

Commitment in the Time of Pandemic



By Steven Höfner

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reedom, justice, and multilateralism are the three key words that we often use to describe the principles that underlie our work at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) around the world. For our office in Palestine,

these three words couldn't have more significance.

The KAS is a political foundation, closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany. Since the opening of our office in Palestine in 1996, our main focus has been to promote democracy, the rule of law, and sustainable economic activity.

We have worked with many Palestinian organizations over the years and currently have 17 partners across the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, mostly led by young women and men who are true visionaries. As our office is also young, we are guided by the conviction that Palestinian youth are the most important foundation of any effort to bring about social change.

Our partners BuildPalestine and Gaza Sky Geeks, for example, are paving the way for youth who are eager to shape the economy in innovative ways; Palestinian Vision and Reform are firmly set on engaging young Palestinians in the decision-making process; while Dooz and the Birzeit Media Development Center are striving to highlight young Palestinian voices in the media.

We produce quarterly political surveys and up-to-date analyses of the justice system with our partners the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and the Institute of Law. We also focus closely on the Palestinian Christian reality with our partner Diyar in Bethlehem. By offering much-needed education on a variety of topics, we believe that we can support the development of political diversity, local self-administration, and religious dialogue.

Before the spread of COVID-19, our office in Ramallah received more than 1,500 visitors per year, including politicians, students, church groups, and civil society

organizations. And while such official visits are of extreme importance, we take pride in enabling numerous channels for communication between young Palestinians and Germans and contribute to increased awareness of their history and aspirations.

The year 2020 has been challenging, to say the least. It was my first year as director of KAS Palestine, and it turned out to be totally different from what I expected. We had to act quickly to make sure that we remain connected despite the crisis. We were so proud to see our partners rise to the challenge with major efforts conducted online; for example, 7amleh's Palestine Digital

the lessons we have learned so far to emerge stronger than before.

Social media will be one of the main priorities for this year. We believe that in order to shift public opinion and promote understanding of the aspirations of the Palestinian people, their voices need to be heard and their lives communicated to the world. As travel will continue to be difficult, we will utilize technology and the power of storytelling to connect Palestinians and Europeans.

We believe that change is a collective mission, and we are eager to explore new ideas. Therefore, I would like



Activism Forum garnered over a million views, proving that we could still make a difference under lockdown.

Once again humanity has adapted; and so have we in building new partnerships for the year 2021. We are not sure whether this year will present the same challenges, but what we are sure of is that we are ready for the challenge and are utilizing all

to invite you to reach out to us through our platforms on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and our website for many opportunities in Palestine, Germany, and beyond.

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