

Guest Speakers Address Young Journalists on Training Course

Ramallah, 18th March 2013

Government Spokesperson, Nour Odeh, The Central Elections Commission's Media Coordinator Fareed Taamallah and Oxford University Professor, Karma Nabulsi, all addressed over fifty young journalists as part of their training on applying ethical approaches to their everyday work.

The training, organized by Civic Forum Institute (CFI) in cooperation with Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS), and funded by the British Consulate in Jerusalem, is part of a wider project focusing on ethical reporting, particularly related to elections. It follows the development of a Code of Conduct for Election Reporting, developed by representatives of the Palestinian media at a two-day workshop in November. To date, around 120 journalists and media operatives from the West Bank and Gaza have signed up to the Code, including over 50 who have signed online at www.cfip.org.

Speaking about her experiences as a woman working both as a journalist and in the political sphere, Ms. Odeh talked about the challenges she has faced. She also discussed the challenges, both economic and political faced by the Palestinian Authority, and answered questions from the participants about pertinent issues such as the delayed payments of civil service salaries.

The CEC welcomed the training, and spoke about their role in preparing for elections on all levels. Issues around the local elections held in October 2012 were discussed, including the issue of the outstanding councils in which elections have still not been held. Fareed Taamallah said, *'everything is now in place and the CEC are ready to administer the elections whenever the government are ready to call them'*.

The third speaker, Dr Nabulsi spoke about the developing registration for national elections to the Palestine National Council, the supreme legislative body of the PLO. She highlighted the importance of inclusive elections that include the voices of Palestinians wherever they live in the world. *'Journalism is a public service,'* she said. *'As a journalist you are responsible for ensuring people have accurate information, and to advocate for Palestinians in exile outside Palestine who do not have a voice, alongside those Palestinians inside who can vote'*.

One of the trainees, a reporter and presenter with Jenin TV, said, *'This training has been an amazing experience, the trainers and the speakers have given us many useful skills and lots of new information. It is important for young media practitioners like us to have the chance to attend such events and learn from the experience of others, both our seniors and our peers'*.

The training, which lasted for three days, included a range of practical and theoretical activities related to interview skills, checking and verifying sources, reporting opinion polls and the importance of elections and a journalist's role in these.

A second two workshops, with another fifty participants are scheduled for the 23rd to 25th March. The workshops are already fully subscribed.