

Margaret Abraham's visit to Palestine

The ISA President was the guest of the newly established Palestinian Sociological and Anthropological Association in February 2017. The visit aimed at integrating the PSAA with the global ISA community, and also to introduce Professor Abraham to the colonial reality in Palestine. During this visit, she gave two lectures, one at Birzeit University, and the other at Bethlehem University.

The lectures, on February 14th at Birzeit University and on February 16th at Bethlehem University, was titled "Making a Difference: Linking Sociological Research and Action for Social Justice," and drew an audience of students and faculty at both universities. Abraham emphasized the role of the International Sociological Association as an intellectual and organizational space for dialogue, debate, and action. Framing her remarks around the concept of "contextual global sociology" she stressed that many of the issues studied by sociologists are global but situating and connecting them to the historical, social, political, and spatial contexts is critical, especially understanding the reality on the ground. She noted that it is important to build a contextual global sociology and work toward transformative change and understanding the responsibilities of a global community in building a more just world.

Abraham discussed the role of the International Sociological Association as an intellectual and organizational space for such dialogue, debate and action. She urged Palestinian sociologists to participate in the ISA's various online forums so that the ISA membership can become acquainted with the realities of colonial Palestine and the conditions under which Palestinians produce knowledge.

The visit to Bethlehem on February 16th also included participation in a forum held at the Youth Center at the Aida Refugee Camp, where youth activists' work in the framework of popular resistance was explained, focusing on reviving collective memory of the Nakba in three projects: "keys of return," the return railroad," and the "passport to return." Professor Abraham also met with the Alternative Information Center in Beit Sahour, where a discussion around the historical context to the Palestinian struggle was discussed.

On February 17th Professor Abraham visited the old city in Hebron and met with activists who explained the ongoing violations of the rights of the residents of the old city in the context of the colonial project of emptying the old city of its Palestinian residents.

Details of the two university events are found here:

<https://bethlehem.edu/ac-foa/ac-foa-soc/margaret-abraham-lecture-soci>

<http://www.birzeit.edu/en/news/lecture-links-research-and-action-social-justice>

The Palestinian Sociological and Anthropological Association was fortunate to have Professor Abraham address Palestinian scholars directly so as to acquaint them with the scope of the ISA's work and how they may become involved in it. Her visit was also a boost to the newly formed PSAA in its efforts to widen its networking and to become a member of the global sociological community. It was also an opportunity for Palestinian scholars to share with her their analyses of the unique colonial condition under which Palestinians live.

Professor Abraham's hosts while in Palestine:

Dr. Abaher El Sakka: President of the Palestinian Sociological and Anthropological Association and faculty member, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Birzeit University.

Dr. Bilal Salameh: Treasurer of the Palestinian Sociological and Anthropological Association and faculty member, Department of Social Sciences, Bethlehem University.

Dr. Lisa Taraki: Secretary of the Palestinian Sociological and Anthropological Association and faculty member, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the PhD Program in the Social Sciences, Birzeit University.