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Ramallah Office

PRESS RELEASE
2017/17
Ramallah, 16 November 2017

UNESCO completes Phase II of open dialogue between Palestinian security forces and journalists on freedom of expression



A 3-day open dialogue between law enforcement actors and journalists was concluded on Wednesday at the Ministry of Interior in Ramallah, Palestine. The event was organized following a successful first experience supported by UNESCO in September of this year.

Altogether, over 50 members of police and security forces have been trained on how they can contribute to an environment that is conducive to freedom of expression and ensure safer working conditions for journalists. Participants range from Civil Defense to Police, National Security Forces, Military liaison, Public Relations, the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Interior.

The open dialogues are contributing to building greater trust between police and security forces and the media, and to enhanced awareness about the role and function of journalists in democratic societies.

Lodovico Folin Calabi, UNESCO Representative to Palestine, explained that the activity would foster *the reinforcement of harmonious and professional relationships by setting a common ground between security forces and media professionals , both of whom are essential to any modern democracy*. Mohammad Mansour, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Interior, echoed this view, stating that *such activities play a fundamental role in supporting*

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democratic and transparent governance. Nasser Abu Baker, Head of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, expressed the Syndicate's commitment to supporting all initiatives that provide *communication spaces and platforms for mutual understanding between journalists and security forces*.

The dialogue touched upon topics such as the safety of both groups of participants, communication between members of security forces and the media, and their respective rights and roles in upholding and strengthening democratic institutions. The training had a strong practical approach and included a Training of Trainers component.
This project is part of a wider initiative by UNESCO to uphold its mandate to foster freedom of expression through the training of security forces, within the framework of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board in 2012. Similar training activities have already been successfully conducted in more than 10 countries, among them Iraq, Libya, and Tunisia.

This project was implemented thanks to support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

For more information on UNESCO's activities in Palestine, please visit www.unesco.org/ramallah and visit us on : Unesco Ramallah Office

For more information on this event, please contact: Majd Beltaji, Public Information Officer of the UNESCO Ramallah Office, at m.beltaji@unesco.org