



December 2020

This month at the Delegation

Diplomatic Engagements

Additional Information

Image: Hiking in the West Bank

Ambassador's Foreword:



Happy Holidays

Welcome to our final Newsletter issue for 2020. As this year draws to a close, I would like to reflect on both the challenges and achievements that Palestine and the General Delegation have faced.

This year has been filled with many challenges including the onset of COVID-19 which placed a remarkable strain on many around the globe, including significantly compounding issues already facing Palestinians and refugees.

Palestinians were faced with the threat of de-jure annexation under President Trump's *Peace to Prosperity* plan, signally the continuation of Israel's expansionist agenda. Whilst these plans for de-jure annexation have been allegedly postponed, Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes and settlement construction processes on the ground have nevertheless continued. Additionally, the dire circumstances regarding funding for UNRWA has led to the agency finding itself without money at least until the end of the year.

Despite the challenging year 2020 has been, the resilience shown by the Palestinian people is particularly important and admirable. During difficult and disheartening circumstances, Palestinian strength has shone through, emphasising the steadfastness and determination of the Palestinian people. It is this resilience that will continue to carry us through hardship, towards a safe and just future.



Indeed, despite these challenges, the General Delegation of Palestine has enjoyed many achievements throughout 2020. We have been proud to lead many effective advocacy campaigns to counter the significant challenges of this year. This has included, in particular, advocacy against both Israel's threat of de jure annexation and its ongoing systematic de facto annexation.

The General Delegation sent letters, factsheets, petitions and held meetings with many parliamentarians, civil society organisations and community members to raise awareness about these issues. In this regard, the efforts were also coordinated with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Council of Arab Ambassadors in Canberra to raise awareness of the tragic consequences that this would have.

The General Delegation's consular services effectively assisted many Palestinian community members, in particular, during the Coronavirus pandemic, including assisting with the repatriation of stranded Palestinians and providing the Palestinian community in Australia and New Zealand with up-to-date information and support. It also assisted in the fundraising efforts in Palestine, through the Waqfat Izz initiative, to raise money to counter the effects of Coronavirus.

The General Delegation also advanced its internal programmatic, administration, reporting processes and social media, including redesigning its Instagram account: *gdopalestine*. It also effectively and systematically responded to instructions from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

All in all, whilst 2020 has thrown many challenges our way, I am confident that with the strength of the Palestinian people and our supporters, Palestinians will enjoy a future in which they have access to their inalienable human rights and achieve self-determination.

It is the hope that 2021 will bring prosperity and wellbeing to Palestinians and the Australian, New Zealand and Pacific communities, I would like to warmly wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Izzat Abdulhadi

Ambassador of the State of Palestine

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





This Month at the Delegation

Palestinian Embassy End of Year Gathering

On 11 December, Ambassador Abdulhadi hosted an end of year gathering, for the diplomatic community and government officials.

It was our pleasure at the Palestinian Embassy to organise an “End of Year” gathering at the Ambassador’s residence, to appreciate and recognise resilience and steadfastness of the International Diplomatic Corps and other friends during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

It was also an opportunity to celebrate Christmas and the New Year.

Ambassador Abdulhadi said in his short sheech that Jesus Christ was born in Palestine with a message of justice and peace which we all are aiming to achieve.



Ambassador Abdulhadi participated in a function organised by DFAT

Ambassador Abdulhadi has been invited to participate in a function organised by DFAT entitled: Australia’s work in the Indo-Pacific, an address by Australia’s Foreign Minister & Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne.

In this function, Senator Marise Payne delivered a speech in which she mentioned the various diplomatic engagements and initiatives of Australia in the Indo-Pacific region. In her speech, she also mentioned that middle power countries play and continue to play a significant role in peace and security in the region in addition to economic recovery after COVID-19.

At the end of her speech, she thanked the diplomatic corps for their resilience during COVID-19 and wished them all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.





End of Year Evaluation

On 16 December, the GDOP held an End of Year Evaluation. This meeting discussed the accomplishments and challenges of the GDOP for 2020.

Embassy staff discussed ways in which the services and activities of the GDOP can be adjusted and improved in 2021 including incorporating lessons learned.

This evaluation session was based on five key criteria including: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Overall, it was agreed that despite the significant and unforeseen challenges of 2020, the GDOP implemented many activities and achieved significant impact.

Zoom meeting with Palestinian Community in New Zealand

On 2nd December Ambassador Abdulhadi met with representatives of the Palestinian community in New Zealand, including various New Zealand Palestinian advocacy groups. The meeting discussed ways to collaborate between these parties in the future.

Venezuelan End of Year Gathering

On the 4th of December, the Embassy of Venezuela hosted an end of year gathering, Ambassador Abdulhadi, Suheir Gedeon and Noura Saleh attended the event. Many representatives from the diplomatic community attended this event.





Pacific Romania Exhibition

On the 9th of December Ambassador Abdulhadi had the pleasure to attend the Pacific Romania Exhibition at the Embassy of Romania in Canberra, invited by Her Excellency Ambassador of Romania and the Dean of the International Diplomatic Corp, Mrs Nieta Barbulescu.

It was an impressive and informative tour on the rich culture and heritage of the Pacific countries.

Australian of the Year Exhibition

On 16th December, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the Australian of the Year exhibition at the National Museum of Australia. Many Ambassador's and diplomats attended this event.



AIIA Christmas Party

On the 9th of December, Ambassador Abdulhadi attended the AIIA Christmas Party with a presentation by Allan Behm. The presentation discussed the re-crafting of Australia's diplomacy in contested times. Allan Behm was, among others, the senior advisor to the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Penny Wong (2017-2019).



Additional Information

Dr Ashrawi: States Must Match Support for UN Resolutions on Palestinian Rights with Accountability for Israel

<http://www.dci.plo.ps/en/article/17094/Dr-Ashrawi-States-Must-Match-Support-for-UN-Resolutions-on-Palestinian-Rights-with-Accountability-for-Israel>

Indigenous Australian and Palestinian Experience: A Comparison

<http://www.palestine-australia.com/assets/Uploads/Indigenous-Australian-and-Palestinian-Experience-A-Comparison.pdf>

Palestine's Cultural Property and the Israeli Occupation

<https://www.nad.ps/en/media-room/media-briefs/palestines-cultural-property-and-israeli-occupation>



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