

Palestinian author jailed by Israel receives prestigious book award

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Abu Dhabi, April 29 (RHC)-- A Palestinian author who has been jailed by Israel for some 20 years has received a prestigious literary award for a novel he wrote from behind bars.

Basim Khandaqji won the prestigious International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) on Sunday in a ceremony held in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. A Lebanese publisher of Khandaqji's novel, A

Mask, the Colour of the Sky, received the award on his behalf.

The book was chosen from 133 other works submitted to the competition. Reports indicated that the author may not be even aware of his literary success and will be unlikely to receive the \$50,000 prize granted by the IPAF.

The prize-winning book narrates the story of a Palestinian archaeologist living in a refugee camp in Ramallah who accidentally finds an identity card of an Israeli settler and uses it to gain access to excavation sites in the Israeli-occupied West Bank where Ramallah is located.

A member of the IPAF's jury team said Khandaqji's novel "dissects a complex, bitter reality of family fragmentation, displacement, genocide, and racism".

Khandaqji is among more than 4,500 Palestinians currently living in Israeli jails. His success has resonated with readers amid an ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza where the regime has killed nearly 34,500 people since it invaded the enclave in early October.

Many Palestinian authors have written lasting books during their incarceration in the occupied Palestine.

Yahya Sinwar, who currently leads the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, Israel's number one opponent in Gaza, has envisioned the future of Palestine's liberation in a book titled The Thorn and Carnation which he wrote in Israeli prison.

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