ARMENIAN PROFESSOR APPOINTED PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY MINISTER

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Historian, human rights advocate, management and policy consultant Dr. Varsen Aghabekian has been appointed Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine. Throughout her career, she has played a leading role in the Palestinian community.

Aghabekian was a founding member of non-governmental organizations and a member of the Higher Presidential Committee of Church Affairs in Palestine. She has served on university boards and human rights organizations and was Commissioner General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights. In addition, she was a member of the Presidential Committee for the Restoration of the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem.

In 2021, Aghabekian wrote *A Palestinian Armenian*, the 1,600-year history of Armenians in the Holy Land. It was followed in 2023 by *The Saga of Survival* about the contemporary history of Armenians in Palestine with special focus of the Palestinian Naqba ("catastrophe" in Arabic) and its impact on the Armenians. *Naqba* refers to the dispossession of the Palestinians from their homeland and the imposed creation of Israel.

Born in Jordan in 1958, she received her higher education in the United States. In 1983, she received her master's degree at Purdue University, Indiana and later her PhD from the University of Pittsburgh. From 1988 to 2008, she worked at the University of Jerusalem as an associate professor, and then as dean.

Aghabekian is the third Armenian to hold high position in the Palestinian Authority (PA). Manuel S. Hassassian was PA's ambassador to the United Kingdom and Denmark while historian Albert Aghazarian was political spokesman for the PA.

In addition to her two books of history, Aghabekian has written numerous manuals, articles and national reports on Jerusalem, education, health, youth and women issues.

PA's new minister of foreign affairs has two children and two grandchildren.

There are no comments yet.