

Newsletter 02/2014 (December)

20/12/14

Dear friends of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung,

Our last newsletter was sent to you delayed in September due to the destructive war on Gaza during the summer. Unfortunately, the last three months of the year were also very tense and difficult due to the increased violence in Jerusalem, the provocations by Jewish settlers on the Al-Aqsa Compound and the violent attack on Minister Ziad Abu Ein which led to his tragic death during a peaceful demonstration, representative of a drastic increase of violent actions against civilians by settlers and the Israeli Army in the West Bank. Discussions about a “Third Intifada” – whatever that means – increased. Meanwhile, the situation in Gaza remains tense, and reconstruction has not even begun despite billions of dollars promised by the international community in Cairo. I sincerely hope that 2015 will be a more peaceful year, and one in which Palestinian rights can be advanced and a legitimate and inclusive political process be rebuilt. This newsletter as always informs you about some of our past and upcoming activities, this time for the period October-December 2014. With the best wishes for the holiday season and a peaceful 2015,



Dr. René Wildangel, Director hbs Ramallah (Palestine/Jordan Office)

follow me on Twitter: @rewiram

Our Middle East Blog (in German) <http://heinrichvonarabien.boellblog.org/>

## News from hbs-Ramallah office (Palestine-Jordan)

### Visits and delegations

In **October 2014** a group of **South African human rights activists, lawyers and academics** visited the offices of hbs in Tel Aviv and Ramallah. Among other things they undertook field trips to the Jordan Valley, Hebron, East Jerusalem Nabi Saleh and Ofer Military Prison. In discussions with Palestinian officials and human rights activists, such as Mohamed Stayyeh, Nabil Shaath and many others the group learned about the conditions created by the occupation and shared their own experiences with peaceful means of resistance which led to the collapse of South African Apartheid. The group also participated in a [public debate](#) at hbs (see below).

Also in **October 2014** **Volker Beck** (chairman of the German-Israeli parliamentary group) visited the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. During the hbs-organized trip Mr. Beck visited Bethlehem and Al-Walajah with the [Negotiations Support Unit](#), Ofer prison

with our partner organization [Addameer](#) and witnessed military court hearings, met with representatives of the newly formed Palestinian unity government and participated in briefings by Palestinian human rights activists.

### Past Events and Activities

From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, the hbs Ramallah hosted an inception workshop as the kick-off to the EU Project “**Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Palestinian Women and Children in East Jerusalem**”. Over the coming three years our partners from ACAD, Art Lab, Right to Play, Sawa and War Child Holland will implement numerous projects in order to improve the livelihoods of women and children in East Jerusalem.



Rene Wildangel welcoming our partners for the inception workshop



The South African Ambassador to Palestine Prof. Makalima gave a brief introduction.

On 28<sup>th</sup> of October, in connection to the visit of the South African Delegation we hosted a *Boell Debate* with the topic: “**South Africa and Palestine – Does the Apartheid comparison make sense?**”. The topic has been debated repeatedly in academia and media. The debate featured a welcome by the South African ambassador H.E. Makalima, a Palestinian view

by Diana Butto and a South African perspective from Prof. Barney Pitso. The debate focused on the comparison of both experiences, on differences and similarities, and which positive political implications and lessons can be learned from the South African case.

On 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of November, our partners, the Institute for Jerusalem (IJS) studies and the [Al Mezan Center for Human Rights](#) in Gaza, in cooperation with the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies (IALIIS) from Birzeit University hosted the annual Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) conference on the topic “[The Geo-Strategic and Political Significance of the Gaza Strip](#)”. The conference included sessions among others on the history of the Gaza Strip, recent political changes, its strategic significance and its economical situation. The whole conference was streamed to Gaza City and included speakers from both places, Birzeit and Gaza.

The hbs offices in Ramallah, Beirut, Tunis, and Rabat – together with IUCN’s Regional Office West Asia – invited 27 participants from 10 countries of the Arab MENA region to Amman for our **Regional Autumn School in Amman**. During the days **between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> of November**, they participated in lectures, exercises, workshops, and a field trip all around the thematic field of natural resources rights, while having the opportunity to network with likeminded environmentalists from all over the region. The lecturers covered topics like “Natural Resource Rights as Human Rights”, “Commons”, and “Water Rights” as well as “Gender and Access to/Control over Natural Resources”, “Resource Governance and Transparency”, and “Privatization of Public Spaces”. The students also participated in a workshop on environmental campaigning strategies. Please follow our [facebook](#) page for pictures of the Autumn School.

The fifth and last Boell Debate of this year on the **1<sup>st</sup> of December** focused on a study on **“Environmental Injustice in Occupied Palestinian Territories. Problems and Prospects”** conducted by Dr. Benjamin Pontin, director of the Bristol Law School’s Environmental Law Research Center at the University of the West of England, Vito de Lucia and Jesus Gamero. Together with our partner Al-Haq, they explored new legal paths which could be used to promote the advancement of environmental rights in the occupied Palestinian territories violated through the Israeli occupation.



The research team consisting of Dr. Benjamin Pontin, Dr. Jesus Gamero, and Vito De Lucia

From the **16th until the 18th of December**, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's Palestine & Jordan office, in cooperation with the [Royal Film Commission - Jordan](#) and the [Goethe Institut Jordan](#), invited for the **International Uranium Film Festival's** premiere at the Rainbow Theater in Amman, Jordan. The three day event was backed by a number of Jordanian environmental organizations, namely the [Jordanian Friends of the Environment](#), the [Society for Energy Conservation and Sustainable Environment \(E-Case\)](#), and [Greenpeace Jordan](#), and screened films around the topics of depleted uranium weapons usage, nuclear accidents, and uranium mining. You can find pictures of the event on our facebook page!

## Resources/ Miscellaneous

Please find the latest version of our partner organisation **MA’AN Development Center’s** environmental magazine online in Arabic on the MA’AN [website](#), where you can also access past editions.

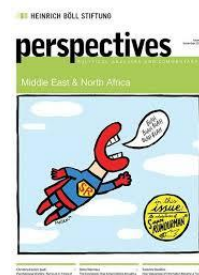
You can find the **Jerusalem Quarterly** which is edited by our partners from the Institute for Jerusalem Studies with many full text articles [here](#).

As always, the **Wadi Hilweh Information Centre** provides a wide range news and footage about the deteriorating situation in Silwan and East Jerusalem in general on its [website](#).

Our colleagues from [Heinrich Böll Stiftung Middle East](#) in Beirut collected a **dossier** with articles in English, Arabic, and French about the recent [UNFCCC Conference of the Parties](#) in Lima, Peru. Have a look!

You can find recent articles released by our partner organization **Masarat – Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Thinking** [here](#).

A [new issue of our regional Perspectives publication](#) is out, dealing with the issue of rumors: “Hardly anything is more challenging than writing about something that is essentially nothing more than ‘hot air’. Yet anyone who has been affected by rumors is familiar with their unhallowed dynamics, and the serious consequences they can entail. Rumors fulfill social functions. They serve as a medium through which unfulfilled hopes or unspecific fears can be voiced. They bond and drive a wedge between people and population groups at the same time. They can destroy reputations, credibility and even lives.” Find past issues [here](#).



*hbs Ramallah* offers **internships** to students and graduates from Germany and elsewhere, for those with a strong interest in political and social development in the region and whose interests align with the hbs program. Our next call is for the period from **April through June 2015**. For further information please check our [website](#).

#### **Imprint:**

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