



Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process briefs journalists at UN Headquarters. Photo: UN/Loey Felip

31 August 2016 – The conflict between Israel and Palestine remains one of the most complicated and misunderstood of modern times, and the media undeniably has a crucial role to play in effectively and efficiently communicating the story.

The [International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East](#) in Pretoria, South Africa, from 31 August- 2 September, will bring together journalists, bloggers, activists, film-makers, academics, policy-makers and diplomats from Palestine, Israel, and other countries.

The purpose of the seminar is to sensitise public opinion and the prevailing media coverage on the peace process, and to enhance dialogue between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Journalists, bloggers, and film-makers prove as tools for the rest of the world to gain knowledge about distant conflicts, and it is important for the international media to come together and think

about how the story is told, and what the most powerful way to tell it is.

The discussions this year will focus on alternative forms of communication in expressing the Israel-Palestine story, through documentaries and films, political satire as a peacemaker, virtual reality as the next frontier in storytelling, and the power of animation to communicate complex issues about the situation.

This year's seminar will see the screening of "The Wanted 18", an animated documentary about the efforts of Palestinians in Beit Sahour to start a small local dairy industry during the First Intifada, hiding a herd of 18 dairy cows from Israeli security forces when the dairy collective was deemed a threat to Israel's national security.

This story and stories alike highlight the importance of alternative platforms for storytelling during war and conflict, as well as peace, as the international media community can help to promote peace and raise awareness for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.



Earlier this year, delivering a statement on behalf of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Robert Piper, Assistant Secretary-General and United Nations Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said "the newly adopted development agenda offered a universal, integrated and transformative plan of action for people, planet and prosperity."

“Connecting development efforts to humanitarian action, human rights and the advancement of the peace process was critical for progress”, he told the meeting, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, emphasising, “There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development”.