

More than 100 representatives from 60 European and Palestinian civil society organisation develop a joint declaration and establish a permanent coordination platform to support their advocacy for Palestine



Delegates from European countries during the field visit to the old city of Occupied Jerusalem, 4 November 2022. Credits: Saeed Alqaq.

Ramallah, 17 November 2022 – The first Palestinian-European Civil Society Forum convened in Ramallah from 7 to 9 November 2022. **More than 100 delegates from civil society structures from Palestine and from 13 European countries**, over the course of three days discussed the main challenges facing Palestine and the Palestinian society, both locally and in terms of advocacy in Europe.

The delegates **produced a joint declaration** emphasizing that the root cause for the oppression, fragmentation, and dispossession that the Palestinian people as a whole have faced and are facing are the consequence of Israeli unlawful institutionalised and systemic policies and practices implemented since 1948, including the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Participants have also developed **a set of recommendations on key positions and messages for civil society advocacy** and engagement with and for Palestine - including calling on the European governments and the European Union to take action concerning ending the occupation and implementing the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Delegates agreed on the need for strategic coordination and knowledge sharing amongst civil society actors active in and for Palestine and Europe, and thus announce that **the Forum**, through its main organisers, **will be turned into a permanent platform** to coordinate and amplify the Palestine advocacy efforts in Europe, with a fixed presence in Palestine and European countries, while also **convening the full Forum every two years**.

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Before the Forum, European delegates participated in tours in Lydd, occupied Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, Jericho, Hebron, and Bethlehem and *witnessed what occupation means in practice for the people - confiscated lands, water apartheid, random demolition orders, but also people's resilience, and determination to stay on their land* (in the words of one participant).

UNSR on the OPT **Francesca Albanese**, **PA officials** including Minister of Jerusalem Affairs **Fadi Al-Hadmi** and Prime Minister **Mohammad Shtayyeh** and EUREP **Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff** gave keynote speeches in the framework of the Forum, highlighting the importance of such event to create better EU-Palestinian networks and understanding of the reality on the ground.

Outcomes of the Forum are being compiled in a joint working document and will be published on this [website](#) for reference. To quote participants, *what I found most interesting about the workshops was hearing about the legal structure of the occupation, especially in Jerusalem, where Palestinian residents have different legal status. This should be considered an apartheid occupation and it's shocking that the international community does not do more about it.*

The event was funded by the European Union and selected European countries and organized by the [JHRC](#), [PNGO](#) and [PNIN](#) in Palestine, [EuroMed Rights](#), [ECCP](#) and [ELSC](#) in Europe, in cooperation with many Palestinian and European national networks and CSOs.

For more information see www.csforum.ps.

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