



The Civic Forum Institute



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Fifty Senior Media Figures Debate Ethical Media Practices in Palestine

Fifty senior media practitioners from TV, radio, online and print media from throughout the West Bank and Gaza, gathered in Jericho on 28th and 29th March, to discuss and debate issues affecting the media in Palestine. Attendees included representatives from Wafa, Ma'an News, Radio Bethlehem, Al Hayat, Al Ayyam, Palestine TV, Bir Zeit and Al Najah Universities and a range of local media outlets from throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Welcoming the participants, Muhammed Abu Diab, Director of CFI said, *'we are delighted you could all join us today, and particularly welcome our friends from Gaza whose travel plans have been so uncertain for this last week'*. He stressed the importance of the event, saying *'from the discussions over the next two days we are hoping to gather ideas, suggestions and recommendations about needed development, and potential projects where the media and civil society can work together to bridge the gap between us and our constituents, the Palestinian people'*.

This Forum comes as the concluding event of a project implemented by Civic Forum Institute (CFI) in collaboration with Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS) and funded by the British Consulate in Jerusalem. The project has included the development of a Code of Conduct for Election Reporting, developed by a group of senior media figures from the West Bank and Gaza in November. Over 150 media practitioners have signed up to the Code to date and more continue to do so at www.cfip.org. In addition, four workshops training young journalists on ethical tools and approaches to their day-to-day work, were held between 16th and 25th March, with over 100 participants.

Through the two days, the participants worked in small groups, discussing and debating topics including; the main ethical issues affecting Palestinian media, the effect of social media on ethical reporting and its role as a source of news, how to improve public trust in the media and issues around political affiliations and their influence on election reporting. Each group then presented the results of their discussions back to the plenary, and additional debate and input from all participants was encouraged.

The event concluded with a session to round up and finalize a set of recommendations for next steps and future work, and these will be included in a position paper, currently in development. Speaking from the Journalists' Union, Abdul Nassar Al Najjar said, *'we are encouraged to see so many decision-makers from important media outlets represented here, so that the recommendations we have developed together can have a real chance of implementation and support. It is essential that we work together to improve standards in the Palestinian media, and that we all strive as leaders to uphold these standards in both our own work and that of all our teams'*.

One of the participants from Gaza thanked the event organizers, saying, *'From 2006 until today, we have had training for journalists in Gaza and training for journalists in the West Bank, but this is the first time we have had the opportunity to work and collaborate together as journalists from one country. We hope there will be many more opportunities to do so in the future'*.

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