



**AMERICAN
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OF BEIRUT**

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AUB Wraps Up Inspiring Week of Solidarity and Learning for Palestine

Palestine Week at the American University of Beirut (AUB) was a profound and engaging series of events aimed at expressing solidarity and support for Palestinians. Organized by the General Education Program, Palestine Land Studies Center, Palestinian Cultural Club, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at AUB, the week was a beacon of learning and advocacy amidst the ongoing human catastrophe faced by Palestinians.

Palestine Week featured over 70 events and activities organized by hundreds of individuals and collective bodies across the AUB campus and medical center, including departments, centers, offices, student clubs, and societies. The program's richness and diversity offered a multitude of perspectives on the Palestinian struggle for liberation, the ongoing genocide against them, and the broader implications for global solidarity networks.

Notable events included the hybrid lecture on "Freedom of the Press in Times of Genocide," organized by the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, where journalists Nada Abdel Samad, Elie Brakhia, Shatha Hanaysha, and Nour Sleiman, moderated by Sara Mourad, discussed the challenges faced by journalists covering the struggles of Palestinians and Lebanese Southerners.

Another highlight was the live podcast recording with Ahmad Biqawi interviewing Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah, organized by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Critical Approaches to Development, Taqarob Podcast, and the Palestinian Cultural Club; where Dr. Abu Sittah shared insights on a variety of topics including his own personal development in relation to his commitment to Palestine and the current status of the healthcare sector in Gaza.

The lecture on "International Law and the Prospect of Justice in Palestine," organized by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI), offered a critical examination of the international legal avenues available to Palestinians; while "The Occupation of Water" lecture provided an in-depth look at the critical issue of water access in Gaza and the West Bank, from a historical and scientific perspective.

The week was also enriched by an online session with renowned Palestinian journalist Plestia Alaqad, who shared her experiences covering the genocide in Gaza, offering an invaluable perspective on the ground realities faced by journalists in this conflict zone.

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In the words of Associate Professor Bana Bashour, director of General Education at AUB, "At the time of extreme polarization, globally and locally, our role as universities as hubs of critical discussions is more necessary than ever. And the role of a liberal education is to help one engage, from a variety of different disciplinary lenses, with issues that are of great significance to the community one is in and especially with radical injustices such as the ones we see perpetrated against the Palestinians."

Through lectures, concerts, photo exhibits, film screenings, writing workshops, and more, Palestine Week engaged the AUB community in deep, reflective discussions about resistance, the role of media, international pressure, and the importance and impact of empathy and initiative in solidarity efforts.

Ilham Khuri Makdissi from Northeastern University provided a detailed historical analysis of the development of the state of Israel. While performances by Kamadjati and Beit Atfal Essumoud consisting of musicians from Palestinian camps in Lebanon captivated attendees in AUB's Assembly Hall. Personal narratives from AUB students Yumna Hamidi and Shatha Hanayshe, recipients of the Shireen Abu Akleh Memorial Scholarship, offered their insights into life in the West Bank, through storytelling and photography.

Philosophy students organized a session with their faculty to engage in critical discussions, dissecting traditional Zionist arguments to uncover logical fallacies and biases, reflecting the event's commitment to rigorous academic analysis. The Environment and Sustainable Development Unit's initiative to plant an olive tree for every child who died in Gaza served as a powerful tribute to the young lives lost.

During Palestine Week, the AUB Medical Center and Faculty of Medicine hosted over 20 impactful events that centered around health and Gaza. Topics covered the spectrum of health challenges that have emerged in Gaza amidst Israel's demolition of the health sector, which has left only three hospitals partially functional, over 300 health professionals dead, and many more detained. From trauma care of war injured patients, to managing chronic disease amidst conflict, to sessions that amplified the heroic stories of medical teams in Gaza, the lens was focused on Palestine. These events exemplified the dedication of the AUB medical community to understanding and supporting Palestinian healthcare challenges.

The program also featured discussions on the challenges faced by the education sector in Gaza, termed a 'scholasticide' by some, and explored creative expression through workshops on writing, as well as zine and scrapbook creation.

International Women's Day was also marked by a dedicated session that featured a speaker from the General Union of Palestinian Women in Gaza, alongside an in-depth discussion on women's healthcare in Gaza and the West Bank. This highlighted the critical issues facing women in these regions, particularly accentuated by the events of the past five months.

As the week unfolded, fundraisers for the Ghassan Abu Sittah Children's Fund highlighting community support efforts. Those included a screening of "The Gaza Fixer" film along with a discussion with the director and a concert by Al Fayhaa Choir that concluded the week on a high note with Fairouz's Zahrat El Mada'en. Lebanese journalists provided insightful reflections on the challenges they face when reporting on the genocide in Gaza and the conflict in the South of Lebanon, amidst a highly polarized local political climate.

Additionally, the event fostered interdisciplinary dialogue through collaboration with international City Debates conference in its twentieth edition, featuring four panels that explored urban planning issues in Palestine.

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The week also hosted an open mic night titled “From Beirut to Palestine,” where faculty, students, and staff came together in a shared space of expression. This event allowed the AUB community to vocalize their thoughts and feelings, further solidifying the week's impact as a powerful forum for dialogue, empathy, and solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

Palestine Week not only addressed the critical issues facing Palestinians but also embodied the essence of AUB's commitment to fostering critical discussions and engaging with radical injustices from a multitude of disciplinary perspectives.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 750 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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