

Home Article Print Page
Published 06:40 03.05.10 | Latest update 06:40 03.05.10

Writers festival opens amid plea for tough and honest talk

By Maya Sela

The Second International Writers Festival opened in Jerusalem last night, with author Nir Baram, representing the Israeli participants, imploring writers not to conceal disagreements.

"When does a writers' gathering fail? When you hide the disagreements," he said. "As a young writer, I wonder whether the festival and the cocktail parties mask the disputes and make the event overly cultural. Kafka said that a book should serve as the ax for the frozen sea within us.

"There are many things that we don't talk about. Just a few kilometers from here is the separation barrier, and in recent years we have seen the systematic confiscation of the rights of non-Jews in Israel and the territories."

Turning to the foreign authors, Baram said that in these times we need tough and honest talk. We need foreign authors to be both supportive and critical, he said. Sometimes when you live near the sea you stop hearing the sound of the waves, he added.

President Shimon Peres and Culture and Sports Minister Limor Livnat attended the ceremony. The Spanish writer Adolfo Garcia Ortega spoke on behalf of the foreign authors attending the festival.