In another related issue, New Zealand government will not participate in the international alliance in the Strait of Hormuz in the gulf region. However, New Zealand Defence Minister, Ron Mark told journalists that New Zealand does not have any capacity to extend support in this respect, with the country barely capable of maintaining two surveillance aircrafts, and therefore lacking the reserve capabilities to participate in this kind of mission. He added that if New Zealand did have the capacity, it would need to be discussed by the New Zealand Cabinet.



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Foreign Affairs spokesman for the National Party Mr Gerry Brownlee described the position as “embarrassing”, and that New Zealand needed to join the effort one way or another.

Mr Brownlee announced that “This is simply not good enough. New Zealand's Defence Force can offer its partners a range of skills and assets in a multilateral effort such as this” adding that “just as oil and other goods destined for Australia moves through the Strait of Hormuz, so too does oil and goods destined for New Zealand.” Mr Peters condemned the attacks on oil shipments as an “inexcusable violation of international law” that “risk(s) escalating a dangerous situation in the Gulf region”.

In a meeting with King Abdullah II, New Zealand reiterated its commitment to combatting violent extremism and terrorism and doing so in collaboration with other world leaders.



His Majesty King Abdullah II with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern during a meeting in New York



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The meeting between Prime Minister Ardern and His Majesty King Abdullah II in New York focused on bolstering cooperation between the two countries in various areas, including regional developments. The meeting pursued cooperation on various matters of joint concern, particularly combatting violent extremism.

The meeting also covered Jordan's efforts to fight terrorism, including the Aqaba Process meetings, which took place on the sidelines of the Leaders Dialogue: Strategic Responses to Terrorist and Violent Extremist Narratives.

In return, Ms Ardern expressed New Zealand's appreciation for Jordan's role under His Majesty King Abdullah II in pursuing peace and stability in the region and the world, and its efforts to fight terrorist ideologies.

New Zealand maintains a strong stance on providing humanitarian assistance to needy countries and in encouraging international and political actors to also do so in accordance with international law and human rights.

Mr Peters announced a three-million-dollar humanitarian assistance package to Syria in August 2019, to assist those suffering as a result of the conflict. He explained that the New Zealand Government had also contributed additional funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) "to support the distribution of food and other essential items, restore water supplies, and support hospitals and health centres to continue to function".

He added that "Humanitarian agencies provide a lifeline for people living in extremely difficult conditions inside Syria, but the challenge is enormous and ongoing." Mr Peters stated that New Zealand "continues to advocate for a political solution to the conflict in Syria", urging that "all sides to comply with their obligations under international human rights Law and International humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to allow rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to all in need".



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New Zealand - US Relations

Prime Minister Ardern met with US President Trump during her visit to New York for the United Nations General Assembly. In her official communique, she stated that she was “looking forward to discussing a wide range of international and regional issues with President Trump, including our cooperation in the Pacific and the trade relationship between our countries.”



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Winston Peters, highlighted the importance of this meeting taking into consideration the high caliber of representatives present on the American side, where President Trump was joined by Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien in his meeting with Ms Ardern. Mr Peters stated that “a very positive discussion was held on a range of international issues and areas of shared interest, including on advancing our bilateral trade interests.”

New Zealand maintains very good relations with the US, however it does differ from the US in a number of policy areas, particularly in its position on international law and a multilateralism, a stance that New Zealand supports completely, unlike the US and Australia.



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New Zealand and Regional/Pacific Cooperation

New Zealand plays an active role in the Indo-Pacific region through effective engagement in the work of regional organizations and various regional conferences.

Upon playing a wider regional role, New Zealand participated, for the first time, in the G20 Summit that convened in Japan during 21-24 November. The New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted that “In light of this strong wind blowing worldwide, New Zealand participation in G20 Ministers’ of Foreign Affairs meeting is a highly valuable opportunity.”



G20 Minister’s of Foreign Affairs meeting in Japan

This participation will offer an opportunity for New Zealand to address its views in regard to various global issues like climate change in the Pacific Ocean, and the dire need for the international community to foster and support the World Trade Organization (WTO).

New Zealand has continued to manage its even-handed relations with the Pacific countries, an example was the recent visit made by Prime Minister of Tonga Kingdom to New Zealand in early December this year. This visit has taken place after high level negotiations between high rank officials from Tonga and New Zealand in wellington in November this year. Also, many specialized agencies from both countries participated in these meetings.



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New Zealand relationship with China

Relations between Wellington and Beijing have been strained under the Ardern government. New Zealand has also joined Australia on concerns about China's growing influence in the Pacific region, with China being the most important trading partner of both countries. Mr Simon Bridges, leader of the opposition from the National Party of New Zealand, blamed Ardern and her deputy, Winston Peters, for the steady deterioration of relations with China and said relations were at their worst.



Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern shaking hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during her visit to Beijing on April 1, 2019

The New Zealand Government has publicly expressed growing concern over Beijing's growing influence in the South Pacific region and has rejected the first domestic bid for Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei to build a fifth-generation mobile network in New Zealand.

Huawei is the world's largest provider of network equipment and many countries are still discussing banning the use of its equipment in 5G networks due to its close affiliation with the Chinese government and mounting privacy and security concerns. Meanwhile Japan, New Zealand and Australia have joined the ever-growing list of countries that have banned the import of Huawei equipment.



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However, in a move aimed at improving bilateral relations with China and containing the ongoing diplomatic crisis, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern visited China on April 1 this year for a one-day visit, the first since she took office in a move that has been judged by many observers as an attempt to ease the tension between the two countries during the previous period.

During the visit, the two sides discussed ways for New Zealand to participate in China's "Belt and Road" plan, the giant global marine and land infrastructure project launched by Beijing in 2013. The parties also called for accelerating negotiations to upgrade the decades-old free trade agreement to continuously strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between China and New Zealand and strengthen cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Negotiations in relation to upgrading the free trade agreement between China and New Zealand were concluded. The two countries signed an agreement in 2008 but has not been ratified until the last quarter of last year. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that it is expected that upgrading the agreement will reflect the urgent developmental requirements and to foster bilateral trade relations and strengthen the process of regional economic cooperation.

China has become the biggest trade partner to New Zealand, the biggest export entity, and the fastest service markets in terms of development. The latest New Zealand Government statistics has shown that China is the largest trade partner, for its trade volume exceeded, recently, NZ\$32 billion.

The Chinese Ambassador to New Zealand made a statement to the Chinese Wednesday Media Agency that upgrading the free trade agreement will increase the bilateral relations and will bring about more vibrancy to the trade cooperation between the two countries.



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New Zealand-Australia Relations

New Zealand and Australia continue to remain strong allies; however, the past year has seen some disagreements between the two countries. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern made an official visit to Australia between 18-19 July 2019. During this visit, she met with the Governor General of Victoria Ms Linda Dessau, and Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews in Melbourne.



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern during a meeting with the Governor General of Victoria Linda Dessau

Prime Minister Ardern said that she intended to discuss key social issues during her visit, including climate change, child poverty and Australia's deportation policies for New Zealand citizens. Prime Minister Ardern also met with Prime Minister Morrison in Melbourne on July 19 2019, where the two parties discussed online extremism, and Australian deportation laws as they pertain to New Zealanders convicted of crimes in Australia.



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Prime Minister Ardern urged that Australia end its deportation of New Zealand citizens convicted of criminal offences, saying that this policy has a “corrosive effect” on Australia-New Zealand relations. However, the Minister for Home Affairs of Australia, Mr Peter Dutton, responded in an interview on Channel 9 that the policy would not be changed, saying “if you come as a New Zealand citizen, or a Brit, wherever you come from, your country of origin is where you go back to if you have committed a crime.”

This stance was supported by the Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese, with bipartisan agreement on the subject. Moreover, those who are defending New Zealand citizens facing deportation have accused Prime Minister Ardern of failing to stand by them.

The 2014 changes to Australian Immigration Laws stipulate that a visa can be cancelled for a person who commits a crime that carries a sentence of one year in prison or more. Since then, more than 1,500 New Zealanders have been deported from Australia, which, according to Prime Minister Ardern, has had a negative impact on bilateral relations.



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New Zealand relations with ASEAN

The New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Winston Peters, participated in the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand. The Minister thanked the representatives for their support to the people of New Zealand following the Christchurch terror attacks earlier in the year.



New Zealand Foreign Minister, Winston Peters, during his participation in the ASEAN meetings in Bangkok, Thailand

Mr Peters added that the collective support shown through a statement issued by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in the week following the attack had very positive impact, and “underscored the importance of our friendship”.

The Minister noted that 2020 will mark the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations, with the partners set to draft a new Plan of Action for the period 2021-2025. In turn, the ASEAN Committee thanked New Zealand for its support in establishing the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), in addition to providing annual scholarships to students from ASEAN member-states.



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ASEAN leaders during the summit in Bangkok, Thailand

Mr Peters also participated in a number of ministerial meetings with committee representatives, and bilateral meetings with the Foreign Affairs ministers of Russia and Cambodia, and as well as the President of Thailand. Mr Peters noted that “New Zealand has serious strategic and economic interests to pursue” at the ASEAN summit, and that New Zealand has “enjoyed engaging with our regional partners on the challenges facing the Indo-Pacific and discussing how to deepen our cooperation”.



New Zealand Foreign Minister during the ASEAN summit



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New Zealand- Japan Relations

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern made an official visit to Japan for four days before heading to New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly meetings. One day before her arrival in Japan, the Asia New Zealand Foundation, a group partially funded by the New Zealand Government, issued a report on relations between the two countries.

The report raised questions as to whether New Zealand has allowed its relationship with Japan to decline, discussing the deterioration of the relationship over several decades, during which time the Japanese economy has stagnated. The report also highlighted how New Zealand has become more focused on thriving Chinese markets, now considered New Zealand's biggest commercial partner.



The New Zealand Prime Minister with her Japanese counterpart during her official visit to Tokyo, Japan



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The report also describes how China's rise as an economic superpower, and the development achieved by other Asian states elsewhere in the region, has had a negative impact on the relationship between New Zealand and Japan. Upon meeting Japanese Prime Minister Mr Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister Ardern commented that both countries have agreed on fostering bilateral strategic cooperation, and that "Japan is increasingly one of New Zealand's most important partners in the world".

Prime Minister Ardern remarked that "In a challenging and changing global and regional environment, New Zealand and Japan enjoy a stable long-term relationship that in recent years has gone from strength to strength". She noted that Japan is considered New Zealand's 4th largest trading partner, and "an important source of high-quality investment", with two-way goods and services trade totaling NZ\$8.8 billion, or USD \$5.6 billion.

Winston Peters stated that Japan is considered one of the most important partners to New Zealand, and that, New Zealand and Japan are strategic partners to confront accelerating challenges in a regional and international environment. Mr Peter declared that New Zealand and Japan participate in attaining joint objectives in defending the World based order which is based on rules and regional peace and security.

Upon the bilateral negotiations, both ministers issued a joint statement for cooperation in the Pacific Ocean, including a set of developmental projects Japan and New Zealand will implement jointly, including renewable energy, infra-structure for aviation, water security, security equipment, and curbing of threats of catastrophes, among others. Also, Winston Peters pointed to the joint declaration as a positive step that reflects the two countries commitment to work closely in the Pacific Ocean region.



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New Zealand and Climate Change issue

New Zealand continues to maintain its commitment to fighting climate change through its climate policies. The New Zealand government has introduced a bill that aims to ensure that Wellington meets its target zero carbon emissions, setting out the country's plan for the next 30 years on global warming, in which it hopes to reduce greenhouse gases to zero by 2050.

The UN Secretary-General thanked New Zealand for its leadership in combating climate change and its commitment to the COP3 Paris Agreement, where it passed legislation to limit temperature increases below 1.5°C by the end of the century, which would mean zero Carbon emissions by 2050.

Upon attending the UN climate summit, Prime Minister Ardern declared that she had secured the support of four more countries in signing a new agreement to combat climate change. She added that negotiations will start with Norway, Iceland, Fiji and Costa Rica, in the hopes that more countries will sign on to the draft agreement.

Prime Minister Ardern remarked that as the situation on earth get worse, so do the policies and procedures. She also said that “Climate change is the defining long-term issue of our generation that successive governments have failed to address”, and that it would be “gross negligence” to ignore the issue.



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Political Context

Pacific Islands

Pacific Island Political Developments

Political instability has persisted in various Pacific countries, most recently, with the withdrawal of confidence from Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, who has been in power since 2011. This came after numerous complaints were raised about the previous government's alleged involvement in corruption and financial mismanagement cases, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister and the appointment of former Finance Minister, James Marabi, as the new Prime Minister.



The New Zealand Foreign Minister, Mr Winston Peters, and the Prime Minister of Tonga, Mr Tu'iono

In another political development in this island, elections in Papua New Guinea related to the independence of Millville Island has been conducted. More than 167 thousand in this island have voted in favour of complete independence from Papua New Guinea, whereby 3 thousand people voted for staying within Papua New Guinea. If the parliament voted in favour of independence, then this new state will become a region of power struggle and polarization between the regional main countries in the Pacific Ocean, China, Australia, and USA.



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Palestine-Pacific Island Relations

There have been no dramatic changes regarding the position of the Pacific countries vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This is except for the continuous efforts by the General Delegation of Palestine in Australia to urge these countries to recognise the State of Palestine and the beginning of developmental and technical cooperation between them and State of Palestine.



The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, with his counterpart, the High commissioner of the Republic of Fiji, Mr Luke Daunivalu

In addition, the inconsistent voting of these countries towards Palestine continued including, Vanuatu and Papa New Guinea, which both of them abstained from voting on some resolutions related to Palestine at the United Nations.



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The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi and First Secretary Noura Saleh during their meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Timor-Leste in Canberra

However, some Pacific countries continued their systematic voting against resolutions related to Palestine, and especially Nauru, Micronesia and Marchelle Islands. In this context, it is important to note that most Pacific countries abstained from voting for most resolutions in relation to Palestine at the United Nations. It is surprising that Vanuatu, which has full diplomatic relations with Palestine, abstained from voting for extending the UNRWA's mandate.



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Palestinian Ambassador with his counterpart, the High Commissioner of Samoa, Mrs Hinauri Petana

In light of the relations with the Middle East crises, Australia and Fiji continued their participation within the UN Peace Keeping Forces “ANDOF” in the occupied Golan Heights.

Also, this joint process comes within a framework to observe the disengagement in the region between Israel and Syria. Moreover, this process comes within the framework of the UN Security Council to renew the UN Peace keeping force mission in the Syrian occupied Golan Heights, after years of UN withdrawal of these forces due to the terrorist group, known as “Jabhat Al Nusra”, which hijacked 40 soldiers from these UN forces.



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Tonga's first ever participation in the Round Table meeting on Public Administration held in Ramallah, Palestine during 1-2 April. The Tongan representative was the Director General of the Public Administration institute, Ms. Mele Amanaki, in a move considered by many to be a giant leap in course of the bilateral relations with the State of Palestine.

This meeting focused on modern ways of public administration and methodologies for the development of government institutions by exchanging means of information and experiences shared by all the countries participating in the conference. The General Delegation of the State of Palestine (GDOP) helped facilitate this conference by contacting all the regional countries invited and urging them to participate in this important conference.

The GDOP has also continued to make persistent efforts to initiate the process of development and cooperation between the State of Palestine and some of these countries through the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, with a strong emphasis on Vanuatu, Fiji, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea.

In this context, representatives of the General Delegation of Palestinian held numerous meetings with the ambassadors of these countries to Australia, all of whom promised to facilitate and support this cooperation. Despite progress in technical and development cooperation with the Republic of Vanuatu, the start of some projects is still currently pending.



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There have been no new developments in the Palestinian-Pacific relationship, except for the decision by the Republic of Nauru to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and establish its embassy there. Accordingly, the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, Yisrael Katz, praised the decision taken by Nauru on his twitter account, saying “We will continue to strengthen Jerusalem and to bring about the recognition and opening of diplomatic missions and embassies in our capital”.

Nauru’s mission to the United Nations in New York said in a letter on 16 August to the Israeli mission that “The Mission of Nauru has the honour to convey the decision of the Government of the Republic of Nauru to formally recognize the City of Jerusalem as the Capital of the State of Israel.”

It is expected that the Israeli Government will soon announce an assistance program to relocate embassies and diplomatic missions to Jerusalem. This program will extend to the Embassy of Nauru, which does not currently have an embassy.

Nauru does not have an official capital and has only one city, Denigomodu. The recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital by the Republic of Nauru has been greatly condemned by the Palestinian leadership, who had asked them to renege on this decision, noting its gross breach of international law. The Arab League also issued a statement condemning Nauru’s decision.

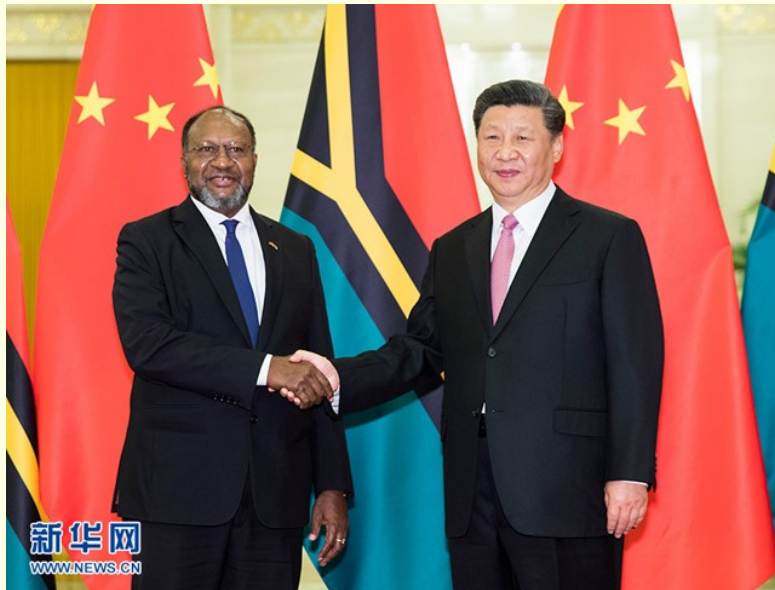


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China's Rise of Influence in the Region

Similarly, in the case of Australia and New Zealand, China's growing influence in the region is also impacting on the Pacific Islands. China's influence in the Pacific is expanding in an effort to support Beijing's strategically important 'Belt and Road' initiative. The Pacific region is also important to China in terms of navigation, seaports and in countering United States influence in the region. China has maintained with these island states on the basis of geo-political and geographical proximity through the provision of more financial and technical assistance.

Within this context, Vanuatu Prime Minister Charlotte Salwai paid a four-day official visit to China from 26-31 May, during which he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and discussed various topics covering a variety of topics, with a specific emphasis on economic and financial cooperation.



**Prime Minister of Vanuatu Charlot Salwai, during his meeting
with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing**



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It is worth mentioning that Vanuatu is cooperating with China on various fields, including Beijing's Belt and Road initiative, as well as implementing the UN Sustainable Development Agenda of 2030, as well as dealing with the effects of climate change.

Chinese President, Xi Jinping, also made it clear of his country's intention and willingness to deepen cooperation with Vanuatu in the agricultural technology sector, support the development of its competitive industries, and continue to encourage Chinese companies to invest in Vanuatu.

He went on further to state that Beijing has adopted a method of supporting justice and pursuing common interests, building friendships through goodwill, in order to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with Pacific Island Nations.

President Xi asserted that China did not follow its own interests based on the so-called "sphere of influence" in Pacific Island States, and instead would always be a friend and partner of those states, respecting their efforts to achieve unified self-development and equal participation in regional and international affairs.

He also emphasized that China supports Pacific Island countries in developing their economies, improving the living conditions of their people, and enhancing their capabilities for sustainable and independent development.

For his part, Prime Minister Charlotte Salway said that Vanuatu is impressed by China's insistence on equal treatment of states, no matter how small or large, rich or poor, strong or weak they might be, and appreciates the China's sincere assistance to his country according to its actual needs.

The repercussions of the Solomon Islands' decision to suddenly end diplomatic relations with Taiwan after 36 years are still being felt in the Pacific region. The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Mr Manasseh Sogavare, made the decision during a ministerial meeting, with the aim of pursuing relations with China.



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**Australian Prime Minister, Mr Scott Morrison, with his counterpart,
Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Mr Manasseh Sogavare**

The move is in line with the “One-China” principle adopted by Beijing, which discourages other countries from establishing official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, as a basis for pursuing full diplomatic relations with China. The Taiwanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Joseph Wu, said during a press conference that they condemn the decision and will terminate diplomatic relations with the Solomon Islands in response.

Mr Wu added that the Solomon Islands, with a population of 600,000 people, needed to be more worried about Chinese “dollar diplomacy”. Following this decision, the US Vice President, Mr Mike Pence, rejected plans to meet with the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands Mr Sogavare, to discuss developments in their partnership. It has been agreed that this meeting would take place on the sidelines of the UNGA meeting in New York.



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An American official described the move by the Solomon Islands as “hurting a historically strong relationship”, calling it “a setback, prioritizing short-term gain with China over long-term commitment with the U.S”. The official added that “Countries that establish closer ties to China primarily out of the hope or expectation that such a step will stimulate economic growth and infrastructure development often find themselves worse off in the long run”. However, a Chinese official stated that the Solomon Islands would gain development opportunities following the severing of its relationship with Taiwan.

Similarly, Kiribati has also cut off diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favour of Beijing, in what is considered another win for Chinese diplomacy. This decision came less than a month after that of the Solomon Islands, with the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs issuing a joint declaration to mark the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two states. This also took place during the UN Climate Summit in New York.

China welcomed the decision by Kiribati. The Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Wang Yi said in a statement that “the Chinese side highly appreciates this important and right decision of the Government of the Republic of Kiribati”. He added that “the Government of the Republic of Kiribati recognises that there is but one China in the world, the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal Government representing the whole of China, and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory.”

Mr Wang continued by remarking that the UN “recognized the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China as the only lawful representatives of China to the UN”, and that the “One China principle has become the extensive consensus of the international community and the important norm of international relations.”



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Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mr Geng Shuang commented that “based on the principle of one unified China, China has made diplomatic relations official with 178 countries around the globe”, and that the decisions made by the Solomon Islands and Kiribati “fully demonstrates that the One China principle meets the shared aspirations of the people and constitutes an irresistible trend of the times”.

Mr Geng added that relations between China and Pacific Island nations are growing rapidly, remarking that Kiribati and China have amicable feelings towards each other. He expressed that China is ready to strengthen bilateral cooperation with Kiribati in a number of areas.

The Prime Minister of Samoa Mr Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, one of the most influential leaders in the Pacific, stated that Samoa would not collaborate with Australia and the US against China, declaring that “their enemies are not our enemies”. He added that Mr Morrison and Mr Trump have agreed on a strategy in the region regarding growing Chinese influence, where regional investment has reached billions of dollars.

Mr Malielegaoi addressed those countries that oppose Chinese assistance by saying “if you want to compete with the Chinese you yourself need to do what they are doing, go and copy”. He contended that “bigger geopolitical issues don't have importance to us as small island countries, whose only interest is to provide a modern living”.



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Impact of Climate Change on Pacific countries

Climate change has been at the forefront of topical issues within the Pacific region this year. Many meetings and events took place for discussions regarding this concern amongst Pacific Island States.



A group of voters carry the Bougainville flag as evidence of their desire for independence

The visit of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to Fiji, Vanuatu and Tuvalu and his participation in the Pacific Nations Forum in Fiji provided the global impetus needed to shed light on the acceleration of climate change and the rise of ocean and sea levels that continue to threaten to flood low-lying coastal nation states, many of whom are located in the Pacific region.

"The Pacific Islands do not contribute negatively to climate change, but they stand on the front lines against the negative impacts of climate change, and they are doing everything they can, not only to protect their populations and culture, but also to reduce their thermal emissions in a way that is an example for most of the developed nations of the world," he said.



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The Secretary-General also described climate change to be one of the biggest challenges of the current era and, one that has become a central theme for the UN, four years after the Paris Agreement during his visit to the Fijian capital Suva. Guterres also stressed the need for the world to realize that "We are not moving forward in winning this battle at the moment and that we are not yet on track to respect the commitments made at the Paris Agreement," adding, "We urgently need a much stronger political will to be able to save the planet."

The Secretary-General also announced that the Pacific countries that are facing this enormous challenge, decided not to give up, insisted, they focused on solutions and developed ways to increase their resilience to these changes and adapt to them, and said that these countries are also leading efforts on the path to reducing carbon emissions and are an example to be followed by the rest of the countries in the world. He went on to note that he does not demand solidarity or generosity, but calls on officials around the world to make decisions out of enlightened self-interest because it is not only about the Pacific nations, but the whole planet is at stake, stating that "Saving the Pacific nations meant saving the planet as well."

In the same Context, the presidents of some Pacific islands criticized the current Australian Government's climate change policy, particularly with the latter's continued reliance on coal and its direct impact on global warming and climate change. "Let's wait for the Australian election and its outcome" said Samoan president Tuilaepa Sailele, in a clear sign preference towards the Australian Labor Party and its climate change plan.



Australian Foreign Minister Ms Marise Payne, during her official visit to Fiji in February 2019



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In the context, the 50th Pacific Islands Forum took place in Tuvalu during 13-16 August. The leaders of 18 Pacific nations met, in addition to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. The forum was centered on climate change, considered the most critical issue facing the Pacific Islands, and the greatest threat to livelihoods and welfare of these states.

Australia's participation emphasised the importance of ratifying Paris Climate Agreement, and the reduction of carbon emissions. Pacific Island nations have harshly criticised Australia for its continued use of coal which is considered an existential threat to these island states. Australia ignored these condemnations, declaring that it will continue to mine coal, and will instead provide financial aid to Pacific Island countries to lessen the effects of carbon emissions and global warming.



A group photo of Pacific Island leaders attending the 50th Summit on Tuvalu Island



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The USA also participated in the forum, with a spokesperson from the US State Department saying that attendees included “a high-level U.S. Government delegation. The statement added that this visit would “emphasize our enduring commitment to the Pacific Islands and our close partnership with this key part of the Indo-Pacific”.



American Vice President Mike Pence

The US delegation hoped to discuss “issues of regional and global importance including regional security cooperation, the global DPRK pressure campaign, building resilience to environmental security challenges, combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and sustainable economic development.”



Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Manasseh Sogavare



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The spokesperson also said that the presence of US in Pacific Ocean is not intended to compete with any other country. China also participated in the Forum, represented by special envoy Mr Weng Xuefeng. Mr Weng stated that “China believes that to better deal with climate change, we must strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement”, and that “developed countries should earnestly carry out their obligations set in the Convention and the Agreement, including providing sufficient support in terms of finance, technology and capacity-building to small island countries”.

The special envoy noted that over the years, China has provided assistance to Pacific Island countries through cooperation on a South-South basis, in order to help them improve their capabilities in combatting climate change. He added that China will also increase its efforts to support sustainable development initiatives in Pacific Island countries.

The special envoy continued by saying that China will always be friend to the Pacific Islands, and that China believes all countries, whether big or small, are equal. He concluded by saying that China will agree to reduce carbon emissions and assist other countries with climate change.



Chinese and Solomon Island Flags



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The final forum communiqué included the Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Action Now, calling on states to limit global warming by reducing coal production, and increasing the contributions to the UN Green Climate Fund. The declaration requested all parties join the Blue Pacific in taking bold and innovative measures to meet the challenges of climate change. All parties to the Paris Climate Agreement are further urged to meet their share of requirements in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The leaders also agreed to emphasise “strong political leadership to advance climate change action, protecting our Ocean’s health and integrity, sustainably managing our island and ocean resources, connecting our oceanic continent (air, sea and ICT) and ensuring healthy people, as cornerstone priorities informed by science”. As such, Pacific Island leaders were disappointed by the failure of the summit to issue an effective declaration to address climate change.

This was clearly in reference to Australia’s stubborn position on continuing to extract coal. Australia had strongly pressured other states to exclude any mention of reduced reliance on coal as an energy source in the final communiqué. Furthermore, Mr Morrison refused to sign the final declaration of the summit which had been unanimously agreed upon by the other leaders, which included the goal of reaching 0 emissions by 2050 and ending reliance on coal mining.

The Prime Minister of Tuvalu Mr Enele Sopoaga conceded that the forum should have achieved more than it had. He regretted the inability of the other small Pacific Island states to reach better results. On the same note, the Deputy Opposition Leader of the Labor Party Mr Richard Marles commented that the Australian Government should provide better assistance to the Pacific Islands and play a greater leadership role in this region.

Furthermore, the shadow Foreign Affairs Minister, Ms Penny Wong, commented that Mr Morrison’s “arrogance has done great damage to our relationships and Australia’s standing in the region”, and that “at a time when we need closer engagement with our region, Australia’s (Prime Minister) has diminished our influence.”

Ms Wong confirmed that the Labor party would have also rejected calls from Pacific Island leaders to halt the establishment of new coal mines, saying that coal is an important industry for Australia, and is a key energy source globally. She added that the Labor party would not agree to an immediate ban on coal and associated industries.



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These island countries in the Pacific Ocean expressed indignation over the Australian Government's approval of the Adani Group coal mine project in the state of Queensland in Northeast Australia. Fijian Prime Minister Mr Bainimarama criticised Australia, saying "we face an existential threat that you don't face and challenges we expect your governments and people to more fully appreciate".

The Australian Government has allocated \$500 million dollars in foreign aid to projects addressing climate change in the Pacific. Mr Morrison declared that this funding not only reflects Australia's commitment to decreasing carbon emissions, but also reflects its support of neighbours and friends in the Pacific. This assistance will support investment in renewable energy, and resilience to global warming.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern joined in the criticism of Australian climate change policy. She commented during the forum that Australia should react more positively to the pressing calls from these island states with regard to global warming. She contended that each country is required to play its role in combatting climate change, and Australia should be held responsible in the Pacific Ocean, given its special role there. On the other hand, the New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Winston Peters, intervened to lessen Ms Ardern's firm position on Australia's role, by saying Pacific nations using Chinese investment should remember it comes on the back of "coal-fired everything".



Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison



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Mr Frank Bainimarama accused Mr Scott Morrison of insulting Pacific Island leaders during the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and said that the Chinese officials were more tactful. The Fijian Prime Minister's comments came upon the failure of the Pacific Islands Forum to reach an agreement on strict new measures to fight climate change, upon insistence of the Australian Government to continue coal production.

This angered Pacific Island leaders, with Mr Bainimarama claiming that Mr Morrison tried to impose his countries policies on other countries and insulted them by mentioning the amount of financial assistance that Australia provides to the region.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison while attending a meeting in Tavalu

He further added to the Guardian newspaper that the Australian Prime Minister was “very insulting and condescending”. Mr Bainimarama said that “there is no competition” between Australia and China “except to say the Chinese don’t insult us”. When asked whether some leaders of Pacific nations would pursue relations with Beijing, the Fijian Prime Minister said that “after what we went through with Morrison, nothing can be worse than him”, highlighting the deterioration of relations with Australia.



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Goals and Objectives

The overall goal for this year was to enhance and strengthen the status and legitimacy of the GDOP as both 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 relations between the GDOP and the Arab and international diplomatic corps
3. Further enhance and institutionalise relations with civil society in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific
4. Further enhance and institutionalise relations with the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic communities in Australia. The Delegation also strives to improve its ability 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 regular and robust strategic dialogue with Coalition government members, including the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Marise Payne, as well as DFAT officials. The Coalition's foreign policy is unlikely to be sympathetic towards the Palestinian situation. For this reason, a position paper that discusses the main components of Australia's foreign policy and its impact on the Israel-Palestine 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.



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3. To work closely with the Pacific island states, with more direct visits and improved bilateral co-ordination 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 UN 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 a 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 are high priorities 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 other councils and institutions.



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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 in 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 (albeit limited) outreach, achieved without a dedicated media department. However, the GDOP believes that a dedicated media strategy would help to generate a much stronger impact, and would be far more effective at influencing public opinion within Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. At present, the capacity and strategy include 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 that have the most impact, in a bid to manage constraints on the GDOP's financial and human resources. In order to respond further to these constraints, the GDOP runs a 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.



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Activities of the General Delegation of Palestine from 1st January - 31st December 2019

Bi-lateral relations

1. The Australian Parliamentary Delegation paid an official visit to the State of Palestine from 10 -15th January 2019. During the visit, the Parliamentary Delegation was briefed on the ongoing violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel. This has included the building of illegal Israeli settlements, the Judaization of Jerusalem, the demolition of Palestinian houses, arrests of Palestinian minors, and the isolation of Palestinian local communities from each other as a result of the Israeli apartheid wall.



**The Australian Parliamentary Delegation at the Palestinian
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in Ramallah**



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The Parliamentary Delegation also visited the city of Hebron and learned about the expansion of Israeli settlements in the Old City, and the serious damage and harm of these settlements to the Palestinian economy in the Hebron area.

The Parliamentary Delegation also visited the city of Bethlehem and were informed about the major settlement activities in the area, as well as the severe restrictions imposed by the apartheid wall on the city's residents.



Ambassador Abdulhadi welcoming the parliamentary Delegation upon their arrival to Jericho / Palestine

The Parliamentary Delegation also visited the city of Jerusalem and were informed about the deteriorating economic conditions in Jerusalem due to its isolation from the rest of the West Bank, as a result of Israeli apartheid wall and the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel.



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The Parliamentary Delegation also met with several Palestinian officials such as Deputy Prime Minister and member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Dr Ziad Abu Amr, who briefed them on the latest developments in the Israel Palestine conflict.



The Australian Parliament Delegation in Jericho

In addition, the Parliamentary Delegation met with many representatives from Palestinian civil society, local communities, the Palestinian business sector, and Israeli NGOs. In all of these meetings, the Parliamentary Delegation was were briefed on the current political, economic and social situation in the State of Palestine.



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The Parliamentary Delegation during its visits to the occupied part of Hebron

It should be noted that the Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied the Parliamentary Delegation throughout its visit to Palestine. The Parliamentary Delegation returned to Australia with a clearer viewpoint and understanding of the deteriorating conditions imposed on the Palestinian people as a result of the continuation of the Israeli occupation.

The Parliamentary Delegation was also informed about the Palestinian leadership's vision, strategies and approaches to overcome these challenges to build a vibrant, sovereign and independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.



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Members of the Parliamentary Delegation during their visit to Jerusalem

The Parliamentary Delegation also promised to raise these issues at the Australia Federal Parliament and to work closely toward Australia's recognition of the State of Palestine. It should also be noted that the Australian Parliamentary Delegation visited the State of Kuwait and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on their way to Palestine, in coordination with the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra.



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The Parliamentary Delegation in front of the Separation Wall in Bethlehem



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2. The Palestinian Delegation participated in the Annual National Multicultural Festival held on 16th February 2019 in Canberra under the theme “Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state”. This festival is attended by more than 300,000 people annually.

The Palestinian Stall attracted many visitors who expressed great admiration for Palestinian handcrafts, embroidery, ceramics, and wood products, as well as traditional Palestinian food products such as olive oil, Maftool, Frika and olives.

The Palestinian Delegation also organised a photography exhibition during the Festival which included custom photos of the city of Jerusalem. The exhibit showcased the ancient history of the Old City, emphasizing the ancient and unique connection between the Palestinian people and the city of Jerusalem.



Palestinian Stall at the NMCF in Canberra



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Images from the Canberra NMCF



Images from the Canberra NMCF



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Images from the Canberra NMCF



Images from the Canberra NMCF



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Images from the Canberra NMCF



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3. The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, met with a number of Ambassadors of Pacific Island nations from 25th-29th February 2019. These meetings included discussions with the Ambassadors of the Republic of East Timor, Samoa and the Solomon Islands around increased political consultation and advancing professional and technical cooperation between Palestine and these Pacific countries.



Ambassador Abdulhadi's meeting with the High Commissioner of Samoa



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**Ambassador Abdulhadi's and Noura Saleh meeting
with the High Commissioner of Timor Leste**

4. On 25 February 2019 the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by Counsellor Suheir Gedeon met with the Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Mrs HK Yu at the DFAT' premises. The parties discussed the current political situation in Palestine, especially the Palestinian position on the so-called "Deal of the Century", the continued violations of the rights of Palestinians by Israel, and the importance of Australia's support of Palestine's accession to international organisations. The two parties agreed to continue discussions in the near future to strengthen Australia's role in reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict based on international law and relevant UN resolutions.



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5. On 13 March 2019 Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, met with the new Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji at the Fiji High Commission in Canberra. The two parties discussed four key topics.

The first was concerning Fiji's potential recognition of the State of Palestine, and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The second was centered on the importance of the technical cooperation between the two countries, while the third topic was an invitation to Fiji to participate in the round table organised by the Palestinian General Personnel Council. The final discussion topic emphasised the possibility of signing a judicial cooperation agreement between the two countries. The Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji promised to work closely with his government on these important issues, and to return to the Palestinian Delegation as soon as he received an official response.



Ambassador Abdulhadi's meeting with the High Commissioner of Fiji



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6. The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, along with First Secretary Ms Noura Saleh, participated in a seminar organised by the Lowy Institute on 18th July 2019, on the balance of power in Southeast Asia. During this seminar, researchers posited new developments regarding the balance of power in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, with increased competition between China and the US in more than one arena. This presentation covered a number of issues and topics, including economic power, geopolitical power, intellectual property, and international relations.

7. The Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi met with Member of Parliament Ms Maria Vamvakinou, Co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine Committee, on 22nd July at the Australian Federal Parliament. Both parties agreed to revitalise and reactivate the Friendship Committee by conducting a number of influential activities.

8. On 30th July 2019, the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra hosted Dr Sanaa Soroghli, Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at An-Najah National University, following her lecture at the Australian Federal Parliament on the current constitutional situation in Palestine.

The lecture was attended by several members of the Federal Parliament, representatives of the Arab and International Diplomatic Corps, representatives of advocacy groups and the staff of the Palestinian Delegation. During the seminar, Dr Sanaa emphasised on the challenges facing the constitutional process in Palestine and the importance of the popular participation in determining the content of a future Palestinian constitution. She also noted the importance of a precise identification of the principles, concepts and the foundations on which to refer to during the creation of the constitutional process in Palestine.



Dr Soroghli during her lecture at the Australian Federal Parliament



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9. On 16 September 2019, Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in a seminar on the achievements of the late Prime Minister of Australia, Robert Menzies, and the late Opposition Leader Arthur Calwell, at the Australian Federal Parliament in Canberra. The seminar was led by their two daughters, who presented the most important social and political aspects of the lives of the two late leaders.



Memories of the Late PM Menzies and the Shadow PM Calwell Panel at Federal Parliament



Memories of the Late PM Menzies and the Shadow PM Calwell Panel at Federal Parliament



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10. On 21st-25th November 2019, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi received His Excellency the Palestinian Minister for Local Government, Engineer Magdi Al Saleh. During his visit, the Minister for Local Government met with Hon Mark Coulton MP, as well as with the Minister for Local Government of Victoria, Hon Adem Someyurk. It should be noted that the minister also participated in the work of the General Assembly of the International Federation of Engineers, as well as the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Australia Union of Engineers in his capacity as the president of the Palestinian Union of Engineers.

The Palestinian Delegation in Canberra coordinated the minister's official visit to Australia, including his meeting with the Minister of Local Government in Canberra, and with the Minister for Local Government in Victoria.

On 21st November 2019, Minister Magdi Al Saleh met with his counterpart Minister Adem Someyruk in Melbourne where he discussed the challenges facing local government in Palestine and the main priorities and developmental needs in this sector. These included the issue of water waste treatments, recycling desalination and other challenges faced by municipalities and Palestinian village councils under the Israeli occupation, especially in Area C.



Minster for Local Government in Palestine Majdi Saleh during his meeting with his counterpart in Melbourne



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The Minister for Local Government in Victoria talked through the outstanding professional and technical advancements in the water sector and desalination projects. The two sides agreed to follow up on the results of their meetings and to continue the consultation process to develop joint local government projects in Palestine in future. The Minister also met with his Australian counterpart Hon Mark Coulton, Minister for Local Government and Small Businesses, at the Federal Parliament in Canberra on 25th November 2019.

During this meeting, the Minister gave a detailed overview of Palestinian local government and the challenges facing it under Israeli occupation, as well as the main priorities and developmental needs, especially in Area C. He also referred to the Palestinian Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) and its vital role in supporting development projects for municipalities and village councils in Palestine. The two ministers also stressed the importance of joint projects between local councils in Palestine and Australia. Minister Mark Coulton visited Palestine in 2017 during a parliamentary trip organised by the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra for a number of Australian Parliamentarians. As a result, he is currently one of the most important and influential Palestinian human rights defenders in the Australian Federal Parliament.



Minster for Local Government in Palestine Majdi Saleh during his meeting with his Federal counterpart in Canberra with the attendance of Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi



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Mr Magdi also met with the Co-Chair of Australian Parliamentary friends of Palestine, Mrs Maria Vamvakinou, in her office at the Australian Federal parliament. He informed her about the continued violation of Palestinian human rights by Israel, and the Palestinian government's plan to disengage from the Israeli economy. In return, Mrs Vamvakinou also informed the Palestinian Minister about the many activities run by the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine in the Australian Federal Parliament.



Minster for Local Government in Palestine Majdi Saleh meeting with the Co-chair of Parliamentary friends of Palestine Maria Vamvakinou MP with the attendance of Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi and Noor Rjoub / PA to the Ambassador



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Minister Majdi Saleh during his visit to the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra.

11. On December 12th, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Nora Saleh, met with the First Assistant secretary of the Middle East and Africa Division at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Angela MacDonald, at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Canberra.

The parties dealt with the bilateral relationship between Australia and Palestine, where a number of issues of common concern, regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, were discussed. The most important of these were Australia's voting patterns at the United Nations, the renewal of the UNRWA mandate, the upcoming Palestinian elections, Australia's position on Israeli settlements, and the recent announcement by the US Secretary of State on the legality of Israeli settlements, as well as Australian aid to Palestine and other related topics.

There were differing views on many of these topics, especially Australia's view of the United Nations voting, and its position on Israeli settlements in the State of Palestine.



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Arab and International Diplomatic Corps

1. On 16th March 2019, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, participated in the Egyptian Charity Bazaar organised by the Egyptian Embassy in Canberra. During this event, the Palestinian Ambassador was introduced to Egyptian handcrafts and popular Egyptian street cuisine. The Palestinian Ambassador thanked the Egyptian Ambassador for this important initiative and its contribution to public diplomacy.



Ambassador Abdulhadi visiting the Egypt Embassy bazaar and received by the Egyptian Ambassador, Mohammad Khairat



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2. On 25th March 2019, the Palestinian Delegation, in collaboration with the ANU film group at Kambri, screened the Palestinian film “The Wedding Invitation”, (Waib). The film addresses some of the social and political aspects in the Palestinian community inside Israel and offered a beautiful visual representation of these challenges showing the dialogue between a father and his son as he distributes wedding invitations for his daughter.

Counsellor Suheir Gedeon delivered a welcoming speech before the film screening, referring to the critical components of the film and the development of the Palestinian cinema. The film was viewed by a distinguished audience from different sectors.



Counsellor Suheir welcoming the viewers



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Noura Saleh, Noor Rjoub and friends

THE EMBASSY OF PALESTINE & ANU FILM GROUP PRESENTS

WAJIB

THE WEDDING INVITATION

MONDAY 25 MARCH @ 7:30 PM

CULTURAL CENTRE, KAMBRI PRECINCT, ANU

DOORS OPEN FOR ENTRY FROM 7 PM



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ANU FILM GROUP, VISIT WWW.ANUFG.ORG.AU



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

3. On 26th March 2019, the Palestinian Ambassador and Embassy staff welcomed a Lebanese Delegation from the Lebanese Future Movement at the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra. The Lebanese Delegation was headed by Osman Alameddine, A Member of Lebanese Parliament representing the Future Movement. Mr Alameddine was accompanied by Mr Mohammad Barjak, the head of the Lebanese Future Movement in Canberra.



MP Alameddin visiting the Palestinian Delegation



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The Palestinian Ambassador welcomed the Lebanese guest and his delegation and briefed them on the latest political developments in Palestine. Also, the Palestinian Ambassador enquired about the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and current approaches to improve their living conditions. The two parties also discussed the current political situation in Lebanon.



MP Alameddin visiting the Palestinian Delegation



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4. On 27th March 2019, the Palestinian Ambassador accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in an important seminar held at the Australian National Gallery on the upcoming Indonesian presidential and legislative election. The symposium was organised by the Frank Lowy Institute. Following the symposium, the director of the institute held a dialogue on this subject with the former Indonesian president's assistant.

5. On 28th March 2019, the Palestinian Delegation staff participated in a dinner hosted by the Egyptian Embassy in Canberra in honour of the arrival of Egyptian Minister of Expatriates, Mrs Nadia Makram at the Hellenic Club.

The dinner was attended by members of the of Arab and International diplomatic corps, a large number of Australian officials, and the Egyptian community in Canberra. It was an important occasion to hear directly from the Egyptian Minister about the current challenges facing Arab communities abroad, especially the Egyptian community.



Welcoming the Egyptian Minister of Expatriates



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

6. On 10th April, the Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine (AJPP) in partnership with the ANU film group and the Palestinian Delegation organised a screening of the Lebanese film “The Insult” at Kambri at ANU. The film was attended by many Australian officials, members of the Arab and international diplomatic corps, representatives of civil society and members of the Arab and Palestinian communities.

The film sparked many controversial discussions about the history of Lebanese-Palestinian relationships and the importance of social reconciliation between Lebanese and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The film also discussed the importance of social reconciliation between the Lebanese and the Palestinian people and the importance of acknowledging each other’s mutual sacrifices.

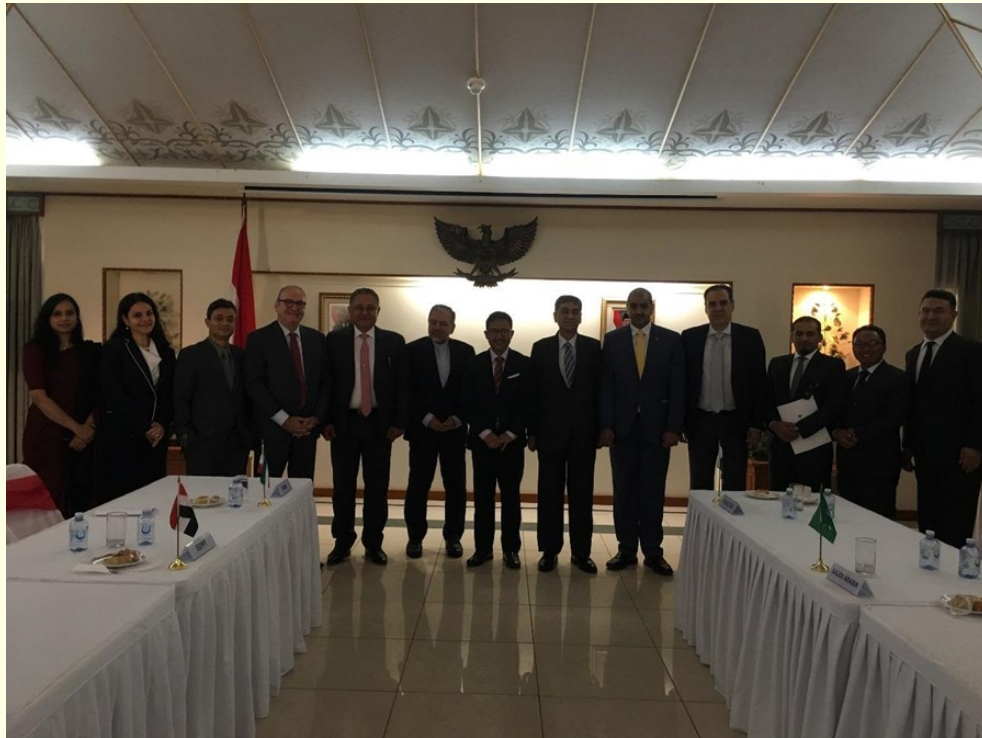


The Insult film at the ANU



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

7. On April 18th 2019, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, in his capacity as a Vice-President of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Canberra, participated in the group's Steering Committee meeting where many important issues were discussed. Members of the Steering Committee discussed the organization of Ramadan Iftar at the Old Parliament House. In addition, the Committee discussed the group's diplomatic program, especially meeting with Foreign Minister Marise Payne.



OIC Group steering committee meeting in Canberra

In addition, the Committee discussed the possibility of organizing the "OIC Day", on the same date as the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. These activities aim to enhance the group's role in Australian political and social life and to conduct a productive and meaningful dialogue with the Australian Government on various issues of concern to Muslims in Australia and the world.



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OIC Group steering committee meeting in Canberra



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8. The OIC Heads of Mission Group in Canberra held its first meeting on May 2nd, 2019, with more than 26 attending at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. The meeting was chaired by the President of the Group, the Ambassador of Indonesia, Kristiarto Legowo, and the Vice-President, Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Izzat Abdulhadi.

The meeting discussed the details of the Ramadan Iftar dinner that the group intends to organize for 31st May 2019. Members of the organization agreed that the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt would coordinate this Iftar, supported by the sub-technical committee of the OIC Group.

In addition, the meeting discussed the activities of the OIC Group, especially the upcoming meeting with the Australian Foreign Minister, Marise Payne, as well as the meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federal Parliament. The Ambassador of Indonesia was also re-elected as the President of the OIC Group and the Ambassador of the State of Palestine as Vice-President.



The meeting of the General Assembly of the OIC Group in Canberra



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9. On 8th August 2019, the Lebanese Ambassador in Canberra hosted the Arab Ambassadors for a Ramadan Iftar in the presence of the Lebanese Parliament member, Mr. Joseph Isaac. Ambassador Isaac informed the audience of developments in the political situation in Lebanon and thanked the Arab countries for their support of Lebanon's stability and independence.



Iftar Dinner at the Lebanese ambassador's residence in Canberra



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10. On 15th May, the Palestinian Ambassador and Palestinian Delegation staff participated in a reception organized by the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Canberra on the occasion of the month of Ramadan. The ceremony was attended by a large number of representatives of the Arab and international diplomatic corps, high-ranking Australian officials, civil society representatives and Arab and Muslim communities.



Iftar dinner at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Left: Ambassador Abdulhadi and Secretary of DFAT Mrs Adamson



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11. On 21st May, His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, hosted an Iftar dinner in honor of the members of the Arab and international corps at his home in Canberra. The Iftar dinner was an important occasion for the exchange of opinions on the latest political developments in the Arab world and represented the virtues of the holy month of Ramadan and its fundamental values.



Iftar dinner at the residence of the Ambassador of Egypt



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12. On 23rd May, the Palestinian Ambassador and staff from the Palestinian Delegation participated in "Africa Day" in Canberra, in the presence of a large audience from International Diplomatic Corp, representatives from the African Union in Canberra, and in the presence of the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Peter Cosgrove. It was an important occasion to learn more about the challenges facing Africa, as well as the tremendous opportunities for real and meaningful development.



Africa Day

It was also an important opportunity to learn about the arts, culture and popular cuisine of African countries. It is worth noting that all Arab countries in North Africa are members of the African Union and accordingly participated in this important celebration.



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Africa Day



Africa Day



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Africa Day



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13. On 31st May, the OIC heads of Mission Group held a Ramadan Iftar in the Old Parliament House, in Canberra, in the presence of a large audience of Arab and international diplomatic corps, representatives of the Australian Government, representatives of Australian civil society, and representatives of Arab and Muslim communities. Each embassy organized a stall that includes some traditional food, embroidery and handicrafts, among other items



OIC Iftar

The stall of the State of Palestine was a favourite, as it displayed posters and pictures of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. The Ambassador of Indonesia, as President of the OIC Group and Vice-President, Ambassador of the State of Palestine, welcomed the visitors.



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There were also two Masters of Ceremonies, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon from the Palestinian Delegation and Counsellor Aliaa Hamdi from the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



OIC Iftar



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The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia delivered a speech on behalf of the OIC Group in which he referred to the deep meaning of the holy month of Ramadan, especially the values of tolerance, pluralism, coherence and acceptance of others.



OIC Iftar



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OIC Iftar



OIC Iftar



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

He also criticized the recent uptick in racist attitudes and Islamophobia in Australia and the world, noting that Islam is a "mercy to the world" and a religion of tolerance, brotherhood and love. He also called for productive and constructive dialogue between the Muslim community and all sectors of Australian society.



OIC Iftar



OIC Iftar



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14. On 10th July, the Palestinian Ambassador met with the Turkish Ambassador in a courtesy visit, in which the Palestinian Ambassador thanked the Turkish Government for its position in support of Palestinian rights, and its role in strengthening the role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The two ambassadors agreed to enhance coordination and continue consultation between them.

15. On 17th July, the Steering Committee of the of OIC Heads of Mission Group met in Canberra. The meeting discussed the future plans of this Group, especially the meeting with the Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marise Payne and the Joint Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defense in the Australian Parliament.

The Committee also discussed the issue of electing a new president for the OIC Group at the end of this year, as a result of the Indonesian Ambassador's desire not to run for a third term. The Ambassador of the State of Palestine was also chosen as the Group's treasurer in addition to his role as Vice-President .



Meeting of the Steering Committee of OIC Group



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16. On 18th July, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in the seminar organized by the Frank Lowy Institute on the Balance of Power in the Southeast Asian Region. During this symposium, the researchers presented the evolution of the balance of power in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, especially the growing strength of China, which has begun competing with the United States of America on more than one level.

The balance of power index included many topics, the most important of which are economic power, geopolitical power, intellectual and political power, international relations and more.

17. On 25 July, The Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in an important political symposium on globalization, international relations and Australia's bilateral and multilateral relations, organized by the Australian Institute for International Affairs in Canberra. During this symposium, the Palestinian Ambassador spoke on the subject of Australia's recognition of the State of Palestine, Australia's position on international law and its multilateral approach.

18. During the period from 1st August to 4th September, the Palestinian Ambassador made a fruitful visit to Palestine, during which he met many Palestinian officials, civil society representatives, academic institutions and others.



Meeting the Palestinian Prime Minister



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- In this context, the Palestinian Ambassador met with HE the Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, where they both discussed the current political situation and the Palestinian Government's vision for the Palestinian political program, especially the disengagement plan from the Israeli market and economy. The Prime Minister explained the rationale and objectives behind the disengagement plan which aims to enhance the resilience and resistance of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian Ambassador also discussed with the Prime Minister the challenges facing the Palestinian Delegation in Australia and the current political situation in the Indo–Pacific region.

- The Palestinian Ambassador also met with His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Dr Riyad al-Malki at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ramallah. Ambassador Abdulhadi updated him on the latest political developments in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. In this context, the Ambassador discussed with the Minister the political and administrative challenges facing the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra.



Meeting with the Palestinian Foreign Minister



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The Palestinian Ambassador also discussed with His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs the administrative and financial needs of the mission, and the need to increase the staff of the embassy in order to be able to carry out the large responsibilities entrusted to it.

In the same context, the Foreign Affairs Minister updated the Palestinian Ambassador on the latest Palestinian diplomatic moves and the current Palestinian political situation, as well as his instructions for strengthening the diplomatic work of the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra.

In the same context, the Palestinian Ambassador met with the leadership of the Department of Asia, Africa and Australia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reviewed with them the activities of the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra. He discussed with the staff of the department the challenges facing its work, especially following the victory of the Liberal Party in the Australian parliamentary elections. The Palestinian Ambassador also discussed with members of the Department the strategic plan for the Palestinian Delegation over the year 2019.

- The Palestinian Ambassador also met with the Minister of Education Dr. Marwan Awartani and discussed with him ways to support the education sector in Palestine according to the needs and priorities of the sector. The Palestinian Ambassador, in the presence of the Director General of EduTECH Ms Eman Soliman Australian company that aims to enhance robotic and coding skills, presented a program to support Information technology and robotics skills in Palestinian schools, and include these skills in the general Palestinian school curriculum.

Ms. Eman Soliman presented her program for future cooperation by drawing on Australian expertise in this field. The Ambassador also hosted Ms Soliman in Palestine, where she presented her robotic and coding skills program in partnership with institutions including the Palestine Techno Park and An-Najah and Birzeit Universities.



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The Ambassador, accompanied by Ms Soliman, also met with the Education Program Manager at the Palestinian Welfare Association “Taawon”, where Ms Soliman presented her program to develop electronic skills amongst Palestinian youth.



Meeting with the Minister of education



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- During his visit to Palestine, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, met the Senior Diplomatic Advisor to His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, Dr. Majdi Al-Khaldi, as the two sides reviewed the current political situation and Australian-Palestinian relations.



Meeting with the Director of Welfare Association Education program



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- In the context of strengthening judicial cooperation between Palestine and the governments of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, the Palestinian Ambassador met with the Palestinian Attorney General, where the two parties discussed the judicial cooperation agreement with the Republic of Vanuatu. Palestine and Vanuatu are expected to sign this agreement soon.



Meeting with the Attorney general in Ramallah



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- The Palestinian Ambassador also met with the President of the Constitutional Court Judge, Hatem Abbas Salah El-Din, who briefed him on the role of the Constitutional Court in monitoring laws and keeping pace with the constitutional process in the country. The two parties also agreed to strengthen the relationship with the Australian side in a manner that enhances the professional capabilities of members of the Constitutional Court in Palestine.



Meeting with the President of the Constitutional Court



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In the context of strengthening relations between the academic sector in Palestine and the academic sector in Australia and New Zealand, the Palestinian Ambassador met with the administration of An-Najah National University in the presence of the Vice-President of International relations, Dr. Khairieh Rsas, as well as the Deans of a number of colleges.

The two parties discussed the possibilities of joint cooperation based on the needs and priorities of An-Najah National University and the higher education sector in Palestine. It was agreed that the Palestinian Ambassador will develop a program aiming to enhance academic cooperation between Palestine and Australia that includes the possibility of an Australian and New Zealand academic delegation visiting Palestine and meeting with representatives of Palestinian universities.



Meeting with Al Najah University Deans of a number of Colleges



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The Palestinian Ambassador also visited various facilities at An-Najah University and met with their representatives, especially the radio and TV channel. The Ambassador also gave an important lecture at An-Najah National University in which he discussed the bilateral relations between Australia and Palestine, focusing on the development program implemented by the Australian Government in this regard especially the Australian scholarship program.

On the sidelines of his meetings at An-Najah University, the Palestinian Ambassador also met with graduates of Australian universities who benefited from the scholarship grants from the Australian Government. The two parties agreed on the importance of forming a Palestinian – Australian Graduation society to support bilateral relations and friendship between Australia and Palestine.



Ambassador Abdulhadi lecture at Al Najah University



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- In the same context, the Palestinian Ambassador also met with Vice President of International Relations at Birzeit University, Ms. Manal Issa, and discussed with her a set of projects that can be implemented between Birzeit University and Australian universities and Palestinian communities in Australia and New Zealand.



**Meeting with the Vice President of International Relations
at Birzeit University**



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- Within the aims of the Palestinian Delegation's project to establish professional relations between Australian women's organizations and their Palestinian counterparts, the Palestinian Ambassador met with the President and members of the Business Women's Forum at the forum's headquarters in Ramallah.

The Palestinian Ambassador presented the steps that the Palestinian Delegation intends to take to start coordination and cooperation between the women's business sector in Palestine counterparts in Australia by starting exploratory research on the possibilities of future cooperation.



Meeting with the Business Women's Forum in Ramallah

Members of the BWF gave a presentation discussing the most important initiatives run by the organization to support women-led businesses in Palestine. BWF also mentioned a desire to foster a relationship with women-in-business groups in Australia.

The two parties agreed on a program to achieve this goal. It is worth noting that Ms Eman Soliman, Executive Director of EduTECH also participated in this meeting.



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- During his visit to Palestine, the Palestinian Ambassador met with His Excellency the Minister of Health Dr. Mai Kaila where the two parties discussed the possibility of future cooperation between the health sector in Palestine, and health sectors in Australia and New Zealand.



Meeting with the Minister of Health in Ramallah



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

19. The Ambassador met with the Business Manager of the Palestinian singer Mohammed Assaf to discuss the possibility of inviting the singer to Australia to perform at a music festival. Both parties agreed to continue discussions, and to begin approaching organizations interested in organising these kind of singing parties in Australia, in addition to establishing contacts within the Palestinian community to assist with organisation.



Mohammad Assaf

20. GDOP Counsellor Ms Suheir Gedeon, attended a lecture held by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees regarding visa conditions and residency criteria. The spokesperson highlighted the implications of these new measures on Australians residing in New Zealand.



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21. Counsellor and acting chargé d'Affaires Ms Suheir Gedeon attended a farewell for the Director of the UN Information Centre Mr Christopher Woodthorpe, on 7th August 2019 in Canberra. On this occasion, Counsellor Gedeon expressed deep thanks and appreciation to Mr Woodthorpe for his wonderful work in Australia and for his cooperation with the GDOP in Canberra, particularly in observing the United Nations Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People.



Farewell for the Director of UNIC

22. Upon invitation from the UN Information Centre, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon commemorated the International Day Against Human Trafficking on 5th September 2019, at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. This event included a lecture on the topic of human trafficking and people smuggling in the Pacific Islands.



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

23. On August 19, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon participated in the observance of the International Day of Humanity, at the invitation of the United Nations Information Center in the hall of the Australian Center for Christianity and Culture.



International Day of Humanity



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

24. Counsellor Ms Suheir Gedeon participated in a farewell dinner hosted by the Egyptian Ambassador at his residence on 30th Aug 2019, on the occasion of him leaving office. At this farewell dinner were a large number of attendees from the Arab and International diplomatic corps, who praised his diplomatic expertise, and thanked him for his important contributions and initiatives during his posting as Ambassador of the Arabic Republic of Egypt.

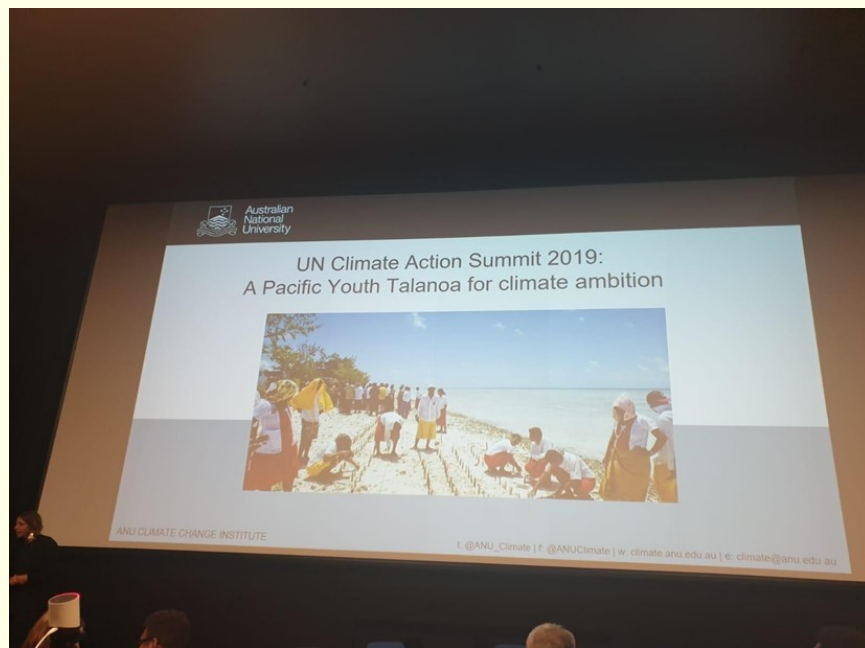


Farewell dinner for the outgoing Egyptian Ambassador



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25. First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in a seminar organised by the UN Information Center at the Australian National University (ANU) on 2nd September 2019. This seminar addressed the impact of climate change on Pacific Island nations, and was attended by a number of the International diplomatic corps, and other interested parties.



Climate Change panel



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26. First Secretary Noura Saleh attended another lecture organised by the UN Information center, on the topic of 'The pursuit of rights and choices for all', which took place on 12 September 2019 at the ANU. During this seminar, the Executive Director for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) highlighted the challenges facing world population and development policy, with a focus on reproductive health.



Population and Development Policy panel



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27. Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi participated in a reception organised by the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) on 17th September 2019 at the QT Hotel in Canberra. This reception included honouring and farewelling Dr Gillian Triggs as she departs Canberra as President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, to take up a role in Geneva as Assistant UNHCR's High Commissioner for Protection. The Palestinian Ambassador wished Dr Triggs success in her new position and discussed with her the ongoing challenges facing Palestinian refugees.

28. The Ambassador participated in a farewell dinner for the ongoing Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt Mr Mohammed Khairat, organised by His Excellency Dr Ali Kraishan, Ambassador of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The farewell was held on behalf of the Council of Arab Ambassadors on 11th September 2019 and was attended by the majority of Arab Ambassadors in Canberra and their spouses. The Ambassador of Jordan presented a plaque on behalf of the Arab Ambassadors to Ambassador Khairat upon the end of his posting, thanking him for his important contribution to Arab issues.



Farewell Dinner for the ongoing Egyptian Ambassador



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The Palestinian Ambassador also delivered a speech thanking Ambassador Khairat for his continued support of Palestinian rights and the Palestinian people, and presented to him a plaque depicting the Dome of the Rock and Holy Jerusalem.



The Farewell dinner for the Egyptian Ambassador



Farewell dinner for the Egyptian Ambassador

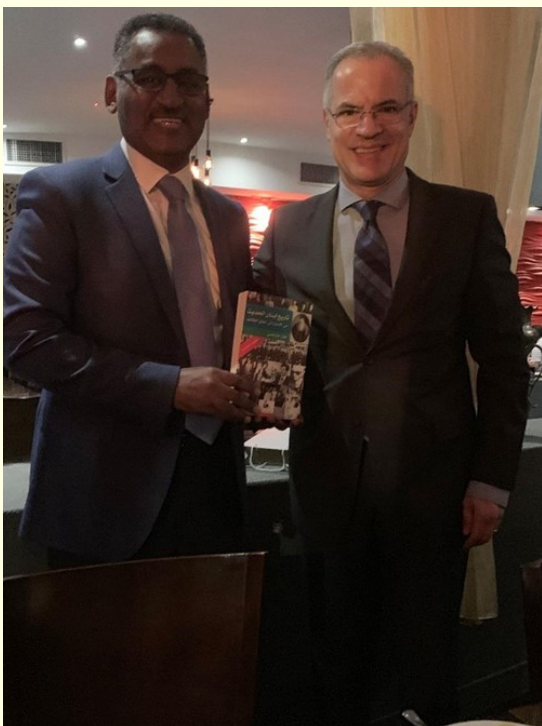


ANNUAL REPORT 2019

29. The Ambassador of Lebanon also hosted a farewell dinner for the Ambassador of Sudan, where he was presented with a souvenir gift. The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia also hosted a farewell dinner for the Ambassador of Sudan, which was attended by a number of other Arab Ambassadors.



Farewell dinner for the Sudan ambassador at the Saudi Ambassador's residence



Farewell dinner at the Lebanese Ambassador's residence



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

30. The GDOP, in cooperation with the ANU Film Club, screened a Palestinian Film called 'The Reports on Sarah and Saleem', which was screened on 25th September 2019 at the Kambri Cultural Centre Cinema at the ANU. The film was attended by more than 150 people, who expressed appreciation for the film and its importance showing racial discrimination in Israel, and the humanitarian aspect of the lives of the Palestinian people. This marked the third film screened this year by the GDOP.



Exhibiting the Palestinian embroidery and handcrafts as a side event of the screening of the film



Reports of Saleem and Sara
Film opening



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Reports of Saleem and Sara Film opening

31. On October 14, The Palestinian Ambassador participated in the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) annual conference in Canberra. This institution is considered one of the most important research institutions in Australia, and specializes in diplomacy, international relations and foreign policy and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The main theme of this conference was Australian Foreign Policy, including US-Australia relations, climate change and Australia-China relations. During this conference, the Shadow Foreign Minister, Ms. Penny Wong, criticized the Australian Government for its stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict, especially the current government's attempts to change its position on the final status of Jerusalem.

Ms Wong also discussed Australia's approach to China, and criticised the current Morrison government for bolstering that narrative that Australia is simply following US policy in relation to China.



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

32. On October 22, at the invitation of the New Zealand High Commission in Canberra, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a lecture on New Zealand's Foreign Policy in the Middle East and Africa.



Ambassador Abdulhadi and Mr Jeff Langley

During this lecture, Mr. Jeff Langley, Deputy Secretary of the Australia, Europe, Middle East and Africa group at the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke about his country's position on Middle East issues. Discussion centered on events in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine.

In his presentation, Mr Langley affirmed New Zealand's consistent position on supporting the two-state solution, and considering Israeli settlements illegal under international law. Ambassadors of several Arab and African countries participated in this lecture.



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33. On November 7, 2019, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in a symposium on the 130th Anniversary of Democracy in Costa Rica at the Old Parliament House in Canberra. A number of ambassadors and academics spoke during this symposium, discussing the challenges facing liberal democracy today, especially in light of the rise of populism and racism seen in the US and Europe. In this context, the issue of Britain's exit from the European Union was discussed as one example of the challenges facing liberal democracy.



Liberal democracy panel



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

34. On November 16, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a cultural festival organized by the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, in the presence of a large crowd of diplomats, distinguished guests, and the general public. The Palestinian Ambassador was received with great hospitality by the Indonesian Ambassador, who welcomed him to the festival.

Indonesian Festival



The festival included many cultural events and activities, as well as displays of Indonesian heritage items, including traditional clothing and food.

Indonesian Festival





ANNUAL REPORT 2019

35. On November 27, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi and his wife, participated in an end-of-year celebration organized by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) in Canberra. The celebration was attended by members of the Arab and international diplomatic corps, several Australian politicians, civil society representatives, academics, and other public figures.



DFAT Reception

DFAT Secretary, Ms. Francis Adamson gave a keynote speech in which she thanked the ambassadors for representing their respective countries, and advancing bilateral relations with Australia. Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, the Hon Simon Birgmingham also delivered a speech commemorating the end of the year, and wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



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DFAT Reception



DFAT Reception



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36. On November 28, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by Counsellor Suheir Gedeon, participated in an important lecture at the Australian National University on the Foreign Policy of the European Union.



Konrad Adenauer Foundation Lecture

This seminar was organized by the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the main lecturer was a member of the European Parliament, Mr. Elmar Brock. The lecture was entitled "Can Europe Promote its Identity, Independence and Responsibilities" as the lecturer addressed key points in this framework, the most important of which are: the strategic independence of Europe, the political and economic harmony of Europe and the ability of Europe to preserve cultural pluralism within it and other related topics.



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Konrad Adenauer Foundation Lecture



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37. On November 28th, First Secretary Noura Saleh participated in the dinner organized by the Latin American diplomatic community at the Hyatt Hotel. It was a great opportunity to network with the Latin America diplomats.



Latin American Diplomatic community dinner



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38. On December 2nd, the Palestinian Delegation, in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Council of Arab Ambassadors and the Australian-Palestinian Parliamentary Friendship Committee, organized a major celebration at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the Federal Parliament in Canberra.



UN Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Members of the international and Arab diplomatic corps, members of parliament, representatives of civil society and advocacy groups, as well as representatives from Arab and Palestinian communities participated in this celebration. The Co - Chairs of the Australian-Palestinian Parliamentary Friends of Palestine committee, Ms Maria Vamvakinou and Ms Janet Rice, each gave speeches at the event, in which they pointed to increased support for the Palestinian people in Australian society and highlighted the violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel. Both MPs also criticized the Trump Administration's recent announcement that building Israeli settlements is legal.



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The Dean of the Council of Arab ambassadors, the Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Dr. Ali Krishan, delivered the speech of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, in which he discussed the necessity of resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict in accordance with international law, UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. He also stressed that there is no stability and peace in the region without the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital.



UN Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People



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The United Nations representative, Mrs. Louise Appen, also read the message of the United Nations Secretary-General in which he indicated that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and called for the achievement of the two-state solution as the only solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.



UN Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People

The Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, also delivered a speech in which he criticized the US decision to consider Israeli settlements legal. He also pointed out that the United States lost its credibility as a broker in the Israel-Palestine conflict, especially after its arbitrary and unjust decisions regarding Jerusalem, UNRWA, the Golan Heights, and Israeli settlements.



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He also indicated that the United States is trying to rewrite history on the basis of power politics and not on the basis of international law.



**UN Day for Solidarity with the
Palestinian People**



**UN Day for Solidarity with the
Palestinian People**



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He also referred to the vision of the Palestinian leadership - in particular, its adherence to the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.

A film on the tourism sector in the State of Palestine, produced by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism, was also shown.



UN Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People



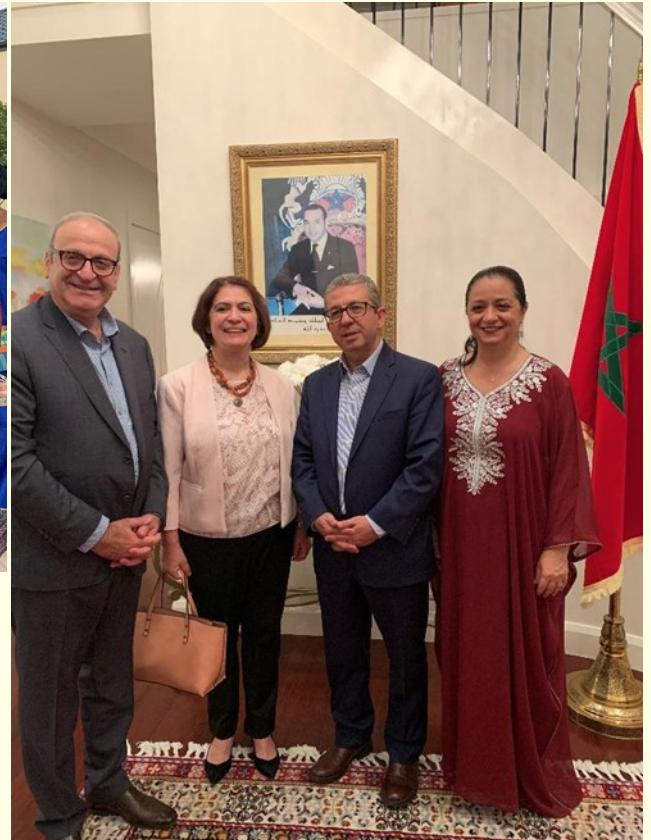
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39. On December 4th, the Palestinian Ambassador and his wife, accompanied by First Secretary, Noura Saleh, participated in an end-of-year celebration organized by the Australian Greens Party at the Federal Parliament. The Palestinian Ambassador thanked the party's Chairman, Dr Richard Di Natale, for his party's principled positions on Palestinian rights, especially the party's recognition of the State of Palestine. The reception was attended by many supporters of the party and a number of Australian Parliamentarians, officials, and civil society representatives in Australia.

40. On December 6th, the Palestinian Ambassador and his wife participated in an end-of-year celebration organized by His Excellency the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco in Canberra at his residence, with many Arab and foreign ambassadors and representatives of civil society and Arab communities in attendance. The Moroccan Ambassador thanked the attendees and wished them a happy holidays.



End of the Year celebration at the Moroccan ambassador residence



End of the Year celebration at the Moroccan ambassador residence



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41. On December 17th, the Council of Arab Ambassadors held a consultative meeting at the premises of the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra. The meeting discussed the a contingency plan in the event of bush fires reaching Canberra, in light of the current wave of bushfires sweeping Australia.

During the meeting, the Ambassadors discussed an emergency plan in the event of fires in Canberra.



Council of Arab ambassador's Meeting at the Palestinian Embassy



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42. On December 20, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary, Noura Saleh, met with the High Commissioner of the Republic of Vanuatu, Samson Fare, where the Palestinian Ambassador congratulated the High Commissioner on his new position in Canberra. The two parties also discussed prospects for cooperation between the State of Palestine and the Republic of Vanuatu.



Council of Arab ambassador's Meeting at the Palestinian Embassy



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43. On December 20, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary, Noura Saleh, met with the High Commissioner of the Republic of Vanuatu, Samson Fare, where the Palestinian Ambassador congratulated the High Commissioner on his new position in Canberra. The two parties also discussed prospects for cooperation between the State of Palestine and the Republic of Vanuatu.



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Above photos: Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Above photos: Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Other diplomatic engagements and activities



Left: Other diplomatic engagements and activities



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Civil Society Activities

1. On 30th January, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon met with a delegation representing Heavenly Culture World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) at the headquarters of the Palestinian in Canberra. The two parties discussed the importance for Enabling principles and applications of international law, and the participation of the Palestinian Delegation in the conference to be held, mid of the year, by this organization.
2. On 13th February, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Nora Saleh, met Professor Stuart Rees in Canberra. Professor Rees is the former President of the Sydney Peace Foundation at the University of Sydney, and considered one of the most important supporters and defenders of Palestinian rights. The two sides discussed ways to strengthen the solidarity movement with the Palestinian people, as well as Professor Rees's desire to cooperate with the Palestinian Delegation in organizing professional activities. The two parties agreed to continue coordination and cooperation to achieve important political outcomes for the Palestinian people.
3. On 14th February, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi participated along with the First Secretary Noura Saleh, in a reception in Sydney organized by the Lebanese community in honour of musician Marcel Khalife during his visit to Australia.



Marcel Khalifa reception in Sydney



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The Palestinian community, represented by Shamikh Badra, also presented a plaque of appreciation to Marcel Khalifeh in appreciation of his efforts to support the Palestinian cause through his songs that include lyrics from the great Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. The Palestinian Ambassador also met with Marcel Khalifeh and expressed his deep thanks to him for his continuous support of the Palestinian people and the pride of the Palestinian people depicted in his songs and art.



Marcel Khalifa reception in Sydney



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4. On 18 and 19 February, Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi and Counsellor Suheir Gedeon participated in a workshop in Sydney organized by the Heavenly Culture World Peace, Restoration of Light. The workshop focused on harmony, peace and international law.



Heavenly Culture World Peace workshop in Sydney

This workshop was attended by representatives of the Pacific countries in the presence of representatives from the international diplomatic corps. In addition, a workshop for participating women was held on the sidelines of the conference, which focused on strengthening networking among women in the Pacific countries.



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Heavenly Culture World Peace workshop in Sydney



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5. On 24 February, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, met in Sydney with an Australian delegation from the Uniting Church in Australia and the Jewish community, that were due to visit both Israel and Palestine. The objective of the meeting was to inform them of the political situation in Palestine and violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel. The discussion and dialogue were very lively as the Palestinian Ambassador answered the questions of the members of the delegation and presented them with suggestions about the upcoming overseas visit. It should be noted that the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra contributed to the development and the organisation of the visit.



Australian delegation from the Uniting Church in Australia and the Jewish community

The visit was considered successful, as the visiting delegation was briefed on Palestinian life under occupation. The delegation also met many Palestinian and Israeli officials, civil and grassroots organizations from both sides.



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6. On March 4, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in evening of Arab poetry organized by the Lebanese Future Movement in honour of a number of Lebanese poets in the diaspora. It was an occasion for the Palestinian Ambassador to meet with a large number of Lebanese professionals, intellectuals and writers and to raise issues with them regarding coordination with fellow Palestinian writers and poets.



Arab poetry cultural event in Canberra



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7. On March 8th, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi and Counsellor Suheir Gedeon met with a delegation from the HWPL organization with a focus on International law and ending conflict, at the headquarters of the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra. The two parties discussed the possibility of coordination between the HWPL and civil society organizations in Palestine, especially the establishment of a mechanism for regular consultation between the two parties. The two parties also discussed the possibility of strengthening the relationship between this organization and the Arab League. The representatives of HWPL also presented an honorary plaque to the Palestinian Ambassador.



A delegation from the HWPL organization



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8. On 14 March, Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in the important symposium hosted by the Australian National University on Australian foreign policy in Canberra. The three lecturers pointed to the challenges facing Australian foreign policy in light of the tension between the United States of America and China, as well as the differences between Australia and China. The lecturers also touched on many other international issues.



Australian foreign policy symposium at the ANU



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9. On 26 March, the Palestinian Ambassador and the staff of the Palestinian Delegation participated in a concert organized by the Australian National University and hosted the Oxford Maqam Concerts. Oxford Maqam is a troupe of vocalists and musicians renowned for their expertise in Egyptian and Middle Eastern Music from the 19th & 20th centuries.

Their concert offered a rare opportunity to experience live renditions of music steeped in Middle Eastern heritage. It should be noted that this project was funded by the Council of Australian Arab relations (CAAR) which is financed by the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. During this performance, the band performed many old Arabic songs and beautiful music compositions. The audience included Australians and members of the Arab community. It should also be noted that the lead singer of this band is of Palestinian origin.



Oxford Maqam Concert performing in ANU



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10. On 29 March, The Palestinian Delegation participated in Harmony Day organized by Hughes Primary School in Canberra. The Palestinian stall contained Palestinian embroideries, handicrafts, ceramics, wood products, and other items. In addition, Palestinian traditional food was also served. It should be noted that the Palestinian Delegation participates in this day annually.



Harmony Day at Hughes



Harmony Day at Hughes



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Harmony Day at Hughes



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11. On April 6, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a charity dinner organized by the McDonald International Foundation for cancer patients in Australia at the Convention Center in Canberra. It was an important occasion for the Palestinian Ambassador to meet with a large number of businessmen and women in Australia. It was an opportunity for the Ambassador to enhance relations with the business sector in Australia and to discuss investment opportunities in the State of Palestine.

This ceremony was attended by many Arab and foreign ambassadors and civil society representatives.



A charity dinner organized by the McDonald International Foundation for cancer patients



A charity dinner organized by the McDonald International Foundation for cancer patients



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A charity dinner organized by the McDonald International Foundation for cancer patients



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12. On 17th April, at the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra, the Palestinian Ambassador and the Delegation's staff received the President of the Jewish Synagogue in Sydney, Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins. The two parties discussed arrangements for the Palestinian Ambassador to participate in a lecture on the Israel-Palestine conflict at the Emmanuel Synagogue in Sydney, and other likely topics of interest to the lecture attendees.



Receiving Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins and his wife at the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra



Receiving Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins and his wife at the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra



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13. On 30th April, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon participated in a meeting organized by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) in Sydney, which focused on boycotting the American company HB because of its commercial ties to the Israeli occupation. This meeting was attended by many representatives from Australian churches and civil society organizations.



**The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) meeting on
BDS**



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14. On May 5th, the Palestinian Ambassador spoke to members from the Jewish community at the Emmanuel Synagogues in Sydney in a joint seminar with the Israeli Ambassador. During this important meeting, the Palestinian Ambassador highlighted the Palestinian vision and stance on the current events, especially the focus on the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the international law and UN resolutions. He also referred to the so-called “Deal of the Century” and why the Palestinians rejected this deal.

The Palestinian Ambassador also referred to the implications of the Nakba, explaining the Palestinian narrative. He also highlighted the deep connection that the Palestinian people have to the land and the failure of the settlement projects to destroy Palestinian national identity. It should be noted that more than 350 people from Jewish backgrounds participated in this symposium.



Emmanuel Synagogues in Sydney



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15. On 17th May, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in an Iftar dinner organized by the mayor of Bankstown, Khaldoun Asfour, who is an Australian of Palestinian origin. Mr. Asfour welcomed the Palestinian Ambassador and hosted him at his private table.

This Iftar dinner was attended by more than 600 people representing the various religious and ethnic communities, in addition to a large number of federal and New South Wales Parliament representatives.



Bankstown' Municipality Iftar



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Bankstown' Municipality Iftar



Bankstown' Municipality Iftar



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16. On 27 April, at the invitation of the Australian-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Trade (AACCI) in Adelaide, South Australia, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in the Ramadan Iftar organized by the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Roland Jabbour, President of the Australian-Arab Chamber of Commerce in Australia, delivered a speech on this occasion in which he referred to the importance of deepening the cultural of pluralism in Australia and drawing inspiration from the principles of the holy month of Ramadan to reject any form of racism, Islamophobia or populism.

The other speakers also pointed out the importance of the relationship between Australia and the Arab and Islamic world and that this holy month is the best occasion to talk about the common values that unite the two parties. It is worth noting that the Governor General of South Australia, the Minister of Commerce, the Minister of Multiculturalism and other Australian officials participated in this Iftar dinner.



Australian-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Trade (AACCI) Iftar



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**Australian-Arab Chamber of
Commerce and Trade
(AACCI) Iftar**



**Australian-Arab Chamber of
Commerce and Trade
(AACCI) Iftar**



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Australian-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Trade (AACCI) Iftar



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17. On 11 June, the Palestinian Ambassador Izzat Abdulhadi, accompanied by Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in a lecture organized by the Bluestar Intercultural Centre at the headquarters of the ACT Parliament in Canberra. The seminar talked about white supremacy and its role in the Christchurch massacre in New Zealand.

The lecturer talked about the West's general view of international relations and the rise of racism and islamophobia over the past several years. He also mentioned in particular the emergence of white supremacist racism in Australia as seen by attacks on immigrants and Islam. At the end of the symposium, the Palestinian Ambassador presented a plaque of appreciation to the lecturer provided by the Bluestar Intercultural Centre.



Bluestar Intercultural lecture



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18. On the 17 June, at the invitation of Rabbi Mr. Jeffrey Kamins, head of the Jewish Synagogue in Sydney, the Palestinian Ambassador and First Secretary Noura Saleh, gave a lecture on the Israel-Palestine conflict before members of the Jewish community.

During this important lecture, the Ambassador discussed the implications of the Palestinian Nakba and the Palestinian narrative on this topic. The Palestinian Ambassador also discussed prospects for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and emphasised the two-state solution. He also touched on the continuous violations of human rights by Israel and the need to end the Israeli occupation and establish an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

It should be noted that this is the second time that the Palestinian Ambassador has spoken before members of the Jewish community in a synagogue. This participation is part of the Palestinian Delegation's ongoing mission to foster stronger relationships with the Jewish community in Australia.



Lecture on the Israel-Palestine conflict before members of the Jewish community



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19. On 17 June, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary, Nora Saleh, met in Sydney with representatives from Carriage works to discuss the literary conference that this organisation intends to run next year, with a number of writers set to participate. It is worth noting that the Palestinian novelist Adania Shalabi was invited to this conference, and will read one of her stories during this conference in Arabic that reflects the struggle of Palestinian women under occupation.



Carriage Work Project



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20. On 22nd June, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a conference organised by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) in Sydney. Many Australian political figures, representatives from Australian civil society, and leaders of Islamic and Arab communities participated in this conference.

During this conference, the Palestinian Ambassador delivered an important speech in which he highlighted the importance of the role of Islamic communities in promoting the values of tolerance and harmony in Australian society, and multiculturalism in Australia.

This participation is in line with the Palestinian Delegation's strategy to establish a constructive and fruitful dialogue with representatives of Islamic communities in Australia, given their important role within Australian community.



AFIC Annual dinner in sydney



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The Palestinian Ambassador also briefed the audience on the current political situation in Palestine, including the failure of the economic workshop in Manama, Bahrain as apart of the Deal of the Century.



AFIC Annual dinner in sydney



AFIC Annual dinner in sydney



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21. On 25th June, the Palestinian Ambassador met with some Australian church leaders in Canberra from the World Council of Churches. During this meeting, the Palestinian Ambassador gave an overview of the situation in Palestine and the challenges facing the Palestinian people in their current political situation, including the economic workshop in Bahrain and the 'Deal of the Century'.

He also highlighted the important role of the churches in supporting peace and justice in Palestine, and the desire of the General Delegation of Palestine to strengthen its relationship with Australian churches due to the ancient Christian history in Palestine. The Palestinian Ambassador also suggested organizing a visiting delegation of church leaders from Australia and India to Palestine to bear witness to the ongoing violations of Palestinian human rights.



Meeting some church representatives in Canberra



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22. On 26th June, the Palestinian Delegation participated in a cultural festival organised by the Women's International Club (WIC) in Canberra, which attracted political, economic, social and cultural elites in Canberra. The Palestinian Delegation held a stall which exhibited Palestinian craftsmanship, embroidery and traditional food, among other items.



**Dr Mayada Kayali, board
memberr of WIC**



WIC Cultural Festival



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A documentary produced by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism was also shown, displaying the most significant tourist and cultural sites in Palestine. This event was coordinated by Dr. Mayada Kayali, a member of the Club's Board of Directors who is of Palestinian origin, who gave a speech about Palestinian heritage and culture and its impact on reviving and rejuvenating the Palestinian national identity.



WIC Cultural Festival



WIC Cultural Festival



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WIC Cultural Festival



WIC Cultural Festival



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WIC Cultural Festival



WIC Cultural Festival



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WIC Cultural Festival



WIC Cultural Festival



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WIC Cultural Festival



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23. On 24th October, the Palestinian Ambassador, along with Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in a celebration organized by the Australian National University for participating institutions of the Australian National Internships Program, including several Australian Embassies and public institutions. The Internship Program at the Palestinian Delegation is an important program aimed at strengthening and enabling the diplomatic and political capabilities of a number of students in Australian universities.



Australian National Internships Program reception



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24. On 26th October, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in the dinner organized by the Islamic Museum of Australia in Melbourne. The dinner was attended by several lawmakers and ministers, including Minister of Immigration, Mr David Coleman in addition to many important and influential Islamic figures.



Iftar at Islamic Museum of Australia in Melbourne



Iftar at Islamic Museum of Australia in Melbourne



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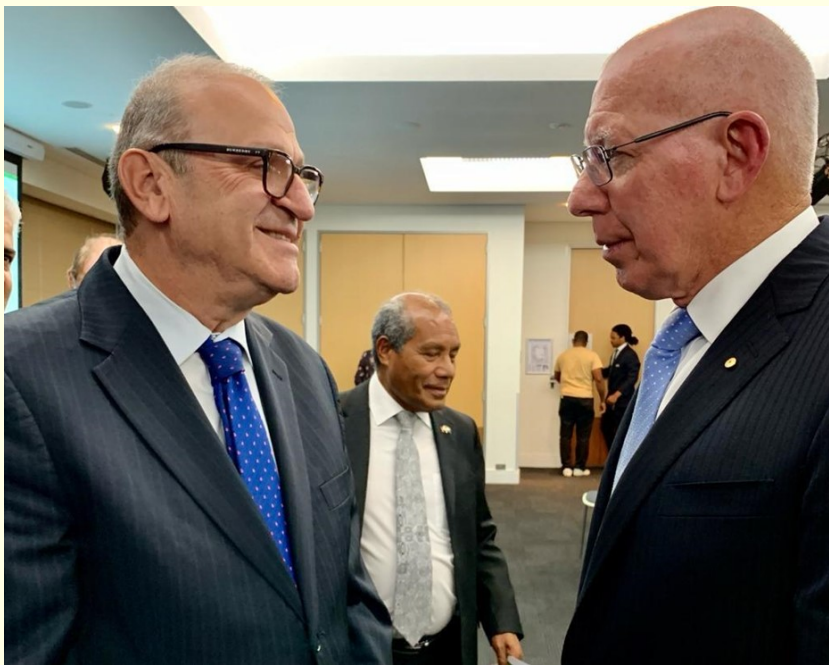


Iftar at Islamic Museum of Australia in Melbourne



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25. On 29th October, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a lunch organized by the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS) at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Center. The Governor-General of Australia, Mr. David Hurley, was in attendance, and gave a speech in which he praised the Foundation's humanitarian work and its ability to train and assist many new immigrants.



Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS) Lunch



Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS) Lunch



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26. On 10th November, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, participated in a dinner organized by the Islamic Council of Victoria in Melbourne, in the presence of members of Parliament, governmental officials, civil society representatives and distinguished figures in the Islamic community. The organizers appreciated the participation of the Palestinian Ambassador and expressed their full support for the Palestinian rights.



**Islamic Council of Victoria
Iftar in Melbourne**



**Islamic Council of Victoria
Iftar in Melbourne**



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27. On 17th November, the Palestinian Ambassador, the staff of the Palestinian Delegation, representatives of advocacy groups in Canberra, and members of the Arab and Palestinian communities participated in a 'Run for Palestine' event in Canberra.

The "Run for Palestine" project aims to raise the Australian public's awareness of Palestinian rights and Israel's human rights violations through running. The Palestinian Ambassador delivered a speech on this occasion focusing on Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip and the unjust blockade imposed on it, especially following the renewed attacks on Gaza by Israel at that time. In this context, it is worth mentioning that this event is run annually by the Palestinian Delegation and Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine Group.



Run For Palestine



Run For Palestine



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Run For Palestine



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28. On 18th November, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, met with representatives from Union Aid Aborad-APHEDA at the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra. During the meeting, the two parties discussed the development activities of APHEDA in Palestine, especially its program to support the agricultural sector. It should be noted that the Australian Government funds many Palestinian NGOs working in the agricultural sector. The two parties also stressed the need for coordination and cooperation between the Palestinian Government and Australian Non-Governmental Organizations operating in Palestine.

29. On 27th November, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a luncheon organized by the Australian Arab Chamber of Commerce and Trade AACCI in Canberra. The lunch was attended by the First Assistant Secretary of the Middle East and Africa Department at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Angela MacDonald, in addition to the President of the Chamber and members of its Board of Directors, and a number of Arab ambassadors.

The President of the Australian Arab Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Roland Jabbour, delivered a speech in which he stressed the importance of developing trade relations between Australia and the Arab world and the role of the Chamber in this regard. Dr MacDonald also delivered a speech in which she referred to the depth of commercial relations between Australia and the Arab world and the need to enhance trade between the two parties.



AACCI Lunch in Canberra



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AACCI Lunch in Canberra



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30. On 25th December, the Palestinian Ambassador and his wife participated in the work of the General Assembly and the end-of-year celebration of the Australia Arab Council in Sydney. This meeting was also commemorated the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Council. The President and CEO of the Council, Ms. Randa Kattan, warmly welcomed the Palestinian Ambassador and thanked him for attending this meeting. During this meeting, a new chairwoman was elected to the Council, in addition to new board members.



General Assembly and the end-of-year celebration of the Australia Arab Council in Sydney



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Left: General Assembly and the end-of-year celebration of the Australia Arab Council in Sydney

Right: General Assembly and the end-of-year celebration of the Australia Arab Council in Sydney





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Palestinian Community

1. On 15th March, in the wake of the Christchurch massacre in New Zealand which killed 50 people from the Muslim community, the Palestinian Ambassador visited Christchurch, where he offered condolences to the Islamic community and the New Zealand Government following this terrorist event. As a result of the massacre, six members of the Palestinian community lost their lives. The Palestinian Ambassador offered his condolences to the families of the victims and participated in the funeral ceremonies.



Christchurch Massacre

Seven Palestinians were also injured during the attack. The Palestinian Ambassador visited them in the hospital and wished them a quick and full recovery. The Palestinian Delegation made a great effort during this ordeal to provide direct consular services and updates to the families of the victims and the injured, and to provide the necessary information to the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Christchurch Massacre



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The Palestinian Delegation also contacted the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs to follow up on the event and obtain the necessary information regarding the names of the Palestinian victims and wounded.



Christchurch Massacre

The Palestinian Ambassador to New Zealand, Izzat Abdulhadi, conveyed the condolences of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, and also the condolences of His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Riyadh al-Maliki to Foreign Minister Winston Peters. The Palestinian Ambassador also offered the condolences of the Palestinian Government to the families of the victims of the Islamic community in Christchurch and participated in their funeral services.



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**Top left and top right:
Christchurch Massacre**

**Bottom left and bottom
right: Christchurch Massacre**



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2. On 31st March, in the presence of the Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Izzat Abdulhadi, the Palestinian community in Adelaide, South Australia, opened the Glimmer for Hope Association. The Palestinian Ambassador delivered a speech during this ceremony in which he highlighted the importance of community organizations in supporting the Palestinian community, and suggested a set of community initiatives aimed at strengthening and empowering the Palestinian community.

The Palestinian Ambassador urged the Palestinian community implement advocacy programs to educate the wider Australian community on the Palestinian cause. He also invited the community to visit Australian Parliamentarians and talk to them about the current political situation.

The President of the Association, Professor Bassam Dali, also gave a speech in which he discussed the goals and activities of the Association and urged the members of the community to join them. The audience also heard the experiences of many young men and women, and their role in promoting Palestinian national identity and reviving Palestinian heritage.



Opening the Glimmer for Hope Association in Adelaide



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**Opening the Glimmer for Hope
Association in Adelaide**



**Opening the Glimmer for Hope
Association in Adelaide**



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3. On 24th April, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in the opening of the Fine Art Exhibition of Palestinian artist, Fathi Hassania in Sydney. The Palestinian Ambassador gave a speech in which he thanked the artist for his wonderful drawings expressing the struggle and resistance of the Palestinian people and their continued struggle for their national rights. The Palestinian artist, who lives in Gaza, also presented a memorial plaque as a gift to the Palestinian Delegation. He also thanked the Palestinian Ambassador for organizing this exhibition, as well as Mr. Hassan Mortada and the daughter of the artist.



Opening of the Fine Art Exhibition of Palestinian artist, Fathi Hassania in Sydney.



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**Opening of the Fine Art
Exhibition of Palestinian artist,
Fathi Hassania in Sydney.**



**Opening of the Fine Art
Exhibition of Palestinian artist,
Fathi Hassania in Sydney.**



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**Opening of the Fine Art
Exhibition of Palestinian artist,
Fathi Hassania in Sydney.**



**Opening of the Fine Art
Exhibition of Palestinian artist,
Fathi Hassania in Sydney.**



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4. On 27th April, the General Union of Palestinian Workers, the Australian Palestinian Club and the Palestinian Graduation Association in Sydney held a large function to honour the graduates in the Palestinian community, as well as honouring prominent figures in the Palestinian and Arab diaspora communities who made contributions in the media.

The ceremony took place at the Australian Palestinian Club's headquarters in Sydney. The ceremony included the distribution of plaques and trophies of appreciation to the honourees from the Arab and Palestinian community, members of the Federal Parliament and the New South Wales Parliament.

During this celebration, the Palestinian Ambassador delivered a speech in which he thanked the graduates and highlighted the importance of their role in strengthening and empowering the Palestinian community as well as in defending Palestinian rights.

The Palestinian Ambassador also thanked the organizers of the event and for continuing to organize this ceremony annually. Mr. Eddie Zananiri, representing the Palestinian community, also delivered a speech in which he discussed the importance of the role of the Palestinian community in the upcoming elections, and referred to the position of the Labor Party on the issue of recognition of the State of Palestine.

Several members of the Federal Parliament and the Parliament of the New South Wales participated in this ceremony, in addition to many representatives of civil society organizations and members of Palestinian, Arab and Islamic community .



Graduation Ceremony for the Palestinian community achievers and honouring prominent figures in the Palestinian and Arab diaspora communities who made contributions in the media.



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Above images: Graduation Ceremony for the Palestinian community achievers and honouring prominent figures in the Palestinian and Arab diaspora communities who made



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Above images: Graduation Ceremony for the Palestinian community achievers and honouring prominent figures in the Palestinian and Arab diaspora communities who made contributions in the media.



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Graduation Ceremony for the Palestinian community achievers and honouring prominent figures in the Palestinian and Arab diaspora communities who made contributions in the media.



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5. On May 30th, the Palestinian Delegation in Canberra organized a Ramadan Iftar for the Palestinian community in Canberra, also to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe).

During this event, the Ambassador delivered a speech in which he discussed the deep meaning of the holy month of Ramadan, especially the promotion of tolerance, harmony between all segments of Australian society, and the role of the Islamic and Palestinian community in this regard.

He also touched on the important lessons of the Palestinian Nakba, especially the importance of the independence of the Palestinian national decision, and the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in their resistance to the Israeli occupation.

He also highlighted that this occasion should motivate all the Palestinian to continue their struggle until independence is achieved, and a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, is established. There was also an excellent discussion on the causes and consequences of the Palestinian Nakba, the necessity of clarifying the Palestinian narrative and the necessity of the right of return for Palestinian refugees, in addition to showing a documentary film on the Palestinian Nakba.



**Ramadan Iftar and Nakba commemoration at the
Palestinian Embassy in Canberra**



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Ramadan Iftar and and Nakba commemoration at the Palestinain Embassy in Canberra



Ramadan Iftar and and Nakba commemoration at the Palestinain Embassy in Canberra



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Ramadan Iftar and and Nakba commemoration at the Palestinain Embassy in Canberra

Ramadan Iftar and and Nakba commemoration at the Palestinain Embassy in Canberra





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6. On 14th June, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, attended a concert by the young Palestinian singer Ameer Dandan in Sydney. Over the evening, the Palestinian Ambassador presented a shield of appreciation to the singer Ameer Dandan for his distinguished role in the show Arab Idol and his pioneering role in enriching Arab singing.



A concert by the young Palestinian singer Ameer Dandan in Sydney



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7. The Palestinian Delegation has followed up on the convening of the Bethlehem Expatriate Conference, to be held in the city of Bethlehem on July 11. The Palestinian Delegation has prepared the invitation cards and sent them to various institutions of the Palestinian community in Australia, as well as to members of the Palestinian community. In addition, the Palestinian Delegation has posted this invitation on all its social media sites.



BETHLEHEM DISTRICT DIASPORA CONVENTION II

JULY 11-14, 2019



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8. The Palestinian Delegation held several workshops to promote the work of EduTech, and encourage students in the Palestinian community to participate in the organisation's programs. The program aims to develop the learning capabilities of students and introduce new learning methods in education, with a focus on the enhancement of robotic and coding skills.



EduTech Training



EduTech Training



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9. On July 4th, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, participated in a lecture organized by the Palestinian community in Sydney. The keynote speaker at this seminar was Mr Richard Falk, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and an international law expert.

Mr Falk highlighted Israel's continuous violations of humanitarian and international law and highlighted the diminishing possibility of implementing a two-state solution as a result of the colonial Israeli settlement project. He contended that Palestinians should reconsider their political objectives in light of these developments.



Supporting Palestinian rights' Panel in Sydney



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Supporting Palestinian rights' Panel in Sydney



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10. On 27th July, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi visited Melbourne, where he met with representatives of the Palestinian community, with whom he discussed ways to enhance coordination between Australian-Palestinian institutions operating in Melbourne, and the possibility of creating a unified coordination body in Australia.



Meeting representatives of the Palestinian Community Association in Melbourne

In addition to this, the Ambassador gave an important speech to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Beit Jalah Society. During his speech, the Palestinian Ambassador highlighted the ongoing situation in Palestine, and the Palestinian people's absolute rejection of the 'Deal of the Century'. The Ambassador also emphasised the important role that Palestinian community organisations play in strengthening the community in its political and cultural identity, as well as by defending Palestinian rights. The ceremonial dinner was attended by number of Australian Political representatives and Civil Society Organisations, as well as the Palestinian community in Melbourne.



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The Ambassador also met with Dr Sanaa Al-Sarghali, a constitutional law Professor at An-Najah University, who was visiting the University of Melbourne. The two parties discussed the constitutional situation in Palestine, and what An-Najah University and Civil Society Organisations are doing in this respect.

The Palestinian Ambassador met with a number of other constitutional professors and lecturers at the University of Melbourne, and where they discussed the various legal options available to resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the role of international law in this regard.



Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of Beit Jala Association in Melbourne



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Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of Beit Jala Association in Melbourne



Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of Beit Jala Association in Melbourne



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Dr Sanaa Al-Sarghali, a constitutional law Professor at An-Najah University visiting the University of Melbourne.



Dr Sanaa Al-Sarghali, a constitutional law Professor at An-Najah University visiting the University of Melbourne.



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11. The Palestinian Delegation, through members of Palestinian Community, participated in a competition organised by EduTech to select the best robot design and electronic innovation on 5th August 2019.



EduTech Competition in Sydney

12. The CEO of EduTech, Ms Eman Soliman presented a trophy to the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, in appreciation of his support of the work of EduTech in Canberra.



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Laila Habayeb visit to the Palestinian Embassy

13. On 14th August, Counsellor Suheir Gedeon and First Secretary Noura Saleh received the Palestinian students, Leila Habayeb and Margaret Bowen. Leila gave a brief overview of the educational exchange program between her boarding school in Amman and an Australian school in Canberra. It should be noted that Mrs. Margaret Bowen had hosted the student, Leila Habayeb, at her home, for five weeks.



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14. On 25th October, the Palestinian Delegation, in cooperation with the Media Cultural institute, hosted the Palestinian Film Festival in Canberra. On the sidelines of the festival, the Palestinian Delegation organized a reception in which many members of the Arab and international diplomatic corps, representatives of the solidarity groups with the Palestinian people, representatives of civil society organizations and members of Palestinian community participated.

The film 'It Must Be Heaven' was screened. During the opening of the movie, the Director of the Media Cultural Institute, Mr Nasser Shakhtour, delivered a speech thanking the audience for attending and the Palestinian Embassy for hosting the Festival annually. He also, gave a brief description of the development of this initiative.

The Palestinian Ambassador gave a brief speech in which he thanked the audience for coming to support Palestinian cinema, before discussing the development of Palestinian cinema according to the various political stages of the Palestinian struggle against colonialism.



**Palestinian Film Festival in
Canberra**



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**Palestinian Film Festival in
Canberra**



**Palestinian Film Festival in
Canberra**



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**Palestinian Film Festival in
Canberra**



Palestinian Film Festival in Canberra



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15. On 31st October, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a dinner organized by the General Union of Palestinian Workers, the Fatah Movement, and the Palestinian community in honour of the Maasarwe family in Sydney.

Aya Maasarwe was the victim of a horrific attack, where she was sexually assaulted and killed by an Australian. Aya, from the Triangle region in Palestine, came to Australia to study English and her case caused significant public debate. At this event, the Palestinian Ambassador delivered a speech in which he recognised Aya as a martyr of Palestine, and that her place in heaven is amongst believers and friends. The Palestinian Ambassador also presented a memorial gift to the Aya's father in appreciation of his graciousness and steadfastness during this ordeal.



Above images: A dinner to honour Massarwe family in Sydney



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16. On 9th November, on the sidelines of the Black–Palestinian Solidarity Conference, the Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, participated in an important lecture organized by the Ibn Rushd Center for Arab Culture in Melbourne.

The Palestinian Ambassador participated in a working paper that focused on the importance of restoring and deepening the Palestinian narrative and story on a large scale. He also provided an analysis that drew comparison between the experience of Indigenous people in Australia and the Palestinian experience in confronting colonialism. This lecture was attended by Parliamentarians, activists from solidarity groups and representatives of civil society.



Ibn Rushd Panel on comparison between First Australians' and Palestinian people's experiences.



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17. On November 11th, the Palestinian community in Sydney, in cooperation with the Palestinian Delegation, celebrated the Palestinian Independence Day at Parliament House in New South Wales. During this celebration, many speeches were made in support of the Palestinian people and Palestinian rights, including from former Foreign Minister Bob Carr who discussed the illegality and illegitimacy of the Israeli settlements as a clear violation of international law.

He also considered the Israeli settlements as the main obstacle to the self-determination of the Palestinian people as an independent and sovereign state. The Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, also delivered a speech on this occasion, in which he referred to the Declaration of Independence and its guarantees for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine along 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. He also mentioned the democratic values of this country and its respect for human rights and social justice.

The Palestinian Ambassador also discussed the devastating effects of settlement construction on the two-state solution, especially in light of the expansion of settlements in Palestine. He also discussed the Palestinian strategy for achieving the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people, especially peaceful non-violent resistance to the occupation, national unity, institution building, and strengthening recognition of the Palestinian state.

On the occasion, representative of the Palestinian community, Edie Zananiri, also spoke about Australian policy bias towards Israel, and called on the opposition Australian Labor Party to immediately recognize the state of Palestine.

The ceremony was moderated by Mr. Albert Jubian, who pointed out in his speech the American bias towards Israel, especially after the United States of America recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, aid for UNRWA.

The celebration was attended by Palestinian Delegation staff, representatives of the advocacy groups, civil society, representatives and Arab, Islamic and Palestinian community in addition to prominent members of the Australian Parliament.



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Above images: Palestinian independence day in Sydney



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Palestinian independence day in Sydney



Palestinian independence day in Sydney



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Above images: Palestinian independence day in Sydney



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Palestinian independence day in Sydney



Palestinian independence day in Sydney



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18. On 22nd November, the Palestinian Ambassador participated in a Black Tie dinner organized by the 'Australians for Palestine' Foundation in Melbourne to honour Jewish activist and intellectual Anthony Lowenstein, by granting him the Jerusalem Prize for the year 2019.

Mr Lowenstein is considered a true and staunch advocate of Palestinian national rights, and a defender of human rights globally. The Palestinian Ambassador delivered a speech during the ceremony in which he thanked Mr Lowenstein for his advocacy for Palestinian rights and his continuous support of the Palestinian people.

The Ambassador also praised his writings and articles and his continuous defence of the values of freedom and human rights in Palestine. He commended the support from the Jewish individuals who support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and thanked them for their courage in adopting positions contrary to the majority of the members of the Jewish community in Australia.

In addition to the Ambassador's speech, Mr Lowenstein delivered a speech thanking the organizers for the ceremony, and spoke about his experience in supporting the Palestinian rights. Nasser Mashni, the president of Australians for Palestine thanked Mr Lowenstein for his moral courage and long-standing support to the Palestinian people.



Jerusalem Prize for the year 2019



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The dinner was attended by many members of Parliament, representatives of solidarity groups with the Palestinian people, and leading figures from the Jewish community and civil society. It should be noted that the Jerusalem Prize is awarded annually by Australians for Palestine and the Australian-Palestinian Advocacy Network (APAN) to prominent Australian figures who have contributed to defending the rights of the Palestinian people.



Jerusalem Prize for the year 2019



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Jerusalem Prize for the year 2019



Jerusalem Prize for the year 2019



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19. On 23rd November, the Palestinian Ambassador, accompanied by First Secretary Noura Saleh, participated in an event organized by the Gaza Children's Fund in Sydney titled 'Gaza Fights for Freedom'. During this event, two documentaries were screened on the resilience and resistance of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank against the Israeli occupation.

On the sidelines of the event, an exhibition of Palestinian embroidery, handicrafts and other components of the Palestinian heritage was also presented. The Palestinian Ambassador, Izzat Abdulhadi, delivered a speech praising the efforts of those in charge of this event, especially the President of the Foundation, Mrs. Ramia Sultan. The Palestinian Ambassador also praised the steadfastness and resistance of the Palestinian people in Gaza and called for an immediate end to the siege imposed on them.



Gaza fights for freedom



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Gaza fights for freedom



Gaza fights for freedom



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Gaza fights for freedom



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Institutional Development

1. The Palestinian Delegation in Canberra celebrated International Women's Day on 8th March, where the Palestinian Ambassador took the opportunity to thank the women working at the Palestinian Delegation office, and wished Palestinian women more freedom, equality and equality.



Women's day at the Palestinian Embassy in Canberra



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2. The Palestinian Delegation continued to prepare periodic progress and financial reports of its work, in addition to monthly plans. At the beginning of this year, the Palestinian Delegation organized a strategic planning session during which it outlined its annual plan for this year.



Strategic planning session



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Strategic planning session

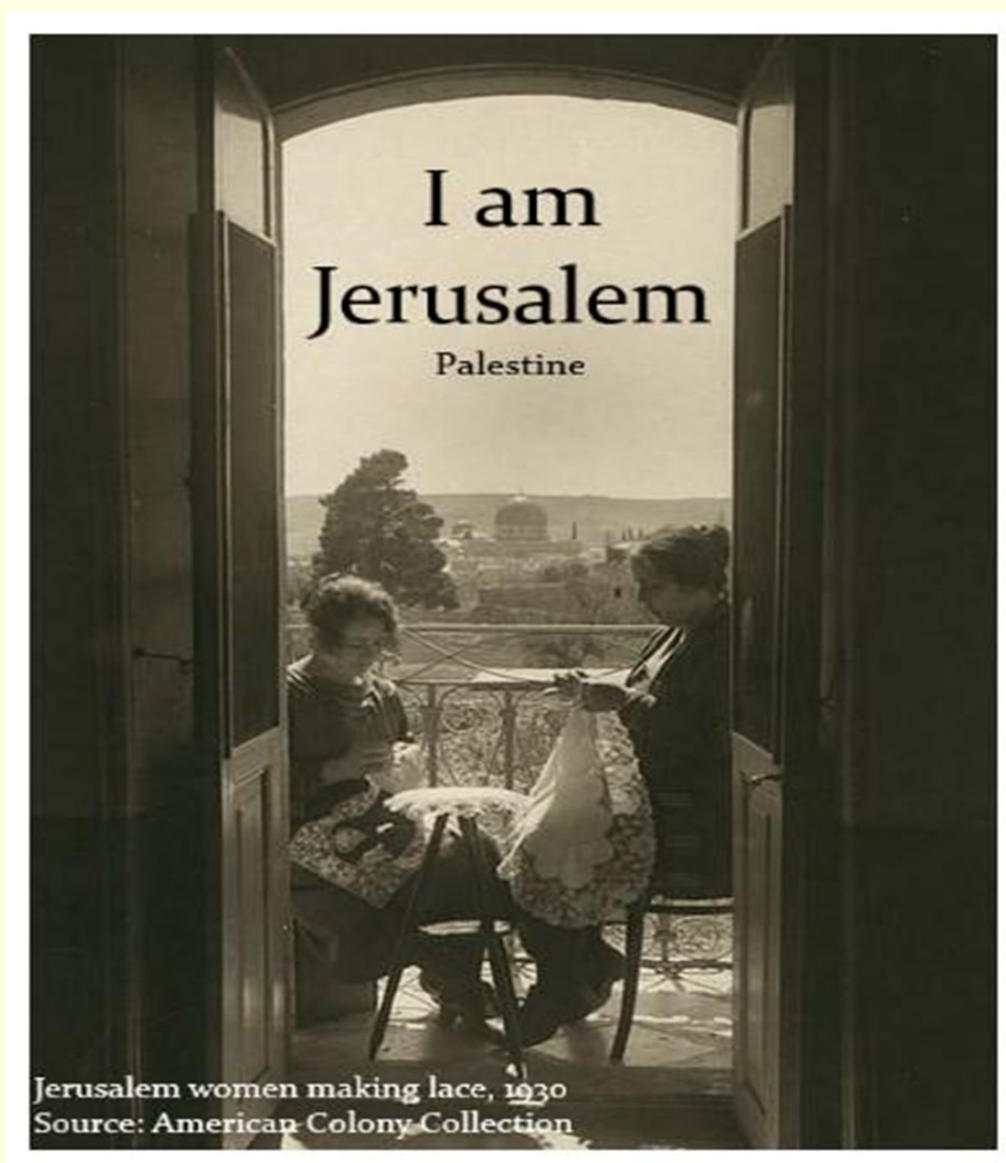


Strategic planning session



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3. The Palestinian Delegation completed the annual report of the activities of the Palestinian Delegation for the year 2018 in both Arabic and English and distributed it to the parties concerned.



2018 Annual Report Cover



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4. The Palestinian Delegation in Canberra continued to host a number of distinguished interns in partnership with the Australian National University. The number of interns during the third quarter of the year reached four volunteers, who are currently completing four important studies. These include strategies for working with the ruling Liberal Party and the Opposition, another study on civil society in the Pacific, in addition to a study on dialogue strategies between the Jewish and Palestinian communities in Australia.



**Internship program at the
Palestinian Delegation**



**Internship program at the
Palestinian Delegation**



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5. The Palestinian Delegation held its last meeting for this year, during which they made a preliminary evaluation of the Delegation's activities over 2019 and set an agenda for its programming over the year 2020.



Internship program at the Palestinian Delegation



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6. The Palestinian Delegation continued to prepare regular reports on important political topics in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific countries.
7. The Delegation on continued to provide quality consular services to members of the Palestinian community and others.
8. The Delegation continued to enhance its procedural performance through the issuance of program documents and annual plans, and through the holding of monthly staff meetings to discuss the management of programs and projects, including their planning, implementation on, follow-up and evaluation.
9. The Delegation on promptly and methodically responded to all correspondence from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including sending several official letters to relevant stakeholders in the region.
10. The Delegation also contacted all stakeholders to promote Palestine's accession to international organizations such as Interpol, the World Trade Organization, and others.
11. The Delegation prepared several reports on the development needs and priorities of certain Pacific island countries in order to start implementation of a targeted programme of professional development co-operation between the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Palestinian Agency for International Co-operation and the group of relevant countries.
12. the Palestinian Delegation continued its effective and efficient Social Media posting process covering the majority of the Palestinian news, political, economic and cultural activities among others.





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