

## Media in their eyes

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Fadi Abu Sada- The role of the Palestinian media is as critical internally as it is insignificant internationally. The key function it fills in Palestinian politics was illuminated when Hamas and Fateh chose the issue to be discussed in their first meeting as part of the national reconciliation in Cairo. They both agreed to stop what they referred to as negative media campaigns in order to create a positive atmosphere for real reconciliation.

The media is one of the main points of contention between Fateh and Hamas, landing it as the first point on their agenda. This means that the parties acknowledge it as a crucial tool for themselves even though we remain under occupation as we did before, during and after the major attacks on Gaza. Yet still at the meeting many questions were raised on the point. Hamas and Fateh have long since commandeered for themselves the media in the Gaza Strip and West Bank as it is a key tool. But who gives anyone the right to hijack what the Palestinian Constitution affords us, not just in our country, but also as part of the international right to freedom of speech. All the while we are still giving our blood. Members of the Palestinian media are wounded and killed exporting the truth of what is going on in our country. The mixing of media and politics is made all the more complicated as there is no real date set for elections in the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate. It is dead on the ground making it difficult to really talk about rights that we have lost when there is nobody to defend us or stand behind us. We do not have a real space to do our jobs independently, away from politics. At the same time the Syndicate seems to want to give the impression that it is awaiting political permission to hold its own elections.

Palestinian journalists as a community need to pressure the Syndicate and take clear steps to not only set the soonest date possible for elections but also to hold them outside of the internal Palestinian strife. If that is not possible then we need to find a new body to take on the role of a real representative for all Palestinian media institutions and journalists. What we care about is an "elected" director leading a strong union that represents the Fourth Authority and to protect Her Majesty from harm. We have to confess that we are part of the problem instead of part of the solution because we have not taken adequate steps to stir the pot. We should be forcing the union to a final and real decision to change. We the media should move now not later as we run the risk of seeing the union elections taken to the Palestinian internal negotiations in Cairo as a fully politicized case. While we remain the keeper of the word in our current capacity our right to freedom of expression will remain confiscated.