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Ramallah Office

PRESS RELEASE
2018/1
Nablus, 6 February, 2018

Launch of Arabic version of the Executive Summary of the World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Report



Nablus, 6 February 2018- UNESCO launched yesterday the Arabic version of the executive summary of the 2017/2018 World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Report. The launch was hosted by AnNajah University in Nablus, in cooperation with Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences and the UNESCO Ramallah Office. It received high attendance, with about 300 participants, including representatives of different civil society organizations, universities and ministries as well as university students.

Among the keynote speakers were the Representative of the Palestinian Prime Minister, Minister of Justice Dr. Ali Abu Diak and Prof. Natsheh from AnNajah University. They all expressed the significance of this launch taking place in Palestine, which adds to the country's commitment towards all obligations related to human rights, including the right to freedom of expression. Dr. Bernt Eide, Representative of the Oslo University, a Representative of the Ministry of Information and a representative of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate also gave brief comments on the report and urged UNESCO and the local government to continue their efforts in adressing the outcomes of the report to support the media landscape in Palestine.

Dr. Lodovico Folin Calabi, UNESCO Representative to Palestine emphasized that *the report exposes the drastic underrepresentation of women in journalism, media companies and in*

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coverage, for example in expert interviews, where only 1 in 5 experts is female. Mr. Thomas Brundin, Deputy Consul General of Sweden further expressed that *UNESCO's mandate is more crucial now than ever due to the high number of threats, violations, hate speech and the persisting need for Media Literacy*. Ms. Hilde Haraldstad, Representative of Norway to Palestine, added that *Freedom of Expression is one of the main pillars of democracy and within the report, it was obvious that freedoms are being violated which is a very worrying factor for Norway*.

Presenting the report findings on the overall outcomes, Mr. Mousa Al-Rimawi from MADA emphasized alerting developments. Especially regarding media freedom worldwide, the report shows that internet shutdowns are increasingly becoming a problem and that freedom of expression is curtailed under the premises of concerns for national security. With regards to the the safety of journalists, the report shows the highest number of killings of journalists in especially Arab States, to a large extent due to ongoing conflicts.

Furthermore the study also reminds us that impunity for crimes against journalists sadly is a worldwide norm, with 9 in 10 cases remaining unpunished. Independent media to restore freedoms in general is therefore crucial. It is worth mentioning that the 2017/2018 report is supported by the Government of Sweden through the Extra budgetary project *Promoting Democracy and Freedom of Expression*.

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