



ANNUAL REPORT

AUSTRALIA PALESTINE **ADVOCACY** NETWORK

www.apan.org.au

www.Facebook.com/AustraliaPalestineAdvocacyNetwork

President's Reflections

I have travelled to Israel/Palestine twice in the last 12 months and been struck both by the outrageous human rights violations inflicted by Israel and at the same time by the resilience of the Palestinian people. While on the one hand it is now almost impossible to imagine the delivery of any meaningful 'two-state solution', on the other hand it is wrong to abandon the principle, for to do so is to deny the right of self-determination. Who knows what the future will ultimately deliver? What we must do is insist on the fundamental principle of human rights under the UN charter and continually point to breaches of international law.

While supporters of Israel vehemently condemn the language of apartheid, no other word adequately describes the situation that now prevails. If a two-state solution is not delivered, then factotum there is one state, this is an apartheid state which the international community has no alternative other than to reject and sanction. It is nonsense to claim, as the Australian government does, that Israel is unfairly singled out at the United Nations for approbation. Israel is the only country in the world that seeks to be identified with, and share the same values as Western democracies, while at the same time maintaining a repressive occupation. It also has one of the most lethal armouries (including nuclear). It cannot be easily threatened. It easily threatens.

Perhaps the most graphic images of the year have been of the 'March of Return'. Thousands of Palestinians from Gaza refuse to accept permanent incarceration and isolation. They bravely walk into no man's land and face an aggressive Israeli military which is determined to keep the Gazan population isolated and under siege. The first activist to initiate this movement and set up a tent, in response to Trump's hostile position on Palestinian refugees and Jerusalem, was Muthanna al-Najjar, an independent journalist. Since the beginning of the march, many Palestinians have lost their lives. In a most bizarre twist we have recently heard that Israel has channelled 25 million from Qatar to Hamas on the understanding they will prevent any further resistance of this kind in the lead up to the Israeli rerun election.

We have long expected Trump's vaunted 'deal of the century' to be revealed. What in fact was revealed at the June Bahrain conference was not even an economic plan, but a Trumpian proposal to trade peace and justice for a show bag of lollies. Given the US has no intention of paying for the lollies, expecting others to do so, and given the Palestinians would be billions of dollars in front if they could develop their own land, industry and commerce; the vacuousness of the proposal was laid bare. To give credit to our own government, we didn't send any high-profile delegates, nor make any other comment or gesture supporting the plan.

It is anticipated that the political component of the US proposal will be revealed before the end of the year. This will of course be totally unacceptable to the Palestinian administration who, following the July demolition of an apartment block in Area A, supposedly under full Palestinian jurisdiction, have withdrawn from all negotiations with the Israeli administration. They have also stated they will not enter formal negotiations with the US administration. The political component of the US proposal will almost certainly reinforce Jerusalem as the exclusive capital of Israel, deny the right of return for Palestinian refugees, endorse the annexation of at least some of Area C, and

encourage the expectation that Palestinians will be absorbed, by and large, by neighbouring Arab countries.

Because Israel's position in relation to Palestine is legally and morally indefensible, it and its supporters seek another weapon of defence. Their preference appears to be the weaponizing of antisemitism. Antisemitism has been one of the most awful blights on the course of human history, culminating in the unspeakable horror of the holocaust. However the true horror of antisemitism is diminished by being blithely splattered around in an attempt to tarnish the credibility and reputation of good people who bare no ill will to Israel, or to Jewish people, but who have the courage to speak against Israeli policies that diminish and demean the Palestinian people.

It takes courage to speak out for Palestine because the antisemitic slur inevitably follows any publicity given to Israeli excesses. The slur or its threat towards media outlets has often been enough to stop the printing of an article critical of Israeli action in the occupied territories, or to demand an article of reply if such a piece should appear. People who have the courage and fortitude to speak do so in support of human rights, in support of upholding international law, in support of the right of refugees and who wish to see the implementation of the peace plan on the basis of the 1967 borders. Is this too much to ask? Accusations or imputations of antisemitism against me personally I see as the voice of weak and cowardly people who have no capacity to mount a moral (or legal) argument of defence and therefore fall back on slur as the only option available to them.

While Netanyahu, Trump and their supporters seek to delegitimise Palestine and Palestinian rights, we have sought to build the case for formal Australian Recognition of Palestine. We were so grateful that at its December national conference, the Australian Labor Party agreed to make Recognition of Palestine a priority. With an unexpected political landscape following the May election, it would be easy to be despondent about our effective potential at a national level. However, following our first visit to parliament since the election, in July, we are much encouraged by the continuing commitment of those who seek genuine justice and peace for Palestinians and Israelis alike. We are also determined to work for a cross party commitment to justice and fairness without which peace is an illusion.

In solidarity,

Bishop George Browning
APAN President
September 2019



Membership

APAN's membership continues to grow – we had a 40% increase in the number of members this year, with a total of 314 members.

We have 35 organisational members – 15 large and 20 small. These organisations represent a great breadth in concern about Palestine. The smaller organisations are predominantly organisations focusing specifically on Palestinian solidarity, and the larger organisations ones that hold concern for Palestine in a broader mandate – such as unions, aid & development organisations, and churches.



APAN members meeting with new local member elected in Melbourne seat of Jaga Jaga

The expansion of membership is predominantly with individual memberships – we have had an increase of 100 individual memberships this year to 279 members. We have opened up concession and monthly memberships in the last few months, and 32 individual members have taken up the concession option. Only a couple have taken up the monthly payment option. The concession membership option does decrease APAN income per member, but we hope this will be offset by the expansion of our membership base.

We are keen to further engage with our members in Palestine advocacy work, and two social work students are currently undertaking an individual members survey to explore how members might want to be further involved in the movement.

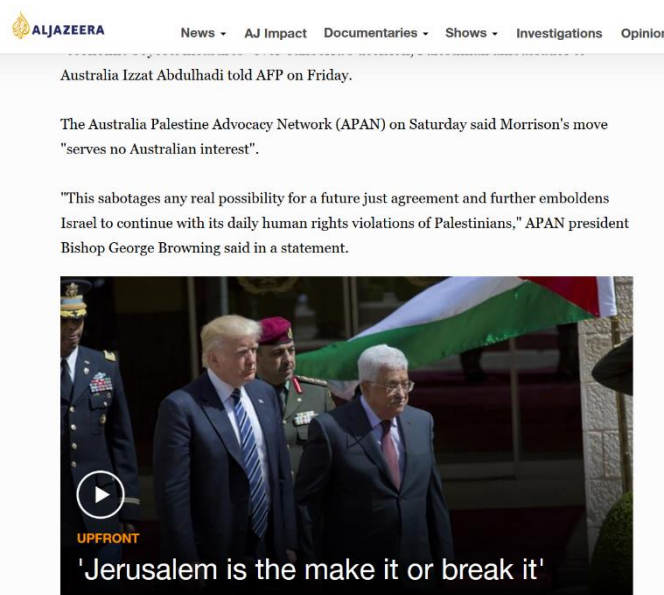
Media and Communications

APAN has well and truly cemented its place in community and with decision makers. We have worked to get the Palestinian voice into the community, into the mainstream media, and into the halls of parliament.

The Government's announcement on Jerusalem last December was a real test for APAN, and through our proactive media engagement, **we captured a bulk of the coverage** and enabled the narrative to present "both sides". APAN was featured in national and global media including **Al Jazeera, The Guardian, France 24, ABC, SMH, and The Weekend Australian**, and we did interviews with **Channel 10, SBS, 2GB, 2SM and Macquarie**.

Throughout the year we continued to build on our existing network of journalists and producers from flagship shows like Radio National with Fran Kelly and Jonathan Green, and Drive with Pat Karvelas. Our expanded staff capacity has enabled our media, messaging and content to be proactive rather than predominantly reactive, as in the past. Highlights from the last year include an exclusive **interview with Fran Kelly** following the release of an open letter signed by 18 former diplomats which urged our government to oppose Trump's plans for Palestine. We also appeared on ABC Radio National talking about the Jewish Nation State Law alongside prominent Mizrahi Jewish activist Orly Noy. We were quick to address the unfolding events **ahead of the anticipated announcements about the so called 'deal of the century'**, releasing a statement, undertaking radio interviews, and publishing an opinion piece in New Matilda.

Following the federal election, our media team led by iconic Australian journalist Peter Manning was at Parliament House **lobbying the Parliamentary Press Gallery**. This trip was an exercise in building relationships and encouraging new Gallery members and others to meet with us and use our resources on a regular basis. We were able to meet with **15 senior and core journalists from the Parliament Press Gallery**, including ABC, Bloomberg, SBS, AAP, Newscorp including Sky News and Daily Telegraph, and Channel 10 Network, who were all very interested in our work and understood that Palestine supporters exist at the highest of levels.



Digital Media

In the lead up to the **ALP National Conference** last year, APAN brought together a group of 12 Palestinian youth and allies, as well as Bob Carr, to create a social media video that called on the Labor Party to pass a motion to Recognise Palestine. The video was used at our booth, and shared widely online, reaching close to 20,000 views.

This year's **Nakba commemoration mini-social media campaign** relied on elevating Palestinian voices and stories - something we have committed to doing more, and is regarded as best practice. Our Instagram and Facebook posts were well received and widely shared, and took a different, more positive tone.

After an extensive review process, including parliamentary feedback and input from an email expert, we rebranded, redesigned and re-launched our regular email communication with parliamentarians and media, and we now send a weekly email "**PalNews**".

In our commitment to Sara's **professional development**, Sara undertook a day-long Video for Social Media Workshop, as well as a Digital Workshop with digital campaigner Lachlan Dale. Through this, we were able to audit APAN's social media platforms and content, and look for ways to innovate. I am pleased to confirm that we have continued to steadily and surely increase our presence across major social media platforms - resulting in the creation of a **diverse, active, and connected online community of Palestine supporters**.



Political Advocacy

APAN has continued to undertake regular lobbying trips to Canberra to engage with parliamentarians and departmental staff. We are pleased to see a growing number of National Party Parliamentarians standing with Palestine, as well as others in the Government, and many in Labor and the cross-bench. This was particularly helpful when the Government announced the 'possibility' of an Embassy move to Jerusalem, where we were able to have a significant number of closed door meetings and consultations.

As a follow up engagement to our Military Court Watch tour, we mobilised **95 parliamentarians to stand up for Palestinian children in military detention** and to write an open letter to UNICEF asking for further action. This letter included both State and Federal representatives and appears to be the largest ever collective Australian parliamentary action in support of Palestinian rights.

There was a massive lobbying effort in the lead up to the **ALP National Conference** in December, which culminated in the Party resolving to make the Recognition of Palestine a priority for the next Labor Government. The advocacy included both a centralised and decentralised lobbying effort.

Centrally, in the six months before conference, APAN had 41 meetings with ALP federal parliamentarians, building the case for Palestinian Recognition within the Party.

We were particularly excited about our largest ever decentralised effort engaging Palestine supporters to undertake local political lobbying. We began mobilising supporters in May 2018, with 211 supporters expressing interest in engaging in the strategy.

APAN facilitated training of 55 supporters in lobbying and political engagement – both in person and online. As a result, 35 parliamentarians were directly contacted by their constituents, including 15 meetings. There were also meetings with 14 union delegates to the conference. This group sent 548 targeted emails to Labor Senators. We also launched an email campaign in December 2018 for people to write to their Labor representatives, with 625 people participating.

APAN also invested significantly in having a presence at the ALP conference – we staffed an information booth for the duration of the conference and presented a video produced specifically for the conference featuring Bob Carr. We also hosted an event as part of the ALP Fringe program, with all 9 Federal parliamentarians who travelled to Palestine with APAN participating, and drawing 120 participants - one of the largest attendances at a Fringe event.



Participants in APAN online lobbying training



APAN ALP conference stall with Senator Anne Urquhart



In the lead up to the Federal Election in May, APAN undertook an online campaign inviting people to contact all their candidates and ask them to stand for Palestine, and 695 people participated in this. Anecdotally, candidates from two different States indicated that Palestine was one of two issues that they heard most about before the election. This suggests that this strategy isn't used by large organisations, and therefore can have a significant impact for the modest numbers of participants.

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."
Desmond Tutu

SCORECARD

How Political Parties Rate on Palestine

+ POLICIES	PARTIES →	Liberal/National	Labor	Greens
Supports the Recognition of Palestine		X	✓✓	✓✓
Supports East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine		X	✓✓	✓✓
Condemns illegal Israeli settlements		X	✓	✓✓
Calls for an immediate end to Israel's Occupation of West Bank and Gaza		X	X	✓✓

Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) is one of Australia's leading organisations standing up for Palestine. We seek to positively influence public policy on Palestine and Israel in line with human rights, justice, and equality.

For more information and references, go to www.apan.org.au

APAN pre-election scorecard



APAN *thankyou* *social media post*
acknowledging politicians who had been
critical voices for Palestinian human rights in
the Australian Federal Parliament but who
finished at the end of last parliamentary term.

Engaging Palestinian Youth

One of our key strategic focus's in this current period is to equip and support Palestinian youth to become involved in the advocacy movement.

Advocacy and lobbying workshops took centre stage this year, kicking off with a hugely successful youth advocacy workshop/meet and greet with scholar Noura Erakat. We then organised in partnership with ActionAid! a number of digital lobbying workshops - a first for us in the space. These were well-attended and participants were highly engaged, and we received much positive feedback.



Palestinian youth attend APAN's advocacy workshop led by Noura Erakat in Melbourne

APAN has also rolled out the first iteration of its **Palestine 101 webinars**, led and presented by multiple Palestinian academics, activists and authors including Dr Sary Zananiri, Zeina Abou Meita, and Dr Randa AbdelFattah. The course is 6 weekly webinars on 'Palestine', covering a range of historical and contemporary topics. The series attracted over 60 signups when it was first advertised, and due to the high demand, APAN prioritised the attendance of Palestinian voices. We have had almost 20 Palestinian youth participate consistently each week. As I write this, we are going into the final week of the series, but so far, anecdotal feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

In our efforts to continue providing training in areas of media and advocacy as a means of engagement with young people at an organisational level, and an opportunity to work more closely with Palestinian youth in the community, we have co-developed



APAN - Australia Palestine Advocacy Network

3 Jul. at 11:27 am · 🌐

Calling All Palestinians!

We've made it easy - this is Everything You Need to Know about the Occupation!

- ✓ History, Highlights, Watershed moments, Where to from here?
- ✓ A guide to "difficult conversations" on Israel's occupation of Palestine
- ✓ 6 short weekly webinars every Wednesday evening, from the comfort of your own home
- ✓ By Palestinians, for Palestinians
- ✓ Bring your family and friends
- ✓ Sign up now - it's free!

#FreePalestine #itsNotThatComplicated



an intensive **Palestinian Youth Media and Advocacy Bootcamp** in partnership with organisation Democracy in Colour as part of our coalition building and intersectional work. We are currently in the planning stages, consulting with multiple activists and Palestinian youth to lead the workshops and presentations. The Bootcamp is expected to be rolled out in February 2020.

In our continuing youth outreach work, we helped organise prominent Palestinian American poet Remi Kanazi's trip in Australia. This has also been a new audience for APAN to tap into, form networks and establish ourselves as one of the main organising voices on Palestine.

Special Events & Grassroots Support

In July, we were honoured to work with AFOPA Edward Said memorial lecturer **Noura Erakat** during her visit to Australia. We were delighted to host a facebook live event, and a sold out event at Melbourne's State Library that we co-hosted with Australians for Palestine. Noura's message about connecting the Palestinian struggle with other social justice issues resonated with many.

In August, APAN hosted Gerard Horton & Salwa Duaibis of **Military Court Watch** in Australia on a speaking tour. We took up this role after Harry Wallace, who was originally organising the tour with MIAT, passed away suddenly in late 2017. The tour was completely funded by the Wallace Foundation and MIAT, including APAN staff time to coordinate the tour. Gerard and Salwa spoke with hundreds of people in public and private forums, including a significant proportion of legal networks.



Military Court Watch Director Salwa Duaibis at APAN's fundraising dinner, Sydney



Two events were held with the Law Council, one in Canberra and one in Adelaide. An event was held in conjunction with the Law School at the University of Tasmania, and one at the Pro Bono Centre at the University of Queensland. The tour also included a very successful event at Federal Parliament, where 19 parliamentarians attended, a round-table with 8 DFAT staff, and meetings with State parliamentarians of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

In October, in the context of the Wentworth byelection, the Prime Minister announced that he was open to moving Australia's Embassy to Jerusalem. APAN moved quickly with an online campaign **No to moving Australia's Embassy to Jerusalem** to contact political leaders and we had 3816 people participate. This was our largest campaign by far, and greatly increased the numbers of people engaged with APAN. This also laid important foundations for APAN's political lobbying work, and we believe was a significant factor in the outcome of the Government not moving their embassy.

In November, in conjunction with our AGM, we hosted a ***Palestine Comes to You*** event, featuring 6 Palestinian young people sharing their stories about visiting Palestine.



Youth speakers at the Palestine Comes to You Event, Sydney

We supported these young people to craft their stories, resulting in incredibly powerful narratives about displacement and reconnection. Buoyed by the success of this event, we now see this as a template of supporting and encouraging the voices of Palestinian young people to be heard.

Also in November, was the **Palestine National Day event in Melbourne**, where the community holds a mini-festival while the Palestinian flags are raised over Federation Square. This year there wasn't the human or financial resources to host a large event, so we supported a group of Palestinian young people to host a smaller event. The event also focused on young Palestinian voices, with 8 young people speaking about "what does it mean to you to be a Palestinian in Melbourne?". The stories that were shared were powerful and poignant.

In December 2018, we supported John Salisbury's **Walk for Palestine** from Melbourne to Adelaide. We organised an event at the beginning of his walk; we also facilitated media outputs and opportunities; and by inviting supporters along his route to join him.



In Adelaide, where the ALP National Conference was being held, we collaborated with AFOPA members to join John for the last day of his walk and organised for a significant number of the conference delegates to welcome John as he completed his walk and handed a letter to key members of the ALP asking them to Recognise Palestine.

In May and June 2019, when it was clear that Trump was preparing for an announcement with the Bahrain conference, APAN worked with former diplomats to prepare an **Open Letter to the Prime Minister to reject Trump's Middle East proposal**. A total of 18 former diplomats signed this letter, and we were able to organise an interview with ABC Radio National Breakfast with one of the signatories.

APAN has been working with a group of committed volunteers in Melbourne to produce Fact Sheets about Palestine. Fact sheets focusing on Trump's Proposal and another on Welfare Payments to Palestinian prisoners' families have already been utilised in lobbying and we have others in the pipeline. We are hoping these can be a resource for both educating our supporters, and political lobbying.

APAN is continually active in engaging with grassroots supporters and member groups, often playing a promoting or connecting role. We have been really excited to support the establishment of two new Palestine advocacy groups this year - Tasmanian Friends of Palestine and Territorians for Palestine in the Northern Territory. We see the role of APAN as being able to utilise our large networks to be able to serve the broader movement.

Study Tours to Palestine

APAN hasn't undertaken any trips to Palestine in this period. The federal election meant it wasn't an ideal time to facilitate specialist tours. We were also unsure about our capacity to facilitate tours for the general public.

We continue to have a close working relationship with Lisa, and with her are planning general public and specialist tours during the later part of 2019 and 2020.

Fundraising

We have been very fortunate to secure a multi-year funding agreement with Broadley Trust, enabling us to securely plan for two campaigners in the current period. We also deeply value our relationship with the Wallace Family Trust, enabling project-based work – which has provided funding for the Military Court Watch tour in this period, and the Black Palestine Solidarity Conference in the coming period.

Memberships remain a significant income stream, as do individual donations.



Dabke at APAN's Fundraising dinner in Sydney

We are deeply grateful for all the effort that goes into organising APAN Fundraising dinners.

In this period, Dr George Hatoum led a team in Sydney, and Mr David Forde a team in Brisbane organising events that together raised about half of APAN's operating costs for the year.

In Brisbane, we partnered with the Muslim Charitable Association, and half of the raised funds on this night, went towards humanitarian projects in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Executive

The APAN Executive is an unusual governance Board, in the significant time that all the Executive members contribute to the running of the organisation. Many Executive members contribute significant volunteer hours every week supporting the implementation of our strategy.

Professor Bassam Dally is stepping down from the Executive after 7 years serving on the Executive – including two years as Treasurer and most recently four as Vice President. Bassam has contributed a phenomenal number of hours in many different roles during this time, and his contributions will be sorely missed.



I wish to acknowledge all the other Executive members who have served this year – Nasser Mashni as Treasurer; Ros Harper as Secretary and our general members – Wendy Turner, Peter Slezak, David Forde, Hiba El-Farra and Bruce Francis.

This will be my final year serving as President. I encourage the Executive to take some proactive succession planning for this role in the coming year.

Staff

We continue to be well served by our hard-working staff.

Jessica continues to carry the main administrative load as well as responsibility for bringing into effect the execution of our strategic plan. She flourishes in the role, but it is very demanding. We need to constantly monitor and care for her in terms of resourcing, training and adequate time off. Jessica took an extended period of 3 months leave over December-February this year. Jessica has also hosted social work student placements with mutual benefit, taking one on in 2018, and now two in 2019.

Sara continues to bring energy, insight, and new effectiveness to the network. Her focus on social media and the involvement and education of the younger generations has been invaluable. We have been most fortunate to gain multi-year funding from the Broadley Foundation which has given stability to her work. We are really excited that Sara will be undertaking the Centre for Australian Progress Fellowship in this coming year, which will be a wonderful way to build on her skills.

Michael has stepped back from producing the monthly *Palestine Digest* which has been replaced with a weekly *Palnews* email. We continue to rely upon him for major articles, opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Michael is also part of our media engagement team. Together the three of them have a truly remarkable set of skills.



The APAN team at the inaugural Jerusalem Peace Prize, Melbourne

