



October 2020

This month at the Delegation  
Palestine in the news  
Additional information and  
sources

Image: Hiking in the West Bank

## Ambassador's Foreword:



### Australian Funding Cut to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

The recent announcement of the Australian aid cut to UNRWA by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), is deeply disappointing and will have harmful impacts on those most vulnerable who receive UNRWA's services and support.

The aid cut was released in the DFAT "*Partnerships for Re-*

*covery Australian Official Development Assistance"* (ODA) report for 2020-2021. The report highlights the Australian ODA to UNRWA for the year 2020-2021 will total \$10 million, half of the previous year \$20 million contribution. This significant drop contradicts and raises questions concerning Australia's position and support for peace and stability in the Middle East region, as UNRWA continues to remain a vital and necessary agency in which millions of Palestine refugees rely for services and support. Indeed, it is the sole responsibility of UNRWA to provide services to Palestine refugees according to the UN resolution 302 (IV), until they are able to return to their homeland.

Indeed, UNRWA provides life-saving services to over 5.6 million refugees, operating under an independent mandate to ensure these individuals receive access to emergency and livelihood services, education, healthcare. This includes providing free education to over 530,000 children who would otherwise go without. UNRWA also provides 3.1 million Palestine refugees with access to health services.



Among others, UNRWA also works to uphold Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality and Women's and Girls Empowerment, through the provision of women's health services such as family planning and career support through Women's Training Centers.

Essential funding from states such as Australia, ensures UNRWA can continue to ensure vulnerable refugees receive access to their basic human rights. To withdraw funding from UNRWA is counterintuitive, and as a proud supporter of human rights and international law, the Australian government must continue to provide UNRWA, and hence Palestine refugees, with support. In decreasing aid to UNRWA, Australia is heightening the risk of increased instability within the Middle East region and threatening the establishment of a two-state solution and potential peace processes, positions which the Australian government and opposition both strongly support.

We call on the Australian government to reinstate its funding to UNRWA to ensure humanitarian support to Palestine refugees and to preserve the possibility of a Two-State solution.

Izzat Abdulhadi

Ambassador of the State of Palestine

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







## Israel approves the construction of thousands of housing units in its illegal settlements



The GDOP is deeply disappointed at the recent announcement that Israel has approved the construction of thousands of housing units in its illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. In this regard, the GDOP issued a press release and has sent letters to Australia Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Penny Wong, raising this issue and highlighting that de facto annexation continues systematically on a daily basis on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Despite the recent hollow and short-lived promise by Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, to postpone the de jure annexation of significant parts of the West

Bank, Jordan Valley and the North of the Dead Sea, de facto annexation, continues to ruthlessly and unapologetically feed Israel's colonialist agenda through the construction and expansion of illegal settlements built in occupied Palestinian territories, which systematically aims to deny Palestinians the right to self-determination and statehood.

It is time for the International community, in general, and Australia, in particular, to take a strong position against the Israeli de facto annexation and put real pressure on Israel to abide by International Law and to be held accountable. The de facto annexation of Palestinian land not only violates international law and UN resolutions but also continues to undermine peace and security in the Middle East and block any peaceful solution to the Palestine Israel conflict.

The General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific kindly calls for the coalition government to condemn this announcement of the construction of housing units in Israel's illegal settlements and to further condemn the Israeli de facto annexation of Palestinian land, in order to save a viable and durable Two-State solution and ensure Palestinian right to self-determination in their homeland, in line with the position which Australia strongly upholds.



## This month at the Delegation

### GDOP Advocacy Campaign

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

This month, the GDOP also focused on the recent announcement of the approval for the expansion of illegal settlements by Israel within the West Bank. In this regard, in addition to issuing a press release, letters were also sent to Australian politicians and senators, highlighting the devastating impact this will have.

**The GDOP Press Release: Israel approves the construction of thousands of housing units in its illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories:**

<http://www.palestine-australia.com/assets/Uploads/GDOP-Press-Release-Settlements-16102020.pdf>

**GDOP Press Release: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funding cut to UNRWA:**

<http://www.palestine-australia.com/assets/Uploads/GDOP-Press-Release-20102020.pdf>

### OIC Day Celebration

The observance of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Day on October 7 in Canberra, was another opportunity to confirm the principled position of the OIC Heads of Mission Group in Canberra towards the right of the Palestinian people in self-determination according to International Law and UN resolutions. This position and commitment reflected in the speech of the president of the OIC Group, H.E. the Ambassador of Indonesia.







## On the Occasion of the birthday of Prophet Muhammad

Ambassador and staff of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific would like to convey their warm congratulations to the Muslim and Palestinian communities in Australia, New Zealand and abroad on the occasion of Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

We hope to commemorate the occasion next year when the Palestinian people are safe and well and closer to achieving their objective of freedom and liberation.

## Girls Run the World Event at the GDOP

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

The two participants had the opportunity to participate in some of the weekly work of the Delegation by presenting summaries of past intern reports in the staff weekly intern report meeting.

This successful event provided many opportunities for both staff and participants to learn from each other.





## Diplomatic Engagements

### Ambassador Abdulhadi met with Mr Mark Bailey

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



### Farewell Dinner

Ambassador Abdulhadi and his spouse attended a farewell dinner organised by Ambassador of Turkey to farewell the outgoing Morocco Ambassador.

### Business Lunch

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

### H.E. the Ambassador of Timor-Leste paid a visit to the General Delegation of Palestine

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

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



### Ambassador Abdulhadi extended his condolences

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





## Additional information and sources

**Edward Said Memorial Lecture 2020 Video—  
Melissa Parke**

<http://www.afopa.com.au/blog/2020/10/20/edward-said-memorial-lecture-2020-video-melissa-parke>

**GDOP Press Release: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funding cut to UNRWA**

<http://www.palestine-australia.com/assets/Uploads/GDOP-Press-Release-20102020.pdf>

**PLO-Negotiations Affairs Department “US Foreign Policy and Palestine Re-engaging Towards Ending Israel’s Occupation of Palestine**

<https://www.nad.ps/sites/default/files/102020.pdf>

**GDOP Press Release: Israel approves the construction of thousands of housing units in its illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories**

<http://www.palestine-australia.com/assets/Uploads/GDOP-Press-Release-Settlements-16102020.pdf>



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