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**IMPLEMENTATION OF 41 C/RESOLUTION 51 AND 215 EX/DECISION 37 CONCERNING
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES**

SUMMARY

The present document is submitted pursuant to 41 C/Resolution 51 and 215 EX/Decision 37.

It reports on assistance provided to the Palestinian Authority and to relevant Palestinian stakeholders, and on developments since the 215th session of the Executive Board.

There are no financial or administrative implications.

Decision required: paragraph 38.



Job: 202301342

INTRODUCTION

1. Detailed information on UNESCO's activities in Gaza is provided in document 216 EX/33 "Occupied Palestine" and is therefore not reported on in the present document.

EDUCATION

2. In Palestine, educational achievement at all levels continues to be affected by the protracted crisis. While Palestine has one of the highest enrollment rates in the region for students in primary education, substantial challenges to access education remain, especially for students from vulnerable groups and communities. Schools continue to be at risk of stop work or demolition orders, and are also facing difficulties in obtaining building permits. According to the Education Cluster, there are currently 58 schools under partial or full demolition order or have received stop work orders. These schools serve around 6,500 students in the most vulnerable areas of the West Bank and are staffed by at least 700 teachers.¹

3. Through pooled resources from the project "Developing digital education and skills for sustainable development through distance learning in Palestine" funded by Japan and from the Education Cannot Wait/Multi-Year Resilience Programme (ECW/MYRP), UNESCO supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) in establishing the first Educational TV Channel in Palestine to improve distance learning. UNESCO's support included work in the studio, provision of television equipment, a lighting system, a video wall and equipment for the studio control room. To ensure the quality of the broadcast content, UNESCO also organized technical training for the television staff. Additional training was provided to educational supervisors and teachers on how to develop quality educational scripts and videos to enhance the lessons broadcast on television and uploaded to the Ministry of Education's educational platforms. The training targeted more than 120 MoE staff, who will be the national focal points for distance learning. UNESCO and the Ministry of Education inaugurated the Palestine Educational TV Channel on 13 December 2022.²

4. Within the framework of the ECW/MYRP Programme, UNESCO has supported 50 schools in the West Bank, providing alternative learning using sports, art, music and storytelling. Activities were developed to enhance students' learning in Arabic and Mathematics for grades 1 to 4 and designed to help recover the learning loss experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychosocial support was also provided to students in remote areas where access to education is often challenged. Moreover, sports equipment was also provided to 10 schools in some of the most marginalized communities in Palestine as identified by the MoE.

5. Following the national consultations prior to the Transforming Education Summit (TES), which were supported by UNESCO and UNICEF, Palestine submitted the national consultation report to the TES Secretariat in August 2022. At the TES in New York in September 2022, the Prime Minister presented Palestine's national statements of commitment to pursue the priority actions and orientations identified during the Summit. The commitments made at the TES are being integrated into the development of the new Strategic Education Plan for 2024-2029 that the Ministry of Education has recently launched.

6. In the framework of the cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) for the development of the monitoring and evaluation system and the implementation of the higher education strategy, UNESCO has supported the development of monitoring and evaluation indicators. 48 indicators were prepared, reviewed and discussed by higher education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza at a consultation workshop held on 4 January 2023.

7. In the framework of the TVET4Future project, funded by the Belgian Development agency (Enabel), UNESCO conducted an awareness raising campaign to increase enrolment in TVET

¹ Education Cluster, March 2023, [Humanitarian Alert: Schools at risk of demolition](#)

² UNESCO 2022, [UNESCO & Ministry of Education inaugurate the Palestine Educational TV Channel](#)

institutions. The campaign was implemented in conjunction with the project "Developing digital education and skills for sustainable development through distance learning in Palestine" funded by Japan and by creating synergies with other projects implemented by the UNESCO Office in Ramallah in order to maximize its impact. The campaign included interactive sessions for nearly 500 beneficiaries (students and parents), as well as a social media component where audio and visual products were developed and disseminated. They reached over 1.5 million viewers in total.

8. UNESCO also completed the development and launch of three youth-led TVET Innovation Hubs in October and November 2022: one in Bethlehem in the field of tourism, with a focus on "Palestinian cuisine", one in Gaza in the field of technology, and one in Nablus in the field of fashion design. The innovation hubs improve young people's access to a wide range of services and supporting programmes that encourage collaboration, networking and innovation, and build skills and competencies to facilitate their access to the labour market.

9. Within the framework of the TVET4Future project, UNESCO also implemented a comprehensive TVET Training of Trainers (ToT) programme, designed to help TVET teachers and trainers integrate cross-cutting, green and entrepreneurial skills into the courses they teach. The programme took place over a seven-month period (June - December 2022) for 118 TVET teachers and trainers in the West Bank and Gaza. By the end of the project in September 2023, the teachers are expected to reach approximately 400 beneficiaries both in the West Bank and Gaza.

10. Under the new project "Improving Student Skills for Innovation and Sustainable Development through STEAM³ and Coding in Palestinian Schools" funded by Japan, UNESCO has been working to strengthen the digital skills of teachers and students to promote innovation and sustainable development. Through the project, between September 2022 and January 2023, more than 100 teachers and 1000 students (grades 5-11) participated in training courses in coding, artificial intelligence, and robotics. Between September and November 2022, 67 students participated in the national "World Robotic Olympiad" (WRO), and 5 students participated in the international WRO which is organized every year to promote robotics. In January 2023, 69 students from the West Bank and Gaza participated in the TECH Camp in Jericho, which aimed at providing students with advanced skills in coding, robotics, AI and 21st century skills. UNESCO supported the Ministry of Education in the development of a digital platform to promote STEM and serve as an incubator for innovation and sustainable development. Additionally, UNESCO supported MoE in providing local coding clubs with necessary equipment such as laptops and robotics kits.

11. Information on the correspondence about reported "attacks on educational institutions" and "violations of the right to education" received during the reporting period is reflected in the Annex to this document.

CULTURE:

12. During the reporting period, UNESCO and its main partners continued to implement activities for the protection and promotion of culture, despite a challenging working environment.

13. UNESCO has started implementing the project 'The Conservation and management of Tell es-Sultan' which is part of a larger multi-stakeholder partnership, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine (MoTA), Sapienza University of Rome and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. Tell es-Sultan is among the most important archaeological sites in Palestine, and it is included on the country's Tentative List. The project aims at promoting this site as a driver for economic and social development and at attracting national and international tourism investment that will benefit the local community. A steering committee to coordinate project activities was established and, after a series of consultation meetings, it approved the first year's work plan on 10 November 2022. Under UNESCO's leadership, a scientific symposium and technical training

³ Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics.

on the conservation of earthen architecture took place in February 2023, paving the way for the elaboration of the conservation and management plan for the site as well as the emergency conservation interventions to be implemented by the project partners.

14. Following the successful closure of the project ‘Local development through the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic built environment in Palestine’ funded by Sweden, UNESCO produced in November 2022 a comprehensive publication ‘New Future for Forgotten Spaces’⁴ on the project’s success stories and best practices. The publication is both a reference document and a testimony to the rich experience of the project. It will be presented at a closing event in June 2023 to celebrate and promote the project’s achievements.

15. In the framework of the 50th Anniversary of the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO Office in Ramallah organized a photo exhibition highlighting the sites in Palestine, which are inscribed on the World Heritage List, focusing on the restoration works in the Church of the Nativity that allowed the removal of the site ‘Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem’ from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2019, and showcasing a few sites included on the Tentative List. A laser light projection was also set up to highlight the story of the 1972 Convention and the sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. The event was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Bethlehem Municipality and the Bethlehem Development Foundation (BDF), with financial contribution from the Bank of Palestine. The exhibition was inaugurated on 15 December 2022 in Bethlehem and ran until 31 January 2023.

16. The renovation of the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, funded by Norway, advanced during the reporting period. A construction company continues to renovate the museum’s premises and its infrastructure. The donor approved a no-cost extension for the project until 30 June 2023 to allow for the completion of the renovation work and to design, with the national authorities and the project partners, the final phase of the project that will prepare, produce and display the interactive audiovisual content of the museum.

17. UNESCO has continued to support the Ministry of Culture (MoC) in elaborating the periodic report on the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the national level. The MoC submitted the Executive Summary of the report on 15 December 2022 and the full report by the extended deadline of 15 February 2023.

18. UNESCO has also contributed to support the implementation of the 2005 Convention through:

- The Athar Al-Farashah Festival in Gaza organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the General Union of Cultural Centers (GUCC), through its Visual Arts Department (Shababeek for Contemporary Art), the French Institute in Gaza, the Eltiqa Group for Contemporary Art, and Dar Al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture. The aim was to provide artists and cultural practitioners with an opportunity to showcase their artwork and improve their livelihood. The festival supported 8 individual and 4 group art projects, the selection of which was based on an open call competition. The festival took place over two days on 24 and 26 October 2022 during which the selected artworks that included music, theatre performances and animation were exhibited.
- The [2022 edition of the Palestine Cinema Days](#) organized by FilmLab Palestine and supported by UNESCO. A panel discussion under the theme “[Next Generation Panel: The Future of image making](#)” took place at the Qattan Foundation in Ramallah on 3 November 2022. The panel discussion gathered international and Palestinian experts who discussed

⁴ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384438>

children's visual literacy and the impact of the omnipresence of digital distribution with the aim to enhance and improve film and TV production for children and youth.

19. In the framework of the EU/UNESCO programme '[Supporting new regulatory frameworks to strengthen the cultural and creative industries and promote South-South cooperation](#)', UNESCO continued to support the establishment of legal and institutional mechanisms for the film sector. Online [film](#) and [production](#) directories were developed and made accessible to the public. UNESCO also contracted a legal consultant and an international expert to assist the Ministry of Culture in developing necessary legal framework for the establishment of a national Film Commission. As a result, on 27 December 2022, the Palestinian Prime Minister officially announced his endorsement to its future establishment.

20. UNESCO finalized the study conducted in partnership with the Drosos Foundation and the Ministry of Culture to map the culture sector in Palestine through statistics that measure the cross-cutting contribution of culture to the SDGs. The study uses the definitions identified in the [Culture|2030 Indicators](#) methodology and it was presented to the members of the Palestine Culture Sector Working Group (CSWG) during a meeting on 24 January 2023 chaired by the Minister of Culture and attended by all partners and donors involved in this sector. The report was disseminated electronically in December 2022 and again after the CSWG meeting in January 2023 among the network of partners. It provides essential information, data and statistics that were collected for the first time in Palestine as part of this study.

21. Information on the correspondence about reported "violations in the field of culture" received during the reporting period is reflected in the Annex to this document.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

22. Between September 2022 and the end of March 2023, the Palestinian Centre for Development and Media Freedom (MADA) recorded a total of 336 media freedom violations, including denial of coverage, detentions and physical attacks⁵. On 5 October 2022, two camera operators from Palestine TV were hit by metal bullets while covering a raid by Israeli soldiers in the town of Deir al-Hatab.

23. In October 2022, the UNESCO Office in Ramallah, in collaboration with the NGO Filastiniyat and the Mental Health Department of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, organized five psychosocial support workshops in Gaza, benefiting 105 women and 45 men journalists, including 60 freelancers and young influencers. Identified as a response in the needs assessment following the 2021 escalation in Gaza, these workshops continue in the first quarter of 2023. A self-care guide in Arabic was also produced for journalists in distress.

24. The UNESCO Office in Ramallah commissioned the first national report of UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators in Palestine that aims to assess the state of Internet development at the national level, according to the ROAM principles of Human Rights, Openness, Accessibility, Multi-stakeholder participation. This work is being carried out in collaboration with the Arab Center for Social Media Advancement (Hamleh). The report is currently being validated and will be made available on the UNESCO website in 2023.

25. In September 2022, within the framework of the project "Infodemic Management in Palestine", 36 media and public relations staff working in health institutions in the West Bank and Gaza graduated from a training programme in digital media production on health issues, to combat misinformation. The project was funded by the International Programme for the Development of

⁵ <https://www.madacenter.org/en/article/1417/>

Communication (IPDC), and implemented by the Media Development Centre of Birzeit University, in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and UNESCO.

26. On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UNESCO Office in Ramallah facilitated a session of a regional online consultation in the Arab States on the protection of journalists and how best to support them in a holistic manner following acts of violence. The session held on 15 September 2022 featured contributions of experts from Iraq and Gaza.

27. Also, UNESCO Office in Ramallah joined the regional conference in Tunisia, from 2 to 4 November 2022, organized in partnership with several national, regional, and international organizations including the International Federation of Journalists and the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists. This regional conference brought together a wide range of participants including journalists' unions, freedom of expression and human rights organizations, media regulators, journalists, lawyers, judges, and media experts from 13 countries in the region. The meeting concluded with a [safety roadmap](#) for the Arab region as “a guiding framework to further the protection of women and men journalists in the region, safeguard the gains achieved and to anticipate ongoing as well as emerging dangers and risks to journalists.”

28. Information on the correspondence about reported “violence against journalists” received during the reporting period is reflected in the Annex to this document.

GENDER EQUALITY

29. Gender equality continued to be mainstreamed in much of UNESCO's work in Palestine, including also initiatives dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women implemented in 2022 and 2023.

30. UNESCO Office in Ramallah is represented on the Gender Task Force (GTF) of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Palestine. UNESCO supported the implementation of the Annual Work Plan for 2022 by participating in the joint branding of campaigns and knowledge sharing among the GTF members.

31. UNESCO Office in Ramallah has actively participated in the task forces and communication groups led by UN Women for both International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism (16 DoA) Against Gender Based Violence campaign. This gave UNESCO the opportunity to influence and support the development and dissemination of common messages on the theme of protection in Palestine to mark both campaigns, as well as the organization of events. As part of the campaign, UNESCO held a joint event with UN Women on 8 December 2022 to launch the findings of a research on Palestinian media outlets from a gender perspective, funded by Sweden. At the ceremony, journalists – including the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate - signed a Code of Conduct committing to enhance gender equality within their outlets and in their coverage.

32. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November 2022, UNESCO organized the orange lighting of the UNDP building in Gaza, where a number of UN agencies are housed, including the UNESCO Gaza antenna. This action is part of the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign and UNESCO's global #OrangeTheWorld actions to raise awareness about gender-based violence. Throughout the campaign, UNESCO Office in Ramallah also shared messages on its social media highlighting how culture and arts can positively change gender norms and address school-related gender-based violence.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

33. UNESCO continued to play an active role as a member of the UN Thematic Group on Youth of the United Nations Country Team in Palestine, actively supporting the implementation of the group's work plan. UNESCO also participated in the process of reformulating the mandate of the UN

Thematic Group on Youth and in the development of the work plan for 2023, as it co-chairs the group with UNFPA in 2023.

34. Youth continued to be mainstreamed in much of UNESCO's work. A number of activities, in particular within the TVET4Future project, The Creative Economy Training implemented with City University of London as well as AI and coding initiatives target mainly youth, young professionals and the most vulnerable and marginalized young people.

35. At the Learning to Earning Summit in Amman in May 2022 the Palestinian government made commitments to reduce youth unemployment by 2025. In consultation with the lead UN agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP and ILO), UNESCO has been assigned as the UN technical lead to provide support on one of the four commitments related to a Youth Coding Academy. UNESCO will work with all involved entities to develop a roadmap building on its experience with the project "Improving Student Skills for Innovation and Sustainable Development through STEAM and Coding in Palestinian Schools" funded by Japan.

36. UNESCO continues to support the Youth Advisory Panel established in July 2022 and has engaged with national and international groups of young people, such as the International Palestinian Youth League, informing them about UNESCO and its work.

Occupied Syrian Golan

37. 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 draft decision

38. 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 216 EX/33 and 216 EX/34, 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 217th session and invites the Director-General to submit to it a follow-up report thereon.

ANNEX



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United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and sixteenth session

216 EX/PX/DR/34.1
Paris, 11 May 2023
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Item 34 IMPLEMENTATION OF 41 C/RESOLUTION 51 AND 215 EX/DECISION 37 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 216 EX/33 and 216 EX/34,
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 217th session of the Executive Board;

III

12. Decides to include this item in the agenda of its 217th 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 |
|------------------|--|--|
| 7 October 2022 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Violence against journalists |
| 22 November 2022 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Attacks on educational institutions and violations of the right to education |
| 23 November 2022 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Attacks on educational institutions and violations of the right to education |
| 16 December 2022 | Chairperson of the Arab Group to UNESCO | Violence against journalists |
| 16 December 2022 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Attacks on educational institutions and violations of the right to education |
| 27 January 2023 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Khelat Al-Fulleh/Al Jiftlik |
| 1 February 2023 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Freedom Theatre in Jenin Refugee Camp |
| 2 February 2023 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Sebastia |
| 2 March 2023 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Violence against journalists |
| 9 March 2023 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Attacks on educational institutions and violations of the right to education |
| 22 March 2023 | Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the State of Palestine to UNESCO | Violence against journalists |