



YWCA of Palestine International Youth Conference

“Youth Participate and Youth Decide: Towards Freedom and Justice”

12 - 14 October 2018

Conference Report

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Acknowledgments

We did it! We accomplished a very successful conference that is the result of countless sleepless nights, hard work and dedication. The YWCA of Palestine would like to thank everyone who helped us make this youth conference possible, meaningful, and historic.

First of all, a huge thank you to our national staff members who, although small in number, were the driving force of the conference. Thank you to our YWCA family in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jericho and Bethlehem for all their support, especially in facilitating the pre-conference workshops with youth. These workshops prepared the young people to lead the conference. It was indeed a conference for youth and led by youth! A special thank you to all conference committees, formed by YWCA staff and youth members, from the Logistics, Documentation and Drafting Committees to the Media and Communications Committee. We thank all volunteers for their hard work and commitment, specifically Adnan Jaber, an active youth member of the YWCA of Jerusalem, who designed the conference logo and offered his support prior to and during the conference. We would also like to thank two special young women from Norway, Ane Hofslis and Lisa Drevland, who volunteered through the EVS programme at our national office and offered their help with conference logistics and communication materials. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Media Specialist Huthayfa Jalamni for his support with conference publicity and media coverage.

We thank the World YWCA for helping us spread the word about our conference within the world movement and most importantly for their presence at the conference. The presence of the World YWCA General Secretary Malayah Harper, staff and volunteers demonstrated the commitment that the YWCA of Palestine and the whole movement have towards youth leadership development and empowerment, especially young women, to create more sustainable futures. We would also like to thank all our YWCA and YMCA sisters and brothers from around the world who expressed their solidarity by attending the conference. Through the Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI), we were able to organize a meaningful and rich pre-conference Witness Visit, which offered the participants a chance to eye witness the daily struggles of Palestinians, especially youth, under occupation. Thank you to all staff who worked on the preparations for this visit. We are also grateful to Gaza YMCA for enabling us to convene a conference that is inclusive of youth in Gaza despite all odds.

A conference of this magnitude wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the generous donations provided by Y-Global Norway, YWCA/YMCA Sweden, Horyzon, the United Church of Christ/Genesis Fund, UNFPA and the Church of Scotland. We are forever grateful!

It took hard work to design a very successful and rich conference programme, which reflected the real issues and needs of youth in Palestine and the Palestinian reality under occupation. We dedicate this success to the conference national committee formed by Ashraf Abu Hayyeh from Al-Haq, Nidal Abu Zuluf from JAI, Nader Abu Amsha from EJ YMCA, Iyad Riyahi from Al-Marsad, consultant Lamya Shalaldeh, YWCA volunteer Haneen Khalil, YWCA of Ramallah Executive Director Ropina Rafidi, YWCA of Palestine National General Secretary Mira Rizeq and staff members Ruba Odeh and Mayadah Tarazi in addition to YWCA of Palestine national board members namely Rana Habayeb and the President Haifa Baramki who did not hesitate to give her utmost support to this event.

One of our 2018 milestones was the increased visibility of the YWCA of Palestine locally as a youth and women's organization. This was achieved with the help of Ma'an Network who was the media sponsor of the conference. We thank them for all their services provided prior to, during and after the conference.

We thank Arda Aghazarian for producing such an amazing report, which is the result of the collective work of the conference Documentation Committee who took detailed minutes of the plenary sessions and parallel workshops.

Very special thanks to the translators for their professional translation and interpretation services, the Ramallah Municipality for hosting our post-conference get-together, and the Palestine Red Crescent Society for their great hospitality, amazing facilities and for providing us with all the support needed during the conference.

Very special thanks to our speakers and presenters, some of who traveled quite a long distance to share their knowledge and experience.

Last but not least, a big thank you to all conference participants, especially the international ones who defied the odds of travelling to Palestine through the Israeli airport to join our conference, gain knowledge and share experience. Your presence and solidarity keep our hope alive for a just peace in Palestine!



Executive Summary

The YWCA of Palestine's international youth conference under the title "Youth Participate and Youth Decide: Towards Freedom and Justice" was the first of its kind in Palestine within the framework of UNSCR2250. The three intensive days were held between 12 and 14 October 2018, in both Ramallah and Gaza. The conference was organized by the National YWCA of Palestine and in partnership with Al-Haq, Al-Marsad, the YMCA of Gaza, and the Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI), and with the support of the YWCA/YMCAs of Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Horyzon, World YWCA, UNFPA, and the Global Ministries.



Conference group picture

More than **500 participants** attended the conference from historic Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Also attending were international participants from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, USA, Macedonia, India, Ukraine, Romania, Switzerland, and Finland.

The YWCA of Palestine and its partners within the global movement invited youth from around the globe to meet and exchange ideas about their economic, social, and political contexts and rights. We were excited to have offered a platform that allowed for creative engagement and participation, and through which young people explored issues about their rights as they relate to the implementation of UNSCR 2250 in the local and global contexts.

“The YWCA believes that young people are and can be the agents of change, and given the right opportunities, support and platforms, they can create the positive future that promises freedom and justice for all.”

Priority was thus given for young women and men under the age of 30. Logistics pre-conference included site visits and events that were held over five days, and a witness visit for the International participants by which they were given the opportunity to learn and witness the everyday life and challenges of young people and learn about strategies of resilience under Occupation. Participants were also given the chance to participate in the Olive Tree Picking (Keep Hope Alive Campaign), a joint project managed by the YWCA of Palestine and East Jerusalem YMCA, after the conference.



International participants at the witness visit

“

For me, this checkpoint [at Al-Shuhada Street in Hebron] was difficult to contemplate, it felt wrong to enter this area so freely yet our friends could not and I chose to wait with them while the group carried on. What happened next changed me in many ways. While we waited, a settler appeared in the doorway of a building that was forcefully taken from a Palestinian family 3 years back. As he sat on the steps but a few feet away from us with an AK 47 between his legs, I had a feeling of discomfort so deep that it was hard for me to understand the trauma the family must have gone through.

- About the pre-conference witness visit



Jade Brady

”

Jade Brady was World YWCA 2018 intern from Australia. The quote above was taken from an article she wrote on World YWCA She Speaks Blog titled “Dreaming Peace & Solidarity in Palestine: A Visit Diary” reflecting on her participation in the conference and visit to Palestine. You can read the full article at www.shespeaksworldywca.org.



Jade at the Wall in Bethlehem during the witness visit

Conference Objectives

The conference aimed to:

- Promote the awareness of young people especially in Palestine around UNSCR 2250 which revolves around the role of youth in security and peace, and the challenges of its implementation in a context of military occupation.



Participants at the
Social Media Booth



Participants at the
Social Media Booth

- Discuss and support a process of building youth leadership in Palestine and supporting youth to move from “Subjects to Citizens” and become active and positive agents of change in the Palestinian society.

- Promote awareness of youth, locally, regionally and internationally on the realities and situation of young people in Palestine.



YWCA of Palestine young
women with Havard Skjerdal
from Y Global, Norway



A young woman drawing on a banner at the Social Media Booth

- Offer spaces for youth from other countries to share successful experiences of engaging young people in decision making processes and positions, and the planning and implementation of sustainable development.

- Create and/or strengthen cooperation between the YWCA and like-minded organizations in building the capacity of youth and strengthen regional and global networks of solidarity for young people, especially within the world YWCA/YMCA movements, as well as with ecumenical partners and other international civil society and youth organizations working on promoting human rights, security and a Just Peace in Palestine.



Young men at the Social Media Booth

**With these objectives in mind,
the conference was *delivered* to youth
and *led* by youth!**

Conference Statement/Recommendations



YWCA of Palestine staff member
Rania Yassir reading the
conference statement during the
closing ceremony

In recognition of youth rights to participate and decide, and in recognition of their role as agents of change, we concluded the conference with the **following recommendations** to the Palestinian government, civil society organizations, and international community:

To the Palestinian Government:

- We appeal to them to set forth a national action plan towards the implementation of UNSCR2250 with the full participation of youth and relevant civil society organizations, and for this action plan to be endorsed as part of the national policies agenda “Residents are the Priority”;
- We call on them to appeal to the countries that have a binding agreement with the Geneva Accords to uphold their duties to protect Palestinian youth under occupation, and to hold accountable the perpetrators of violations and criminalization of violators of International law;
- To take the appropriate legislative and policy measures that would ascertain the participation of youth in decision-making by at least 30%;
- To hold the Palestinian government accountable for protecting Palestinian residents and youth against crimes and violence, as per its legal bind of the international law;
- To end the internal division between all Palestinian political factions and work towards building national unity that nurtures freedom and democracy;
- To amend the electoral law so that youth participation is guaranteed in the electoral process and their prospect in decision-making enhanced;
- To strengthen and improve partnerships among official institutions and relevant civil society organizations so as to unite and enhance efforts

towards assuring real participation in decision-making at the local, regional, and international levels.

To the International Community:

- We call on our international partners and their respective governments, especially the ones who are signatories to the 4th Geneva Convention, to continue to support justice and freedom, uphold their duties to protect Palestinian youth under occupation, and to hold accountable the perpetrators of violations and criminalization of violators of International law.

All the points mentioned above would be incomplete if not ascertaining that the youth will have their basic rights fulfilled. The Palestinian people have remained steadfast in the call to self-determination as a basic and irrefutable right that is affirmed in international law. The Palestinian people are entitled to put an end to their state of siege and asylum, and to demand their right of return to the land from which their ancestors were displaced, and to end the occupation. This should continue to be the sole and only national agenda that can secure dignity and freedom to all Palestinians, including Palestinian youth who are the future of Palestine, and the future leaders.

The YWCA of Palestine took the lead in mobilizing young people to understand and actively engage in the implementation of UNSCR2250. The team worked in close coordination with local institutions, UN organizations, NGOs, and most importantly with active youth members to bring this conference to life.



**YWCA of Ramallah youth
group at the closing ceremony**

What is UNSCR 2250?

This resolution...

- Changes the narrative. Young people are often portrayed either as victims or perpetrators of violence. The resolution recognizes that young people should be engaged in building peace.
- Provides recognition and legitimacy.
- Brings visibility. The resolution provides a new focus on youth and peace, giving visibility to the initiatives, actions and projects initiated by young people and youth organizations towards peace, justice, reconciliation, and promotion of diversity.
- Promotes youth representation and participation.
- Provides tools for encountering violent extremism. Such as by investing in education and vocational training, providing youth employment opportunities.
- Ensures accountability. The resolution calls for an annual debate in the Security Council to discuss the progress on the implementation of the resolution.
- Can be used in both conflict and non-conflict settings.



YWCA of Jerusalem youth member Shouroq Adnan at the Social Media Booth



UNSCR2250 is a new tool for us to push the youth agenda!

UNSCR 2250 and the Local Context

❖ The Palestinian Context



World YWCA staff member
Daniela Zelaya at the Social
Media Booth

The prolonged military occupation of Palestine and the consistent violations of rights, targeted mostly against young women and men, have created a desperate and hopeless state for youth. Youth in Palestine constitute the majority of the population, yet they do not get their fair share of resources nor are they represented in decision-making processes. They rarely hold positions of authority or power in their organizations, community, or government. This leads to a sense of marginalization and exclusion.

❖ The Palestinian Context and UNSCR 2250

UNSCR 2250 urges states, UN organizations and civil society to consider ways to increase meaningful and inclusive participation of youth in building a sustainable future that promotes justice, respect, and security. Despite the advancement of work related to UNSCR1325 in Palestine, the UNSCR2250 which concerns the involvement of youth in Peace and Security had not been locally addressed. On its way to organizing the international conference in October 2018, the YWCA started the process of raising awareness on UNSCR2250 among its youth in the four local associations (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho) by organizing preparatory workshops where 217 young women and men took the leading role in and worked within their communities in focusing on the resolution. The YWCA believes that those youth will form the basis of the young leaders who can develop a National Action Plan that addresses youth issues within the UNSCR2250 and lead its implementation

through youth networks locally, regionally and globally with the support of relevant civil society organizations such as the YWCA.



**Pre-conference workshop
at YWCA of Bethlehem**



**Pre-conference workshop
at YWCA of Jericho**



**Pre-conference workshop
at YWCA of Ramallah**



**Pre-conference workshop
at YWCA of Jerusalem**



Conference Preparations

The workshops have instilled a sense of leadership among the organized groups who developed the logo for the conference. They also developed materials, drama, art, music, and other visual aids voicing their issues, which were displayed at the conference. More importantly, the youth created local, regional, and international networks, sharing successful experiences of engaging in decision-making processes, and in the planning and implementation of sustainable development. Youth solidarity networks that were created are serious about promoting human rights, security, and a just peace in Palestine.

“

I joined the YWCA with 14 other organizations at the three-day strategic planning meeting held by Al-Muntada in Jordan and I soon realized that this youth conference would be the first of its kind in the region. It was such an honor and a great learning experience, but also felt like a big responsibility to ensure the youth voices are heard and taken into account in the future plans.



Duaa Suliman

”

Duaa Suliman, Project Coordinator for Youth and Women at the YWCA in Ramallah. Duaa represented the YWCA at Al-Muntada—the NGO Forum for Combating Violence against Women. This is a national forum that joins all relevant Palestinian NGOs working in the field of human rights and women's rights issues.

Prior to the conference, more than 70 youth joined the preparatory workshops at the YWCAs in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, and Jerusalem. Below are some of the results of the preparatory workshops, as stated by Duaa Suliman:

- Youth were educated on UNSCR2250 and on youth issues in times of conflict, specifically their role in decision-making and how to demand their rights for justice and peace in order to achieve equal opportunities in education, healthcare, and political participation.
- Youth were educated on the National Development Plan for Palestine and the rights and duties of youth within the framework of international human rights.
- The conference encouraged youth to start thinking about mechanisms for creative interaction and taking initiatives to improve their social and economic conditions.
- Youth have become more aware of their societal role and are now more able to claim their rights. The workshops have allowed youth to review legislations and realize the limited participation of youth in the local and national plans and decisions.

Our conference slogan was “Engaging Youth, Promoting Just Peace” to emphasize our important youth role as agents of change in peacebuilding.



Participants at the Social Media Booth

Conference Proceedings

The conference plenary sessions offered a range of diverse and inclusive working papers that mostly focused on conceptualizing and considering the implementation prospects of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 in the Palestinian context, particularly the Palestinian youth under occupation.



**Participants standing for the
Palestinian National Anthem at
the opening ceremony**



**Ubai Aboudi, from the Union of
Agricultural Work Committees,
moderating session 1 on day two**

The papers presented emphasized on Palestinian youth rights in light of the political, civil, social, and economic situation. There was critical analysis as presenters identified the gaps between national strategies vis-à-vis realities on the ground, and the challenges and responsibilities of the State of Palestine particularly after signing international treaties and conventions.

Also presented were advocacy initiatives and practices (local and international) that have succeeded toward the implementation of UNSCR2250.

**Young people have the power to
change the world!**

The 15 Parallel Workshops organized by the youth focused on human rights and freedoms, leadership, economic empowerment, and the types of systematic violations and forms of violence under occupation. Also discussed was the role and responsibility of the Palestinian government in providing protection as based on international human rights frameworks, and in compliance with international treaties that Palestine has signed.



Haya Hmeedat, YWCA active youth member, speaking at a workshop facilitated by YWCA of Ramallah

Day 1 – Friday 12 October 2018

❖ Conference Opening Ceremony



Youth participants at the opening ceremony

The opening ceremony of the conference was exhilarating. Over 500 people, more than 70% of whom were young participants, showed up from different corners of Palestine, as well as from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, USA, Macedonia, Ukraine, Romania, Switzerland, India and Finland.

What was moving was to have young participants from Gaza also attending the conference, live on webcam from YMCA Gaza, listening in and taking part. Moreover, the conference included voices from Palestinian refugee camps in the diaspora, such as in Lebanon, with recordings that young members shared via online streaming, not to mention the documentary films prepared by youth members.



Youth participants at Gaza YMCA

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Youth from Gaza were also able to attend the conference... I felt so proud of this organization which has been so close to my heart...The youth have always been a major focus of the YWCA, so it is not surprising that the YWCA was avant-garde once again in planning this conference

-From Al-Bushra Website



Samia Khoury

”



Taghreed Daoud
with Dana Mourad

Taghreed Daoud and Dana Mourad, two young women members, welcomed the guests as master of ceremonies before the speakers started the day with inspirational speeches.

Haifa Baramki, National President of the YWCA of Palestine, welcomed the participants to the conference that happened to coincide with the 125th Anniversary of the YWCA of Palestine since its establishment in Jaffa, before it was launched in Jerusalem and proceeded to aid Palestinian refugee camps.



Haifa Baramki delivering her speech at the opening ceremony

The Young Women's Christian Association exemplifies the perseverance of national identity. The leading organization has been working since 1983 to create women leadership, especially young women, to realize their full rights and capabilities.



Dr. Agha delivering her speech at the opening ceremony

Dr. Haifa Agha, Minister of Women Affairs, emphasized the role of youth in society, and stressed that not only the “talented” and “skilled” young people but rather **all** youth deserve opportunities, including those with special needs who are often marginalized.

Dr. Agha drew attention to the stressful conditions that are largely affecting the mental health of Palestinian youth in the face of Israeli policies. The overall Occupation with its brutal facts on the ground, daily frustrations, unemployment issues, and the general dissatisfaction of economic and social aspects of life, among others, are taking the youth on the route of despair. This, Dr. Agha noted, is alarming, and she called for the need to assess and renew the educational discourse, and to find creative educational tools, and innovative, cultural, and sports activities to instill a fresh sense of belonging among the youth. UNSCR2250 is ultimately a key strategic tool to be employed in emphasizing that the youth are pillars of society and that they cannot be isolated from social and sustainable development.

Malayah Harper, World YWCA General Secretary, noted that the sense of marginalization as experienced by the youth in particular and by the Palestinians in general is there “by design.” Nationalism and isolationism are intentional, and it is our responsibility and our ability to bear witness and remember that “gender justice should not wait.”



Malayah Harper delivering her speech at the opening ceremony

At overwhelming times, issues related to women are generally put on the margin, but women’s issues do not wait. The vision for society, Malayah Harper reminded us, is a vision where the deep imbalance among women cannot be ignored. Human development is about freedom for all.



Harper reminded us of the fact that young people are those who drive change, yet they are seldom in the driving seat. It is important to pass the baton to the new generations and ensure that women’s organizations are accounted for as they bridge gaps and share the leadership.

She concluded her inspirational keynote speech by reminding the youth to connect with networks, engage and inspire, act and become actors of change, and to adapt by celebrating the mistakes, learning from them, and TRYING AGAIN, and to not give up HOPE.



Anders Thomsen delivering his speech at the opening ceremony

Anders Thomsen, UNFPA Representative to the State of Palestine and Chair of the UN Group on Young People, thanked the international participants for coming to Palestine. Having served five years in Palestine, Thomsen recognizes the importance of having people see the reality on the ground, including the very difficult choices of the unemployed Palestinians to have to work in Israeli settlements, or how women undergo violence. The answer to the question, “What is freedom of justice?” he noted, is in Palestine.

What Justice is NOT. What Freedom is NOT:

Not having the right to go to school

Not feeling safe at home

Not having the liberty to choose who to marry

Not having the freedom to express one’s opinion or determine one’s own future

Not having the freedom to play sports and essentially Not having the right to ride a bike!

Thomsen’s sharing of the importance for young women to have the simple right of riding a bike touched on how deeply he understands the social as well as political elements connected with the Palestinian reality. He shared that indeed there is deep sense of despair overriding the people, and that the sense of despair added to the frustrations which arise during clashes do not get us to freedom and justice. “We need you,” he ascertained and inspired the youth, “to implement your aspirations.”

He also reminded the older generation in specific and institutions and organizations in general, based on his own experience at UNFPA, that **“our best ideas are when the youth make them.”** For this to happen, he stressed that the youth need an enabling environment and he talked about the importance to create those spaces. Hope and peace, he admitted, are hard to envision, but we cannot lose hope and vision.

Speaking of hope and vision, Fredrik Glad-Gjernes, International Director of the YWCA-YMCA Global (Y Global Norway) took on an uplifting turn in his speech which ended with a song that he asked the audience to sing along with. Fredrik was not shy to declare that the “Israeli occupation is illegitimate. It is illegal. And we have to stop it.” He stressed that we are all the children of God, and we must henceforth be active peacemakers, and the way, according to Fredrik, is through BDS.



Fredrik Glad-Gjernes delivering his speech at the opening ceremony

He stressed on the importance of love – even if this would present the need to come to terms that Israelis and Palestinians should love one another. It is this path of love from which justice would rise. The resolution 2250 is a good step towards change, and the inclusion of youth is a must. As such, this conference can be seen as a way to showcase the Palestinian struggle to the global community.

"We shall not move" Fredrik sang to the amused looks of the young participants "We shall not move...like a tree!"

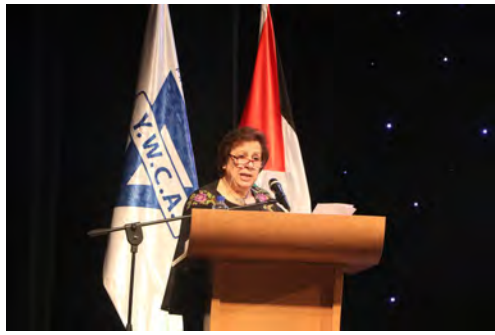
Ellen Soderberg, YWCA-YMCA Sweden Board Member, was denied entry to Israel and hence could not present her speech at the conference. She shared a heartfelt video a day later which had the audience in tears. Her persistence to the cause and her unwillingness to give up on solidarity with the Palestinians was deeply moving. Katrina Garanader of the YWCA-YMCA Sweden said she was both furious and sad about what happened, but she hopes that this gives us energy to act.

“

The youth are the leaders, and they must stay courageous in the face of challenges.

BE BRAVE!

”



**Mira Rizeq delivering her speech
at the opening ceremony**

Mira Rizeq, National General Secretary of the YWCA of Palestine, highlighted on the importance of supporting women and youth, and building leaders toward a democratic and free society; steadfast in the face of violations. The 2250 resolution calls for the involvement of young people, and thus gives the space for youth to participate in the process of sustainable development, as well as in peace and security which are almost impossible in light of the Israeli occupation.

She thus talked about the need for accountability for the continuous violations, especially at the time when the US policies are showing bias to the side of the perpetrator, considering Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and stopping the aid of UNRWA. She urged the Palestinian government to give chances for the youth to participate in decision-making, for they possess all the potential and ability to be active leaders.

She shared a story. A story of her mother. Mira took us on a visual trip from which we were able to capture the sense of voluntarism. She told the young participants about her mother's story when she was a young woman who single-handedly challenged the social concepts, patriarchal perceptions, and her own lack of expertise, by believing in herself.



**Mira Rizeq with Dr. Haifa Agha
after the opening ceremony**

Her mission was to serve her society, and she at such a young age started a clinic during some of the most challenging times in the political environment. Mira's mother is the personification of taking action: rather than sitting and complaining, she believed in her own willpower and capacity to take charge and make things happen. This story that the General Secretary of the YWCA of Palestine shared resonated with the youth in knowing their own potential, and of being reminded, in moments when they forget, that at times when the spaces for them do not exist, they may just as well need to get out there and create those spaces themselves, despite all challenges and disappointments. Mira's message, as inspired by her late mother's service in Palestinian society, is one for all society. It is about achievement through

intergenerational development: it is about moving with the wisdom of the older generation and the bravery of the youth.

❖ Day 1 Plenary Session 1



Lamya Shalaldeh presenting her paper at the plenary session

Lamya Shalaldeh, UNSCR1325 Expert, Consultant and Human Rights Activist, gave a comprehensive overview about UN Security Council Resolution 2250, highlighting on the fact that we cannot speak about sustainable development without awareness on the situation of young women and young men, and their right to choose their own destiny.

The youth are the majority of the population. They are the present and future, yet the rates of youth living under and caught up in the middle of armed conflict and violence reach up to 400,000 youth (aged between 15-29). It is thus crucial for the youth to take part in conflict resolution, mediation, and peace-building, especially in the face of the eminent dictatorship in the region. Shalaldeh admitted that she is well-aware of the general sense of cynicism regarding international resolutions, but she nevertheless pointed out that UNSCR1325 and UNSCR2250 are tools that young women in particular can make use of to have their rights met. This resolution in particular stresses the importance of including youth in achieving peace and justice. Its main objectives call for the inclusion of youth in decision-making, protection, participation, and re-building society, and all countries must be held accountable to meet the goals. She stressed that organizations have to hold on to their commitment and accountability, and to know that protection of individual and collective rights is a must, regardless of the conflict.

It is our moral obligation to have youth take part in decision-making and for them to take part in peacemaking toward achieving equality, employment, and security. We must uphold our tools for accountability, and we need to incorporate methods to include the youth and exert pressure on governments.

Firas Jaber, writer and researcher in policy issues at al-Marsad, gave a comprehensive overview of the historic role that the Palestinian youth have had in society at large. He shared eye-opening statistics and facts about what the main Palestinian youth obstacles are, essentially going down to unemployment challenges and lack of jobs, and the large contradictions between education and employment, as well as the political division. To put efforts on youth is essential, he stated, in finding a solution to the political divisions and instabilities.



Firas Jaber speaking at the plenary session

- 30% of the Palestinian population is made up of the youth sector.
- The main challenges of youth: Unemployment, education and higher education, and civic and political participation. Obviously, the occupation is the main challenge.
- There are 47 educational institutes in 2017 and there are 60,000 students who have enrolled in universities in 2017. There are 220,000 students in universities, but the type of education they receive is conventional and not market responsive.
- Shockingly, having higher education actually leads up to a 57% increase in being unemployed.
- The political climate, internal factions, and the fact that the laws do not protect personal freedoms and rights of speech limit the inclusion of youth. The participation of youth in the legislative council elections basically comes down to zero.
- Most of the youth organizations are not registered, and those unregistered movements have become spaces for political expression. Although this is good, yet it keeps youth outside of the formal and influential decision-making platforms.



Lama Alami presenting at the plenary session

Lama Alami, lawyer and human rights activist, also highlighted on the importance of connecting the resolution 2250 at legislative councils and ensured that there *are* ways to make this happen. She, much like the rest of the speakers, acknowledged the deep sense of despair and depression prevailing in Palestinian society.

Psychological and mental health are not to be under-estimated in the society, especially in the face of political confrontations, arrests, injuries, detentions, incarcerations, not to mention unemployment, poverty, lack of opportunities, social challenges, violence, and lack of participation in decisions. She urged for accountability in what relates to the resolution, for youth participation, the development of the educational curricula and cooperating with institutions both locally and internationally in documenting violations, finding ways to protect individuals, and support newly-married couples and students, among others.

❖ Day 1 Plenary Session 2

Dr. Muiz Karajeh made an enlightening address that left participants awed by his eye-opening analysis. His deliberating insight helped those attending to reflect on and analyze the meanings behind objectives rather than simply taking them as they come. “Participation of youth,” he noted, may sound somewhat vague or could be an abstract notion. Participation for *what?* Towards *what?* Dr. Karajeh said that we need to first understand the reality on the ground before understanding the youth situation.



Dr. Karajeh speaking at the plenary session

He reminded us that the youth, who are now being encouraged to “participate,” had essentially been the key change makers in Palestine. The movements of the 70s and 80s have had voluntary human resources of young people, women, populist parties, labor units, and students at the forefront. The participation of women and youth had been neither abstract nor obscure, but rather intentional, with reference, and it was based on deep political and critical thinking. The thinking, essentially, had been focused on national freedom; it was about liberty from imperialism and colonialism. The national Palestinian movements were united against subordination and subjugation. However, the Oslo Accords and preeminence of NGOs after the 90s have intentionally weakened and fragmented the national struggle. The structures changed, and the focus soon shifted away from speaking about freedom from oppression, colonialism, and imperialism, and became centered instead on international organizations, youth participation, and human and women rights. The idea of peace has thus effectively changed, and the private sector got in charge in place of the civil society. As such, Palestinian organizations developed the terminology of “development, empowerment, and human rights” in a way that kept the youth passive, ultimately forgetting that the youth were the action-makers. “We seem to have

forgotten what we were!” Dr. Karajeh pointed to the nodding faces, “we forgot what the youth have always been – the change makers!” They do not need “leadership” – they are the leaders themselves.

In reflecting on the historical impact of the youth and the role they have always had in Palestinian society as well as politics, Dr. Karajeh factored on some elements that are truly worth consideration. He reminded us of the general loss and confusion of the youth who have always been a positive force but are now suddenly referred to in an inferior discourse, as though they were an idle bunch that need to be lifted through “empowerment, education, cultivation, and awareness-raising.” We, as associations, he challenged us, now find ourselves working “on” and “for” the youth, rather than “with” the youth who are and who have always been the leaders in society.

Dr. Karajeh brought forth a crucial point often dismissed when discussing the youth: the effects of consumerism and funding, and the social media role in turning the youth into passive commentators. We must re-evaluate where we are in light of the imperial context and reflect on the discourse of the private sector, which is in charge of the economy and which challenges the sense of volunteerism at large. The imperialism structure, so it seems, has replaced the “making of a country,” leaving the youth as passive followers rather than the change makers that they essentially had been.

The time has come, as Dr. Karajeh noted, for us to get rid of old and traditional ways of working. We need to change the double standards when it comes to human rights in the political context. We also need to reconsider what “freedoms” we are promising the young generation. Is it the need to “purchase a house or a car” to “live a life of dignity”? We need to reflect on the reality of consumerism that is eminent in society and social media, which has dominated over the political discourse and distracted us from the broader picture of freedom from domination, oppression, and subjugation. In reflecting on those realities, a question for us to answer in all honesty is: “what is political participation in this context?”



Rasha Abbas presenting at the plenary session

Rasha Abbas, lawyer and legal researcher at Addameer, delivered a powerful presentation following Dr. Muiz Karajeh’s outstanding analysis. She shared that there are more than 5,700 political prisoners, 480 of whom are under administrative detention. 500 of them are children, and 300 are women. Many are arrested simply for their social media input and Facebook posts, which makes it illegal to document inhumane actions even if by simply taking photos or videos of the Israeli Occupation practices.

The electronic surveillance forces determine documenters as inciters, thus prohibiting freedom of expression. The repercussions of expressing one's opinion could lead to up to 6 and 18 months of jail. The way that the arrests happen are also crucial to mention. Individuals are forcefully taken by the army in the wee hours of the morning in ways that are traumatizing for them, their families, and neighbors. They are humiliated and dehumanized, and many violations are made against them by the judicial court, soldiers, and even the doctors at the prisons who discriminate against them. There is bias and persistency in the practice of the law itself. The legal system in and of itself is unjust, for the person detained does not have the right of defense, or to even know the reason for being detained.

The Palestinian youth, women, as well as children are henceforth very much subjected to administrative detention, leaving little space for one to think of a more hopeful future. Rasha Abbas provided a genuine reminder of how vulnerable the Palestinian youth really are, and of how crucial it is to enforce accountability in light of the political context. The international society appears to be rather shy when it comes to showcasing the Palestinian reality, and she urged the importance of archiving and documentation.

Some of the overwhelming realities shared from across Palestine at the conference:

- **The high unemployment rate and lack of job opportunities.**
- **In the face of unresolved challenges, Palestinian youth aspire to immigrate.**
- **Identity challenges, and the absence of a helpful educational curricula.**
- **The violation of rights and the lack of humanity.**
- **Internal political divisions, and the fragmentation of the people (such as in Jerusalem).**
- **Isolation, ghettoization and an overall state of despair, particularly among refugees and youth living in Gaza, a good number of whom have attempted suicide.**

❖ Day 1 Plenary Session 3

Fredrik Glad-Gjernes, International Director of Y-Global Norway, urged for unity against injustice. He spoke fervently about the importance of focusing on the youth toward building democratic and free society, with the use of UNSCR 2250 as a tool by which to do so. He shared success stories through which youth movements were able to effect public discourse. Examples included the YMCA/YWCA of Norway, and the BDS as a tool to exert pressure for the implementation of international law.



Fredrik Glad-Gjernes presenting at the plenary session



Issa Rishmawi presenting at the plenary session

Issa Rishmawi brought forth examples from the youth initiatives in Beit Sahour that he supervised. These initiatives, activities, and community confrontations were deemed successful. He shared that the Palestinian youth lack leadership figures and role models, and he spoke about the need for a national strategy that would focus on the youth to lead the way.

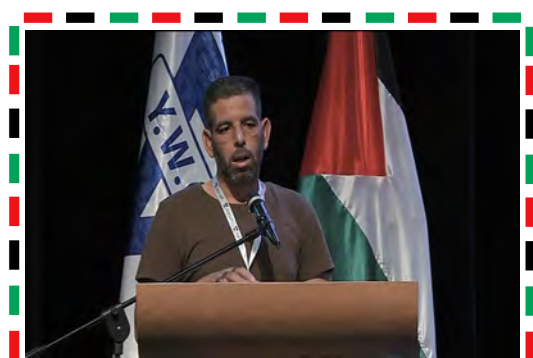
Tareq Shaheen provided a bit of perspective about Palestinian refugee camps that are set randomly around different cities, overly-condensed and lacking many services. Unemployment rates are extremely high amidst Palestinian refugee camps, and the aid that is provided is often accompanied with a series of obligations, which become rather disempowering for the youth. He spoke about the right of return as a means not a destination and accented the discrimination that is present with regards to refugees who are ultimately seen as inferior.



Tareq Shaheen presenting at the plenary session

The youth in refugee camps, he also noted, are seen as gatekeepers rather than change makers. He recommended that the youth movements would work in more innovative ways and have initiatives that are disconnected from official or formal institutions.

❖ Day 2 Plenary Session 1

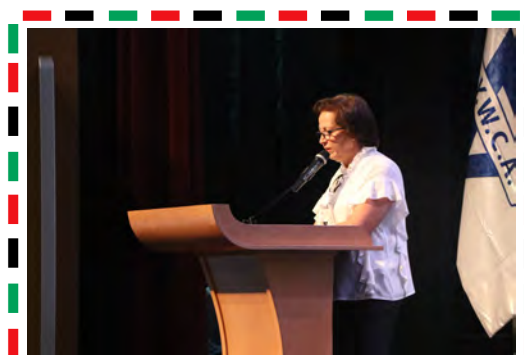


Ziad Al-Riyahi presenting at the plenary session

Ziad Al-Riyahi shed light on the women and youth initiative based on volunteerism of human resources initiated at the Jalazoune refugee camp. He brought positive feedback about how the initiative was self-sustaining, and that it had positive producing and marketing strategies that it did not depend or rely on outside aid. This input at this plenary session gave young participants the very important reminder that the concept of volunteerism is flawed if limited to organizations.

The sense of volunteerism must arise from the people themselves, and the youth in this respect must be self-reliant and serious about their involvement.

May Amireh shared the striking fact that the unemployment rate among the youth in Palestine below the age of 30 reaches almost 50%, and the young men in the job market are three times as many as the women. She also shared that the highest unemployment rate in the world today is in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which is obviously on the rise as a result of the siege. The numbers do not include Jerusalem, which is a particular case often dismissed. 20% of the Palestinian work force work in Israeli settlements, which boosts the Israeli economy, and in turn weakens the Palestinian market and natural and human resources, let alone taking away from the natural flow of life.



May Amireh presenting at the plenary session

All of these figures indicate the limitations and economic challenges of Palestinians. She shared that a third of the youth between 15-25 years old are not enrolled in education, employment, or vocational training. As a committed community member who has had extensive experience in the vocational training sector at the YWCA of Jerusalem, Amireh stressed on the importance of vocational training as an alternative way to ensure jobs aside from conventional academic degrees. The YWCA of Jerusalem is in fact one of the few platforms that provide East Jerusalemites with the option to pursue vocational training, especially with the rise of school dropouts and illiteracy. Studies indicate that students in vocational training centers have a 70% higher chance to get employed than those in academic institutes. But with that comes many challenges: The sectors, after all, are limited to the Israeli system, yet the YWCA of Jerusalem is doing its best to meet the youth needs in ways that would directly shift their lives and assist them in the job market and careers.



Laila Khalid at the plenary session

Laila Khaled demonstrated just how low youth participation is in political decision-making in Palestine. Their participation in decision-making is 0.7%. There is intentional fragmentation, she noted, of youth from political and social representation, and there is little accountability to democracy. This happened despite the fact that the youth played a major role in confronting occupation policies and volunteered their time and efforts to stand against the policies.

Surely, there are violations against youth from the occupation forces, with political detentions, killing, movement restrictions, and lack of access to education, employment, and right to self-determination and right of return. 35% of the martyrs are youth as of the polls of 2015, and 84.6% of the arrested detainees are youth. Their lack of inclusion on the governmental system is representative of the defect, as it may, of the international resolutions pertaining to the rights of women and youth in ascertaining their rights and holding governments accountable to their duties and responsibilities.

❖ **Needs highlighted were:**

- Bridging the gap between national and local laws and the international resolutions and treaties that call for the inclusion of youth in decision-making.
- Increasing youth representation in decision-making and activating their role and participation on various levels.

- Finding solutions for the dilemma of the legislative council that pertains to the inclusion and empowerment of youth.
- Issuing laws that strengthen the youth to reach positions of change making.

❖ Day 2 Plenary Session 2

Shawan Jabarin spoke fervently about the importance of hope, resilience, and steadfastness for the Palestinian youth. Youth participation, he stressed, is a lawful right. It is a moral responsibility, and the marginalization or isolation of the energy of the youth cannot be consented to. In his presentation, Jabarin demonstrated careful understanding of not only the challenges, but also the general distrust among the youth and their doubt not only of the leadership but in life at large.



Shawan Jabarin speaking at the plenary session

There is a prevailing sense of cynicism not to be under-estimated, and the gaps of the youth vis-à-vis society are getting larger as the young generation is losing hope altogether in the country.

Nevertheless, he ascertained the right to self-determination, and assured that resilience comes from hope. This hope can ultimately be achieved when shared on a national spectrum with the inclusion of youth. Jabarin noted that there is full absence of youth on the governmental level and this has dangerous repercussions, yet with his significant experience in working for human rights for many years, he also mentioned several examples of young Palestinian leaders, men and women alike, who are beacons of hope and show much potential for a better future.

Taking part in international charters is a good step, but it is insufficient. There is much more to be done to bridge the gap between the youth and the government, which has not yet shown its willingness to really abide by these charters. The environment must be prepared to make this happen, and there should be more thought put into how these resolutions affect different segments of Palestinian society. He noted that a serious workshop should be put together to find ways to decrease the gaps, and to employ and invest in the energies of the youth.

In the rich discussion, Jabarin reminded the young leaders that governments will not make any changes *unless* they are put in the corner and unless they have something

to lose. Therefore, it is essential to hold governments accountable, and to have them prosecuted for unlawful actions. The laws will not bring freedom on a silver plate, but the laws *do* provide the space for the people to hold governments accountable; they bring the space for political pressure in light of international law. It would be a waste to not take advantage of such spaces.



Raji Sourani presenting at the plenary session

Raji Sourani, the international award-winning human rights activist, spoke to the participants LIVE from Gaza. Gaza, to some people's surprise, has some of the highest educational rates in the world, and it has a percentage of over 63% made up of youth. Sadly, more than 90% are under the poverty line. It is a disaster in Gaza, with a serious water issue which obviously affects the health system overall. All of these realities, added with the absence of opportunities, unemployment, death, and conflict, are pushing the youth in Gaza to want to be out.

With that said, Sourani made the willful statement that Palestinians are on the right side of history. Ultimately, the legality of the law and international criminal court would win over the law of the jungle that is currently implemented. Several organizations, such as al-Haq, put much efforts in showing that documenting illegal violations of the Occupation, and making use of the international and human rights law to hold the criminals, including military leaders, accountable is the way forward. His statement, coming from Gaza of all places, was an inspiring reminder for the youth to hold on and aspire to ascertain their rights by the power of the legal system.

Luna Erakat followed up the crucial discussion by emphasizing on the importance of the participation and protection of women. She mentioned CEDAW and some of the controversies around issues related to premature marriage, the choice of partners, child marriages, inheritance rights, and sexual and reproductive and health rights. The rights, resolutions, and international axes are undoubtedly crucial first steps, but they should be followed up by providing space as well.



Luna Erakat presenting at the plenary session

She noted the importance of holding on to resolutions that focus on not discriminating between genders or refugees and people with special needs. The resolution still has some points to be revised when it comes to women and youth, particularly on the Palestinian level. Luna Erakat's knowledge and genuine commitment to the rights of women was inspirational for the young women, as noted in the questions that followed up amidst the crowd. One young woman in Gaza shared her personal admiration to Luna Erakat and her inspiring message, sharing that she will ultimately follow up and get further involved in raising issues related to women in conflict.

❖ Day 2 Plenary Session 3



Havard Skjerdal at the plenary session

Havard Skjerdal spoke about the free Palestinian initiative in Norway that aimed to boycott Israeli products. The initiative garnered many negative reactions, yet it nevertheless maintained its plea in solidarity for peace and justice for Palestinians. He also stressed the importance of including youth in advocacy campaigns.

Frida Anderson spoke about one of the most impactful campaigns by students in Norway who gathered funds for Palestinian youth, together with the YMCA, YWCA, and JAI, in solidarity with Palestine and with a focus on the freedoms Palestinians lack.



Frida Anderson presenting at the plenary session



Mahmoud Nawa'jeh presenting at the plenary session

Mahmoud Nawa'jeh spoke about the BDS campaign as a tool to hold violators accountable to international law, to end occupation, the racial separation, and settlements. There is fear of its economic and cultural impact, he expressed, and there are criminalization acts against individuals and major cuts of funds of institutions in support of the campaign. Nevertheless, many countries will not be ceased by such actions and will persevere in their plight for human rights for all.

Jenny Higgins spoke about legislative and advocacy efforts in Ireland and noted that one of the main reasons for poverty among Palestinian is the settlements, and the EU should thus coerce settlement products. She stressed the importance to comply with international law, seeing that there are moral and ethical obligations, which the Israeli policies must respect.



Jenny Higgins at the plenary session



❖ Parallel Workshops on Day 1 and Day 2

Day 1	
Workshop Title	Workshop Organizer
Forms of Violations Committed against Palestinian Youth under Occupation	YWCA of Ramallah Moderator: Samia Hamad Speakers: YWCA Active Youth Members Haya Hmidat Sanad Karajah Muhammad Falaneh
The Israeli Violations against Jerusalemite Youth under Occupation	YWCA of Jerusalem Moderator: Shuroq Ala'din Speakers: YWCA Active Youth Members Aseel Ewesat Aya Ewesat Aya Halaq Dana Mourad
Safe Spaces for Youth	World YWCA and YWCA of Palestine Jade Brady, 2018 Intern at World YWCA, Geneva Haneen Khalil, Active Youth Member at YWCA of Palestine
Social Media as a Tool in Engaging Youth in Campaigning and Advocacy	World YWCA and YWCA of Palestine Daniela Zelaya, Young Women's Engagement Associate at World YWCA, Geneva Amany Abu Awad, National YWCA of Palestine Media and Communications Consultant
Entrepreneurship as a Tool for Youth Empowerment: Sharing Models, Strategies and Lessons Learnt Locally and Globally	Oxfam, Y Care International and YWCA of Palestine Rahhal Rahhal, Women and Youth Economic Empowerment Adviser at Oxfam Harriet Knox Brown, Director of International Programs at Y-Care International Wael Obeidi, Field Supervisor at YWCA of Palestine
Identity	Palestinian Counseling Center Rima Abdeen Ghadeer Shatat Tamer Khalaf

Day 2

Workshop Title	Workshop Organizer
Violations Committed against Palestinian Workers in Israeli Settlements	YWCA of Jericho Moderator: Sbaha Kamal Speakers: YWCA Active Youth Members Rami Hamad Nada Abu Queifeh Hadeel Sarabta
Increasing Youth Participation in Decision-making: Presenting the Local National Initiative for Increasing Youth Participation in Decision-making	YWCA of Ramallah Moderator: Naseem Anfous Speakers: YWCA Active Youth Members Isra' Salameh Samah Musleh Mus'ab Karajeh
Freedom Campaign of 14/06/2018	Lift the Sanctions on Gaza Campaign Ashraf Abu Iram: Campaign Coordinator Tami Rafidi, Women's Rights Activist
The Role of Global Partnerships in Advocating for a Just Peace: Empowering Young Women	YWCA/YMCA Sweden Caroline Daly, Youth Project Coordinator YNCA Ukraine and UNSCR 2250 Viktoria Trofimova Valeriya Fetisova
The Experience of YWCA Japan in Advocating for Justice in Palestine	YWCA of Japan Sumie Ogasawara, International Relations Manager Mio Saito, YWCA Volunteer
Advocacy: From Local to Global	Addalah and YWCA of Palestine Dalia Hamayel, Addalah Coalition Coordinator Arda Aghazarian, Volunteer at the YWCA of Palestine
Parallel Workshops in Gaza YMCA	
Youth Political Participation and Decision-making	Women's Affairs Technical Committee WATC, Gaza Moderator: Ihab Al Mughrabi Hussam Abu Siteh Ahmad Al Tananya Mir'l Bashir
Youth and Decision-making	Women's Affairs Technical Committee WATC, Gaza Moderators: Saif Al Islam and Sulieman Mansour Speakers: Youth Activist from WATC

	Ma'moun Sweidan, The President's Advisor Muhamad Judeily, President of the Secretariat for Youth Work Hani Elloh, Coordinator of the Palestinian Youth Network Samah Kassab
Voluntarism under Current Situation	Women's Affairs Technical Committee WATC, Gaza Moderator: Mahmoud Emad Abu Aklen Speakers: Youth Activists from WATC Mahmoud Abu Aklen Ahmad Abu Sabha

The following values are essential in a safe space

Respect, Solidarity, Safety, Inclusion, Diversity

Some of the key points noted in the workshops:

- 1. We must come up with a clear definition about the youth concept**
- 2. Think of ways to define targets and timeframe for the ways forward**
- 3. Voluntary work with self-initiative youth presence**
- 4. Practice what you learn and work in groups to make a campaign about the situation in Palestine through social media.**
- 5. Steer away from traditions that do not put us forward**
- 6. To find alternatives for the job market**
- 7. Political pressure to bring about changes**
- 8. Importance of National and International advocacy as tools of change**



Pictures from the parallel workshops

The YWCA of Palestine Celebrates its 125th Anniversary

The YWCA of Palestine has been a leading organization working since 1893 to create women leadership, especially young women, to realize their full rights and capabilities, and to promote and advance their full participation in decision-making on equal footing with men in all aspects of life. As a youth association, we believe in the importance of working with diligence and passion toward supporting and empowering young people in our communities.



Pictures from the celebration

Exhibits at the Conference

During the conference, there was a special exhibit showcasing art work from different Palestinian communities, with embroidery, fresh and homemade products, creative art, and other materials.



Pictures from the exhibits

Youth are the Solution

Not the Problem!

The Youth March and Final Workshop

Following the conference, on day 3, the local and international participants and youth members marched in the city of Ramallah calling for the implementation of UNSCR2250 in Palestine. This was a great finale to the conference, after which the members were hosted by the Ramallah Municipality. The YWCA of Palestine team met at the final workshop and shared the proceedings.



Pictures from the youth march



Annexes

Annex I

Conference Programme

Day 1: Friday October 12, 2018	
08:00 - 09:25	Conference Registration
09:30 - 09:45	Opening Ceremony and Opening Speech
	Master of Ceremonies: Taghreed Daoud and Dana Mourad <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moment of Silence in Commemoration of Palestinian Martyrs• National Anthem - State of Palestine Sareyyet Ramallah Scout Troop
	Welcoming Speech Haifa Baramki , YWCA of Palestine National President
09:45 - 11:00	Official Opening Speeches
	Dr. Haifa Agha , Minister of Women'S Affairs: Highlighting the Sectorial Strategy for Gender Equality: Bringing women on board
	Malayah Harper , World YWCA General Secretary, Geneva: Keynote Conference Speech
	Anders Thomsen , UNFPA Representative to the State of Palestine and Chair of the UN Group on Young People: Opportunities for Young People in Palestine
	Fredrik Glad-Gjernes , International Director of Y Global, Norway: Partnership for Building Youth Leadership - The Importance of the Conference to International Partners
	Ellen Söderberg , YWCA/YMCA Sweden Board Member : Partnership for Building Youth Leadership - The Importance of the Conference to International Partners
	Mira Rizeq , YWCA of Palestine National General Secretary: Vision, Mission and the Challenges of Youth Engagement
	YWCA of Palestine Documentary film screening
11:00 - 11:3	Coffee Break (Booths Opening)
11:30 - 12:30	Plenary Session 1 Youth, Peace, and Security - UNSCR 2250
	Moderator: Ruba Odeh , YWCA of Palestine National Coordinator for Gender, Peace and Security

11:30 - 11:40	Youth, Peace, and Security within UNSCR2250 Lamya Shalaldeh , UNSCR1325 Expert, Consultant and Human Rights Activist
11:40 - 11:50	The Reality of Palestinian Youth Firas Jaber , Writer and Researcher in Policy Issues at Social and Economic Monitor (Al-Marsad)
11:50 - 12:00	Research Paper on UNSCR 2250 and the Palestinian Context Lama Alami , Lawyer and Human Rights Activist
12:00 - 12:30	Questions and Discussions
12:30 - 14:20	Plenary Session 2 Palestinian Youth and the Challenges of the Political Reality Moderator: Ashraf Abu Iram , Youth Activist
12:30 - 12:45	Youth and the Challenges of the Political Reality they live in Dr. Muiz Karaja , Lecturer at Birzeit University
12:45 - 13:00	Political Detention of Palestinian Youth and Nominal Courts Rasha Abbas , Lawyer and Legal Researcher at Addameer
13:00 - 13:10	Documentary Film: Forms of Violations Committed against Palestinian Youth under Occupation produced by YWCA of Ramallah and Al Haq Organization
13:10 - 13:50	Testimonials on Violations Committed against Palestinian Youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghassan Al Zaanin from Gaza through Video conference (7 minutes) • Aya Rimawi, Youth Activist from Biet Rima village (7 minutes) • Jumana Ashqar, Youth Activist from Haifa (7 minutes) • Ammar Youzbashi, Youth Activist from Al-Baddawi Palestinian Refugee Camp, Lebanon (7 minutes)- Recorded message
13:50 - 14:20	Questions and Discussions
14:20 - 15:30	Lunch Break (Main Conference Dining Room Floor #5)
15:30 - 16:45	Plenary Session 3 Palestinian Youth and Active Citizenship Moderator: Queen Masoud , Vice President of the National Board, YWCA of Palestine
15:30 - 15:45	Youth Engagement as a Strategy for Building a Democratic Free Society Fredrik Glad-Gjernes , International Director of Y Global, Norway
15:45 - 16:00	The Reality of Palestinian Youth within Palestinian Public Life: National Strategy versus Reality Issa Rishmawi , Youth Movement Coordinator, Beit Sahour

16:00 - 16:15	Refugee Youth and the Right of Return Tareq Shaheen , Youth Activist at Ibda'
16:15 - 16:45	Questions and Discussions
16:45 - 17:00	Coffee Break
17:00 - 18:30	Parallel Workshops in Ramallah (Listed under Parallel Workshops on Day 1 and 2)
20:00 - 22:00	Cocktail Reception YWCA of Palestine Celebrating its 125th Anniversary
Day Two: Saturday October 13, 2018	
09:15 - 9:30	Summary from Day One
09:30 - 10:45	Plenary Session 1 Palestinian Youth Rights: Ambitions versus Possibilities Moderator: Ubai Aboudi , Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the Union of Agriculture Work Committees
09:30 - 09:45	Integrating Youth in Decision making in regard to National Polices Laila Khalid , Youth Activist at YWCA of Bethlehem
09:45 - 10:00	Volunteerism and Youth Engagement Ziad Al-Riyahi , Voluntary Work Coordinator at Jalazoune Refugee Camp
10:00 - 10:15	Education and Vocational Training: Rights and Future May Amireh , Vocational Training Supervisor YWCA of Jerusalem
10:15 - 10:45	Questions and Discussions
10:45 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 12:15	Plenary Session 2 Palestine post Treaties and International Agreements: Effects and Future Moderator: Abed Razeq Ghazzal , Human Rights Activist
11:00 - 11:15	International Treaties and the Commitment of the Palestinian State towards the Protection of Youth and Pursuing Punitive Measures for Perpetrators of Violations Shawan Jabarin , General Director of Al Haq Human Rights Organization
11:15 - 11:30	Gaza and International Agreements: The Palestinian Government's ICC Referral Submission to Open Probe into Israel's War Crimes in Gaza Raji Sourani , International Award Winning Human Rights Activist (Video Conference with Gaza)

11:30 - 11:45	CEDAW and its Implications on Youth Luna Erekat, Palestinian Non-Governmental Coalition to Combat Violence Against Women (Al Muntada)
11:45 - 12:15	Questions and Discussion
12:15 - 13:30	Lunch Break (Main Conference Dining Room)
13:30 - 15:15	Plenary Session 3 International Partnerships and Advocacy: Examples and Mechanisms
	Moderator: Nidal Abu Zuluf, YWCA of Palestine/ EJMCA Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI) Manager
13:30 - 13:45	Free Palestine Campaign: Strategies, Achievements and Challenges Havard Skjerdal, Y Global Staff member, Norway
13:45 - 14:00	Operation Day's Work Campaign Frida Anderson, ODW Board Member, Norway
14:00 - 14:15	Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions: International Successes and Challenges Mahmoud Nawa'jeh, National BDS Campaign Coordinator in Palestine
14:15 - 14:30	The Occupied Territories Bill: The Irish Advocacy and Legislative Efforts to Ban Settlement Produce Jenny Higgins, Advocacy and Policy Coordinator at Christian Aid, Ireland
14:30 - 14:45	The Role of Youth in Social Movements Hammoudeh Subhi, Arab Regional Coordinator for Social Forum from Morocco
14:45 - 15:15	Questions and Discussions
15:15 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:30	Parallel Workshops in Ramallah (Listed under Parallel Workshops on Day 1 and 2)
16:00 - 17:30	Parallel Workshops at Gaza YMCA (Listed under Parallel Workshops on Day 1 and 2)
17:30 - 18:00	Group Picture of all Participants at the Theater
18:00 - 19:00	Youth Side Meetings
19:00 - 20:00	Dinner at the Conference Dining Room floor #5
20:30 - 22:00	Film Screening of the Wanted 18
Day Three: Sunday October 14, 2018	

09:30 - 9:45	Summary from Day Two
09:45 - 10:30	Closing Ceremony
	Master of Ceremonies Rania Yaser and Heyam Battrawi
09:45 - 10:00	Conference Closing Statement and Recommendations
10:00 - 10:15	Reflections from Participants
10:15 - 10:30	Conference Closing and Thank you Note Mira Rizeq, YWCA of Palestine National General Secretary
10:30 - 12:00	Break and Youth March preparations (Check out from Hotel)
12:00 - 13:30	Youth March
13:30 - 16:00	Entertainment, Fun Activities and Lunch at Ramallah City Hall Garden

Annex II

Conference Speakers and Moderators



Haifa Baramki is the President of the YWCA of Palestine, former President of the Ramallah YWCA, and Vice President of the World YWCA board of directors. She is also a Council member of PUGWASH Conferences on Science and World Affairs. She has a B.A. in Social Work from the American Lebanese University, and an M.Ed. in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University. She started her professional life as a teacher in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Gaza Strip before she moved to Birzeit College and later to Birzeit University, where she worked first in the field of teaching and later in the field of administration, as the Registrar and Director of Admissions. Baramki was pioneering in the field of Professional Continuing Education where she established in Birzeit University the first center in this field in Palestine. Her key areas of expertise include management and administration, systems and institutional building, adult professional continuing education, vocational education and training, strategic planning, and organizational development. Major positions that she held included Registrar and Director of Admissions of Birzeit University, and Director of the Center for Continuing Education. Born and raised in Gaza, Baramki lives currently in Ramallah.



Dr. Haifa Al-Agha is the current Minister of Women's Affairs. She obtained her PhD in the Educational Studies from Oklahoma State University (OSU), USA in 1991, and worked at OSU as a Researcher for a year. After returning to Palestine, she worked as a resident of the Faculty of Education and as Head of the Psychology Department at Al-Aqsa University in the Gaza Strip. Dr. Al-Agha worked as a General Director of the internal auditing and monitoring department at the Ministry of Education in 1993, and was then promoted as General Director in general education at the Ministry of Education in Palestine. She was appointed as the Minister of Women's Affairs as of June 2, 2014.



Fredrik Glad-Gjernes is the Director of the YWCA/YMCA Global (Y-Global) in Norway since 2011. He has degrees in Management (University of Manchester), Theology (Volda College), and Development (Oslo College). Glad-Gjernes previously worked as teacher (1987-1993), leader in Changemaker (1993-1999), and at the Norwegian Church Aid (2000-2011). He is passionate about the Stop Poverty Campaign and the Free Palestine Campaign, and believes in working non-violently towards achieving just peace in the Holy Land.



Malayah Harper is the General Secretary of World YWCA. She has more than 20 years of experience in the area of social justice and equality. Her passion for justice and equality stems from her experiences as a child, raised a feminist by a single mother and grandmother, with meagre resources in an inner city in Canada. Over many years, she established innovative partnerships using her significant experience working in social movement building. She holds a deep commitment to leave no woman or girl behind as the world progresses towards equality and empowerment. Working with UNAIDS (2005-2014) and leading HIV-AIDS work in multiple countries in eastern and southern Africa she worked first hand with groups of women living with HIV, which further strengthened her understanding of and commitment to work with women intersectionally. As the UNAIDS Global Chief for Gender Equality and Diversity Division (2014-16), Harper elevated the political commitment for women, girls with HIV across many UN Member States. A strong believer in the Sustainable Development Goals, she carries with her the experience of working across sectors and leading negotiations to strengthen the global work for core issues. Be it with the World Bank, the British Government or other non-profit organizations, she has used the strategy of interlinking issues and communities with policies and planning to realise the development goals. A champion of working with local communities, Malayah has led programs and projects, especially focusing on youth and women, across countries in Africa, Europe, North America and Asia. Her approach is informed by her personal experiences working directly within communities. As an outspoken activist on the issue of institutional sexual harassment, Harper carries the torch for a better world for women, by women. The World YWCA General Secretary since 2016, she has been leading the implementation of the organisation's bold and transformative vision that *by 2035, 100 million young women and girls will transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war leading to a sustainable YWCA movement, inclusive of all women.*



Anders Thomsen has served four years in Palestine with a focus on both humanitarian and development challenges related to population dynamics, youth, reproductive health, and combatting gender-based violence. Before arriving to the country, he was the UNFPA Deputy Representative for India and Bhutan. He has more than 25 years of experience in development assistance, with a commitment to promotion of Human Rights, Reproductive Health, and Poverty Reduction. Prior to his assignment in India, Thomsen worked at UNDP's Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office, where he was Senior Portfolio Manager for \$700 million dollar MDG Achievement Fund. At the same time, he led the development of a new system for the administration of the Multi-Donor and Multi-Agency Trust Funds in the UN system. He has previously served as Resource Mobilization Specialist for UNFPA and as Programme Specialist in the Asia Pacific Division, where he covered South-East Asia during the Indian Ocean Tsunami crisis. Before joining UNFPA, Thomsen spent six years with UNOPS both at Headquarters and in Eastern/Southern Africa where he focused on nationally implemented loans and grants from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Earlier he worked for several companies in the Private Sector. Thomsen has been stationed in various countries across three continents; Africa, Asia and Latin America. He holds a double major in International Development Studies and Business Administration. He is a national of Denmark.



Ellen Söderberg, a board member of YWCA YMCA Sweden made internship at YWCA Palestine and was based in Ramallah for almost half year. Movements of Sweden and Palestine had been in touch since the 1960s, and Palestine is still one of the countries of key priority for the Swedish movement. UNSCR 2250 is a global tool that highlights the importance of global partnerships. Global peace building, in that respect, can only be reached by joined forces and engagement.



Mira Rizeq is the National General Secretary of the YWCA of Palestine (since 2006) and was board member at the YWCA in different capacities including as President. She has filled in significant development positions in her career; she was Deputy Director for Save the Children USA, Team Leader of the UNDP/LRDP Project, and Director of Operations for the World Bank NGO Trust Fund Project in Palestine managed by the Welfare Association Consortium. Rizeq got her first graduate degree from the USA and her second graduate degree from the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. She is presently one of the International board members within the Middle East/Europe region of the Global Ministries in the USA.



Ruba Odeh is National Program Coordinator of Gender, Peace, and Security at the YWCA of Palestine. She is a women's rights and youth activist, and representative at the Union of the Palestinian Women's Committees' at the Coalition of Defenders of Human Rights in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Region. She has extensive work experience in several civil society organizations that focus on youth and women's programs. Odeh has extensive experience of more than ten years in the management of humanitarian and development projects for Palestinian women and youth, particularly in the areas of gender mainstreaming, culture, arts, and the empowerment of youth toward social development. She is a volunteer Board Member of the Union of the Palestinian Women's Committees' Executive Directors, and has represented the Union in several local and international sessions and meetings, including the global women's rights march, and at the World Social Forum (in which she was the Palestinian representative). Odeh is a founding member of the Development and Heritage Union, and its representative in various local and international platforms including the Euro-Mediterranean youth network. She received her B.A from Birzeit University, and has a master's degree in Sociology also from Birzeit University.



Lamya Shalaldeh – Jabarin is a mother of four sons, a women's rights activist with a master's degree in Sustainable Development, and is also a part-time professor at Birzeit University. She has several publications on issues related to women, and had notable work experience with various institutions. During the first Intifada in the late eighties, Shalaldeh was leader of the popular children's education team when Occupation forces shut down Palestinian schools, and she supervised the startup of women's production cooperatives in the Hebron district. She remains actively engaged in cooperative training and women's empowerment activities. Shalaldeh is accountable for building national action plans on the UNSCR 1325 and its preambles. She is experienced in monitoring and documenting violations against women in armed conflicts, and conducts evaluations of NGOs on the gender mainstreaming levels in their work. She worked in several Arab countries (including Tunis, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, and Jordan,) and trained on gender mainstreaming for several media and civil society organizations, prosecutors and judges, as well as youth organizations such as the YWCA. In cooperation with some International institutions, she now works with team members at the Geneva Institute for Human Rights on the contractual and non-contractual mechanisms for the protection of human rights, and training of the delivery of reports, agreements, and the universal periodic review report. She is a Consultant for the "Protection of Youth Rights under Occupation" with the YWCA, in line with UNSCR 2250 and related resolutions. Shalaldeh is actively engaged in the trade union, and previously managed the labor committee for one of the local institutions. She is board member of several Palestinian organizations.



Firas Jaber is a co-founding member of and researcher at the Social and Economic Policies Monitor, Al-Marsad. He has completed several studies and published multiple books, and supervised a series of public opinion polls and a number of survey-based research studies. He is a member and a leader of research teams in studies related to needs assessment studies, capacity building, participatory applied studies, and gender related issues. He also conducted several studies on development in the Arab world, in cooperation with specialized Arab research institutions. Jaber's recent involvement in research and advocacy focused on Colonial Taxation in Palestine, which was published along with a group of Arab Studies on Tax Justice. He was the former Director of Research at the Bisan Center for Research and Development. He joined as member of the Board of Directors at Al-Mada Association for Arts-Based Community Development. Jaber was elected as Chairperson of Nawat, the Arab Institute for Policies and Studies. He holds a B.A. in Sociology from Bethlehem University, and earned his master's degree in Sociology from Birzeit University.



Ashraf Abu Iram is an experienced Advocacy Manager with strong lobbying and organizational skills. He is currently Advocacy and Policies Program Manager at PNGO (Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network), and Programs Coordinator at the Birzeit Club. He is adept at arranging campaigns for action, and has extensive background in marketing management, research assistance, and negotiations, among others. **Abu Iram** has a bachelor's as well as a master's degree in Sociology from Birzeit University.



Lama Alami is a human rights and youth activist from Jerusalem. She has a Bachelor of Law from the Department of Law at Birzeit University. She has a Palestinian Law Practice License, and is currently pursuing the Israeli Law Practice License. Alami has had extensive work experience with several local as well international civil society institutions and human rights organizations. She was trained by some of the most prominent lawyers and defenders of human rights in the West Bank and Jerusalem. She published her research on UNSCR 2250 based on her knowledge as Legal Advisor for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as on her perspectives as a young Palestinian woman. She exerted efforts to develop an in-depth understanding of what is pertained in the resolution, and managed to translate its terms in a way that is both related and relevant to the Palestinian context and reality.



Rasha Abbas is Lawyer and Legal Researcher at Addameer – the Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association’s Documentation and Research Unit, where she is in charge of the legal research and analysis of the association’s reports, studies, and research papers. She is representative of Addameer in several local and international legal coalitions, including the civic coalition for monitoring the legislative process, and the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) regional forum for the “prevention of torture.” Abbas has a master’s degree in International Law from Duke University. She is a former lecturer at Bizeit University, where she developed a study course titled “Introduction to Israeli Law.” She also became the principal trainer for Birzeit University’s faculty on the Vis Moot International Court, which was held in Vienna in 2015.



Ghassan Al-Za'aneen is Researcher at the Strategic Studies Institute of Palthink in Gaza. He has a master's degree in Political Science from Al-Azhar University in Gaza. He is a dynamic and highly-engaged member of society, and a youth activist.



Jumana Ashqar is a political and women's youth activist. She is in charge of the focal projects at Assiwar – the Feminist Arab Movement in Haifa. She has a master's degree in Community Mental Health from the University of Haifa, and a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Haifa. Ashqar participated in various training courses and activities both locally and internationally, including the Coalition of Defenders in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Regional Training in Jordan, the Erasmus Training held in Morocco on Alternative and Extracurricular Education, as well as in several other workshops. She was also Group Leader for the Intercultural Dialogue, Peace, and the Elimination of Racism youth training in France. In addition to her current work, Ashqar mentors teachers and deans of high-schools on social issues, such as the elimination of violence in schools. She is a member of the European Commission's youth network, and is volunteer and active participant in several youth and women's rights organizations.



Ammar Youzbashi has a B.A. in Information Technology from the Beirut Arab University. He has various certificates from several universities and institutions, namely in the fields of strategic planning, negotiation tactics, project planning, short-filmmaking, TV production, as well as in other legal and social related courses. Youzbashi has over 15 years of work experience with organizations that are concerned with youth and child protection. He is currently a youth project's Technical Consultant, and delivers training in youth participation and project planning. He is a volunteer and board member at the Arab Palestinian Cultural Club, volunteer and head of the Palestinian Cultural Club in Beirut, as well as volunteer and executive board member of the refugee webcast team.



Tareq Shaheen is a 26-year old Palestinian who lives in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp, located south of Bethlehem. He has a B.A. in Social Work and Psychology from Bethlehem University.



Queen Masoud, Vice-President of the YWCA of Palestine, and board member (and treasurer) of the YWCA of Ramallah. She has been an active youth member at the YWCA for many years, and had the chance to attend three of the World Councils; in Nairobi, Kenya (2007); Zurich, Switzerland (2011); and Bangkok, Thailand (2015); as well as the CSW in NY (2012). Masoud is an active member in the social committee of the Ramallah Board of Directors, and was part of the youth-empowerment task force in partnership with the YWCAs of Ireland and the UK. Masoud is a Sub-Branch Manager at the Bank of Palestine PLC (the first national bank in Palestine since 2009). She is currently finalizing her Executive-MBA degree from Birzeit University, and has a bachelor's degree in Accounting, with a minor in Finance, from Birzeit University. Masoud is interested in arts and cultures, and has worked as piano teacher on a part-time basis for four years. She has a diploma in Piano from the National Conservatory in Ramallah – Palestine.



Frida Andresen is the leader of Operation Day's Work. Operation Day's Work is Norway's largest solidarity action by, with, and for youth. In 2018, the OD project involved Palestinian youth. Andresen has been a volunteer for Operation Day's Work since 2014, and she was a part of its national committee last year.



Jade Brady, an Irish and Australian national, is YWCA Governance Associate at the World YWCA, and a member of the YWCAs of Australia and Ireland. Prior to working full-time at the YWCA of Australia, she had worked in the business administration of corporate finance, where she was also board member. She worked and volunteered at the grassroots level for many years, mostly in the areas of domestic and family violence, leadership, and empowerment. Brady has a B.A. in Contemporary Culture and Society; exploring how relationships between individuals and societies function and interact within intercultural and 'globalization' contexts. She completed an M.Phil. in Race, Ethnicity and Conflict Studies, focusing on sociological theories such as racialization, gender, migration, ethnic conflict and peace-making, as well as the techniques used and responses elicited by states and international agencies to manage peoples and conflict. Her research looked into the Occupation of Palestine, and the troubles in Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to the intersections of national identity with gender and sexuality, and how such intersections play out in social institutions and the wider community in Ireland.



Mahmoud Nawajaa is the General Coordinator for the Palestinian BDS Movement's National Committee. He is a prominent youth activist, with a master's degree in American Relations.



Daniela Zelaya is a Young Women's Engagement Associate in the World Young Women's Christian Association. She first started as a volunteer and board member at the YWCA of Honduras, where she worked as a peer educator for social and gender justice, violence against women and girls, and sexual reproductive health and rights. She then joined the World YWCA in 2016, working with communications, leading peace building and youth empowerment programs, and coordinating the Young Women's Global Advisory Council. Zelaya has been part of the leading team on behalf of the World YWCA for the CSW, the International AIDS Conference, the Human Rights Council, as well as the Interfaith National Consultations in Zambia and Kenya on the fight against HIV/AIDS. She also took part in the designing and reviewing of the "RiseUp!" Guide for Young Women's Transformative Leadership.



Håvard Skjerdal is the head of Marketing and Communications at the Global YWCA/YMCA in Norway (Y-Global). He has a degree in Human Geography from the University of Oslo. Before his position at Y Global, he was a long-term volunteer with the Norwegian YWCA-YMCA movement. He has been working on different youth campaigns for human rights and justice throughout the years, and is passionate about fighting injustices through creative advocacy campaigns and policy work.



Rahhal Rahhal (BBA, MBA) graduated from Bethlehem University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, and continued his graduate studies at Brock University in Canada, where he got his master's degree in Business Administration (MBA). He is the Women and Youth Economic Empowerment Advisor at Oxfam, and is also a part-time lecturer at the College of Business at Bethlehem University. Rahhal is a professional business development expert. He focuses on entrepreneurship as a path for economic empowerment of women and youth in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially for the most marginalized and most vulnerable persons in those sectors. With more than 15 years of work experience in the private sector and NGOs in Canada and Palestine, he has been able to achieve distinguished results, ranging from developing academic entrepreneurship courses to achieving marketing objectives and sales growth for micro and small businesses.



Dalia Hamayel, Coordinator of "Adaleh" - The Palestinian Coalition for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. She graduated from Birzeit University, with a major in Sociology. She is a youth activist and member of several youth groups.



Ubai Al-Aboudi is the Monitoring and Evaluation “M&E” Officer at the UAWC (Union of Agricultural Work Committees) in Palestine. He has a master's degree in Economics in the field of minimum wages. He is a progressive volunteer who works with farmers and youth, and has local contributions in political economy, activism, and civil rights, especially in working in Area C of the West Bank. Al-Aboudi has represented the UAWC and the international peasant's movement “La via Campasina” in several local and international events, including The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in Rome, and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.



Wael Obeidi is the National Field Supervisor at the YWCA of Palestine. He provides support to the local YWCAs through different interventions, particularly in relation to economic empowerment of women and youth. In addition to his work in the direct implementation of national projects within the YWCA Council Office, he was the Manager of the local *Shumous* project that started with the support from the EU/SMC. He previously worked with the Irish Representative Office to the PA, the AMIDEAST, and UNRWA in the fields of economic empowerment and humanitarian protection. Obeidi graduated from Al Quds University with a B.A. in Economic and Social Development. He joined the YMCA/ YWCA family ten years ago as an employee, and was a volunteer at the East Jerusalem YMCA for many years before.



Harriet Knox Brown is the Director of International Programmes at Y Care International, based in London (UK). Y Care International works in partnership with the global YMCA movement and other national youth-focused civil society organisations to create safe and sustainable employment and enterprise opportunities for vulnerable young people to fulfil their potential. As Programmes Director, she provides leadership for the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of Y Care International's programmes worldwide, ensuring that our interventions create lasting change for vulnerable young men and women. She also leads on mobilising resources from institutional funders such as the UK government and European Union, and influencing key decision-makers on youth enterprise and employment. She has worked with Y Care International for over 10 years, supporting youth-focused community development initiatives across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Brown previously worked as a languages teacher in Colombia and she has a MSc from London School of Economics in Development Management.



Valeriya Fetisova, young leader from YMCA Lviv, local associations of YMCA Ukraine.



May Amireh is Supervisor of the Vocational Training Center (VTC) run by the YWCA of Jerusalem for the past 11 years. She has major interest in assisting young women and men to achieve their status in the Palestinian society through self-development and training on all aspects (vocational, personal, societal, and professional), with the aspiration to see the youth one day taking their responsibilities in creating a better Palestine where all Palestinians would be living equally in a developed, free and independent country. Amireh has had a long experience in the vocational training field, and she was previously the trainer and curricula developer for the vocational specializations at the UNRWA. She holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Jordan.



Mio Saito is a student of Social Environment and Welfare at Kumamoto Gakuen University in Japan. She has special interest in relations between and among people such as survivors, victims, perpetrators, and their families and friends in the aftermath of disasters, war, incidents, and accidents. Saito took part in organizing a refreshing camp program, organized by Kumamoto YWCA, for children who live in Fukushima that suffered from a nuclear power plant accident in 2011. She also joined the "Nanjing Peace Pilgrimage," a study tour hosted by the National Council of YWCAs of China and the YWCA of Japan, co-hosted by Nanjing YWCA and YMCA, in March 2018.



Shawan Jabarin is the General Director of Al-Haq and Vice President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). He was appointed to the Human Rights Watch Middle East Advisory Board and was elected as a Commissioner for the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). He is a recipient of the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1990 for his defense of the freedom of expression and human rights. Jabarin was the first Palestinian to be recognized by Amnesty International as a “prisoner of conscience” after having spent seven years under administrative detention in Israeli jails without charge or trial. He received his B.A. in Sociology from Birzeit University and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from the National University of Ireland, Galway.



Sumie Ogasawara is a member of staff in the YWCA of Japan since 2011 and where she is in charge of international relations. She has worked with youth international exchange programs and advocacy against nuclear energy/weapons. She also took part in coordinating the YWCA of Japan's delegation to the World YWCA Council in 2015, and the young women's participation at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).



Raji Sourani has been dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory throughout his professional career, despite the personal and professional sacrifices he has been forced to make in the process. He has been an active lawyer since his qualification in 1977, representing a wide variety of victims of human rights abuses. He received many honors in his career, the most recent of which is the Right Livelihood Award for 2013. Despite periods of political imprisonment in Israel; years of harassment and violence from the Israeli military; harassment from the Palestinian Authority; and even death threats from Palestinian fundamentalist parties, Sourani has maintained an unwavering commitment to human rights. He has been an advocate for basic human rights standards both at a domestic and international level and has refused to curtail his outspoken criticisms of failures by Israel, the Palestinian Authority, political parties and other states to adhere to human rights standards. Despite the obstacles faced, he continues to promote and protect human rights through the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, which he founded in 1995 with a group of fellow lawyers and human rights activists in the Gaza Strip. Sourani has spearheaded this award-winning centre since its establishment and continues to ensure that the centre provides legal and other services to victims of human rights abuses in the Gaza Strip, enabling them to seek justice and reparation. A committed family man, he has been blessed with an equally committed and understanding family, providing love and encouragement through even the worst times. His wife in particular has proved the strongest source of support, despite the often-great sacrifices that his work has brought to their life.



Issa Rishmawi is a social and political activist, and the head of the youth movement, “Wisata.” He is one of the founders of and official spokesperson for youth mobility in Beit Sahour, which gathers the Palestinian youth in Beit Sahour to reflect on their aspirations and attain their goals. The approach is to stay clear of religious or factionist prejudice, and focus instead on serving the community of Beit Sahour and protecting it from outside forces or agendas that may intend to have the people displaced or their lives restricted. Rishmawi has a bachelor of Biology from Birzeit University, and a license in Language and Linguistics from the Center for Media Development at Birzeit University. He took several media training workshops. He is married, and transitioned to the field of Media and Public Relations after having worked as a teacher for 6 years. He is currently a Sales Representative for Ooredoo, one of the groups of the Wataniya Telecommunication Company in Palestine.



Haneen Khalil was born in Ramallah and currently lives in Occupied Palestine with her family. She graduated with a B.A. in Law from Birzeit University, and was well trained to be a successful lawyer by some of the famous mature lawyers in Ramallah, and she also got the chance to work with the general attorney’s office. Khalil now has her own law office, where most of her work is running her family business. She is passionate about social community work and helping others. She believes in the importance of voluntarism, and in the support and time she dedicates for others. She is currently serving as board member at the YWCA of Ramallah, and is an active youth member at the YWCA of Palestine’s Peace and Justice Task Force, under the leadership of the National Council. She is also an active member of the national coalition for UNSCR1325. In her free time, Khalil likes to do planting, some sports, and socializing with friends. She is grateful for everything that happens around her, and knows that the best is yet to come.



Amany Abu Awad is the Media and Communications Consultant for the National YWCA of Palestine. Prior to her current position, she completed a ten-month internship in communications at World YWCA in Geneva, Switzerland. The highlight of her internship was giving a speech at the UN for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on behalf of the National YWCA of Palestine and the World YWCA. In 2015, she completed a six-week internship in Marketing and Communications at Catholic Social Services, Columbus, Ohio, USA. Abu Awad is a graduate of Bethlehem University with a BA in English Language and Literature and a minor in Translation. She is a member of the YWCA of Bethlehem and a former board member of the National YWCA of Palestine. She is an advocate for human rights, especially of women and youth. During her university years, she was involved in different youth programmes including the Student Ambassador, Youth for Change, and Young Arab Voices programmes.



Nidal Abu zuluf is the Manager of the Joint YMCA/YWCA Advocacy Initiative (JAI) that works on mobilizing the ecumenical movement to advocate over just peace and the end the oppression of the Palestinian people. He is a previous student leader who served as the President of the Student Council at Bethlehem University in 1983. He was a political activist during the 80s and 90s of the last century. During this time, he was arrested by the Israeli army and spent a couple of years in Israeli detention camps. Abu Zuluf is a co-author of the Palestinian Kairos Document and the Founder of the Palestinian Youth Ecumenical Movement which is a member of the WSCF (World Student Christian federation). He is also the coordinator of the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine.



Jenny Higgins is the Policy and Advocacy Advisor at Christian Aid Ireland. Christian Aid Ireland's Advocacy and Policy team uses evidence-based research to influence power holders (both in Ireland and internationally) to take decisive action to promote peace, social justice, to protect human rights, and to eliminate poverty. Her work involves lobbying, research and working with key coalitions to create change. Her work is focused on increasing ambition on climate change, economic justice and international taxation, as well as human rights and accountability within Christian Aid partner countries, with a focus on Colombia and the occupied Palestinian territory. Before joining Christian Aid, Higgins worked with Trócaire on their occupied Palestinian territory programme, in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs on their Middle East Desk, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and at the United Nations in Geneva. She has an MA in Human Rights from University College London.



Viktoriia Trofimova, President of YMCA Bojarka, local associations of YMCA Ukraine.



Tami Rafidi, a political and human rights activist, was born and raised in Occupied Palestine. She earned her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and her master's degree in International Studies from Birzeit University – Palestine. She got the Fulbright scholarship and traveled to the United States for her PhD in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University – Fort Lauderdale – Florida. Recently, she was also granted a professional Diploma in Strategic Communication and Diplomacy from a joint program between Birzeit University and the British Council – Palestine. Rafidi is currently the Programs Director at the Yasser Arafat Foundation, working to preserve the history and heritage of Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian national memory. She has a long career path in women rights and politic, and has participated in many conferences, training workshops, and seminars in Palestine and abroad.



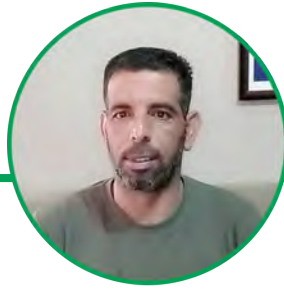
Hamouda Soubhi is Special Advisor to the National Council of Human Rights of Morocco. He is both a co-founder of Alternatives in Montréal and of the Forum des alternatives Sud in Morocco. He sits on the Governance Council of Alternatives International, and plays an essential role within the Liaison Committee of the International Council of the World Social Forum. He is Alternatives International's representative on the Alternatives Board. Soubhi worked on various projects of importance in Algeria, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Tunis, Palestine, and Brazil. He has extensive experience in training in several fields, including animation techniques, social work, social mobilization, project management and project engineering, among others. He has a master's degree in International Relations from Université du Québec in Montreal, and has a Certificate in Criminology from the University of Montreal.



Laila Ayyad, born in 1996, earned a B.A. in Basic Level Teaching in History and Geography from Bethlehem University in 2017. She has certificates in personal leadership training, and in training trainees. She has been an active member at the YWCA for over four years, with special interest in issues related to women and youth, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the treaty of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as to the Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 1325. She took part in the Health Work Committees' training in leadership and advocacy, and received from a Palestinian student-centered institution training in how to achieve success in an ever-changing world. Ayyad worked in Telecommunications as Sales Representative prior to working as private teacher for university students. She has gained experience in archiving oral history through her work that was in cooperation with the Bethlehem University and the University of Sussex. She is currently working with the Palestine Museum of Natural History on a project regarding climate change and on how to teach it as a subject to high school students.



Caroline Daly is Project Coordinator/Manager of the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden. She has been involved since 2011 in youth and democracy work within the Swedish YWCA and YMCA movement in its national and international programs. She is currently managing the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden's "Agenda 2030" project, which seeks to empower youth participation and agency regarding the Global Goals and Agenda for the year 2030. UNSCR 2250 is an important tool in this work that aims to reach the global goals as well as to implement youth agency. We want to call it "the peaceful revolution for youth participation."



Ziad Al-Riyahi has been living in the Jalazoune refugee camp since the time he was born (in 1976). This refugee camp is less than 10km away from Ramallah and Al-Bireh. He is a social activist, and one of the founders of the Jalazoune Youth Initiative. He was detained for a year and a half by the Occupation forces at the Israeli prisons. Currently, Al-Riyahi works fulltime in the Ramallah Municipality. The Jalazoune Youth Initiative that he took part in establishing works on shielding and supporting impoverished families at the Camp, with initiatives such as providing treatment, house repair, education aid, or reduced medicine prices for many cases of illness. The Jalazoune Youth Initiative also sets up cleaning services to motivate children and youth in all of the camp's neighborhoods to take part in and also initiate such endeavors.



Abdel Razek Ghazal has a bachelor's degree in Psychology, and a master's degree in Democracy and Human Rights from Birzeit University. He works at the Health Work Committee in the areas of policy, advocacy, and skills-building, with a special focus on approaching health policies from a human rights perspective. Ghazal has contributed developing training manuals in relation to women, youth, and children, and toward the empowerment of marginalized groups. He is vice chair of the executive board of directors for "Bedouins without Borders," and vice president of the Parents Teacher Association for the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope. He made several contributions in studies and research papers on the prevention and protection of violence and discrimination against women and children. Some of his studies and articles on women, youth, and children's psycho-social preventions and interventions have been published.



Luna Erekat is a women's rights and human rights activist. She got a Bachelor of Law from Al-Quds University in 2003, a Higher Diploma in 2006 from Birzeit University, and has been a practicing lawyer since 2007. She ranked second place in the 2009 International Human Rights Competition for her pleading on human rights violations of the Jahalin Bedouin community, and she consecutively won first place twice in a row: at the International Defense Competition in Jerusalem in 2015, and in Mauritania in 2016, for her pleading to activate the CEDAW treaty, under the title "Equality Without Reservation." Erekat was lawyer at the Women Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC) between the years 2006 and 2008, and supervising lawyer of students at Al-Quds University's Human Rights Clinic in Jerusalem between 2008 and 2011. She was also the Head of Advocacy and Documentation Unit at WCLAC from 2014 to 2016. Erekat is currently a Legal Advisor, and does her practice for several organizations on issues pertaining to the rights of women and persons with disabilities. She volunteers at a few Palestinian institutions, and has had an active role in several local as well as international campaigns, workshops, and conferences.



Dr. Muiz Karajeh has a B.A. in Media and Political Science from Birzeit University, and a master's degree in International Relations from France. He has worked for diverse media and communication platforms, the last of which was for seven years at the International Monte Carlo Radio Station in Paris. He is a contributor in various journals and periodicals, including the prominent al-Adāb Lebanese Journal. He currently teaches Media at Birzeit University.



Arda Aghazarian is Communications Consultant with valuable experience in creative and professional writing, film, and radio production. She was Project Supervisor and Media and Advocacy Coordinator at the YWCA of Palestine (2009-2013), and World YWCA Executive Board Member (2007-2011). She has extensive knowledge in project management, and assisted in carrying out witness visits, conferences and study programs for several local organizations. She also delivered training locally and in other countries including Jordan, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Norway, and Australia. Aghazarian was Consultant for the YWCA of Armenia to be affiliated in the world movement, and mentored young women at the CSW in NY. She was selected as United Nations Media Practitioner, and was appointed Honorary Guest Speaker through different programs. Her lectures focus on issues related to narrative, identity, language, and the power of personal story in conflict resolution and wellbeing. Her auto ethnographic research looks into issues related to the sense of space and place, identity, and the empowerment of women in areas of conflict. She has a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Birzeit University, and is a Fulbright Scholar with an M.A. in Communication from Villanova University.

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