

Appeal to participants at Oslo Urban Arena 2016

The annual urban development conference [Oslo Urban Arena](#) has chosen to invite Hila Oren from the Tel Aviv Foundation as a keynote speaker at this year's conference. The signatory planners and architects respectfully voice our surprise at this choice. We therefore also respectfully ask you leave the conference while Oren talks.

From 1995 we cooperated with Norwegian expert colleagues in the formation of the Palestinian Ministry of Planning, as a follow-up of the Oslo Accords. Under shifting circumstances this cooperation has continued for nearly 20 years. Our Norwegian colleagues are well acquainted with the situation we suffer, and which indeed touches upon what the OUA Conference is about.

We are saddened by the fact that the OUA has chosen to profile such a prominent front figure for Israeli state policies as Hila Oren, whose role it is to brand Tel Aviv on the international scene. To us, Tel Aviv-Jaffa is a key site of continuous struggle, where the Palestinian population was ousted to make room for largely European colonisers of Jewish background. This conflict is still very hot and anyone who wishes can read about it in digital media. Books have been written about the dark side of Tel Aviv, and Israeli organisations like Zochrot and De-Coloniser are working to "struggle against history's oblivion and suppressed memories, to finally envision...[an] equal shared life and a peaceful cohabitation." [Forward 19.7.16](#).

Irrespective of what Hila Oren chooses to tell you, she has the active support of Israeli government. She is an integral part of the on-going campaign to improve Israel's standing internationally. This is whitewashing, and it comes in times where Israel faces growing criticism for the continued occupation, ethnic cleansing and colonisation of Palestinian lands. The Ministry of Planning that we built with our Norwegian friends and colleagues is closed down.

-What do we need a Ministry of Planning for, when we have no country to plan any more?

Hila Oren's work is indeed about planning. But this planning is in violation of our rights and the future of our people, who lived for centuries in peace, Jews, Christians and Muslims together. Our advice is to not pay heed to the planning she represents. We therefore respectfully ask you leave the conference while Oren talks. As your friends and colleagues we ask this, as a way of respecting the close ties that have existed and still exists between Norwegian and Palestinian urban and regional planners.

Please show us that Norwegian urban planners and developers do not support Israel's occupation, colonisation and ethnic cleansing and that you do not consider such actions legitimate in the realm of our profession. We implore you, for this is very important to us and to everyone in Palestine and Israel who works for an end to the deplorable occupation.

Dr. Salem Thawaba- Associate professor – Director of the master program of urban planning and Landscape Architecture – Birzeit University, Palestine

Akram Ijla, PhD, Uppsala University

Nihad Al Moghany, Professor and Urban Planner, Director General of Gaza Municipality.

Ali Abdel Hamid, Professor and head of Department of Urban Planning at Al Najah National University, Nablus

Ziad Amra, Bank Manager, Minneapolis USA

Tayseer Mushtaha, Architect and Planner, Gaza

Said Jalala, Civil Engineer, Gaza

Initiated by Norwegian planners: Knut Felberg, Øystein Grønning, Rolf Skjelstad, Alf Haukeland, Lasse Bjerved, Marit Unstad, Karl Otto Ellefsen.

In addition, the appeal has been co-signed by 95 Palestinian academics and artists who live in Jaffa-Tel Aviv, or have been forcibly exiled and are refused re-entry in spite of being Israeli citizens.

Signatures on Oslo Urban Arena Conference call for boycott of Hila Oren

1. Jihad Abu Raya, Advocate and Social Activist, Director of Falesteeniat Organization.
2. Ibraheem Naserallah, Writer and Lecturer, Paris University.
3. Professor Shareef Kanaenah, Professor of Anthropology at Beir Zeit University .
4. Mohamed Hafez Yaqoub, Lecturer, Paris.
5. Samah Idrees, Chairman of auditors, Al Adab Journal.
6. Fathi Abu Al Redha, Activist for return to destructed Palestinian villages in Israel.
7. Rajah Ighbareia, Member of the Political council of Abna Al Balad Organization.
8. Abid Abeddy, Artist.
9. Ahmed Khanaan, Artist.
10. Fathi Fourani, Writer, Haifa.
11. Kholoud Masalhah, Media Centre, Haifa.
12. Waqim Waqim, Advocate and social activist.
13. Ayman Hajj, Vice president of Kefah Movement for Arab-Palestinian rights.
14. Waheeba Zeyad, Independent activist.
15. Loai Khatib, Member of the Political council of Abna Al Balad Organization.
16. Sami Mohana, Poet and the President of the Palestinian writers and journalists in Historic Palestine (48).
17. Amani Al Hindy Barakat, Al Awda Association, San Francisco.
18. Hanan Bakir, Writer and Journalist, Oslo.
19. Lobna Masaraw, Journalist in Middle East Media, Jerusalem.
20. Jamal Joma'a, The Popular Movement against the Israeli separation Wall and Israeli Settlements.
21. Professor Ronin Ben Ari, Tel Aviv University and Technion Institute, Haifa.
22. Professor Aytan Bronshtain, Decolonizer, Tel Aviv University.
23. Hezar Hejazi, Psychologist and Founder of Falesteeniat Organization, Acre.
24. Rola Qassem, Falesteeniat Member of Board, Al Ramah (North of Acre).
25. Mohamed Khalil, Physiotherapist, Sakhneen (East of Acre).
26. Yaqoub Hejazi, Writer and the director of Al Aswar Foundation, Acre.
27. Hanan Hejazi, Director of the Children Cultural Center, Acre.
28. Ghadir Al Shafe', Women Coalition of Haifa.
29. Dr. Adib Jarrar, Organizational Development and Leadership Consultant.
30. Yousef Sharqawi, Political Activist.
31. Badee' Al Dewiek, Human rights activist.
32. Somar Salem, Artist.
33. Greitta Berlin, Free Gaza Activist.

34. Hoda Salah Al Deen, Political Activist.
35. Lena Hejawi, Schools supervisor and educator.
36. Manal Abu Raya, Woman Empowerment Consultant, Jaffa.
37. Professor Mohamed Tarazan Al Aeq.
38. Sohad Haj Yehia, Business owner.
39. Mona Jouzin, Physiotherapist.
40. Inass Moreeh, Journalist, Tamrah, Hifa.
41. Saed Dabah, Artist.
42. Mohamed Abu Rayah, Advocate and Justice defender, Sakhneen.
43. Ahlam Abbasi-Ghanem, Engineer, Acre.
44. Said Al Nahry, Artist. Skhneen.
45. Jamal Haider, Social Activist.
46. Nadia Ismael; Events organizer.
47. Issam Mohamed Al Zober, Teacher.
48. Halah Araffat Al Taher, Teacher.
49. Lamees Al Douri, Political writer.
50. Nayef Quseny, Civil Engineer, Haifa.
51. Ahmed Khaleefah, Advocate, Human Rights Association, Nazareth.
52. Mazen Al Azah, Activist.
53. Ikhals Zeibak, Falesteeniat Organization, Acre.
54. Sewar Abu Aql, Student.
55. Alla' Kayal, Advocate.
56. Sabreen Foqaha, Writer.
57. Jamal Haider, Workers Union.
58. Ahmed Ighbareiah, Activist.
59. Benan Qabalawi. Activist.
60. Samir Abid Rabo, Professor in International Law.
61. Nabil Awad Deiab, Activist.
62. Omar Shaa'the, Engineer.
63. Rami Sakher Al Bargouthy, Activist.
64. Jouhainah Hussein, Woman Empowerment Activist.
65. Akram Hessain, Political activist.
66. Qadri Abu Wassel, Detainees Specialist.
67. Helin Mahajneh, Activist.
68. Amani Khaleileh, Advocate.
69. Arabiah Mansour, Family Consultant.
70. Manar Makhoul, Researcher.
71. Sameeh Saleebi, Accountant.
72. Mazen Fares, Physician.
73. Ques Qaderi, Advocate.
74. Hamoudi Seuliman, Advocate.
75. Moaz Abu Rashid, Law student.

76. Sami Mea, university student.
77. Anaeieh Hussian, Activist.
78. Doa' Sahli, Social Activist.
79. Ameer Abbas, Journalist.
80. Lateefah Younis, Artist.
81. Reemah Najjar, University Lecturer, Haifa.
82. Saleem Abu Jabal, Political Activist.
83. Belal Derbas, Social Activist, Haifa.
84. Hussam Arrar, Political Activist.
85. Samah Hayek, Journalist.
86. Najwah Mabareeki.
87. Rami Sayegh.
88. Zaheerah Sabbagh, Writer.
89. Issam Hejjawi, Speaker of expelled Palestinians in Skottland.
90. Ayman Shahid, writer.
91. Dr. Nadiyah Habbash, Architect and Urban Planner, Beir Zeit University, Municipality of Rammallah, Member of Elected Board.
92. Kamal Al Deen Amourah, Activist.
93. Hania Harb, Activist.
94. Safa Abdo, Activist.
95. Israr Mussa, Activist.