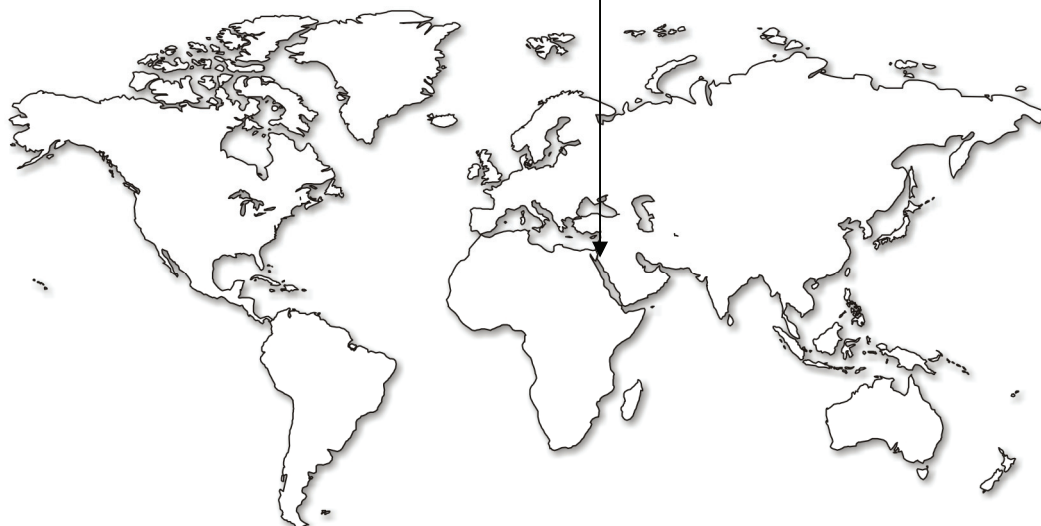# Palestine

Responding institution:

The respondent has requested to remain anonymous.

This is the first time that a report has been received from Palestine. There are 17 public libraries, 13 university research libraries, 1 020 school libraries and 2 government-funded research libraries in the country.

Internet access for school and public libraries is below 20%, and for university and government libraries it is 81-100% and 21-40% respectively. Access is, however, free of charge in all libraries, although fees are collected from users at universities and some municipalities. A number of non-governmental and international organisations have contributed funds to expand Internet access in the country. There is an average amount of local content on the Internet, but very much of this is available in local languages. The literacy rate is indicated as 8%.

Librarians do not support the filtering of information on library Internet terminals, and software for this purpose is not widely used. No anti-terror laws were passed in the past two years. The respondent has mentioned that the Palestinian Legislation Council is inoperative as a result of the Israeli occupation.

The view has been expressed that keeping user records will affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user, and that librarians should join other groups that defend intellectual freedom and access to the Internet. The respondent has indicated that there have been no reports of incidents of the violation of intellectual freedom; some incidents have, however, been reported in third-party sources.

Libraries in Palestine have not become involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. Two reasons provided for the absence of HIV/Aids in the country are the strong social and religious beliefs, and sexual abstinence before marriage.

There are no special library programmes to promote women's literacy, but workshops and video conferences in libraries present special programmes that bring together experts who can assist women. These activities are arranged by the libraries and the university's public relations department.

A weak library association, in the respondent's opinion, is probably the reason why a code of ethics has not yet been adopted. It is believed that, with some effort, this will be possible within the next two years. The Internet Manifesto has not been adopted because of the poor infrastructure of the library association, which has no Internet connection or website, and seeks help from outside to improve matters. The intention, however, is to adopt the Manifesto within the next two years. The respondent has acknowledged complete unawareness of the Glasgow Declaration, but hopes that the library association will adopt it within the next two years.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

Israeli occupation has meant that the Palestinian Legislation Council has been inoperative. No anti-terror laws were passed in the past two years.

Reported incidents/violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years

The respondent has indicated that no such incidents were reported in the past two years. IFEX does, however, document several worrying instances of the violation of freedom of expression in the country. The most obvious case was that of the abduction of BBC journalist Alan Johnson, who was recently released. There are also reports of the endangerment of journalists resulting from the use of a vehicle marked "TV" by armed groups; of gunmen storming a news agency and the killings of a journalist and a media worker.

Sources:

http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/84127/
http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/84110/
http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83953/
http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/83356/

HIV/Aids awareness

Palestinian libraries are not involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. The respondent offers two reasons why HIV/Aids is not a problem in the country: these are the strong social and religious beliefs, and sexual abstinence before marriage among teenagers.

Women and freedom of access to information

No special library programmes are available to promote women's literacy, but special programmes that bring together experts and that can assist women are presented at workshops and video conferences in libraries. The libraries cooperate with the university's public relations department to arrange these special events.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The Internet Manifesto has not been adopted because of the poor infrastructure of the library association. There is no Internet connection and no website, but with help from outside to improve matters, the Manifesto should be adopted within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The respondent has acknowledged complete unawareness of the Glasgow Declaration, but hopes that the library association will adopt it within the next two years.

Ethics

The respondent cites the weakness of the library association as a possible reason why a code of ethics has not yet been adopted. It is the respondent's view, however, that this should be possible within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Palestine
Population:	No data available
Main language:	No data available
Literacy:	No data available
Literacy reported by respondent:	8%

Population figures, language and literacy are from the
CIA World Factbook, 2007 edition
(https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

Palestine

Libraries and Internet access

Palestine participated for the first time in the IFLA/FAIFE World Report in 2007. No comparisons can therefore be made with previous reports.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	17
Estimated number of school libraries:	1 020
Estimated number of university libraries:	13
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	2
Source of these numbers:	Ministry of Culture, Library Department; Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Internet access

Population online**:	243 000 users as of Sept. 2006 (7.9%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	21-40%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Average
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Very much
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	No
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in all libraries
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	Yes – the universities and municipalities usually pay for the Internet provider service from the fees collected from users; NGOs also sometimes donate or fund such projects, for example the British Council, AMEDEAST, AED and World Bank

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.
** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.internetworldstats.com).
*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.