



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 9, 2026

Dear members of the AUB community,

It is with much sadness that I share the news of the passing of the distinguished Palestinian historian and longtime member of the American University of Beirut community, **Professor Walid Khalidi**, whose formidable scholarship impacted the study of modern Middle Eastern history and whose life's work was devoted to preserving the collective memory of the Palestinian people.

Born in Jerusalem in 1925 into a venerable family of jurists, scholars, political figures, and educators, Professor Khalidi's early years paved the path that would define his life. As a young man, he worked in Jerusalem in 1945–46 with the Arab Office, established by the Arab League to present the case of Palestine before the international community. That experience would guide his lifelong commitment to documenting and understanding the historical roots of the Palestine question.

Professor Khalidi earned a BA from the University of London in 1945 and an MLitt from the University of Oxford in 1951. That same year, he began lecturing in Islamic studies at Oxford while continuing his research on Islamic philosophy. In 1956, he resigned his position in protest of the British role in the invasion of Egypt.

In 1957, Professor Khalidi joined AUB's Department of Political Studies and Public Administration, where he taught for 25 years, educating generations of students who would go on to become leaders in academia, diplomacy, and public life across the Arab world. His academic career also took him abroad as a research fellow at Princeton University, a fellow at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs, and later as a visiting professor of government at Harvard. After leaving AUB in 1982, he settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he served as senior research fellow at Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies until his retirement in 1997.

Professor Khalidi dedicated his lengthy and illustrious career to documenting the history of Palestine and the larger Arab-Israeli conflict. His research questioned established narratives and applied meticulous historical analysis to issues that had frequently been influenced by misconceptions and myth. *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* and *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* are two of his most influential works that continue to make significant contributions to the preservation of Palestinian historical memory.

Professor Khalidi's sense of duty and public responsibility extended well beyond scholarship. He engaged actively in public life throughout his years at AUB, advising political leaders and participating in discussions on and around Lebanon's political challenges. In 1963, he helped found the Institute for Palestine Studies. It was the first autonomous, nonprofit research institute of its sort in the Arab world, and he maintained a strong relationship with it throughout his life. Over the years, he also played roles in diplomacy and mediation, serving as adviser to the Iraqi delegation to the United Nations, contributing to Arab diplomatic efforts, and participating in the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991.

Professor Khalidi's many contributions have been acknowledged on a global scale. Among many awards and honors, he received the Jerusalem Prize from the Palestinian National Authority, Jordan's Order of Al Istiqlal (First Class), and was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In

2010, AUB awarded him an honorary doctorate of humane letters in recognition of his lifelong scholarly and intellectual contributions.

The American University of Beirut community remembers Professor Khalidi as an eminent scholar and intellectual leader whose work has made a genuine impact in academia and well beyond.

To his family, friends, and loved ones, we extend our heartfelt condolences.

With deepest sympathy,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD
President

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