

## 6. FINLAND AND PALESTINE

### Background

Building on many years of interactions and debates between Finnish and Palestinian scholars, officials, diplomats, religious figures, media and civil society representatives, PASSIA, the Finnish Institute in the Middle East (FIME), and the Finnish Representative Office in Ramallah – which was celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the time – decided in 2008 to embark on a joint project, culminating in a two-day workshop. The international seminar on **Palestine & Finland**, which was held on 22-23 November 2008 in Jericho, brought together officials, diplomats, representatives of civil society, and academics with a wide range of fields of specialization, who discussed the history, presence and future of Palestinian-Finnish relations and took an in-depth look at Palestinian internal politics as well as on the prospects of the peace process.

### The Workshop

Drawing on local specialists and Finnish experts based in Jerusalem and abroad, PASSIA and its Finnish partners organized and hosted a two day-workshop in Jericho. Over 50 participants – spanning UN, EU, Finnish and Palestinian institutions, among others – were joining analytical intellect and joyful meetings.

The program, which was jointly put together was as follows:

**Workshop on Palestine & Finland**  
22-23 November 2008, Intercontinental Hotel, Jericho

#### **Program**

<b>SATURDAY, 22 NOVEMBER</b>
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9.00-9.30            Opening Remarks  
*Sirpa Mäenpää, Deputy Director General for Middle East and Africa, MFA Finland*

#### **SESSION ONE: HISTORY OF RELATIONS**

9.30-10.15        The Identification of the so-called Hisham Palace by R.W. Hamilton  
*Dr. Mikko Louhivuori, Rockefeller Museum*

- 10.15-11:00 Hilma Granqvist's Research: Reflections on Historical and Contemporary Relevance in Finland and Palestine  
*Dr. Riina Isotalo, University of Helsinki*
- 11.00-11.15 Coffee Break
- 11.15-12.00 Palestine and Finnish Media – A Reporter's Perspective  
*Sanna Negus, Middle East Correspondent, YLE, Finnish Broadcasting Co.*
- 12.00-12.45 Cooperation between Palestinian and Finnish Churches  
*Martti Tuhkanen, Director, Conference Center Paivakumpu, FELM*
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch Break

### **SESSION TWO: FUTURE CHALLENGES**

- 14.00-14.45 The Development of the EU's Political Role in the Context of the Palestinian-Israeli Relations  
*Dr. Flora Kurikkala, Foreign Ministry*
- 14.45-15.30 Finland & the PA: Official Relations Since 1995  
*Dr. Olli Ruohomaeki, Foreign Ministry*
- 15.30-15.45 Coffee Break
- 15.45-16.30 The Palestinian Minority in Israel and Minorities in the Future Palestinian State: Thoughts in the Light of the Finnish Experiences  
*Dr. Hannu Juusola, University of Helsinki & Foundation of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East*
- 16.30-17.15 Women's Role in Building a Society – A Finnish Perspective to the Palestinian Developments  
*Dr. Sylvia Akar, University of Helsinki*

<b>SUNDAY, 23 NOVEMBER</b>
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### **SESSION THREE: PALESTINIAN INTERNAL POLITICS**

- 9.00-10.00 Visit to Hisham's Palace, Jericho
- 10.15-9.45 Introduction  
*Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA, Jerusalem*

- 10.45-11.00      Hamas and its Agenda  
*Hani Al-Masri, Head of Bada'el Research Center, Ramallah*
- 11.00-12:00      Fateh at the Crossroads  
*Dr. Loay Shabaneh, Director of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and Member of Fateh*
- 12.00-12.15      Coffee Break
- 12.15-13.00      Chances and Challenges for Palestinian National Unity  
*Dr. Ghassan Al-Khatib, Vice-President of Birzeit University*
- 13.00-14.00      Lunch Break

**SESSION FOUR: PANEL ON THE IMPASSE IN THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THE PROSPECTS FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE**

- 14.00-16.00      *Speaker: Dr. Khalil Nakhleh, Senior Researcher and Author on "The One State Option"*

*Participants:*

Jehad Draidi, DG MEHE; Nisreen Al-Aref, Finance Manager, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; Jamal El-Aref, Deputy Middle East Representative, ANERA; Fouad Dakkak, Engineer; Shaher Hijani, PDLFEP Program Coordinator; Hannu Taimisto, Lawyer/COPPS; Kari Lamperi, EUPOL COPPS Prosecution Exp.; Pia Rantala Engberg, Head of the Representative Office of Finland, Ramallah; Outi Saarikoski, Deputy Head, Representative Office of Finland, Ramallah; Anna Savolainen, Desk Officer/Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Mona Shamma', Office & Program Manager, Representative Office of Finland, Ramallah; Dr. Ghazi Hanania, Deputy Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC); Dr. Nafiz Nazzal, Dr. Laila Nazzal, University Professors; Jamal Jawabreh, Director General; Nihekiesson, Consul General; Adnan Al-Masri, Badael Center; Rana Halaseh, Head of Technical Assistance Unit; Philip Holzapfel, Political Officer, German Representative Office, Ramallah; Anna Brudin, Political Officer, Swedish Consulate General; Sabri Saidam, President's Office; Musa Abu-Gharbieh, Fateh Movement; Lois Nakhleh, Artist; Sahar Jallad, Advisor to the PLA Chairman; Ibrahim Nuaimi, Supervisor of Computer Labs; Rana Al-Helsi, PhD, Head of Technical Assistance Unit; Saleh Rafat, FIDA.

■ **Finland and Palestine**  
*August 2009 (English, 170 pages)*

The outcome of the project was a publication containing the proceedings of the workshop. By producing such a booklet, PASSIA hopes to share the fruitful debates and experiences on Finnish-Palestinian relations with a wider audience.

