

PARIS, 26 June 2020

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Item 25 of the provisional agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 207 EX/DECISION 39  
CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS  
IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

**SUMMARY**

The present document is submitted pursuant to 207 EX/Decision 39 and 40 C/Resolution 67.

It reports on assistance provided to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant Palestinian stakeholders, and on developments since the 207th session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Decision required: paragraph 36.

1. The reporting period is from July 2019 to May 2020.
2. Detailed information on UNESCO's activities in Gaza is provided in document 209 EX/24 "Occupied Palestine" and is therefore not reported on in the present document.
3. Along with the rest of the world, Palestine has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As in other countries, the government closed schools and businesses, asked most workers and families to restrict their movement, and mobilized the public health infrastructure. As of 17 May 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports 554 confirmed cases and 4 deaths in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.
4. The UN response to COVID-19 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory mainly focused on humanitarian needs, aimed at supporting the Palestinian Government's efforts to respond to the crisis, has been swift and thorough. The UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) convened the first interagency COVID-19 task force meeting as the first cases were confirmed in the West Bank, assigning clearly-defined roles to task force members.



## EDUCATION

5. The protracted conflict and violent episodes of escalation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the closure of the Gaza Strip and physical access restrictions pose daily challenges and threats to the fulfilment of the right to education of children and youth. The damaging effects of the deteriorating situation in Gaza have resulted in about 270,000 children suffering from severe, moderate or mild forms of mental disorders<sup>1</sup> and a rise in school dropout rates. The rate of students exposed to violence inside the school was 46% in 2018. Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to dropping out of school. The degree of integration of children with disabilities into public schools was 58.6 in 2018.<sup>2</sup> The future is also uncertain for adolescents, as the youth unemployment rate currently stand at 24% in Palestine.<sup>3</sup>

6. In this context, as the technical advisor to Education Sector Working Group, Local Aid Coordination Secretariat and Inclusive Quality Education thematic working group, UNESCO continues to support inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all Palestinians, both through policy and technical advice as well as through interventions on the ground.

7. During the reporting period, within the context of the UNESCO Arab Regional Strategic Framework for Education in Emergencies (2018-2021), UNESCO provided technical guidance to the Ministry of Education on the concept of inclusive education, as well as on teacher training on inclusive education and child-centred teaching methods, mainly through the implementation of the Education Cannot Wait project. In June 2019, UNESCO launched a two-year project funded by the Education Cannot Wait initiative and implemented with UNICEF, UNRWA, UNDP and Save the Children. This Multi-Year Resilience Programme for Palestine (2019-2021) aims at strengthening the resilience of communities, children, youth and their families in targeted areas in Gaza, East Jerusalem and Area C, through improved access to inclusive, equitable education and learning opportunities. UNESCO aims at providing remedial education for children in hospitals, inclusive education training to teachers and staff in government schools and assistive devices for children with disabilities.

8. Within the EU-funded Youth for Employment in the Mediterranean Project (YEM), UNESCO revised and fine-tuned a skills forecasting model in order to provide a projection of labour market needs for the next five years in Palestine. The model anticipates the need of certain occupations in order to inform policies and to provide information for youth to direct their career path to bridge the gap between the demand and supply in the labour market. UNESCO, in partnership with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), held a launch event for the skills forecasting model in Ramallah on 13 February 2020, which was opened by the Minister of Education. UNESCO will complement this work by analysing real time data related to jobs in demand.

9. As part of UNESCO's support to Palestine's higher education sector, a two-day workshop was organized in December 2019 in Ramallah on the role of higher education in achieving the SDGs, and SDG 4 in particular. Forty high-level representatives from universities, the Ministry of Higher Education and civil society organizations participated. They agreed to work collaboratively in achieving SDGs, particularly SDG 4, and to ensure alignment between the SDGs and their own strategies, also recommending strengthened synergies between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education.

10. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education (MoE) co-led the Task Force on Distance Learning, in collaboration with its partners in the Education Cluster (UNICEF, Save the Children, etc), aligning its interventions with the MoE's needs and plans to respond to COVID-19. Funds from existing extra-budgetary projects were reprogrammed in an

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<sup>1</sup> OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring & Evaluation Report, Ministry of Education, 2018-2019.

<sup>3</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

effort to provide urgent assistance to the Response Plan developed by the Palestinian government. Additional support was mobilized from the Education Cannot Wait First Emergency Response (FER) window through UNICEF and from CapED to support the development of distance learning modalities and online awareness raising on healthy lifestyles and psychosocial support during and post pandemic. UNESCO is also working closely with the Ministry of Education and other partners on implementing the global joint Framework (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, World Food Programme) on school reopening in Palestine.

11. The closure of schools and universities in Palestine, which will remain closed until the end of the school year as a protective measure to avoid the spread of the coronavirus, has impacted over 1.6 million students. The Government made available an online platform to support distance learning, and has announced that schools will reopen in August.

## CULTURE

12. Since the last reporting period, and within the framework of the project to support “Local development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment in Palestine” funded by Sweden, UNESCO completed the rehabilitation of eight cultural heritage sites. Three other sites are currently in progress. During this period, the project generated 6,500 working days as temporary job opportunities, trained 6 architects and engineers and organized 9 community awareness activities. As part of the project activities, UNESCO started the preparation of:

- The Conservation and Management Plan of Sebastia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The site is on the Tentative List of Palestine<sup>4</sup> and contains significant archaeological sites, landscape features as well as a living old town. The Conservation and Management Plan will be used as a tool to manage the property and address the challenges facing the site such as urban development and poor maintenance.
- A publication on the project, success stories and best practices, which will cover technical and community engagement aspects.

13. UNESCO provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) for the development of four by-laws to enable the proper implementation of the “Decree Law concerning Tangible Cultural Heritage”. The MoTA is currently reviewing the draft by-laws for museums, excavations, inventory instructions, conservation and protection of built cultural heritage, after which a round of consultations with specialized civil society organizations will take place before submission to the Palestinian Cabinet for endorsement.

14. The preparation of the Conservation and Management Plan for the World Heritage site “Hebron/AI-Khalil Old Town” funded under the World Heritage Fund, is in progress. UNESCO provides technical support to MoTA for the elaboration of preparatory studies in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders.

15. A project for the elaboration of the Nomination file for Jericho cultural sites has been approved under the World Heritage Fund for USD 30,000, and will be implemented in coordination with the UNESCO Office in Ramallah.

16. UNESCO has continued to supervise the rehabilitation works in the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, funded by Norway, to open a multimedia interactive exhibition on Palestinian culture. The project has been extended until December 2020 with an additional USD 165,000 from Norway that will help address the challenges faced during project implementation, and in particular the renovation works and Civil Defense safety requirements at the Peace Centre building.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5718/>

17. UNESCO organized for the first time a capacity-building training on the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property on the Prevention of Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property and the 1954 Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The training was organized from 3 to 6 December 2019, in cooperation with the Italian Carabinieri, INTERPOL, and in close collaboration with the MoTA, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Culture, targeting 40 professionals and practitioners from governmental entities, civil society and private conservators and collectors<sup>5</sup>. The experts' reports and operational recommendations were shared with the MoTA for follow-up actions.

18. Within the framework of the project on "Strengthening national capacities for Safeguarding Palestinian Intangible Cultural Heritage" funded by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism, three activities were implemented. These included a 5-day training on the implementation of the 2003 Convention and its key concepts<sup>6</sup>, policy support for the final revision of the Draft Law for the Safeguarding of Palestinian Intangible Cultural Heritage<sup>7</sup> with key experts from the Ministry of Culture and a 7-day training on community-based inventorying<sup>8</sup>, including pilot inventory exercises. These activities were facilitated by two international and two national experts and attended by 25 participants/experts working in the field of intangible cultural heritage in Palestine<sup>9</sup>.

19. Support was provided to the Ministry of Culture and relevant stakeholders in cultural policy monitoring through the project "Re|Shaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" funded by Sweden. Activities focused on the preparation of the 2005 Convention Quadrennial Periodic Report due in April 2020, and notably on the elaboration of evidence-based policies in the field of cultural and creative industries<sup>10</sup>. Two multi-stakeholder consultations involving public institutions and civil society representatives were organized on 9-10 December 2019 as well as a national training workshop on participatory policy monitoring for the multi-stakeholder national team in charge of elaborating the Quadrennial Periodic Report.

20. To support the design of the Culture Sector Strategy and policies as well as the effective implementation of the 2005 Convention, UNESCO is carrying out for the first time in Palestine a comprehensive mapping of culture sector and assessing sector's contribution to the economy (GDP), education, resilience, social participation and development, governance, etc., based on the Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda. The project is jointly funded by Drosos Foundation, and is implemented in parallel with the above-mentioned project "Re|Shaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expression" funded by Sweden.

21. The implementation of cultural activities, including physical rehabilitation projects, performances, exhibitions and cinema activities, has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Hence, while activities with soft deliverables were kept on track, those requiring field work were rescheduled to future dates. UNESCO continued its capacity-building activities in the field of intangible cultural heritage and organized the first ever-online training on the "Preparation of Nominations Files and International Assistance Requests in the Framework of the 2003 UNESCO Convention" for Palestinian professionals and officials (5 days between 4 and 10 May 2020). Furthermore, UNESCO continued supporting the Ministry of Culture in the revision of the draft

<sup>5</sup> More information is available in the link: <https://en.unesco.org/news/capacity-building-training-effective-implementation-1970-conventionand-1954-hague-convention>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2636612616432438>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2655259237901109>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2652769964816703>

<sup>9</sup> Press release, 5 December 2019: <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-concludes-first-two-workshops-within-framework-project-strengthening-national-capacities>

<sup>10</sup> More information is available at: <https://en.unesco.org/news/reshaping-cultural-policies-promotion-fundamental-freedoms-and-diversity-cultural-expressions> and [https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2735251809901851?\\_tn=-R](https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2735251809901851?_tn=-R)

Intangible Cultural Heritage Law and facilitated discussions on its articles among a team of specialists identified by the Ministry of Culture and UNESCO. The draft law was submitted to the Ministry of Culture on 18 May 2020, for final feedback and comments UNESCO Ramallah Office in partnership with the Willy Brandt Center in Jerusalem has also participated once again in the 9th International Jazz Day celebrations on 30 April 2020. The highlight of the Palestinian Jazz Day celebration this year was a concert by members of the popular Typo band from Gaza, which was live streamed from Gaza through Facebook.

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

22. During the reporting period, journalists in Palestine have continued to face a range of violations, including physical assault, seizure of equipment, prohibition of coverage, and raids of media houses, according to the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA)<sup>11</sup>. Among the incidents recorded by the Center, a freelance photographer lost an eye after being hit by a fragment of a bullet fired by Israeli border guards while covering a demonstration in November 2019. The same month, offices of Palestine Television were raided and ordered closed. The Secretariat received one letter on 13 May 2020 related to the reported extension of this closure.

23. In November 2019, the UNESCO Ramallah Office, in cooperation with the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate (PJS) and under the patronage of the Prime Minister's Office, launched a National Mechanism for Monitoring the Safety of Journalists.<sup>12</sup> This multi-stakeholder mechanism involves representatives from relevant ministries, civil society organizations and the PJS, and serve to improve reporting on attacks against journalists, in particular within the framework of the UNESCO Director-General's annual report on the safety of journalists and when assessing progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Indicator 16.10.1. A series of training sessions has been organized for its members, in the West Bank and Gaza; in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioners for Human Rights and local NGOs.

24. UNESCO, in collaboration with the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, supported the creation of a Safety Officers Network within media organizations in Palestine. UNESCO organized four specialized training sessions for the safety focal points, in both the West Bank and Gaza.

25. In October 2019, UNESCO Office in Ramallah, in cooperation with 7amleh - the Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media - organized a one-day discussion titled "One year after applying the Cybercrime Law: Challenges and Opportunities"<sup>13</sup>. The discussion provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives on the Cybercrime Law and its impact on the work of journalists, activists and media outlets, as well as regional and international perspectives on guaranteeing freedom of expression online, in line with international covenants and agreements and with reference to UNESCO's ROAM principles for Internet Universality.<sup>14</sup>

26. In September 2019, UNESCO celebrated its fourth International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI 2019) in Palestine, under the theme "Leaving no one behind!". UNESCO launched an in-focus report "Access to Information: A New Promise for Sustainable Development" at an event organized in collaboration with An-Najah University in Nablus and the Oslo Metropolitan University, and supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, UNESCO Ramallah and Media Development Center/Birzeit University also celebrated World Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2020, by organizing online trainings, hosting radio programs and broadcasting 20 videos from different Journalists in Ramallah and Gaza.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.madacenter.org/en/article/1270/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/national-mechanism-monitoring-safety-journalists-palestine-launched-occasion-international-day>

<sup>13</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/events/one-year-after-applying-cybercrime-law-challenges-and-advantages>

<sup>14</sup> To read more on UNESCO's ROAM Principles <https://en.unesco.org/news/unescos-roam-framework-recognized-high-level-panel-report-digital-interdependence>



27. In collaboration with Al-Quds Open University, UNESCO featured an Open Talk on IDUAI that involved influential local speakers from academia, non-governmental institutions, and media outlets actively advancing the right to access information. The event served as an occasion to mark the Arab Regional Digital Inclusion Week.<sup>15</sup>

28. In December 2019, UNESCO sponsored the participation of a Palestinian documentary heritage expert in the regional conference held in Doha, as part of the "Supporting documentary heritage preservation in the Arab region" project<sup>16</sup>.

29. Within the framework of the Global Media and Information Literacy Week, two capacity development trainings<sup>17</sup> were held in partnership with the Media Development Center and Birzeit University for the benefit of 68 Public Relation Officers from different ministries as a joint collaboration between UNESCO, the Prime Minister's Office and UNDP. The training sessions will continue throughout the first quarter of 2020.

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

30. UNESCO supports and promotes Gender Equality in Palestine and the alignment of national legislation to international treaties, through the first Gender Policy Institute (GPI) in Palestine and the Arab region established via a government decree in June 2019.

31. UNESCO finalized the development of the first comprehensive mapping and analysis of the gender-related policies endorsed by the Palestinian government between 2011-2017, entitled Bridging the Gender Gap: Mapping and Analysis of Gender Policies in Palestine (2011-2017). The report is available at the UNESDOC in [English](#)<sup>18</sup> and [Arabic](#). The Analysis, which highlighted several challenges facing gender policy development in Palestine, helps the Government to establish a baseline on gender policies and their implementation. It identifies policy gaps in order to support policy formulation, bridge gaps, and identifies areas for policy development and contributes to the efforts in elevating Palestinian women's status towards enhancing gender equality and justice.

32. UNESCO actively participated in the design and implementation of the Together Against Violence<sup>19</sup> joint campaign on the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence along with more than 68 national and international partners.

## **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

33. In November 2019, UNESCO facilitated the nomination and participation of Mr. Anas Al-Dalou (22 years old)<sup>20</sup> a young entrepreneur from Ramallah in the 11th UNESCO Youth forum organized at the UNESCO headquarters on 18-19 November 2019. Mr. Al-Dalou presented his initiative on recycling old clothes and selling them online to generate income and support other young people and communities in need.

34. To scale up its support to Palestinian youth, one of the vulnerable segments of the society, UNESCO Ramallah Office, with the support from the Social and Human Sciences (SHS) sector, conducted, an in-depth assessment of the youth sector in Palestine, focusing on gaps and potential areas for development. The assessment proposes five potential areas for intervention: (A) Capacity development for youth advocates and policy makers, (B) Sustainable development

<sup>15</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-celebrates-4th-international-day-universal-access-information-iduai-2019-and-arab>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/doha/communication-information/supporting-documentary-heritage-preservation-in-the-arab-region/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2611587098934990>

<sup>18</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372466>

<sup>19</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/newly-launched-together-against-violence-joint-campaign-demands-prompt-adoption-family>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/unesco.ramallah/posts/2646255702134796>

through environmentally focused youth programming, (C) Enhance youth well-being, (D) Personal transformation of youth's knowledge, skills and attitudes, and (E) Transforming youth's relationships with key stakeholders in their social environment. The assessment aims to facilitate programme design and delivery focusing on gaps and potential areas for development of youth sector, leading to upscale the presence of the SHS sector in Palestine based on the identified needs.

### Occupied Syrian Golan

35. The project for Syrian students in the occupied Syrian Golan launched in 2009 and financed by Japanese Funds-In-Trust ended in March 2013. Without further extrabudgetary resources, this assistance could not be provided over the reporting period.

### Proposed decision

36. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered documents 209 EX/24 and 209 EX/25, as well as the annex to this decision,
2. Recalling its previous decisions concerning "Educational and Cultural Institutions in the Occupied Arab Territories",
3. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 210th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

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### ANNEX I



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

## Executive Board

Two hundred and ninth session

209 EX/PX/DR.25.1  
PARIS, 26 June 2019  
Original: English

### PROGRAMME AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMISSION (PX)

**Item 25 IMPLEMENTATION OF 40 C/RESOLUTION 67 AND 207 EX/DECISION 39 CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

### DRAFT DECISION

The Executive Board,

### I OCCUPIED PALESTINE

1. Recalling 185 EX/Decision 36 and 38 C/Resolution 72 as well as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regard to the right to education, Articles 24, 50 and 94 of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the denial of the right of children to education, as well as the Hague Convention (1954) and its additional Protocols and the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), also recalling the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 on the "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory",
2. Having examined documents 209 EX/24 and 209 EX/25,
3. Committed to the safeguarding of monuments, works of art, manuscripts, books and other historical and cultural properties to be protected in the event of conflict, as well as the safeguarding of schools and all educational facilities,
4. Deplores the damaging impact of the military confrontations on the fields of competence of UNESCO in the Gaza Strip, particularly education and cultural institutions;
5. Deeply concerned by the Israeli army violations against Palestinian universities and schools, demands that the Israeli authorities immediately halt actions that violate UNESCO principles and the provisions of the world declaration for education for all (1990) and reaffirms, in this regard, that schools, universities and cultural heritage sites enjoy special protection and should not be targeted;
6. Expresses its growing concern about the harmful impact of the Wall on the activities of educational and cultural institutions, and demands, in this regard, that Israel, the occupying Power, cease all of its settlement activities, including the construction of the Wall and other measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and the Cremisan Monastery in the Bethlehem Governorate, which harm the social fabric of Palestinian society and prevent Palestinian school children and students from exercising fully their right to education;
7. Notes with deep concern the Israeli censorship of the Palestinian curricula of schools and universities in East Jerusalem, and urges the Israeli authorities to immediately halt this censorship;
8. Expresses its appreciation for the substantial contributions of all concerned Member States and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to UNESCO's action in Palestine as well as for building of schools for Palestinian children such as the school of Tana, near Nablus and the two schools in Khan Al-Ahmar and in Abu Nuwar near Jerusalem, and appeals to them to continue assisting UNESCO in this endeavour;
9. Deeply regrets the destruction by the Israeli authorities of schools, including the school in Abu Nuwar and the school in Tana, and calls on the Israeli authorities to halt plans for further demolition, including of the school in Khan Al-Ahmar;
10. Thanks the Director-General for the results that have been obtained in favour of the protection, reconstruction, rehabilitation and restoration of the Palestinian archaeological sites and cultural heritage, invites her to reinforce her action in this regard and to strengthen UNESCO's assistance to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions in order to address the needs for capacity building in UNESCO's fields of competence by, *inter alia*, expanding the financial assistance programme for Palestinian students and school children, and requests her to organize, as soon as possible, the ninth meeting of the Joint UNESCO-Palestine Committee;

## **II OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN**

11. Also invites the Director-General:
  - (a) to continue the efforts she is making to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, in accordance with the relevant provisions of its decisions;
  - (b) to undertake efforts to offer appropriate curricula, and to provide more grants and adequate assistance to the educational and cultural institutions of the occupied Syrian Golan;



- (c) to dispatch an expert to assess and evaluate the needs of the educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Syrian Golan and report to her before the 210th session of the Executive Board;

### III

12. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 210th session, and invites the Director-General to submit to it a progress report thereon.

### ANNEX TO THE DOCUMENT

During the reporting period, the following correspondence has been received by the Secretariat in relation to this item:

Date	From	Subject
29 November 2019	Alternate Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO	<a href="#">Educational, Cultural, Media and Health Institutions</a>
23 January 2020	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine	<a href="#">Educational Institutions: UNRWA Schools</a>
13 May 2020	President, Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science	<a href="#">Closure of Palestine TV Offices</a>