

Introducing the IAPP to Palestine in the West Bank city of Ramallah

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Ramallah, Palestine—More than 20 people, including Palestinian and European parliamentarians, attended an event introducing the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) to Palestine, held on December 16, 2017 in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Also among the attendees were former government ministers and other senior Palestinian leaders.

The opening session was dedicated to introducing the IAPP to Palestine, and focused on the value and importance of dialogue and collaboration among parliamentarians from around the world.

Welcoming remarks were offered by Hon. Zouheir Bahaloul, who has participated in several IAPP programs around the world. Representing the hosts was Dr. Nabil Shaath, an advisor on foreign and international relations to the president of Palestine and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), who offered greetings.

Dr. Thomas Walsh, chair of UPF International, gave an overview of the IAPP. He and Dr. Tageldin Hamad, secretary general of UPF International, who also spoke, emphasized the role of the IAPP as a platform for parliamentarians from around the world to advance the cause of peace. The parliamentarians from Europe, Hon. Roberto Rampi from Italy and Hon. Ulla Sandbaek from Denmark, contributed their thoughts and insights, and encouraged the esteemed audience to look for windows of opportunity in times of challenge. Hon. Talab El Sana, who was instrumental in helping to organize this conference, reiterated the Palestinian commitment to peace. Dr. Ahmad Majdalani, a former minister and a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee, made hopeful and forward-looking remarks.

After lunch, a second session took place, under the title, “Toward Living Together in Harmony, Peace and Cooperation.” The speakers in this session discussed ways our society’s orientation can be transformed from resolving conflicts with violence to fostering a culture of harmony, peace and cooperation. The emcee for this session was Hon. Tahani Abu Daqqa, former minister of youth and sports and former minister of culture in Palestine. Hon. Abu Daqqa played a major role in organizing the event.

The speakers shared their many experiences in the field and talked about the suffering they have experienced as a result of the conflict, their hopes and dreams, and their sincere wish for peace and a better future for their children.

Mr. Umberto Angelucci, chair of UPF-Middle East and North Africa, gave the closing remarks in which he encouraged the attendees to initiate activities for peace like the Soccer for Peace project.

The one-day event concluded with a tour of Ramallah and a visit to the museum at the Muqata'a complex.



The Palestinian hosts:

Dr. Nabil Shaath, advisor on foreign and international relations to the president of Palestine and a member of the PLC

Dr. Ahmad Majdalani, former Palestinian minister who currently serves as the secretary-general of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) and is a senior member of the PLO Executive Committee

Mr. Muhammad Al-Madani, head of the Palestinian Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society (PCIIS) – PLO

Hon. Intissar Al Wazir, member of the PLC

Hon. Najat Ahmad Ali El Astal, member of the PLC

Hon. Sameh El Abed, former minister in the MOP and participant in peace talks with Israel and America



Hon. Ashraf El Ajrami, former minister of prisoner affairs

Hon. Tahani Abu Daqqa, former minister of youth and sport and former minister of culture

Dr. Bashar Jumaa, advisor to the prime minister

Dr. Ziad Darwish, member of the PCIIS – PLO

Dr. Mohammed Odeh, member of PCIIS – PLO

Mrs. Feda Abu Hmaid, legal advisor of the PLO

Prof. Varsen Aghabekian, Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Project and freelance management and policy consultant