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 10th 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**

**SATURDAY, 22 NOVEMBER**

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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**

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| 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 Tuhanen, 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

SUNDAY, 23 NOVEMBER

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 Badael 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 Hijtani, PDLFEP Program Coordinator; Hannu Taimisto, Lawyer/COPPS; Kari Lamperi, EUPOL COPPS Prosecutium 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. Nazif 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.
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.