

Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms “MADA”

Annual Administrative Report -2015

For the tenth year in a row, the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms "MADA" during 2015 continued its relentless work in defending media freedoms and the promotion of freedom of expression, and its contribution in media development and improvement of the legal environment through four major programs:

1. Monitoring and documentation.
2. Legal Unit.
3. Support and advocacy.
4. Media development.

Monitoring and Documentation:

MADA continued to monitor violations against media freedoms in Palestine during the last year on a daily basis, In addition to issuing numerous press releases, 12 monthly reports, besides its annual and semi-annual reports.

During the year MADA held two press conferences to announce its annual and semi-annual report; two special reports were conducted during the year on violations women journalists were exposed to during the last five years, and another on violations against photojournalists during the recent years.

Violations against media freedoms reached a new peak during 2015, unprecedented rate since MADA was established and started its role in monitoring violations, as 599 violations were monitored against media freedom in Palestine, whilst in 2014 witnessed a total of 465 violations (committed by both sides Israeli and Palestinians both in Gaza Strip and West Bank).

Israeli occupation committed the bulk, as a total of 407 violations, or approximately a rate of 68% of the total rate of violations, whereas, Palestinian apparatuses in WB/GS committed a total of 192 violations or an estimated rate of 32%.

Media freedoms in Palestine generally and Palestinian journalists in particular, were exposed to several suppression operations, by the Israeli Occupation during the last three months of 2015, in conjunction with Palestinian “uprising” against the Israeli occupation that erupted in October 2015.

Total number of violations (by Israeli Occupation and Palestinian sides) recorded in 2015 witnessed an astonishing rise when compared to 2014, with a rate of 29%, noting that 2014 recorded the highest and gravest rate of violations (since MADA started monitoring and documenting in 2006) including the execution of 17 journalists and media workers, during Operation Protective Edge in 2014/ Aggression against Gaza Strip.

In another comparison between total violations monitored in 2013 and 2015, respectively, we conclude that the latter increased by 162%.

Legal Unit (Defending journalists) program:

Last year did not remark any positive progress regarding “media” legal environment, yet it took a step backwards, as a higher council of media law was agreed by President Mahmoud Abbas, as a presidential decree on 29/12/2015, after it passed the Palestinian Cabinet on 15/12/2015, remarkably the law has fostered the executive authority over the media, besides the fact that the law was agreed in an unpredicted step, for all Palestinian Civil society in addition to all media outlets, MADA played a leading role in stopping the Higher Council of Media law, in collaboration with its partners from media institutions, human rights organizations, and the PLO executive committee member Dr. Hanan Ashrawi.

Later, a secretariat was formed that included a wide range of human rights and media institutions, including (MADA, MDC, AL-HAQ, Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, PHROC, Jihad Harb/ independent and Nour Odeh/ independent), to follow up the case with the Palestinian council of ministers, a meeting with Dr. Zyad Amro Vice prime minister was held, it was agreed to conduct a new draft, where the secretariat formed a committee that included experts to conduct new draft which was discussed later in an open seminar that took place in MDC, the secretariat agreed to send the draft for the UNESCO office in Ramallah for translation and to engage international experts opinions.

In the same context, Access to information law draft, is still pending for more than two years (since 2013) at the Palestinian Cabinet although it passed all phases of debate, that MADA demonstrated a significant role, in advocating for the law and convincing decision makers/ takers on the significant importance of enacting such a law, in addition to promoting for the right to access information, and holding training sessions for various sectors and bodies, throughout the last six years, whereas the audio visual law draft is also still pending at the Palestinian Cabinet.

Legal unit continued their mandate, in particular defending Palestinian journalists and providing free legal consultancy, as our lawyers in Gaza and West Bank, provided numerus legal consultancies, and the attorney in West Bank followed several cases of journalists in the Palestinian courts.

As part of MADA’s program to promote freedom of expression and media law reform, a meeting with several representatives who participated in the project “defending freedom of expression in a healthy legal environment”, funded by the European Union, that included (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, journalists, media students, and representatives of the government, PJS, CSOs) where they discussed the reality of media and freedom of expression and finalized many important recommendations.

Besides, legal unit has conducted a training program regarding freedom of expression/ access to information, as it organized and held 8 separate training workshops as two targeted lawyers that lasted for six days (36 hours of training) with 51 participants, and another 3 training workshops for journalists lasted for 8 days (48 hours of training) with 64 participants, and finally 3 training workshops for media students lasted for 8 days with the participation of 61 students.

The legal unit also conducted a research entitled “legal unit- the importance and efficient of defending journalists” that tackled the legal environment to protect and guarantee freedom of expression and opinion in Palestine, and under the international treaties, it also focused on the norm of the legal unit work at the center, that provides free legal consultancy

for journalists besides the training, as the study noted that the formation of a legal unit for this particular field is an unprecedented step, as so far on the national level there hasn't been any focus on following up cases that are linked to freedom of expression and opinion in specific or journalists.

The research concluded several recommendations most notably, the quite significance of the continuity of raising awareness and providing capacity building of journalists and media students on legal aspects that are associated with their work in media, besides, carrying out training workshops for other targeted groups similar to (judges, prosecutors, lawyers), it also highlighted the fundamental need to target (Palestinian apparatuses workers) in raising their awareness on cases of freedom of expression.

Media development and campaigns programs:

MADA launched three media campaigns during 2015, reserving its leading role in the field, as MADA launched the first digital rights campaign in Palestine, which was launched after a series of preparations including the conduction of two training workshops on the definition of "digital rights and Intellectual property, in addition to the best practices for using social media, to ensure the success of campaigns that are launched over internet giants/ or social media networks, to reach the maximum level of followers of civilians or journalists, another training workshops targeted a group of journalists on successful media campaigns, as the participants contributed in initiating a slogan- video for the campaign "Must Fly" referring to the access line(ADSL), participants also were engaged in promoting for the campaign through Facebook/ Twitter/ Press Releases, several journalists and bloggers also contributed in the campaign through "Bloggers Bus", in a program designed with full activities that started with defining the norms digital rights, and what questions to be directed by the public/ decision makers for Internet providers similar to (Palestinian telecommunication LTD, Hadara and callU company) according to the program that was distributed amongst the participants that also included the code of conduct of activists and bloggers, during the campaign "CALLU, internet provider company" provides WIFI for all participants in order to ensure that the campaign is covered live on social media.

The campaign succeeded in stirring the debate on digital rights, and the significant importance of access to internet for the public with affordable prices, which can enhance their chances to interact freely, and express their opinion over the internet, and above all ensure their right to access to information.

Followers of the main video topped to 272,960 viewers including (130 shares and 770 likes) on our facebook page, whereas followers of the video conducted by the participants topped to 727, 312 viewers including (1400 likes, and 129 shares).

This campaign won the golden prize as the best digital media campaign in the Middle East that was organized by the WAN-IFRA, which was announced in Dubai in February 2016.

The center also launched other campaigns to end violations against media freedoms, on several radio spots and ads on Facebook that included infographics (around 132,000 views including 776 likes and 24 shares).

A third campaign was launched by MADA to promote access to information as "you have the right" with a slogan of (free flow of information is the norm and restriction is the exception) as the followers of the animation clip topped to

312,000 including (129 shares, 1100 likes, and 75000 views), whereas one of the stickers of the campaign received more than 62,158 views and 5600 likes.

In this context MADA has conducted three training workshops that targeted journalists on (access to information-capacity building, and advocacy skills on social media) to empower journalist to promote this right, as 57 journalists participated in the training sessions in West Bank and Gaza Strip, in project funded by the UNESCO Office in Ramallah.

Furthermore, as part of MADA's work and initiation, the center issued a study entitled "intellectual property and freedom of expression in Palestine" that tackled the reality of intellectual property in our country, and what hinders this rights, and what violates it, that leaves negative impacts not only towards freedom of expression but also on creativity in general, as a complimentary step the center also held two seminars in Ramallah and Gaza to discuss the draft of the study and conclude recommendation of the study before the issuance, as participants discussed comprehensively intellectual property and its impact on freedom of expression in and creativity in Palestine, many recommendations following the seminar were taken into consideration, and were included in the final designed draft of the research study, that finally urged the importance need to enact a Palestinian modern law that guarantees intellectual property, and joining international treaties that guarantees intellectual property similar to WIPO, in addition to many other important remarks and recommendations.

Moreover, MADA issued another study on "Citizen-journalist and freedom of expression in Palestine- Gaza/ as a model" that highlighted the new pattern of media that highly benefited from the new techniques in social media / diversity, in order to identify the features of citizen- journalist in the Palestinian society and inspect the level of its spread, and its role in enhancing freedom of expression, the study presented that citizen- journalist enhanced freedom of expression/ opinion despite the fact that citizen- journalists were exposed to numerous levels of violations and threats, the study finally recommended the importance of raising the awareness of the public in particular "citizen- journalist" on the code of conduct of journalism, and standards of freedom of expression and opinion, and the urgency to form a code of conduct for this particular category "citizen-journalist" to serve as a guideline.

Relations and partnerships:

MADA cemented ties with local sides including (high judicial council, attorney general, bar association etc...), it continued its productive collaboration with Palestinian universities through training workshops targeting media students.

MADA also widened its circles with Palestinian CSOs, as it initiated the cooperation with several civil institutions including (AMAN, AL-HAQ, MDC, PJS) to form Khabirni coalition that worked on Access to information to ensure the attainment of two major objectives, firstly to promote/ advocate the importance of this right for the Palestinian public, secondly, to put pressure on decision makers to enact the law that guarantees this right, particularly, that it was noticed that the government froze the debate over the previous draft that was presented by the National committee formed by the general secretariat of the Palestinian council of ministers, and the Anti- corruption commission, although it wasn't publicized officially, although we at MADA and Khabirni coalition to set meetings with Prime Minister and several ministers to discuss this topic, and assure the importance of enacting the law as complimentary step of ratifying several international treaties, but all demands in this regards were marginalized, which reveals their unannounced intentions to discuss this topic in particular.

The center actively participated in several local conferences and workshops related to human rights and democracy.

Additionally, the center received several international delegations and representatives, to discuss the center's activities and the reality of freedom of expression in Palestine, besides MADA dynamically contributed and participated in many international conferences and workshops including: the UNESCO conference in Paris on internet and other cases related to access to information, and freedom of expression, moreover, MADA's general director Mousa Rimawi actively participated in the world press freedom day, that was held in Latvia, Riga, Mousa Rimawi presented an intervention on laws during the side event organized by MedMedia.

MADA also participated in the general conference of the IFEX, in Trinidad/ Tobago, besides, its participation in ANNA LINDH Foundation, in Spain with a speech in the inauguration and closing ceremony representing Palestine, besides, Mousa Rimawi presented a brief on MADA's strategic plan and its intentions to work on intellectual property.

MADA continued to strengthen its role as a primary source of information and data related to media freedom in Palestine, as many international organizations cited MADA in their reports, the center also continued its collaboration with numerous international organizations in regards to freedom of expression, MADA also participated several campaigns on media freedoms launched by other IFEX members.

Internally:

MADA's board convenes its meetings regularly, as six meeting were held a meeting every two months.

It also continued its work in mapping its policies and approving the financial and administrative reports of the year 2014 that were presented to its general assembly in its annual meeting that was held on 13/04/2015 were they approved both reports, in addition, to the discussion on the progress of the center's programs, and ratifying partnership contracts and collaboration with donors and funders, as during the past year 4 contracts were signed with other partners including (Open Society Foundations (OSF) related to general support and funding monitoring and documentation, Representative office of Finland in Ramallah a project on Access to information, International Media, International Media Support (IMS) on intellectual property and freedom of expression, finally the UNESCO office in Ramallah on access to information) the board decided to expand the general commission members through accepting nine more members; and the total number of members now is 35 members, who participate in all various activities organized by the center.

Challenges and Obstacles:

Violations against media freedoms are still occurring even escalated in the past two years, forming the most prominent challenge, which requires a necessity to intensify our work at MADA in particular, and all civil society organizations and human rights institutions in general to collaborate with international organizations. To put an end of all violations, especially the Israeli violations the most prominent and grave against journalists and their lives, noting that Palestinian violations likewise increased in the past two years.

It's substantial to work on a conducive legal environment and law reform related to media, to ensure that all Palestinian parties including and in particular Palestinian apparatuses to abide by the law, and respect freedom of expression that are listed under the national laws –Palestinian Basic Law- and other International treaties that Palestine ratified in 2014, and ensure that Palestinian laws are in line with international treaties in this aspect.

The second challenge, is the shrinking international support for funding Palestinian CSOs in general including MADA, and the support specified for freedom of expression and media freedoms in particular is negligible compared to other areas and fields, which affected our work, mainly the legal unit which we failed to secure the needed funding to keep it operating in 2016.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge all the support by international organizations that supported our programs, during the last year , in particular, (OSF, Representative office of Finland in Ramallah, EU, UNESCO office in Ramallah, IFEX, IMS) and former funders of the center (FFF, DCAF, WAN-IFRA) we would like to thank all our local supporters in CSOs, high judicial council, association bar, ministry of Information, Palestinian universities, and all media freedom defenders in Palestine and across the globe.

MADA’s prominent activities 2015:

#	Date	Activity	Funder
1	05/01/2015	December 2014- monthly report- media freedom violations	OSF
2	09/01/2015	Translating/ issuing December report 2014. English- media freedom violations	OSF
3	13/01/2015	Meeting with president of the Higher Judicial Council Ali Muhanna discussing further ways of collaboration to enhance freedom of expression.	
4	14/01/2015	Issuing a special report, and displaying a documentary film on violations during “operation protective edge/Gaza” against journalists in Gaza Strip, and was announced in a press conference in Ramallah.	IMS
5	26/01/2015	displaying a documentary film on violations during “operation protective edge/ Gaza” against journalists in Gaza Strip, and was announced in an open meeting with journalists in Gaza.	IMS
6	31/01/2015	Open discussion seminar in Ramallah to promote freedom of expression through a healthy legal environment with the participation of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, representatives of the government and CSOs.	EU
7	06/02/2015	Issuing January Monthly Report.	OSF
8	10/02/2015	Translating and issuing January monthly report.	OSF
9	23/02/2015	Conducting 3 days of workshop in Bethlehem targeting lawyers in collaboration with “association bar” to promote freedom of expression.	EU
10	2-3/03/2015	Participating in UNESCO conference in Paris – internet/ access to information, and freedom of expression.	UNESCO
11	10/03/2015	Issuing February monthly report.	OSF
12	15/03/2015	Announcing and issuing annual report of media freedom violations 2014, in a press conference in Ramallah.	OSF
13	19/03/2015	Translating and issuing February 2015 Monthly report “English”	OSF
14	23/03/2015	Training workshop (journalists) –Gaza Strip on freedom of expression /legal perspective / two days.	EU

15	26/03/2015	Training workshop (lawyers) –Nablus on freedom of expression /legal perspective / three days.	EU
16	07/04/2015	Issuing March monthly report.	OSF
17	13/04/2015	MADA.s General assembly annual meeting to discuss and approve the financial and administrative reports.	
18	16/04/2015	Translating and issuing March 2015 report “English”.	OSF
19	22/04/2015	Conducting two days workshop- Nablus/ Media students on freedom of expression.	EU
20	23/04/2015	Launching MADA’s APP (IOS+Android).	OSF
21	29/04/2015	Training workshop, for media students (two days) in Palestinian collage/ Ramallah, and Al-A’roub collage in Bethlehem on freedom of expression.	EU
22	01/05/2015	Launching a campaign on enacting a law that ensures freedom of expression including radio spots, videos.	EU
23	03/05/2015	Participating in the world press freedom day organized by UNESCO in Riga and the side events.	MedMedia
24	04/05/2015	Organizing a conference in East Jerusalem commemorating 3 rd of May in collaboration with Al-Quds university, that included MADA documentary film, and an open discussion with the attendance journalists and head of EU representative Jaun Gat Reter.	EU
25	07/05/2015	Issuing April 2015 monthly report	OSF
26	11/05/2015	Workshop for media students/ Gaza / University of Al Aqsa- two days	EU
27	13/05/2015	Translating and issuing Apri report “English”	OSF
28	26/05/2015	Issuing special report on recent violations against women journalists during the last five years	OSF
29	27/05/2015	Workshop for media students/ East Jerusalem / Hind Al Hussein college- two days.	EU
30	02/06/2015	Meeting with head of the anti- corruption commission Rafeeq Al Natsheh, to discuss updates on the law draft / Access to information.	
31	03/06/2015	Issuing May montly report.	OSF
32	11/06/2015	Translating Issuing May report “English”.	OSF
33	14/06/2015	Conducting two days of workshop, for journalists from south WB/ in Bethlehem.	EU
34	02/07/2015	The announcement of forming “khabirni coalition following three organizational meetings with AMAN, AL-HAQ, MDC.	
35	06/07/2015	Issuing June monthly report.	OSF
36	09/07/2015	Translating and Issuing and June 2015 “English”.	
37	13/07/2015	Khabirni coalition, announcing a prize for the best logo designed for the coalition.	
38	30/07/2015	Conducting a workshop for journalists on media campaigns best practices in	EU

		Ramallah -3 days.	
39	01/08/2015	Launching the first stage of digital rights campaign.	IFEX
40	03/08/2015	Issuing July monthly report.	OSF
41	05/08/2015	Translating and Issuing July monthly report in English.	OSF
42	09/08/2015	Issuing MADA semi-annual report.	OSF
43	09/08/2015	Issuing MADA semi-annual report -English	OSF
44	18/08/2015	Issuing citizen- journalist and freedom of expression in Palestine study.	OSF
45	26/08/2015	Participating at the annual meeting of the national team for the initiation of media development in Palestine, at Birzeit University, with the participation of more than 50 institutions members in Gaza/ West Bank.	
47	03/09/2015	Issuing August monthly report.	OSF
48	10/09/2015	Translating and Issuing August 2015 monthly report “English”.	OSF
49	16/09/2015	Kicking off “bus bloggers” campaign, that contained interviews with the public and related companies, all was released live on social media.	IFEX
50	28/09/2015	Issuing press release on the international right to know day on behalf of Khabirni coalition.	
51	30/09/2015	Special report “when the camera exposes the rifle” about violations against photojournalists in the past three years and half.	OSF
52	04/10/2015	Issuing September monthly report.	OSF
53	05/10/2015	Participating IFEX General Meeting in Trinidad- 3 days “discussing strategies and plans of the network, in addition to electing its executive committee.	IMS
54	10/10/2015	Translating and Issuing September monthly report “English”.	OSF
55	12/10/2015	Delegation of Khabirni coalition meets with deputy Minister of national economy to discuss access to information right and the efforts to approve it in the government.	
56	22/10/2015	Signing an agreement with the Representative of Finland in Ramallah on access to information project.	
57	02/11/2015	Issuing press release on the international day to end impunity.	
58	10/11/2015	Issuing October monthly report.	OSF
59	22/11/2015	Issuing October 2015 report “English”	OSF
60	28/11/2015	Conducting 3 days of workshop in Gaza on access to information/ capacity building/ advocacy skills on social media	UNESCO
61	03/12/2015	Conducting 3 days of workshop in Ramallah on access to information/ capacity building/ advocacy skills on social media	UNESCO
62	01/12/2015	Kick off “access to information” campaign for a month	UNESCO
63	07/12/2015	Issuing November 2015 report	OSF
64	10/12/2015	Issuing November 2015 report “English”	OSF
65	10/12/2015	Open seminar in Ramallah to discuss intellectual property “draft / study” in Palestine	IMS

66	11/12/2015	Open seminar in Gaza to discuss intellectual property “draft / study” in Palestine	IMS
67	14/12/2015	Conducting 3 days’ workshop for journalists in Gaza, on access to information/ building capacity, advocacy skills.	UNESCO
68	16/12/2015	Participating in an international Forum organized by Anna- Lindh Foundation in Spain/ 3 days.	Anna Lindh
69	29/12/2015	Issuing a study on “Intellectual property and freedom of expression in Palestine”.	IMS
70	30/12/2015	Issuing a study on “the importance and efficacy of defending journalists”	EU
In addition to other activities, and issuing tens of press releases in “English and Arabic”.			