University Teachers in Palestine trained to become first to pilot UNESCO- International Federation of Journalists Model Course on Safety of Journalists



From 25 to 27 January 2017, the UNESCO Office in Ramallah organized a training workshop to introduce Palestinian university teachers to the Model Course on the Safety of Journalists developed by UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) for the Arab region. This course is aimed at providing media students with a detailed understanding of both theoretical and practical aspects relating to safety. The training, which took place in the city of Jericho, was held in partnership with the IFJ, represented by its local counterpart the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate (PJS).

The training follows the official approval of the Model Course by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education last October. Since then, many universities have expressed an interest in integrating the course in their journalism curricula. Birzeit University even announced that it would launch the course as of next semester.

In his opening remarks, the Minister of Education Dr. Sabri Saidam said, “This model curriculum is a good initiative to raise awareness among Palestinian journalists on safety issues.” He also expressed his gratitude to UNESCO for “being the main supporter of education in Palestine”.

On behalf of Dr. Lodovico Folin Calabi, Head and Representative of the UNESCO Office in Ramallah, Junaid Sorosh-Wali, Head of the Culture section said, “UNESCO has made the safety of journalists one of its priority areas of intervention in Palestine, within the

framework of the implementation of the 'UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity' that UNESCO has been mandated to lead".

Mr. Nasser Abu Baker, Director General of PJS, reminded participants that Palestine was the first country in the region to adopt this course, and highlighted its importance especially in regards to the high rate of attacks against journalists.

Al-Quds, An-Najah National University, Birzeit University, Arab American University, Modern University College and the Palestine Technical College were all represented at the workshop.

Naela Khalil, teacher and reporter, said, "The techniques introduced during this training workshop are very important. Our lives are at risk in different ways; we need to be alert and use good practices to minimize the risks".

The training offered methods for delivering both the theoretical and the practical part of the syllabus, with examples and case studies from Palestine.

Dr. Naim Al-Masri from the Palestine Trauma Center gave a perspective from Gaza on the importance of the course: "The safety of journalists is an essential topic in Palestine where we have been frequently exposed to conflict. It is necessary for future journalists to be aware of the minimum standards of safety for journalists".

This three-day training workshop was co-facilitated by Dr. Pirita Juppi, a trainer, lecturer and researcher in journalism, and by several local specialists who covered specific components of the curriculum. The event was implemented with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Government of Norway and the NET-MED Youth Project, which is funded by the European Union.

Recommendations from the participating universities were for UNESCO and IFJ to continue this type of training, with an emphasis on the practical part of the syllabus, and to follow-up and evaluate the implementation of the course in each university.

For more information on this event, please contact:

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Information on UNESCO's activities in Palestine is also available at www.unesco.org/ramallah