



المبادرة الفلسطينية لتعميق الحوار العالمي والديمقراطية

The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of **Global Dialogue and Democracy**

Annual Activities Report

2006

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MIFTAH

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Foreword by the Secretary General of MIFTAH



It is my honor to have been elected Secretary General of MIFTAH this year. In my capacity in this role, my main goal is to embrace MIFTAH's mission and work towards best achieving the organization's objectives.

Throughout 2006, great strides have been taken. MIFTAH has worked hard to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society. In 2006, MIFTAH continued to expand, both in terms of its staff and its range of activities. It has won a reputation for possessing a strong voice and providing an indispensable forum that allows various parties to participate in the development process.

MIFTAH has also developed new strategies to meet the various demands of a changing world. It has developed its own strategic plan for 2007-10, taking into account important developments that influence our work. Our new strategy defines four strategic objectives: To disseminate the Palestinian narrative and discourse globally to both official and popular bodies and decision-makers; to empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and

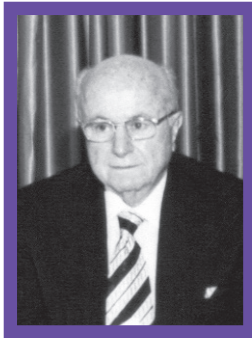
responsibilities of good citizenship; to influence policy and legislation to ensure the safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance; and to bolster MIFTAH's capacity and its capability to achieve its objectives and mission efficiently and effectively.

It takes committed people to ensure that an organization progresses and develops. The hard work of all MIFTAH's staff, stakeholders and supporters over the years has brought us to this point. My personal thanks go to all our staff, board members and supporters, and also to our funders for their continued support. It has been a pleasure and an honor to be at the helm of this organization.

This annual report not only looks back on the year that has transpired but also forward to the years ahead. I am confident that our new strategy will provide MIFTAH with the means to best fulfill its role and with the tools and expertise to meet any forthcoming challenges.



Letter from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees



Dear Friends,

On behalf of all members of MIFTAH's Board of Trustees, I am very pleased to present to you MIFTAH's annual report for 2006. The goal of our report is not only to celebrate the continuous delivery of high quality programs but to also list the accomplishments of our organization. All the significant contributions are presented and cover areas in the field of good governance and democracy and media and information and are as impressive as they are numerous. This success is heartening. At the same time, the strategic planning process which we began last year continues to carry us forward. It has guided us in redefining our strategic objectives and in setting a three-year plan.

I am also very glad to inform you that Dr. Lily Feidy has assumed office as Secretary General of MIFTAH in view of Dr. Ashrawi's re-election as member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Dr. Ashrawi continues to serve as Head of MIFTAH's Executive Committee and to show unwavering commitment to MIFTAH. Likewise, Dr. Feidy's stellar performance as Deputy Secretary General is an indication of what to expect in her new duties.

This report also serves as an acknowledgment of thanks to our dedicated staff who have worked with vigor to accomplish MIFTAH's vision. A word of thanks also goes to our stakeholders and supporters who have made this year a success and the future bright.



MIFTAH's Mission, Vision and Objectives

VISION

An independent, democratic and sovereign Palestinian state, which grants Palestinians their basic rights, preserves their dignity, and enjoys international recognition and respect.

MISSION

MIFTAH seeks to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society; it further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles in the Palestinian cause. To that end, MIFTAH adopts the mechanisms of an active and in-depth dialogue, the free flow of information and ideas, as well as local and international networking.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- To disseminate the Palestinian narrative and discourse globally to both official and popular bodies and decision-makers
- To empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship

- To influence policy and legislation to ensure the safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance
- To bolster MIFTAH's capacity and its capability to achieve its objectives and mission efficiently and effectively



MIFTAH's Programs

Democracy and Good Governance

Components of the program

- Empowerment of Palestinian women leadership
- Empowerment of Palestinian youth leadership
- Policy Formulation
- Enhancing systems of integrity, transparency and accountability in the Palestinian Public Sector
- Strengthening the role of the media in enhancing systems of accountability and access to information

Media and Information

Components of the program

Information and Informatics

- A website with English and Arabic pages that offer analytical examination of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well as pertinent Palestinian issues, in addition to fact sheets, reports and special studies

- Intensive media activity on particularly pressing issues through interviews, commentaries, press releases and briefings
- Networking and coordination with media institutions at the local and international levels
- Timely statements and petitions

Media Monitoring Unit

- Monitoring Palestinian Media
- Research and advocacy activities aimed at reducing incitement, dehumanization and de-legitimization of “the other”
- Educating the public to become more critical media consumers
- Fostering professionalism in the Palestinian media



MIFTAH's Board of Trustees (2006)

Hanan Ashrawi	Founder and Head of MIFTAH's Executive Committee; Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
Lily Feidy	Secretary General of MIFTAH
Sa'ïd Khoury	Chairman of MIFTAH's Board of Trustees; President and Co-owner of Consolidated Contractors International Company (CCC), Athens
Ziad Abu Amr	Former President of the Palestinian Council on Foreign Relations; Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
Maha Abu Dayyeh	Director of Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling
Ghassan Khatib	Director of JMCC
Mustafa Barghouti	President of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief
Committees and	Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
Mahmoud Darwish	Palestinian Poet

- Sawsan Fahoum-Ja'far Board of Trustees Chair for the Friends & Cancer Patients Charity
- Rima Hammami Professor of Anthropology, Head of Women's Studies/ Higher Education Program, Birzeit University ;women and human rights activist.
- Khalil Hindi Professor, Brunel University, UK and AUB, Beirut
- MohammadAbdel-Qader Al-Huseini Head of the Board of Directors of Faisal Hussein Foundation/ Member of the Board of Trustees of the Jerusalem Society for Welfare and Development
- Khalil Jahshan Regular Member: President of the National Association of the Arab Americans (NAAA); Former President of American – Arab Anti Discrimination Committee (ADC) Washington, D.C
- Rashid I. Khalidi Professor, Columbia University
- Sabih Al-Masri Chairman of ASTRA Group
- Muhammad Masrouji President of Jerusalem Pharmaceuticals Co.Ltd., Chairman of Masrouji Co. Ltd
- Abdel-Muhsin Qattan Founder and President of A.M. Qattan Foundation, London
- George Salem Attorney at Law and partner at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer and Feld, Washington D.C

WHO'S WHO AT MIFTAH

Employee	Title
Dr. Lily Feidy	Secretary General
Dolly Nammour	Development Director
Rula Muzaffar	Director - Financial and Administrative Affairs
Mousa Qous	Arabic Media Coordinator
Joharah Baker	Writer - Media and Information Program
Mu'ath Bakri	IT Coordinator
Bisan Abu Ruqti	Project Manager
Reem Wahdan	Project Coordinator
Sana' "Asi	Project Coordinator
Ruham Nimri	Project Coordinator - Media Monitoring Unit
Muhammad Abed Rabbo	Analyst - Media Monitoring Unit
Ala' Karajeh	Information Coordinator - Media Monitoring Unit
Nahed Abu Sneineh	Administrative Assistant to Different Projects
Margo Sabella	Special Assistant to the Secretary General and the Executive Committee
Khuloud Ju>beh	Secretary
Rami Rizqallah	Accountant
Ja'far Ladadweh	Receptionist
Eyad Awar	Driver
Na'imeh Qteiri	Services





DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

MIFTAH's Governance and Democracy program aims at strengthening governance and the rule of law, establishing efficient and transparent systems of accountability, promoting political pluralism and participatory governance, and supporting leadership among women and youth.

The program is comprised of the following specific components:

I. Empowerment of Palestinian Women Leaders

1. Women in Peace Negotiations Phase II
2. Women and Elections: Women Electoral Support Points (WESPs)
3. Raising Awareness of a Gender Sensitive National Budget
4. Gender, Peace and Security

II. Empowerment of Palestinian Young Leaders

1. Supporting Youth Leadership: Palestine
2. Media Capacity Building for Young Leaders

III. The Public Sector

Enhancing Systems of Accountability in the Palestinian Public Sector

IV. Policy Formulation

I. EMPOWERMENT OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN LEADERS

1. Women in Peace Negotiations: Phase II

[Effective Dates of Project: March 2005-February 2007]

[Funder: The Ford Foundation]

Description

The project Women in the Peace Negotiations is a component of MIFTAH's Program of Empowerment of Palestinian Women Leadership-Women in Politics and complements the other program, Women in Elections. It attempts to build on MIFTAH's experience in the areas of advocating human rights and the promotion of participatory governance and to create linkages between gender equality issues, conflict management and peace building. Women in Peace Negotiations-Phase II builds on the outcomes of MIFTAH's project *Women in Peace-Phase I*, implemented in November 2003-September 2004 and which was funded by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main goal of the second phase of Women in the Peace Negotiations is to enhance women's political participation in peace building and the negotiations process through networking, capacity building and simulated negotiations with Israelis.

Description of Achievements

1. Mapping of Israeli Organizations:

The Palestinian Center for Israeli Studies-Madar-was contracted to conduct a mapping of Israeli peace organizations. The results of the mapping were distributed to Forum members for reference in identifying an Israeli partner for the project. The methodology used in the mapping is as follows:

- Organizations' web sites
- Organizations' literature and main activities
- Books and publications by the organizations
- Reports of research centers on targeted organizations

2. Women's Political Forum:

The project's Steering Committee defined the selection criteria for prospective members of the Women's Political Forum and application forms were designed accordingly. Application forms and invitation letters were sent to 60 active women and 30 participants were selected to form the core group of the Forum. Selected members represent women's activists in civil society, political parties, universities and non-governmental organizations. Two preparatory meetings were held at MIFTAH's office on October 11, 2005 and November 30, 2005. The participants discussed the following:



Women Political Forum Informative Sessions

- Vision, aim and objectives of the Forum
- Participant expectations (both personal and professional)
- Election of Forum Steering Committee comprising five committed and active members from among the Forum participants
- Tasks of the Steering Committee

3. Women's Capacity Building:

A small library for the members was created and comprises analyses of Israeli society and updates on the Palestinian political situation. Contacts were initiated with specialists who were contracted to work on conducting specialized sessions on issues pertaining to negotiations. MIFTAH and the experts agreed that the informative sessions and the training on negotiation skills should be complementary. A draft program was designed according to the following:

- Part one: informative sessions- Seven interconnected sessions which summarize the Palestinian–Israeli negotiations will be held. The topics selected by the participants are as follows:

- Hamas-historical background and internal organization
- Palestinian- Israeli negotiations-historical background
- Jerusalem
- Borders
- Water
- Settlements



Negotiations Skills Training

- Part two: *negotiation skills' training*- A three-day training course is planned to be implemented in February 2007 in Jericho.
- **Important Note:** According to the project's original plan, the women participants were supposed to have dialogue meetings and simulated negotiations with the Israeli partner. However, due to the current situation, the women in the Forum decided they would not be possible to carry out such an activity. As such, MIFTAH is working on building the capacity of participating women in this phase and will delay the dialogue meetings and the simulated negotiations to a later date when the situation is less turbulent.

2. Women and Elections: Women's Electoral Support Points: Phase II

[Effective dates of project: Jan-Dec 2006]

[Finder: International Republican Institute]

This phase of MIFTAH's program of Empowerment of Palestinian Women in Politics: Women in Elections aims at addressing the gender deficit in local



politics and governance by developing a support network for Palestinian women interested in assuming a more prominent role in public life. The primary vehicle for such a network was the establishment of the Women's Electoral Support Points (WESPs) throughout the West Bank and Gaza devoted to training, empowering and mobilizing women in pursuit of inclusion and equality in all sectors of public life.

Project Objectives:

1. To sustain the established network of women leaders.
2. To provide a framework for reaching out to and building the capacity of women members in elected offices at both the local and national levels.
3. To mobilize the women's constituency to gain support for elected women.
4. To provide a local framework for ongoing contact and coordination among women to address their needs and problems as they arise as well as to provide them with a locally-available and accessible support point inside their communities.
5. To provide a framework for the delivery of various training, as these become identified by women and their support teams.
6. To network with local organizations.

Description of Achievements

1. Newly elected members' capacity building and consultancy

- a. Individual and group consultancy for newly-elected members in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)
- b. Individual and group consultancy for newly-elected members in the local councils

MIFTAH has adopted a new approach that aims at providing tangible support for members of local councils by helping some of them prepare project proposals and contacting donors for funding. The strategy used here is to form a “specialized advisory committee” to review the project proposals and recommend prospective donors. This approach will provide the women with an opportunity to practice the skills they learn through capacity building sessions, and at the same time provide real services to their community.

As a first step, MIFTAH started this work centrally in Ramallah, formed the committee, held the first meeting on Feb. 21, 2006 and asked some women to prepare proposals that respond to community needs.

2. Candidate capacity building and consultancy:

a. Identifying candidates for the last phase of local elections:

MIFTAH's field coordinators started identifying potential candidates and encouraging women to run for these elections. They tried to respond to women's inquiries especially those pertaining to political and legal issues.

Another role played by most of the coordinators pertained to communications and lobbying of political parties along with families to nominate women who are qualified and have the potential to win. In some locations, political parties called MIFTAH's coordinators to consult with them on the names of women endorsed by those parties.

3. Media and advocacy:

The following advocacy activities were implemented:

a. Public meetings: In response to the coordinators' recommendations and due to the need for raising public awareness on women's involvement in the electoral process in areas of active political participation, several public meetings were conducted in each district by MIFTAH and in coordination with local organizations and the elections committees to advocate women's active citizenship.

At each meeting, the coordinators ensured the involvement of the Central Election Committee to give them the opportunity to clarify the new electoral system to the women in local communities.

b. MIFTAH's coordinators facilitated some media activities through local newspapers and private TV stations that highlighted the newly elected members' contributions to local councils and the PLC and discussed future challenges concerning women's status and agenda.

4. Success Stories:

A book documenting the success stories of some women candidates in the first and second phases of local elections was published and widely distributed. MIFTAH received very positive feedback on the book, since it is the first effort to document women's experience in this regard.

3. Raising Awareness of a Gender-Sensitive National Budget through Capacity Building

[Effective dates of project: Jan.-Dec. 2006]

[Funder: Kvinna till Kvinna]

Background

As a result of MIFTAH's work in the previous project "Raising Awareness for a Gender-Sensitive National Budget" funded by KTK, the idea of gender budgeting was adopted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In fact, the Ministry has started work on analysing the budget on a sector basis beginning with the budget of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics is planning to adopt the same approach through providing the necessary data and analyzing its own budget. Women's organizations, as well, have become more interested in lobbying a gender sensitive budget.

The goals of this project are the following:

- To establish a network that could support the process of engendering the national budget.

- To form a core team that could manage the process of engendering the budget.
- To build the capacity and skills of local trainers who could help in training government employees in the future.
- To prepare a Palestinian training kit or manual on engendering the budget.

Project Preparation

The project set-up proceeded smoothly since MIFTAH is continuing the work that started last year. Part of the preparation included a workplan with a timeframe and project evaluation forms.

Steering Committee

A project Steering Committee was formed representing the following: the Ministry of Women's Affair, the Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), Women's Studies Institute, Birzeit University, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, as well as two consultants that were involved in Phase One of the project.

Training

In order to build a qualified national team of experts in the area of engendering the national budget, and after discussions with the Steering Committee, MIFTAH sought an international expert, Mrs. Debbie Budlinder, who agreed to come for a consultancy mission and training in early August of next year.

4. Gender, Peace and Security

[Effective dates of project: Jan.-Dec. 2006]

[Funder: UNFPA]

Overview

This project is funded by UNFPA, as part of its overall Gender, Peace and Security Program, which is a multiple country project, in this instance documenting



the specific case of Palestine. It aims to raise awareness among decision makers and key stakeholders on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Palestinian institutions and come out with practical recommendations that can help coalitions campaigning on the issue of violence against women to better develop their plans and services.

A case study was carried out which sought to include a series of activities that would promote a unified understanding of terminology and concepts involved in GBV, primarily by strengthening the platform of organizations in the Coalition using media events.

II. EMPOWERMENT OF PALESTINIAN YOUTH LEADERS

1. Supporting Youth Leadership: Palestine

[Effective dates of project: October 1, 2006 - September 30, 2007]

[Funder; National Endowment for Democracy]

Background

MIFTAH's project *Supporting Youth Leadership: Palestine* comes as a direct response to recommendations put forward by young political leaders, particularly those who participated in a previous youth empowerment NED-funded project, which stressed on the need to continue to involve emerging leaders in democracy building efforts. These young leaders feel they need to have a vested interest and ability to meaningfully participate in the political process.

The project aims at enhancing the communication skills of young Palestinian political leaders in order to build a national consensus on young leaders' issues in Palestine and strengthen youth leadership roles in public life.

The objectives of the project are accomplished through the following activities: drafting an open letter outlining the young leaders' demands regarding their role in political parties and non-governmental organizations and publishing and disseminating it among decision makers; holding eight round table meetings in the districts, organizing two central conferences in Gaza and Ramallah, and publishing a fact sheet on the participation of youth in the public sphere.

Project Set-up Activities

Preparatory Phase

1. Suggested topics for round table meetings:

On October 13, 2006 a meeting was held at MIFTAH for a small number of young leaders from different political parties in order to introduce them to the project activities and get their feedback regarding the roundtable meetings and the information to be covered in the fact sheet.

The meeting concluded with the following valuable recommendations:

- a. The topics must be related to the current political and security situation.
- b. Topics to be addressed are: *the role of student movements, the Palestinian governance system from the perspective of the youth, political parties' by-laws, and polarization in Palestinian partisan life.*

Implemented activities:

1. Fact sheet:

Part of MIFTAH's plan for this project is to produce a fact sheet that gives a statistical presentation of the status and degree of participation of youth in the public arena.

The fact sheet focused on youth in decision making positions in the political parties, public institutions, the PLO and elected offices (PLC and local councils), in addition to some facts related to education, time use, population, marriage,

the labor market among others. The final draft of the fact sheet will be disseminated in January 2007.

2. Roundtable meetings:

The first roundtable meeting took place in Jerusalem on Dec 17, 2006. It highlighted the political role of the student movement and the student councils at Palestinian universities. Twenty-seven participants attended the meeting, representing the student councils at Al Quds, Birzeit, and A IQuds Open University, in addition to leaders from the political parties and factions.

The meeting concluded with the following recommendations:

- Reviving the student movement
- Encouraging voluntary work among students
- Empowering student leaders through social and cultural programs
- Conducting more meetings on the same topics in other districts
- Raising student awareness to avoid factional extremism or involvement in the current security chaos

2. Media Capacity Building for Young Leaders: Palestine

[Effective dates of project: October 2005-September 2006]

[Funder: National Endowment for Democracy-NED]

Overview

This project emerged from recommendations put forward by the young political and community leaders who had previously participated in various MIFTAH activities. The prevalent feeling among the youth is that because they lack certain skills, they are not taken seriously enough and are therefore marginalized as players who have a thirst for contributing to development and building a Palestinian state. Since the youth sector possesses the energy and vision to participate in a nation building process, and in order to gain the respect and confidence of those in decision making positions, many

of MIFTAH's beneficiaries requested that MIFTAH implement a project that would enable them to compete with the best experts in various sectors of society. This is especially necessary since there has been no known mechanism within the existing Palestinian systems that allows for youth to air their grievances and to demand to be taken more seriously.

Objectives

- To build the capacity of young Palestinian leaders in addressing the media more effectively in order to build a national consensus on young leaders' issues in Palestine;
- To provide assistance to young leaders in drawing up their messages and delivering them successfully;
- To provide young leaders with the incentives, skills, and teaching tools that would boost their roles, lead to further advancement within their community and increase their influence in decision making;
- To provide young leaders with the framework and tools to formulate effective communication channels that would enhance their intra and inter communication within and across communities and organizations;
- To establish links and networks between young leaders and their local media, in order to facilitate monitoring and initiate programs about young leaders in their community, and support and strengthen a partnership between the media and young leaders;
- To boost young leaders' self-confidence in their leadership role.



Description of Achievements

Training sessions:

All the training sessions used the same method; the first day of training focused on the theoretical background of communication skills and building relations with the media. The second day focused on televised interview skills, crafting messages, public speaking skills and writing press releases, while on the last day the trainees had the opportunity to practice their acquired skills in real studios. Each participant conducted a short interview in front of the camera and the rest of the trainees, together with the trainer, assessed his or her performance.

The following is a list of the training sessions held throughout the project.

The first training session took place in Hebron on December 12-13-14, 2005, which about 22 male and female participants attended.

The second training session was conducted in Gaza City on December 14-15-17, 2005, which 22 participants attended.

The third took place in Bethlehem on February 1-2-3, 2006, which about 23 male and female participants attended.

The fourth was conducted in Southern Gaza (Khan Younis) on March 25-26-27, 2006, which 22 participants attended.

The fifth took place in Northern Gaza on May 22-24, 2006, which about 22 male and female participants attended.

The last training session was conducted in Nablus on June 3-5, 2006, which was attended by 16 participants.

Feedback from the trainees and trainers:

- The feedback from the trainees was very positive, especially concerning the timing of the training, methods, materials and trainers. They confirmed that these trainings sessions improved their self-expression and self-confidence. They felt that the training helped them explore themselves and their capabilities. They also considered the practical part of the training (using the camera) as the most interesting and useful part. In some cases, they complained about the long theoretical part of the training.
- The trainees expressed their need and expectations for training sessions in other specialized topics.
- The trainees also expressed their appreciation of MIFTAH's commitment to this target group and to supporting young leadership.
- The trainers expressed their amazement with the capacity of some trainees and their desire to learn and practice their skills.
- The trainers observed the harmony among the participants despite the differences in their backgrounds and considered these differences a positive factor that made the training atmosphere dynamic.
- The trainers also observed that the debatable and complex political situation, in addition to the competition between Fateh and Hamas discourses, was well reflected in the discussions during the sessions.

III. ENHANCING SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PALESTINIAN PUBLIC

[Effective dates of project: March 2005-February 2007]

[Funder: The Ford Foundation]

Description

The project *Enhancing Systems of Accountability in the Palestinian Public Sector* is an integral part of the overall strategy of the Palestinian civil national initiative for halting corruption. It builds on MIFTAH's joint work with AMAN (Coalition for Accountability and Integrity) in the project Inception Phase implemented in Aug. 2002-Dec. 2002 where MIFTAH prepared the groundwork through data collection, preliminary analysis of the problem and design of the work plan. The main aim of this component is to enhance systems of accountability, principles of transparency and values of integrity in the Palestinian public sector through promoting public information and expanding public participation at the decision-making level and consequently curbing corruption. The aims will be achieved through the following activities:

Description of Achievements

Research on the financial dependency of the three state bodies and its implications

Consultant Jihad Harb was contracted to conduct a research study on the separation of powers between the three state branches. An outline of the research and research methodology was discussed and approved. The final draft was submitted in March 2006.

The findings of the research were discussed with representatives of the three powers so they could add their comments and recommendations. After revising the draft in light of these comments, MIFTAH conducted a one-day workshop to publicly announce the results to representatives of Palestinian civil society, NGOs, and the representatives of the three powers who worked on drafting the public budget and who were invited to discuss the results.

As part of the dissemination process, MIFTAH contracted a local TV station to produce TV talk shows on the project's main issues: *separation of powers* and the *public budget*. The TV show was broadcasted during the last week of June 2006 on five local TV stations covering the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The results and recommendations of the research were summarized based on the different sectors (parliamentary, executive and judicial sectors) and were sent to the stakeholders to be taken into consideration in the future budget planning and implementation phases.

The research will be distributed to PLC members, universities, ministries, and judicial institutes, and to all interested non-governmental and research organizations.

Opinion poll on civil servants' best practices and the priorities of the public in the budget:

MIFTAH conducted a large-scale opinion poll in cooperation with AMAN on the following two main topics:

Public Budget:

- Public Budget: concept and amount
- Priorities of the public in the budget of five service-oriented ministries (Health, Labor, Social Affairs, Interior Affairs, and Education)

Public Sector:

- Concepts of citizenship, public sector, and public servants
- Behavior of civil servants with the public (with special concentration on the previously mentioned ministries)
- Corruption within the public sector

As part of the dissemination process, MIFTAH conducted a public workshop on December 23, 2006 to announce the results. MIFTAH also announced the results in the local newspapers and the document was posted on both MIFTAH's and AMAN's websites.

The results and the recommendations of the poll were summarized and sent to each ministry included in the poll. They were also sent to the stakeholders so they could take them into consideration in the future.

Civil servants' best practices:

A booklet for civil servants on their best practices with the public was produced and is currently in printing. The "public servants best practices document" was produced in partnership with official institutions and with civil servants trade unions. The first draft was presented to senior staff members in the public sector (two meetings in 09.11.06 and 26.11.06) in order to take their feedback concerning the content of the document. Distribution of the booklet among public institutions and to the Ministerial Committee will be carried out as soon as the book is printed.

Citizen Awareness:

- Seven town hall meetings, in the different governorates of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which aim at holding officials accountable to their constituencies and to raise awareness concerning the Public Servants Best Practices were planned in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during January.
- Four radio spots were produced and aired in eight local radio stations. These spots dealt with the concepts of transparency, accountability, right to access information, and citizenship matters. Two radio spots were produced and will be aired on eight local radio stations during January 2007. The aim of these two radio spots is to raise the awareness of the public towards the "public servants best practices document".
- Two centralized TV shows were produced in Ramallah and aired in five local TV stations in the different governorates on the separation of power and

the public budget. These TV shows hosted experts who could not move to other governorates and the TV shows were produced on a centralized basis. One TV show was produced on the topic of public servants and will be aired throughout January 2007 on five local TV stations.

- Announcements will be published in the newspapers in January 2007 on the main topics of transparency, accountability, right to access information, and citizenship matters.

IV. POLICY FORMULATION

Overview:

MIFTAH's Policy Formulation is an ongoing project that aims at promoting the accountability and transparency of the public sector in all policy issues pertaining to good governance, particularly reform and security and political developments, including short term ad hoc and long term plans. MIFTAH believes that genuine reform must take place through a transparent process whereby the public sector, the private sector and civil society are brought together on policy formulation on a range of issues that are vital to Palestinian decision making.

The main component of the program is the policy dialogue meetings that aim at enhancing multi-channel communication between and among all society members, including government, civil society organizations, and the private sector on a number of different but related issues with a view of supporting policy formulation. The policy areas identified include *reform priorities, processes and participatory governance, questions of factional politics and decision making, approaches to peace and requirements for peace making generating a discourse of nonviolence, laws and legislations*

The Policy Formulation aims at enhancing the ability of decision-makers to formulate policies in an inclusive and professional manner using a participatory process that leads to the disclosure of and access to information and that genuinely responds to the needs of the Palestinian public.

In order to realize this objective, policy meetings are regularly held generating policy papers prepared by specialists. Each series of inter-connected policy papers are printed in a booklet and highly disseminated.

Objectives:

1. Promote policy dialogue among the various stakeholders and present timely analyses of issues that inform policy decision making.
2. Raise awareness among Palestinian decision makers of the importance of the inclusive participatory approach to policy formulation processes.
3. Identify gaps and weaknesses in existing public sector policies.

Achievements Made

Policy Meetings

Summary

Throughout the year 2006, MIFTAH conducted a series of closed dialogue sessions

within the framework of its Public Policies Program, which addressed a number of pressing issues by engaging Palestinian academics, decision makers, and politicians, among other segments of society, in an open and candid exchange of information and ideas. The tangible outcome of these sessions was a series of public policy papers (seven) that included detailed analyses of the Palestinian political situation and the ongoing internal crises, in an attempt to formulate ideas, alternatives, and exit strategies.

Following is an overview of these policy documents:

First Paper (Policy meeting held on Feb. 13, 2006):

The Role of Civil Society and the Current Challenges

The political developments, namely the results of the last legislative elections conducted on 25 January 2006 and the victory of Hamas brought a number

of political, intellectual, and social challenges to the fore for different social groups, including civil society organizations. The modest results of electoral lists that participated in the elections as representatives of civil society organizations, or at least with their support, manifested their weaknesses and the gaps or deficiencies in their methodologies, which need diagnosis with the aim of learning lessons and concluding solutions and remedies.

Evaluation of the Role of Civil Society Organizations

The legislative elections were conducted under special circumstances that led to voting in accordance with closed political criteria on two streams: Fateh and Hamas.

However, there were gaps that led to the weak performance of civil society organizations.

Weaknesses include the weak coordination between components of the society and the exclusion of some trade unions and labor federations. Moreover, the mission of facilitating change has been restricted to a limited group of elitists among these institutions and their impact on decision-making. Furthermore, the formulation of public policies was limited. The number of these institutions, as well as their activities and programs, were geographically concentrated in the central West Bank (Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem) in addition to Gaza City. These civil society organizations were not providing assistance and service-delivery activities and programs, which the public was in dire need of. Finally, the deterioration of voluntarism constituted yet another weakness of civil-society organizations.



Requirements for Activation of the Role of Civil Society Organizations

In order to end the crisis of civil society institutions, there is a need to address the weaknesses and gaps, through concentrating on horizontal expansion in different areas.

There is also a need to emancipate trade unions and labor federations, activate their role and involve them in civil society institutions in the process of formulating plans and trends. There is a need to re-orient the activities and programs of civil society institutions towards public needs and enhance voluntary work in their activities and programs through adopting public activities that motivate participants and address their sense of identity. Moreover, these must embark on a wide process of reform and combating corruption and mobilize public opinion to oppose and confront such phenomena. They must also reinforce the institutional dimension and the values of transparency and democracy inside civil society and its institutions.

Second Paper (Policy meeting held on Feb. 25, 2006)

Charter of Action and Rights of Parliamentary Blocs at the Legislative Council



Within the context of committing to the democratic approach in Palestinian political life and respect for principles of plurality, there is a need to establish parliamentary traditions, most notably the notion of parliamentary blocs.

In this context, there is a need to commit to a group of principles related to the rights and duties of parliamentary blocs, most notably:

Each winning electoral list is entitled to form a parliamentary bloc comprising

its members. Each bloc has the right to have its own bylaws to regulate its work, select a head, dismiss or accept the resignation of any of its members, be informed of the major issues related to the work of the PLC and chair some committees such as the Budget, Human Rights and Public Freedoms Committees. These blocs are entitled to reach a consensus concerning the coordination of their work, propose draft laws, call for a no-confidence vote against the Council of Ministers (Government) or one of its members and participate in the PLC support bodies (Council Affairs Committee, Library Supervision body, Parliamentary Research Unit Supervision body etc...). A bloc is entitled to get appropriate headquarters within the PLC premises and to utilize the Council's facilities to perform its parliamentary work. It is entitled to a budget.

The heads of parliamentary blocs shall have priority to speak or respond to draft laws, to Government statements or confidence/no-confidence moves towards the Government.

Heads of blocs are entitled to request adjournment for holding consultations between bloc members prior to voting. The representation of parliamentary blocs shall be taken into consideration upon allocating or receiving official delegations. Finally, these blocs are entitled to form ad hoc gatherings for a specific issue of interest.

Duties of Parliamentary Blocs include their commitment to parliamentary and professional traditions and their pledge not to use the Council's documents, assets and information in any action other than parliamentary work. Blocs must inform the Council

Affairs Committee and the PLC Speaker of any changes in their structure or formation.

No bloc is allowed to nominate more than one bloc member to the same post within the

PLC. Parliamentary blocs pledge to urge their members to abide by the provisions of the

Law and PLC bylaws.

Third Paper (Policy meetings held on April 11 and 18, 2006)

Economic and Political Siege of the Palestinian Authority: The Dimensions and Mechanisms for Remedy



The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has suffered a suffocating crisis that took hold immediately after the new Hamas Government assumed office. Hence, the Palestinian people have suffered from siege, economic boycott and political isolation after the donor community suspended its assistance to the Palestinian Government and severed all political contact with it.

The Dimensions of the Economic Crisis

The inability of the PNA to pay salaries to its employees and the fact that most banks suspended operations with the PNA as Israel threatened to stop all banking transactions with them, has led to a serious economic crisis.

Politically, it is expected that the peace process that started in Madrid, moving on to Oslo and the subsequent agreements will come to an end. Israel will continue to impose unilateral elimination plots, under the pretext of the absence of a Palestinian partner and in a manner that preserves Israeli interests and satisfies Israeli security requirements at the expense of the Palestinian people and their rights. There is a possibility of the collapse of the PNA and the emergence of local militias that may pave the way for the outbreak of civil war.

Proposed Mechanisms for Crisis Resolution

In order to break the political isolation and economic blockade imposed on the Palestinian people, there is a need to examine several strategies. The first is to convene a national salvation conference that defines a unified Palestinian vision and an agreed on agenda that constitutes the minimum acceptable

Palestinian position to be presented to the world as a Palestinian program comprised of all Palestinian forces. Moreover, there is a need to form a national unity government based on this program, provided the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) grants this Government a safety net for the agreed duration.

Alternatively, there is also a need to reach a consensus so that the Council of Ministers

(Cabinet) assumes responsibility for the implementation of the internal national program, while the Presidency takes charge of foreign affairs (activates the PLO and its institutions through the integration of all Palestinian political forces, and reaffirms the PLO's role as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people).

In order for such national dialogue to bear fruit, it is possible to utilize existing channels at the Presidency in order to mitigate the economic blockade and political isolation, provided these channels do not constitute an alternative or a shadow Government run by the Presidency.

Fourth Paper (Policy meeting held on July 5, 2006)

National Consensus Document: Scenarios and Alternatives for the Coming Period

Following the failure of negotiations concerning the formation of a coalition government, hence Hamas' ongoing confrontation of an international economic and diplomatic blockade, the National Conciliation Document of Prisoners (a.k.a. the

Prisoners' Document) was issued. The document was drafted following extreme polarization and antagonism between the two main Palestinian factions, Hamas and Fateh, which reached the point of internal



fighting, threatening Palestinian national unity, and their confrontation of Israel's occupation.

There was a call for national dialogue based on the Prisoners' Document that addressed all controversial issues including the establishment of a Palestinian state within the

June 4, 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital, the return of Palestinian refugees to their home land on the basis of UN Resolution 194, the right to resistance and its concentration within the 1967 Occupied Territories, the activation of the role of the PLO, and its reformulation on the basis of proportionate representation before the end of 2006, agreement over the PLO's assumption of responsibility for negotiations, and the formation of a Palestinian national unity government within two weeks of signing the document.

The Kerem Shalom operation and the subsequent Israeli military operation "Summer Rain" reshuffled the cards in both the Palestinian and Israeli arenas whereby the options and alternatives of both parties became unclear. However, a number of scenarios or alternatives are envisaged to deal with the status-quo, which can be summarized as follows:

First: Continuity of the Status-Quo: This option entails the intensification of internal polarization, plurality in conflict-management strategies according to the agendas of different factions, the escalation of Israeli aggression, security chaos, the aggravation and increase of poverty and unemployment rates, the continuation of the international diplomatic and economic siege and the mere symbolic existence of the PNA.

This is the worst case scenario, since it constitutes an environment conducive to the implementation of Israel's unilateral policies and the subjugation of the Palestinian people, hence breaking their will and enforcing a one-sided solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Second: Dissolving the PNA and Returning to the Pre-Oslo Era: Advocates of this view believe that the PNA has lost the justification for its existence: it failed

to end the occupation and its policies, it failed to build institutions of law and order and it failed to provide the pre-requisites of a viable Palestinian presence, including the establishment of an independent and sustainable economy. This option means that Israel is held fully responsible as an occupying state, which opens the opportunity for requesting international protection or forming a unified national leadership that runs the affairs of citizens in the same manner that existed prior to the signing of the Oslo Agreement and the inception of the Palestinian Authority.

Opponents to this view believe that adopting this option essentially negates and undermines the achievements of the Palestinian people and contradicts the Prisoners'

Document, particularly concerning the need to preserve the PNA. Another major concern for opponents of the dissolution of the PNA is the fact that 165,000 Palestinian citizens are employed with the Government (including approximately 58,000 security personnel and 107,000 civil servants). These PNA employees provide for their families, which constitute around one million Palestinian citizens (i.e. a quarter of the Palestinian population in the Palestinian occupied territories).

Third: The Option of Negotiations: This option builds on the hope that parties are convinced of the need to return to negotiations on the basis of the Road Map. Some consider this option inevitable given that the alternative to negotiations is imposing a unilateral Israeli solution that enjoys international and Arab support. On the other hand, others believe that the negotiations option has proved to be a failure, particularly as seven years of negotiations have not accomplished any tangible achievements worth mentioning.

Furthermore, Israel has undermined the option of negotiations by imposing irreversible facts on the ground (settlement construction and expansion, the discriminatory Separation

Wall, the Convergence Plan, unilateral disengagement and demarcation of borders).

Fourth: Combining Resistance with Negotiations while preserving the PNA: This option stems from the need to combine armed resistance with negotiations, as this will apply major pressure on Israel. Advocates of this view believe that armed resistance has resulted in the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip, and is therefore, the natural alternative to negotiations, which have reached a dead end.

According to this point of view, Palestinian political forces can agree on a unified resistance strategy, its forms and scope. On the other hand, experience has proven that it is impossible to combine an authority with armed resistance, especially under the superior Israeli military power and the inherent international bias in its favor, which has led to the de-legitimization of the struggle for liberation and has equated resistance to occupation as terrorism.

Fifth Paper (Policy meeting held on August 1, 2006)

Palestine-Lebanon: the Similarities and Differences

The intense developments in the Palestinian and Lebanese arenas following the two resistance operations "The Dispelled Illusion" and "The Sincere Promise," in addition to the subsequent large scale Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, raised several questions on the possibility of linking the Palestinian option to the Lebanese option including the dimensions of such a linkage and its impact on the current Palestinian situation.

Similarities and Differences

There are many common factors, as well as differences, between the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese resistance. The first similarity is the common enemy (Israel), their method of operation (guerilla warfare), in addition to the strategy and weapons used by the enemy in confronting both (Palestinian and Lebanese resistance).

Hizballah and Hamas are no longer mere resistance movements, but also parties in authority. Some perceive Hizballah as an extension of Iran in the region. Similarly, some question the possibility of Hamas having a private agenda within the context of the regional conflict (Syria- Iran axis).

There are many differences between the two situations. Some consider the experience of Hizballah a deeper and more influential resistance experience, as seen during the recent five-week war. The Palestinian resistance, despite all its positive aspects in confronting the enemy and the spirit it sustained throughout the years of struggle, suffers from the absence of a unified leadership, weak training and experience and lack of coordination between military wings.

Furthermore, there are circumstantial differences in which each of the sides operates.

Lebanon is a state with recognized borders and the resistance has open access to weapons. In Palestine, however, Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip did not mean the end of its occupation of the Palestinian territories and the establishment of permanent recognized borders.

Finally, Lebanese political parties, including Hizballah, realize the importance of maintaining a unified position to confront the crisis and find solutions. This is not the case in the Palestinian arena, despite consensus over the Prisoners' Document.

The Possibility of Linking the Two situations: Some consider this as an opportunity to attract international attention towards the Palestinian cause, the root of all problems and conflicts in the region. This is based on the belief that linking the two issues is only natural as both have one enemy and one objective. They believe there is an opportunity to benefit from the sympathy that Lebanon enjoys at the international and public levels through linking the two causes, especially if such international interest results in an international consensus to resolve all outstanding issues in Lebanon and Palestine.

On the other hand, some believe that there should be no linkage, since the crisis in Lebanon has led to delaying attempts to launch Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over captured Israeli soldier (Gilad Shalit). Political linkage, specifically with Hizballah, may lead to linking the Palestinian cause to Iran, which may be detrimental to Palestinian aspirations altogether.

Others call for linking the two issues in all aspects that may benefit the

Palestinian cause, specifically in relation to political negotiations and the implementation of pertinent UN resolutions, while at the same time, avoiding the negative consequences of such linkage whenever possible, specifically the attempts to link the Palestinian side to the regional axis (Syria-Iran).

Sixth Paper (Policy meetings held on September 11, 2006 and October 4, 2006)

The Crisis of Forming the National Unity Government: Practical Initiatives and Available Alternatives

The feeling of optimism that has prevailed among the Palestinian political establishment following the announcement of an agreement on the formation of a national unity government did not last very long. This prevented the success of efforts exerted towards the formation of a national unity government until now, which has caused an almost complete paralysis in the Palestinian political system. Extreme polarization and antagonism between the two political mainstreams, Fateh and Hamas, was translated into armed clashes which resulted in serious casualties.

“Appeal for Palestine”

Because of this grave situation, a number of national forces and intellectuals came together to draft a document entitled “Appeal for Palestine” that included a group of practical initiatives to exit the crisis, prioritized in the following manner:

First option: To form a national unity government based on the Prisoners’ Document and its political program (to be implemented before the end of Ramadan). This includes convening the Higher Committee for the activation of the PLO.

Second option:

A) The formation of a transitional Palestinian government, composed of independent national personalities with the consent of existing political forces and the PLC’s endorsement for one year, during which this cabinet would work

towards resolving internal issues, particularly 1) reversing the deteriorating socio-economic situation, 2) remedying poverty and unemployment, 3) ending the international political and economic siege on the Palestinian people, 4) guaranteeing the resumption of international financial assistance, 5) resuming financial and administrative reforms, and 6) improving government services to the public.

B) The authorization of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in its capacity as the central political reference to the Palestinian Authority (PA), to follow up the political process (i.e. peace negotiations), and urging President Mahmoud Abbas to convene the PLO's Higher Committee, which is headed by Abbas and composed of the Palestinian National Council's President, members of the PLO's Executive Committee, the leaders of the various Palestinian factions and political parties, and several independent personalities; the aim of this meeting would be to re-elect the PLO's Palestinian National Council, in addition to the overall development of the PLO itself.

C) The proposition of a national plan to combat (and end) the current state of security and weapons chaos in the Palestinian territories, reform the Palestinian security apparatus, safeguard the rule of law and achieve security and justice to Palestinian citizens. This would be carried out in a spirit of cooperation between the Presidency and the Government, with the participation of the relevant institutions and the support of all political forces and the PLC.

D) The allocation of this transitional period (one year) for the promotion and fostering of a calm internal national dialogue free of rhetoric, in order to reach an agreement over the mechanisms to implement the National Conciliation Document of the Prisoners (a.k.a. the

Prisoners' Document), including the formation of a national unity government in addition to reaching a consensus over its proposed agenda.

These initiatives shall be combined with the mobilization of Palestinian public opinion, which would act as a political force in itself in order to bring Fateh and Hamas to accept them and ensure their implementation.

The steps envisioned in the “Appeal for Palestine” raise a number of questions:

A National Unity Government or a Government of Independent Figures?

There is a general preference for the option of a national unity government as opposed to other options, despite a general realization that the chances of this option are gradually becoming remote. However, this option has several advantages, most notably: it is the favorite option acceptable to all parties; it has gone a long way and has reached a conclusion, and it enjoys public support. Furthermore, it creates the necessary climate for meeting international demands, as it neither stipulates the total submission to the Quartet’s conditions nor their complete negation.

Finally, such a government provides the opportunity to end the economic and political siege imposed on the Palestinian people.

Despite all the abovementioned advantages of the national unity government option, there are obstacles that hinder its adoption, most importantly: it is difficult to agree on a political program for this government that combines political action with armed resistance.

The second option of forming a government of independent figures requires general national consensus and wide public support. It constitutes a practical way out because of the conflict between national forces over the national unity government, while at the same time it constitutes the least damage to Hamas’ interests (since this option enables Hamas to maintain its power in the PLC).

This option also provides an opportunity for a provisional truce in the ongoing fight between Hamas and Fateh, and prevents the escalation of factional antagonism into internal fighting. It grants the public a chance to catch their breath at the political and economic levels and unifies the Palestinian stance in any future political move concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Despite the above-mentioned advantages of this option (a government of independent figures), it has certain limitations, including Hamas’ rejection.

Consequently, this option will not solve the ongoing power struggle between Hamas and Fateh. In addition, there are no guarantees that a government of independent figures would resolve disagreements even temporarily, over the contradictory political program.

A Higher Committee for Activating the PLO or a Negotiations Reference Committee

Throughout all the documents agreed on by Palestinian factions and forces, there is a recurrent assertion for the need to develop the PLO through activating the Higher Committee as agreed on during the Cairo dialogue in March 2005. There is a debate over the procedures and mechanisms adopted in this regard. In order to hold PNC elections, there needs to be an agreement on the adopted procedures and mechanisms, which requires no less than one year. Reformulating the PNC through the quota system is not possible since Hamas demands 40-60% of the PNC seats - a demand that other factions cannot accept.

Consequently, there is a need to reach a practical formula that includes Hamas in the PLO. One of the most prominent options in this regard is the representation of Hamas in the PLO's Executive Committee through the Prime Minister, the PLC Speaker and other

Hamas representatives (in addition to one representative of the Islamic Jihad). This ensures that Hamas enjoys the same weight as Fateh in the Executive Committee, particularly because decisions are made through consensus.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION PROGRAM

Background

MIFTAH's Media and Information Program (MIP) is one of two major programs in which the organization's overall mission is translated into action; namely the presentation of the Palestinian narrative on the local, regional, and global levels. The program currently is comprised of two central components: 1) Information Material (in Arabic and English) and 2) External Relations. We are currently in the process of expanding our activities to incorporate other elements, including targeted media campaigns and audio visual productions.

- 1) Information Material is primarily concerned with the collection/documentation, formulation, and dissemination of information on key Palestinian issues and concerns; these include political and field developments as well as civil society issues. Our information material comes in the form of news stories, opinion pieces and editorials (Op-Eds), statements, factsheets, and special studies (in-depth reports). The information is disseminated through 1) our website (www.miftah.org), 2) our email database (approximately 7,000 recipients), 3) our media fax lists, and 4) during our briefings with visiting delegations (i.e. in the form of hard copy information packages).
- 2) External Relations is our direct and active interaction with our key target groups, on the local and external levels. These include 1) conducting briefings with visiting delegations of students, activists, journalists, associations, among others, during which we respond to requests for information on political issues, internal issues, and any topic we are able and willing to discuss, 2) participating in local and international workshops and/or conferences relevant to our field of work, and 3) participating in various committees and initiatives (locally and internationally).

Tangible results: While it is difficult to obtain quantitative indicators of our progress, we have been keen on monitoring and evaluating the number of publications which we produce. Following is an outline of our ENGLISH information material during Oct 2005-Oct 2006.

Publication	News Stories*	Op-Eds	Statements	Fact Sheets	Special Studies
Quantity	18	92	39	5	2
Topics	The topics range from internal issues (security, internal strife, employees strikes, etc) to Israeli violations, and the recent Israel war against Lebanon, among other issues.	The number of topics is too big to outline here, but the basic themes have included the January elections, Israeli violations and assaults, and political developments in the oPt.	Our statements have responded to pressing field/security developments, regional and global political issues, Israeli violations, and various topics concerning the internal Palestinian situation.	-FAQ: Al-Nakba -Palestinian Refugees (update) -The Palestinian National Authority's Sources of Funding -Palestinian Government Structure -Palestinian Textbooks	-Palestinian Women and the Intifada -The Palestinian Security Services: Past and Present

* News Stories is a new type of information material we began to produce on 31 August 2006.

In addition to MIFTAH's information material, our website provides an up-to-date resource of material produced by other institutions, including Palestinian and international NGOs, media outlets, as well as various reports by specialized institutions (such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Crisis Group).

Impact and effects of activities: Throughout the past year, we have been monitoring the scope of coverage of our information material, including a

weekly internet search for our publications on major websites that provide information on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It would be safe to conclude that the vast majority of our Op-Eds have been either reposted on these websites, or communicated by some groups through various online forums. The same applies to our factsheets, special studies, and statements, which have been quite frequently used by other institutions and reposted by several websites. Copies of republished articles and material are available upon request. At the qualitative level, the overall impact of our information is difficult to pinpoint. There have been several instances where the Palestinian news agency Wafa, for example, quoted MIFTAH in both Arabic and English, and there has been one particular case where the Palestinian representative to the United Nations in New York used specific sentences from one of our statements regarding the Israeli assaults against the Gaza Strip prior to Gil'ad Shalit's kidnapping in June 2006. However, as mentioned before, the overall impact of the type of work in which the MIP is involved cannot be specifically identified or quantified. Part of the reason why we introduced "News Stories" to our website is to be able to infiltrate the mainstream media in their reporting of events in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Basically, if we can provide alternative information and news reporting, then media outlets would find the logic and means to use it, as long as it is credible, accurate, and well-researched.

Lessons learned and conclusions: In order to be able to reach the desired objectives of our program, namely the communication of vital information and analysis on the situation in the oPt., it will be very important to infiltrate mainstream media, particularly print media. For that purpose, we feel that the time is ripe to try to establish direct contact with media institutions in order to ensure, to some degree, that our material is taken into account. It will also be vital to develop our news reporting capacity. We currently have one full time writer, one part time writer, and one intern who draft information material for MIFTAH. However, if we expect MIFTAH to increase its news reports (News Stories) then we will have to mobilize more writers to produce timely news reports and articles. In conclusion, MIFTAH's MIP has placed the organization in a reputable position as far as information is concerned; however, there is agreement among members of the organization that we will need to expand our programme and incorporate more diverse forms of information material.

Media Monitoring

Words Can Kill – A Joint Palestinian-Israeli Action for an Alternative Public and Media Discourse

[Effective dates of project: October 2004-June 2006]

Since September 2004, MIFTAH and KESHEV (The Centre for the Protection of Democracy in Israel) have been engaged in a unique and original project, which aims to improve media discourse in both Palestinian and Israeli media through monitoring, research, advocacy and lobbying activities. This project hopes to facilitate the development of an independent media and a culture of moderation, tolerance, and understanding between the two peoples, and implementation of the anti-incitement provisions in the Road Map, as well as previous agreements between Israelis and Palestinians, all of which will assist in the re-launching of a genuine peace process.

The aim: To encourage a public and media discourse free of incitement, prejudice and dehumanization of the other in Palestine and Israel, through monitoring, research, advocacy and lobbying activities. The action will facilitate the development of an independent media and a culture of moderation, tolerance, and understanding between the two peoples. This is in addition to the implementation of the anti-incitement provisions of the Road Map and agreements between Palestinians and Israelis, all of which will assist in the re-launching of the peace process.

The action seeks to increase trust between the parties and develop a peace environment. To accomplish this, it is necessary to raise public awareness in Palestine and Israel regarding the incitement, bias, defamation, de-legitimization, and dehumanization of the other commonly found in the media and in public discourse regarding the peace process and relations between the two peoples. The objectives are defined as follows:

1. Promote moderation: To promote a culture of moderation, tolerance, and understanding that is conducive to a peace environment.

2. *End incitement*: To contribute to the halting of incitement against and defamation of the other side in the media and by politicians and public officials.
3. *Build an alternative discourse*: To build a new platform for developing a common language and agreed-upon terms for use by Israelis and Palestinians, and for promoting an independent media and an alternative discourse in the media among decision-makers and in the general public on both sides.
4. *Create a model of cooperation*: To show that Palestinians and Israelis can indeed work together on this important subject and others, proving that cooperation between the peoples is possible to achieve various common goals that affect the lives of both peoples.
5. *Establish monitoring mechanism*: To establish a mechanism to monitor incitement and bias against the other side that will offer lasting coverage of incitement on both sides, and assist the sides in reaching a final political arrangement, or, during the interim period of negotiation, an arrangement of the kind set forth in the Wye Plantation Agreement, and especially in the Road Map.
6. *Advance minority interests*: To promote an environment that benefits minority rights, specifically those of the Arab population in Israel, a group which has an important role in establishing the kind of public discourse and peace environment that the action seeks to achieve.

The target groups: The Palestinian and Israeli media, Palestinian and Israeli policy makers, civil society organizations, law enforcement officials and the legal community, media students, and the Palestinian and Israeli general public.

The main activities: Setting up media-monitoring units, information gathering and research, holding seminars and workshops, publishing findings and reports, and advocacy.

The following media monitoring reports were issued in 2006

1. A Moment of National Pride: Israeli Media Coverage of the Takeover of Jericho *Prison*

Date posted: April 24, 2006

2. The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in the Palestinian Legislative Elections Date posted: May 09, 2006

3. The Palestinian Media Coverage of Sharon's Illness and his Departure from Political Life June 17, 2006

4. *The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in the Media Coverage of the 17th Israeli Knesset Elections*, August 2006

(latest MIFTAH-Keshev Media Monitoring reports are found at www.miftah.org)



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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