



**INTERVIEW conducted on 29.10.2019**

by

**Rokiah Hashim (Siti Ruqaiyah Hashim)**  
**Malaysian Born freelance writer, poet, film and theatre critics**  
**Peace and Human Rights Activist**  
**Now residing in the Balkans, Europe**

**INTERVIEW - Mr Abdallah Tayeh,**  
**Asst. Secretary of General Union of Palestine**

**FOR DIOGEN PRO CULTURE MAGAZINE**

**BY ROKIAH HASHIM**

## **BIODATA**

A Palestinian writer who is a refugee from BET DARAS living in Jabalia camp in Gaza, Abdallah Tayeh is currently Assistant Secretary General of the General Union of Palestinian Writers 2018- 2019. He was Vice President of the Palestinian Writers Union, 1995-2003. Deputy President of Palestinian Writers Union since 2003. He was also Vice President of Afro-Asian Writers Organization in Palestine and Founder member of Palestinian Writers Union. Member of many cultural and information bodies in Palestine. Author of 18 books: Short stories,

novels, politics, journalism, travelogue, bibliography etc. He participated and attended numerous cultural and media conferences. Amongst them: Arab Culture N.G.Os Conference. Morocco, 1996. Radio & T.V Festival. Cairo, 1997. Information Ministers Conference. Dakar, 1997. International Book Fair .Cairo, 1996-1999. Vietnam 2000 Conference. Hanoi, 2000. Seminar of Palestinian Future Culture ,Cairo, 2003. The Continuous office of Arab Writers Union. Cairo, 2003. General Convention of Arab Writers Union. Algiers, 2003. Arab Writers and Authors Union. Damascus, 2004. Literary and Administrative Conference in China, 2005. Abu Dhabi Book Fair, 2019. Arab and Palestinian Journalist are publishing his cultural and political articles.

## **INTERVIEW WITH ABDALLAH TAYEH FOR DIOGEN PRO CULTURE FOR WORLD PEACE.**

**SRH: Tell me more about yourself. Your childhood, family, schooling and education background and career.**

AT: I am Abdullah Tayeh. I was born in 1953 to a family who was expelled from the village of Beit Daras to Gaza amongst the thousands who were expelled from Palestine during the 1948 Nakba. I lived my childhood in Jabalia refugee camp and still living there. I studied in the university and worked as a teacher in the camp schools, after a long time in teaching I moved to work at the Ministry of Information, now I am retired since few years ago. I won in the elections of the General Union of Palestinian Writers several times since 1995. On summer 2018 I was elected as Assistant Secretary-General of the General Union of Palestinian Writers.

**SRH: When did you start writing and what inspired you into it? How did it develop from beginning until now? How many novels and other genres you had written and published?**

AT: I started writing in the early seventies and was inspired to write by the miserable situation and poverty of our people in the camp combined with the great effect of the expulsion of my family from its land and home.

I started writing short stories then novels and also other genres of literature. I am keen to pay attention to the foundations of language art and linguistic aesthetic expressions. I published five novels, six short story collections and seven books in literature, culture and media which is a total of eighteen books. Four short story books were translated into English, and one anthology with other writers translated into Spanish.

They are:

**Short story**

Who Knocks the Door. Alquds: Abu Arafa Printing and Publishing, 1977.

Circles Are Orange. Alquds: National Publishing Foundation, 1991.

Search Is a Continuous Rhythm. Writers Union Print, 1997.

The Waves Slipping Away. Ramallah: Ugarit Printing, 2001.

Soldiers Who Don't Like Moth. Palestinian Institution for Guidance, 2003.

What the Narrators Said on the Neighborhoods. Haifa: Library Everything, 2016.

## **Novels**

Those Who Search For The Son. Alquds: Abu Arafa Printing and Publishing, 1979.

The Car And The Night. Alquds: Abu Arafa Printing and Publishing, 1982.

The Indian Fig Ribe soon. Alquds: Al - Bayader for Printing and Publishing, 1983.

Faces in the Hot Water. Writers Union Print, 1996.

Moon In Beit Daras. Writers Union Print, 2001.

## **Politics**

Zohair El Raies, the Political and Thinker. Gaza: Al Amal Printing House, 2000.

## **Literary and journalism books:**

The Night of 7th December. Gaza: Al Amal Printing House, 2003.

Cultural Media in Radio and Television. Ramallah: Dar Al Majid for Printing and Publishing, 2006.

## **Bibliography**

Palestinian Writers from ALQUDS. Alquds: Algundy House, 2016.

## **Literature:**

Creativeness in the Meanings of the Holy Names of Allah. Gaza: Publications of Afro - Asian writers 2015.

## **Travelogue**

My Journey to China (Literature of Travel). Haifa: Library Everything, 2018.

## **Literature**

Palestinian Novels and the Lasting Conflict. Gaza: Kalima Printing & Publishing, 2019.

### **Short Stories Anthology in Arabic**

Short Stories from Palestinian Tales in Occupied territories. Alquds, 1977.

Short Stories from Occupied Land. Alquds, 1981.

Wounded Birds Feature Stories the Palestinian Ministry of Culture and Information by a Group of Palestinian Journalists and Writers. Ramallah, 2003.

Stories from Palestine. Ramallah, 2003.

### **Short Stories Anthology in English**

Modern Palestinian Short Stories in Translation. Ramallah. Edited by: Izzat Ghazzawi, Claire Peak, 1998.

Stories from Palestine. Gaza. Translated by Said Abd Elwahed, 2003.

Wounded Birds Feature Stories the Palestinian Ministry of Culture and Information by a Group of Palestinian Journalists and Writers. Ramallah. Translated By: Izzat Ghazzawi, 2003.

Gaza Stories. London: published by Comma Press, 2014.

### **Short stories anthology in Spanish:**

Palestinian Stories under Occupation - Spain, 2003.

**SRH: What are the challenges faced in being a writer in Palestine and how are you coping with them?**

AT: The Palestinian writers are living under extreme difficult conditions under occupation, siege, poor economic conditions and poverty. The crisis of printing and publishing forced the Palestinian writers to spend part of his family small budget to print his books. And we have no opportunities to participate in foreign and Arabic literary and cultural conferences as a result of the siege and occupation. Their books don't have the opportunity to be translated into other languages. And they are affected by the lack of readers and the scarcity of selling books because of the poor economic conditions of the people, especially in Gaza Strip.

I published most of my books from my own little savings, and some publishers were interested to publish my books but without any financial return.

**SRH: You are very much involved in major and prominent writing associations in Palestine. Tell me more about them and the challenges faced.**

AT: After the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, freedom of expression, writing, and opinions were given. Accordingly, tens of cultural centers were set up, and the Palestinian government abolished censorship over publications. The Ministry of Culture was established for the first time. The Writers' Union was established before the Ministry of Culture in 1978 under the military Israeli laws, which hunted down the writers and the intellectuals. Now, these institutions and cultural centers suffer from lack of financial resources and abilities to conduct activities and events. The siege has also contributed in breakdown of communications with their peers in Ramallah or abroad. The crisis of publishing and circulation, reading, and buying books affect the cultural status-quo. Moreover, the bad economic conditions, unemployment, and poverty multiply the effect of these crises. The

writers tried by all means to overcome these problems, though very little, through personal efforts and by spending some of the family's income on publishing books.

**SRH: Situation in Gaza. The siege is making life worse from day to day. And Gaza is described by human rights reports as inhabitable and collapsing. But the resistance is not easing at all. As a writer, how do you see this?**

AT: People in the Gaza Strip suffer from siege, unemployment, poverty, lack of water, bad health conditions, lack of jobs, increasing numbers of graduates, freedom of traveling, low income, over-crowdedness etc. All these situations overshadowed daily life and have produced numberless patterns of characters and events. People here seek life, freedom, peace. The writers, me included, express these sufferings and dreams in their writings.

**SRH: The destruction of physical amenities and living conditions in Gaza are also accompanying the annihilations and destructions of Palestine culture. Archive records are gone and all historical artifacts are diminishing etc. How do you see this as a person close to cultural aspects of life?**

AT: All these miserable situations, tough living conditions, and transgressing the folklore and cultural institutions of our people will never hinder us from asking for its freedom, independence, and emancipation from the occupation.

**SRH: The political- sosio-economic aspect of occupation and enlargement of foreign Jewish settlements in West Bank are affecting the livelihood and social fabric of Palestine since 1967. And the impotency of Arab countries to take actions against occupations are so glaring and deepening. Leaving very serious impactful**

**situations. As a Palestinian writer and an intellectual, how do you see this?**

AT: The International Laws dont recognize settlement nor occupation. Despite their strong daily effect, the people are determined to stay in their lands enduring all the aspects of suffering and oppression practiced by the occupation and its settlers. Our people will keep struggling, and we have a big faith in the removal of the occupation sooner or later. We love life, freedom, and peace.

**SRH: Current and coming writing projects?**

AT: I have published eighteen books. I still have eight books that need publishing. There are six other books that I am still working on.

My being elected as an Assistant Secretary-General of the Palestinian Writers Union put me on a great responsibility to serve our writers, spread and publicize their creations and introduces them to the world. We also have to work hard to organize literary activities and conferences that will make them achieve their goals and literature publicity.

**SRH: What are your hopes and dream as a prominent writer and a Palestinian for peace in the Holy Land?**

AT: I hope to wake up one morning to find the occupation has gone with its settlers, the siege uplifted, and peace has spread all over Palestine and the Holy Land.



**Thank you very much for this exclusive interview for DIOGEN pro culture magazine, respectable Abdallah Tayeh.**

**@copyright DIOGEN pro culture magazine 2019**

26.10.2019

PR  
DIOGEN pro kultura  
<http://www.diogenpro.com>