

## Memorandum of Understanding

### A. Introduction

This memorandum of understanding is between the Israel State Archives, the Palestine National Archives, Library and Archives Canada, and the U.-S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Whereas the archival organizations of the State of Israel and the Palestine-Palestinian National Authority have records that document the shared rights, interests, and legacy of Palestine's population during the Ottoman and the British Mandate Periods;the Jewish Israeli and Palestinian people.

That years of strife have jeopardized the safety and security of records documenting the joint heritage of Palestine's population during the Ottoman and the British Mandate Periods; Jewish Israeli and Palestinian people.

That current information technology, such as the digital scanning, preservation, and distribution of non-electronic materials permits widespread access to important records regardless of where the user is located;

Nevertheless, that in order for the Israeli and Palestinian archivists to collaborate effectively and work jointly on collections that are physically located in one institution, the archivists must be able to travel to the facilities that maintain the records.

### B. Oversight

The partnership-initiative will be organized within the framework of ~~under the auspices of~~ the International Council on Archives (ICA) and shall be called the "Israel and Palestine National Archives Collaboration."

### C. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will consist of the heads representatives of the Israel State Archives, the Palestine National Archives, Library and Archives Canada, and the U.-S. National Archives and Records Administration, or their designees, and a representative of the International Council on Archives (ICA). ~~All are members of the International Council on Archives~~The sSteering eCommittee shall be tasked with developing a management plan and budget.

### D. Project to Proceed Without Prejudice to Political Commitments

1. The Parties acknowledge the existence of political commitments by the Government of Israel (GOI) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Namely, the GOI and the PLO committed in 2003 to "A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State

Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" under the auspices of the Quartet (the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia). As part of the "Road Map", the GOI committed to "reopening Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem". Without prejudice to this commitment, the Palestinian National Archives and the Israel State Archives shall form a joint Israeli-Palestinian team of professional archivists and records managers under the oversight of the Steering Committee to gain access to records and other materials that have been confiscated by the GOI for the purpose of inventorying the records and other materials confiscated by the GOI from Palestinian institutions since October 2000.

#### Specific-E. Joint Tasks

1. **Place under archival control, digitally reproduce, and make available newspapers published in Palestine during and prior to 1948.** This activity will focus primarily on a collection of pre-1948 newspapers currently in the custody of the Givat Haviva Educational Foundation. The project will also include a search and inventory of newspapers held by other organizations, such as, Tel Aviv University, Haifa Municipality, and the National Library. The goal of the task is to place under sound archival control and to provide access to a comprehensive collection of pre-1948 Palestinian newspapers. The materials will be scanned and metadata compiled by a joint team of Palestinian and Israeli archivists and placed on a-agreed websites where all researchers can access the materials. Tasks include:
  - a. The formation of a team to manage the task and facilitate acquisition of equipment and personnel.
  - b. Acquisition of services of a conservation expert and inspect the condition of the Givat Haviva newspaper collection
  - c. The formation of a team to inventory the newspapers in Givat Haviva and survey other archival organizations for additional pre-1948 newspapers, and other sources.
  - d. Acquisition of scanning equipment
  - e. Locating a site to perform the scanning
  - f. Training a team of Israel and Palestinian technicians and archivists to do the scanning.
  
2. **Survey and digitize photographs documenting the pre-1948 cultural life of Palestine's population during the Ottoman and the British Mandate Periods**~~Mandatory Palestine~~**Israel and Palestine.** Many institutions in Israel and Palestine contain pre-1948 photographs of historical importance. The goal of the task is to place under sound archival control and to provide access to a comprehensive collection of photographs documenting the cultural life and physical landscape of ~~Israel and Palestine~~the pre-1948 period, starting with the collection of photographs located in Um-al-Faham. The materials will be scanned and metadata compiled by a joint team of Palestinian and Israeli archivists and

placed on a-agreed websites where all researchers can access the materials. Tasks include:

- a. Do a feasibility study of digitizing the photographs<sup>[GRF1]</sup>
- ~~a-b.~~ The formation of a team to inventory the photographic collections in Um-al-Faham, and other sites in Israel and; Palestine, and Europe.
- ~~b.c.~~ Acquisition of scanning equipment
- ~~c.d.~~ Locating a site to perform the scanning
- ~~d.e.~~ Training a team of Israeli and Palestinian technicians and archivists to do the scanning

3. **Survey and digitize records from the British Mandate and Ottoman period located in the Israel State Archives.** When the British Mandate period ended in 1948, it left behind a large collection of records documenting the administration of Palestine. They are currently located in the Israel State Archives, but largely document transactions with the Palestinian Arab population. In order to make the records better available for everyone to the Palestinian population, they should be digitized and made accessible over the Internet. Tasks include:

- a. The development of a work plan of work. An order of priority for digitization could be as follows:
  - i. Dispatches of the High Commissioner, 1920-1948
  - ii. Chief Secretary, 1918-1948
  - iii. Census and Population registers
- b. Acquisition of scanning equipment
- c. Training a team of Israeli and Palestinian technicians and archivists to do the scanning.
- ~~d. The scanning will take place at the location of the records~~The Israel State Archives has space in which to conduct the scanning.

- ~~4. Form a team of experts to inspect and inventory the records seized from the Orient House in August 2001.~~ In August 2001, Israel closed the Orient House and took control of the records located there, including the contents of the library. Since it is unclear what records were maintained at the Orient House at the time of its closure, a non-partisan team of archivists and records managers should take steps to gain access to the records for the purpose of inventorying them and making recommendations as to their ultimate disposition. Tasks include:
  - ~~a. Formation of a team of experts under the auspices of the International Council on Archives.~~ The team would survey and inventory the records and make recommendations regarding their disposition. The recommendations would include the identification of records suitable for scanning and made available over the Internet, and the ultimate disposition of the physical materials
  - ~~b. Inquire into the status of the library materials located at Orient House.~~ Apparently the Government of Israel is willing to turn over the contents of the library to the Palestine National Authority.

~~e.c. The signatories commit themselves to active pursuit of a satisfactory solution acceptable to all parties regarding the records and books in Orient House. The United States and Canada have strongly urged that Israel initially allow an international inspection of the current status of materials of Orient House as a first step to its reopening.~~

**5.4. Set up records management and archival training programs for the Palestine National Archives and the Israel State Archives.** The Palestine National Archives has identified basic records management and archival training as priority for its organization and is in the process of seeking funding for such training, among other initiatives, under an overall Palestine Development Plan, which may include .. from the World Bank. The Israel State Archives would like to have staff cross-trained with other archives organizations. Tasks include:

- a. Identify training needs of the Israel State Archives and the Palestine National Archives
- ~~a.b.~~ The formation of a team to develop a curriculum
- ~~b.c.~~ Development of training materials
- ~~e.d.~~ Development of a training schedule
- ~~d.e.~~ Acquisition of materials
- ~~e.f.~~ Conduct of the training

## F. Funding

Under the oversight of the Steering Committee, Funding-funding for the above project initiatives will come in part from the organizations that are party to this memorandum of understanding. Pending subsequent changes funds will be deposited into a designated account of the International Council on Archives which shall be administered by the Steering Committee.

Signatures: