

Bedlam, Far gearing up for first UK-Israel co-production, Zaytoun

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Gareth Unwin's Bedlam Productions and Fred Ritzenberg's Far Films are in pre-production on *Zaytoun*, the first UK-Israel co-production following the newly ratified co-production treaty.

Details of the project were announced today at the UK-Israel Film Coproduction Treaty Launch breakfast at BAFTA in London.

Israeli film-maker Erin Riklis (*Lemon Tree*) is directing the [feature](#) which is also a French-Israeli co-production. It tells the story of a ten year old Palestinian refugee and an Israeli fighter pilot shot down over Beirut in 1982. The script has been written by Palestinian writer Nader Rizq, winner of a Nicholls Fellowship with his script.

Casting is currently underway.

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French speaking territories and international sales rights are being handled by Pathé Films, United King is handling Israeli distribution rights, while Prominent Pictures, H.W. Buffalo, BUF in Paris and British Film Company have joined as equity partners.

The project was supported by the BFI Film Fund and British Film Company during its development stage.

Oscar winning Unwin, who was one of the producers on *The King's Speech* said: "Multi-party co-productions are notoriously difficult to structure, with the new treaty we have a great template for how we might all collaborate to bring this amazing story to life. We are incredibly excited to be working with such outstanding Israeli and Palestinian talent."

Eran Riklis added: "My first steps as a filmmaker were taken in this country when I studied at the NFTS and so it is a great pleasure to helm this UK-Israeli collaboration and to join forces with an Oscar winning British producer who is now venturing in to the drama and complexity of the Middle East".

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