

ESCWA in the News

الإسكوا فى الإعلام

ESCWA celebrates International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People

29 November 2016

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Images of displacement and war, but also of hope and resilience, have taken over Beirut's glitzy Downtown Souks. To commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, observed on Nov. 29, the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue

Federica Marsi | The Daily Star

BEIRUT: Images of displacement and war, but also of hope and resilience, have taken over Beirut's glitzy Downtown Souks. To commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, observed on Nov. 29, the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee has launched a photo exhibition in the Beirut Souks in partnership with the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

"Palestinian Moments" revolves around the concept of time. Since the exodus of 1948, more than 700,000 Palestinians have lived a life of displacement across the region.

In Lebanon, they constitute an estimated 10 percent of the population, but they still have not achieved full rights, and poverty, unemployment, poor housing conditions and lack of infrastructure plague the community.

"Today, in this public space and in the heart of Beirut, we emphasize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland," said LPDC President Hassan Mnymneh at the opening ceremony Tuesday.

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"We are all Arabs and we are all humans, we cannot forget what Israel is doing to the Palestinian people."

The exhibition, consisting of five different sections, will run from Nov. 29 to Dec. 4. One section, "From Palestine to Lebanon, a Story of Displacement," features a selection of 30 photographs from UNRWA's film and photo archive that represent the hardships Palestinians have been through since 1948.

Another section, showcasing a selection of work by photographer Adel Hana, from the Union of Arab Photographers, gives a vivid portrayal of life under the siege of Gaza.

Acting Country Director for UNRWA in Lebanon Hakam Shahwan inaugurated "Palestinian Moments" together with Mnymneh, ESCWA Executive Secretary Rima Khalaf, and Palestinian National Economy Minister of Abeer Odeh.

"The Palestinians have been through a very tough journey and this is the message sent by the exhibition," Shahwan told The Daily Star at the event. "Whoever is attending this event is showing solidarity."

Political and diplomatic figures, the media and members of the community were welcomed to the opening ceremony by a group of female Palestinian dancers from the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon.

Among those taking pictures and cheering was Tala Masri, a 17-year-old student at the Lady of Balamand High School in north Lebanon.

Masri is a third-generation Palestinian whose family was displaced from the coastal town of Haifa.

Even though she says she has little hope of ever living there herself, she takes up every occasion to spread awareness of the ongoing Palestinian struggle.

"I have never seen my home country, but this does not matter. It is a connection that comes from inside," she told The Daily Star.

Alongside the photo exhibition, a group of women from Ain al-Hilweh were selling embroidery and other handicrafts with the support of a number of NGOs.

For Wafa Falloush, one of the 18 women working inside the camp, this is one of the few occasions to sell her work outside its confines.

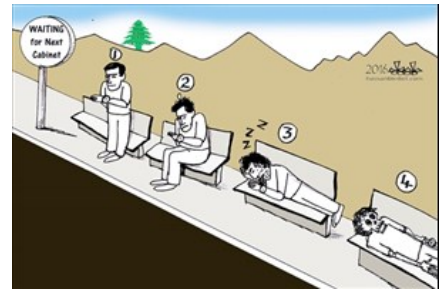
Like others in the group, she is a widow and sells her handicrafts to help her provide for her children. "I learned this art from my mother and now I have taught it to my daughter," Falloush said. "It is part of our tradition, but it is also a means to ensure our future and to regain our dignity."

Among the guests at the ceremony was Dr. Mads Gilbert, the internationally renowned Norwegian physician and activist who has been banned from re-entering Gaza by the Israeli authorities.

On Nov. 30, he will be speaking at an American University of Beirut conference titled "Endless Wounds of Gaza," organized in collaboration with ESCWA.

According to Gilbert, what is even more important than the work he conducts in the field is the work he does at home.

"The only tool we have as ordinary people is not to forget Palestine and to work to shift public opinion on the Israeli occupation," Gilbert told The Daily Star.



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A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on November 30, 2016, on page 3.

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Tuesday, November 29, 2016 Elder of Zion

Major UN official praises boycotts of Israel, Arab refusal to make peace, and Palestinian "resistance" (<http://elderofzion.blogspot.com/2016/11/major-un-official-praises-boycotts-of.html>)

We all know that the UN is biased against Israel. All you have to do is look at one of UN Watch's many articles. One **egregious example from Tuesday** (<http://www.unwatch.org/today-un-condemned-israel-10-times/>):

The U.N. General Assembly adopted 10 resolutions singling out Israel today, with only 4 expected to be adopted later this week for the entire rest of the world combined, with one each on Syria, Iran, North Korea and Crimea. See UN Watch's full list and voting records below. The resolutions were adopted in their first reading today before the UNGA's Second and Fourth Committees. All 193 UN member states participate in the committee stage, and then almost always vote the same way when formally adopting the texts at the GA plenary in December.

But UN officials themselves are usually careful not to sound too one-sided. They will happily allow special days, months or years, and countless committees and special sessions, dedicated to bashing Israel - but they will almost always insist that they want peace and that Israel has the right to exist in safety. They do not want to lose that little shred of a pretense of objectivity, because to say outright that Israel should be destroyed or that they are against peace would be an explicit violation of the UN Charter. They are professional diplomats and they are usually careful with their words.

For example, **Ban Ki-Moon has said** (<http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-about-face-ban-says-un-unbiased-toward-israel/>) "Israel is one of the 193 Member States, thus Israel should have equal rights and opportunities without having any bias, any discrimination. **That's a fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter and thus Israel should be fully given such rights.**"

Some UN agencies are not quite so circumspect, though.

Meet Rima Khalaf, executive secretary of UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA).



(https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-55WMKJgKBmc/WD44o7ilAPI/AAAAAAAAA1_I/22De7QuNifYWw9eyuvcEtEqZN09AdInuQCLcB/s1600/rima.png)

From the **Kuwait News Agency** (<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2578864&language=en>) (KUNA):

A growing number of individuals and institutions from four corners of globe are joining solidarity movement with Palestinian people, said **Executive Secretary of UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) Rima Khalaf**.

Speaking at an event held in Beirut to mark the International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People, Khalaf said that **the organized campaigns to boycott Israeli occupation authorities are gaining momentum and new grounds every day all over the world**.

In the Arab region, there are much fiercer **popular campaigns against those who naturalize relations with Israeli authorities**, she said.

Rima Khalaf is praising boycotting Israel, which is bad enough, since the boycott movement's goals are not to end the "occupation" but to end Israel.

Beyond that, though, this major UN official is praising Arab nations that punish those who have any sort of relationships with Israelis. Khalaf is essentially saying that Israel does not belong in the family of nations and anyone who treats them equally - as Ban Ki Moon insists - should be ostracized.

Arabic reports (<http://fatehnews.org/2016/11/29/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B6%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4/>) add that she also accused Israel of being an "apartheid" state in setting itself up to be ethnically pure, she claimed that 850,000 Palestinians have been arrested by Israel, and any Palestinians who are killed - including terrorists - are murdered by Israel simply "because they are Palestinians who refuse to give up their rights and refuse to surrender to injustice."

"The years have proven that the Palestinian people did not get used to injustice, but chose resistance," Khalaf stated, using a code-word for terror attacks.

Khalaf is justifying terror and making up facts. By any yardstick, Khalaf is directly calling for nations to violate the UN Charter. This goes **beyond even what Israel complained about her saying** (<http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-urges-un-to-probe-official-for-misconduct/>) in 2015.

And, just like last year, Khalaf will not suffer any consequences for her public display of hate that violates the charter of her employer.

We have lots of ideas, but we need more resources to be even more effective. Please **donate today** (<https://www.patreon.com/user?u=3873701>) to help get the message out and to help defend Israel.

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BEIRUT, Nov 29 (KUNA) -- A growing number of individuals and institutions from four corners of globe are joining solidarity movement with Palestinian people, said Executive Secretary of UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) Rima Khalaf.

Speaking at an event held in Beirut to mark the International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People, Khalaf said that the organized campaigns to boycott Israeli occupation authorities are gaining momentum and new grounds every day all over the world.

In the Arab region, there are much fiercer popular campaigns against those who naturalize relations with Israeli authorities, she said.

Khalaf shed lights on the non-stop Israeli brutal measures against Palestinians in West Bank, and Gaza which included blockade, murder and displacement.

She also pointed out that discrimination against Palestinians living in Israel.

There are more than 50 Israeli laws discriminating against Israelis who no Jews or who descent from Arab or Palestinian origins, Khalaf stated.

She lamented that such human rights violations against Palestinians were the result of the lenient stance of the international community in face of the Israeli behavior.

For her part, Palestinian Minister of National Economy Abeer Odeh stated that the Palestinian people still pin hopes on the peace process.

Palestinians hope that relentless diplomatic and legal efforts would help meet their aspiration of an independent state where they live with dignity, she said.

She called for more support to render the international conference in Middle East peace, planned to be held in France, a real success.

She underlined the need for an international action to press Israel to stop the illegal settlement activities on occupied Palestinian land.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is marked in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolutions 32/40B of 2 December 1977 and 64/17 of 21 January 2010. The Resolutions encouraged Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the Day of Solidarity. (end) wsm.ibi

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Caption : epa05652289 Visitors look at the exhibition 'Lives Under Siege' by Palestinian photographer Adel Hana from Gaza during the 'International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People', in Beirut, Lebanon, 29 November 2016. The day is observed annually by the Lebanese Palestinian dialogue committee (LPDC) in partnership with United Nation economic and social commission for western Asia (ESCWA) and the UN relief and works agency for Palestine refugees in the near East (UNRWA). EPA/NABIL MOUNZER

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