



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

**UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY
IN SUPPORT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

**United Nations Office at Geneva
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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 7 and 8 September 2006, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 60/36 and 60/37 of 1 December 2005.
2. The Committee was represented at the conference by a delegation comprising Paul Badji (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Riyad Mansour (Palestine).
3. The theme of the conference was “Realizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people”. Eighteen representatives of civil society organizations were invited to serve as members of the Steering Committee of the Conference. The members chaired the different sessions of the Conference, conferred with other participants and drafted the Plan of Action (annex I) in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. A list of participants at the Conference is contained in annex II.
4. Twenty-five experts made presentations in the plenary meetings and served as resource persons in the workshops (for a summary of the workshops, see annex III). Representatives of 56 civil society organizations participated in the conference. Representatives of 45 Governments, the Holy See, Palestine, 5 intergovernmental organizations and 12 United Nations system entities attended as observers.

II. Opening statements

5. **Kofi Annan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a message read out on his behalf by Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, stated that while much of the world’s attention had recently been focused on developments in Lebanon, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to worsen. The recent hostilities and Israeli incursions had inflicted further hardship on Palestinians, exacerbating the already high levels of poverty and unemployment, destroying vital civilian infrastructure and exposing them to new and more serious shortages of water, electricity and - in Gaza - food. An elaborate system of checkpoints and closures made the movement of people and goods next to impossible. All that combined only fostered bitterness and hatred. Since the end of June, more than 200 Palestinians, including women and children, had been killed.
6. He stressed that crossing points had to be opened to allow goods into Gaza, so that Palestinian exports could reach their markets. It was also important to achieve progress towards the release of Palestinian Authority officials recently arrested by Israel and in President Abbas’s long-standing efforts to secure prisoner release. Achieving those goals required Palestinian efforts, including the release of the captured Israeli soldier, the provision of security at crossing points and an end to rocket fire against Israel from Gaza.
7. He concluded by saying that he encouraged Palestinian efforts to form a national unity Government. If the Palestinians could unite around a realistic and acceptable programme, and if that could help alleviate Palestinian suffering and bring the security situation under control, it would be a positive step. The United Nations would do whatever it could to support those efforts. Indeed, the international community continued to have a responsibility to work towards a comprehensive, just and

lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. With the political dialogue at a standstill, renewed efforts should be undertaken without delay to restart the peace process in the region.

8. **Paul Badji**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that despite all the commendable efforts by the international community, including civil society, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate. All those serious problems deliberated on at past meetings and conferences had been exacerbated, such as the construction of the separation wall, settlement activities and economic and social development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Following the abduction of Corporal Shalit on 25 June 2006 by Palestinian militants, Israeli forces had launched a major military operation in the Gaza Strip, carrying out a number of extrajudicial assassinations, destroying Palestinian Authority institutions and, worse, deliberately causing a major humanitarian crisis by destroying civilian infrastructure, including the only power station in Gaza. During the operation that had started on 28 June, more than 200 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, many of them innocent civilians, including women and children. The humanitarian situation was very worrisome, probably the worst ever, especially in the Gaza Strip. Almost 80 per cent of the population in the Gaza Strip was now living below the poverty line, owing mainly to the tight closure imposed on the borders by Israel.

9. The Committee strongly condemned Palestinian rocket fire and suicide attacks indiscriminately targeting Israeli civilians. Such acts undermined the Palestinian aspiration to peace and eventual statehood and the Committee stressed that a solution could be found only through non-violent means.

10. He expressed concern that despite international condemnation and in violation of international law, the Israeli Government continued to create facts on the ground, which were rarely covered by international media. The construction of the wall was ongoing, destroying and appropriating Palestinian land and property. Efforts to consolidate major settlement blocks continued, with hundreds of new housing units being built, and the settler population was on the increase. Those activities, together with measures such as establishing exclusive road networks connecting settlements and other means to restrict the movement of Palestinians, were apparently intended to move Israel towards unilaterally drawing its “final borders”, prejudging the outcome of the future permanent status negotiations.

11. He recalled that lesser-known aspects of the occupation remained of essential importance. Israel’s unilateral plan to withdraw smaller settlements from the West Bank might be perceived by public opinion as equal to ending the occupation, which was far from the truth. The fact was that a large part of Palestinian land would be expropriated to incorporate the major settlement blocks into Israel within the “final borders” to be defined by the separation wall, while the remaining land would be divided into cantons without free access to one another. The Jordan Valley would remain under Israeli control, meaning that Palestinians in the West Bank would not have access to the outside world. Moreover, many crucial natural resources, including important and scarce water resources, within Palestinian land would be used exclusively by settlers.

12. **Riyad Mansour**, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, read a message sent by President Mahmoud Abbas, which said that countless General Assembly and Security Council resolutions addressed the many aspects of the question of Palestine. Regrettably, however, virtually none of those resolutions had been implemented, and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was not being complied with. Such total disregard for the United Nations and its resolutions and decisions and the continuing violation of international law by the occupying Power had gravely compounded the conflict and the plight of the Palestinian people over decades, hampering the realization of their inalienable rights.

13. Mr. Mansour drew attention to the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It had steadily and gravely deteriorated in all aspects –political, security, economic, social and humanitarian. Israel, the occupying Power, had continued its fervent, unlawful settler colonialism in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular East Jerusalem, confiscating more and more Palestinian land, building and expanding more settlements and more than doubling the number of its settlers in the Palestinian Territory. In addition, despite the clear call by the International Court of Justice, Israel had now nearly completed the construction of a wall on confiscated land, including in and around East Jerusalem, severing the Territory into several isolated and walled enclaves and cantons, destroying numerous communities in their entirety, destroying the livelihood of and displacing thousands of Palestinians, and further entrenching Israel’s illegal settlements. The wall, along with the settlements and Israel’s hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks, was destroying the continuity and territorial integrity of the Palestinian Territory, isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the Territory, devastating the Palestinian economy and destroying the very fabric of Palestinian society, decreasing the likelihood of achieving a two-State solution.

14. He added that the deteriorating economic and social conditions were the result of Israel’s ongoing military campaign of aggression, with its violent assaults against the besieged population in the Gaza Strip, as witnessed in recent months. The military aggression had involved, inter alia, the occupying Power’s deliberate use of force, resulting in the killing or injury of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including women and children; the continuation of extrajudicial killings; the destruction of vital infrastructure, properties and institutions of the Palestinian Authority; and the collective punishment of the entire population. Furthermore, the financial crisis imposed on the Palestinian Authority in the months following the free, fair and democratic elections of January 2006, had caused a dramatic decline in economic and social conditions and resulted in the grave humanitarian crisis prevailing today in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

15. **Phyllis Bennis**, Co-Chair, International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP), pointed out that the war in Lebanon and the continuing assault in the Gaza Strip had created new realities. The issue of Palestine, for too long limited to the narrow issue of ever-decreasing areas of authority governing the Occupied Palestinian Territory, had been returned to its regional, Arab and global context. In that regional context, Governments were being pressured by the widespread expression of popular democratic demands for an end to Arab support for the United States of America’s regional plan for “democratization” across the Middle East. If democracy was to have any meaning at all, the United Nations, and every Member State, should welcome the opportunity to recognize and establish full relations with a democratically elected Government in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, regardless of whom the Palestinian people elected. The war in Lebanon had also changed the reality on the ground in the region. Among those changes was the new reality in which Israel and the United States of America had accepted the presence of United Nations Blue Helmets on Israel’s border, providing protection for Lebanese and Israelis alike.

16. She added that the United Nations was engaged in a difficult effort to initiate the compensation registry called for in the General Assembly resolutions on implementing the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that held Israel’s wall to be illegal. But the wall was almost finished, encircling Palestinian towns and cities in the most massive land grab since 1967. Israel’s rejection of international protection was rooted in its fear of a slippery slope towards international – specifically United Nations – centrality in Middle East diplomacy, instead of the current reality of a United States-controlled “peace process”.

17. She said that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) urged the United Nations to convene, under its own auspices, an international peace conference for the Middle East grounded in international

law and all relevant United Nations resolutions. No Government, however powerful, had the right to impose collective punishment on an entire population. No Government, however protected by a global super-Power, had the right to continue an illegal occupation and to deny its captive population all its rights as guaranteed by international law and United Nations resolutions.

III. Plenary sessions

Plenary I

From awareness to action: impact of peace movements, political parties and trade unions

18. **Mustafa Barghouti**, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, started his presentation by emphasizing that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not a conflict between two sides, both fighting for a piece of land; it was a struggle of people who had been under an apartheid and colonial occupation for more than 40 years and who had been dispossessed of their land for more than 58 years. It was a struggle for freedom.

19. Mr. Barghouti described the Israeli process of consolidating the occupation through the creation of an apartheid system, which included the building of the wall, the establishment of 650 military checkpoints preventing the free movement of people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and a process of collective punishment that did not stop with persecution and oppression. On average, a Palestinian in the Occupied Territory was allowed to use no more than 24 cubic metres of water per capita per year, versus 2,400 cubic metres of water for Israeli settlers living in the West Bank and consuming Palestinian water. On average, Palestinian areas produced 937 million cubic metres of water, but Palestinians were allowed to use only 157 million cubic metres; the rest went to Israel.

20. Mr. Barghouti pointed out the clear failure of the international community reflected in the double standards it employed when dealing with the Palestinian issue. When Kuwait was wrongly occupied by Iraq, the world community had mobilized to liberate Kuwait, but it had been tolerating the occupation of Palestinian territory for 40 years. The world community was so impatient regarding the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) when it came to Lebanon, while Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) had not been implemented. The world community was against violence when it came to Israel, but it did not show enough support to preventing violence against Palestinians. In the last six years, 4,650 Palestinians had been killed. Palestinians had had the best presidential and parliamentary elections in the region. Yet 41 elected members of the parliament had been arrested, including the head of the parliament and five ministers. In addition, the International Court of Justice had taken a very important decision against the construction of the wall, the illegal measures in Jerusalem and all settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, describing them as illegal and stating that they should be removed.

21. In parallel with that double standard and the silence of the international community, and owing to Arab weakness, Israel had cultivated a culture of impunity with respect to violations of international law. Israel was deporting, or preventing entry by, any international figure trying to gain access to Palestinian areas to investigate the situation or show solidarity to the Palestinians, even if such individuals were carrying passports from the United States or Europe. The only way out of that situation was a strong grass-roots involvement of parliaments, political parties, trade unions and NGOs to pressure their Governments to take action in four different areas: to lead Israel to accept international law and the human rights of Palestinians; a movement to boycott and disinvest in Israel; a movement aimed at the imposition of complete sanctions on military cooperation with Israel; and to send as many delegations as

possible to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, because the reality there was not sufficiently exposed to international media and to the public in general.

22. He concluded by saying that in the past 40 years, although peace processes had taken place, nothing had changed on the ground, as the process of occupation and settlement expansion continued. The partition resolution of 1947 had accorded 45 per cent of historic Palestine to an Arab State. After the 1967 war, Palestinians had accepted the painful compromise of having a Palestinian State only in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip representing no more than 22 per cent of the land of historic Palestine – in other words, less than half of what was decided by the United Nations. The result of the process of the confiscation of land for settlement expansion would be the destruction of the possibility of the creation of an independent Palestinian State, the destruction of the potential for peace based on a two-State solution, and the creation of an apartheid system.

23. **Achin Vanaik**, professor of international relations and global politics at the University of Delhi, said that without first understanding the strategic behaviour of Israel and the United States, one could not have a corresponding strategic perspective that would guide efforts in that regard. Three main phases had characterized the Israeli occupation since 1967. The first phase could be termed as full and direct occupation, lasting from 1967 until the Oslo Accords in 1993. The second phase lasted from 1993 until the ascension of Ariel Sharon to power in 2003. It was during that phase that there was a partial subcontracting of the occupation via the Oslo Accords. Israel would maintain overall control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but the Palestinian Authority would in effect take on some of the burden of policing and some responsibility for administering the Occupied Territory, while Israel dangled endlessly the bait of a possible “negotiated settlement”, even as it continued violating the Oslo Accords by extending its settlements programme. In the third and current phase, Israel had decided on a unilateralist imposition of the kind of settlement and “peace” it wanted not only in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but also in the Middle East as a whole. This new Israeli phase of strategic reorientation was substantially coordinated with the United States, which had also embarked on its own form of unilateralist militarism aiming at reordering the Middle East in ways that would ensure the long-term and undisputed dominance of Israel and the United States over the whole region.

24. In that strategic reorientation, the phase of Israeli “disengagement” from the Gaza Strip was in effect a rearrangement of the occupation in a way that was meant to be decisive in three respects: first, by creating facts on the ground, it eliminated permanently the prospect of any future settlement on the basis of the pre-1967 borders; secondly, in the name of a new “realism”, it forced a permanent abandonment of the Palestinian people’s claim to have their “right of return” even symbolically acknowledged by Israel; and, thirdly, it decisively repudiated United Nations resolutions 194 (III), 242 (1963) and 338 (1973) thus rendering the United Nations in general irrelevant and nugatory as regards a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

25. Mr. Vanaik said that a proposal that had been floated and was well worth considering was the establishment of an international criminal tribunal for Israel by the General Assembly along the lines of the one for the former Yugoslavia. Such a tribunal could be established, as had been pointed out by experts, under Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations as a “subsidiary organ” of the General Assembly. The Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference could be used as preparatory arenas for lobbying and mobilizing in that regard. Another idea would be to call on the OIC and the Movement to demand the immediate establishment of a Middle Eastern zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. In addition, a conference could be held with the participation of select and sympathetic parliamentarians from the countries of the South and of representatives from the civil society organizations engaged in solidarity work for the Palestinian people. From such a conference, a smaller group of parliamentarians could be established to undertake a tour of select countries of the South to meet

heads of Government and to hold press conferences. He also suggested the holding of an international concert for Palestinian rights. He concluded by quoting the work done by the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), which had created a five-minute music video – one of its most effective advocacy tools ever in terms of reaching the general public, young and old. The making of that video had taken considerable time and resources and the creative efforts of a collective of musicians, writers and film-makers. A similar music video sensitive to the circumstances of the Palestinian people could and should be made.

26. **Pedro Brieger**, Professor at Buenos Aires University and a journalist at Argentina's Channel 7, said that the Palestinian cause was supported by Governments in Latin American and Caribbean countries. That position was supported by MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela); the Rio Group, composed of 19 Latin American countries; and the South American Community of Nations, consisting of 14 countries. The biggest Palestinian community outside the Arab world lived in Chile. For that reason, Chile was the first country in Latin America to open a representative office in Ramallah, followed by Peru and Costa Rica. Significantly, after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006, Costa Rica and El Salvador, the only two Latin American countries with representation in Jerusalem, had moved their representative offices to Tel Aviv to correct a "historical mistake", according to Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica.

27. Brazil had started a movement to strengthen the relations between Latin America and Arab countries that until 2005 had had only economic and commercial links. In September 2005, the Meeting of South American and Arab Countries had issued a statement supporting Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and the need for the establishment of an "independent Palestinian State in 1967 borders" and recognizing the "right of States and peoples to resist the foreign occupation, in accordance with principles of international law". The United States and Israel, as part of the strategy to weaken relations between the Latin American and Arab countries, were trying to sign a free trade treaty with MERCOSUR. Mr. Brieger stressed that the importance of such a treaty was not economic but political, since the exports of the MERCOSUR countries to Israel represented less than 1 per cent of the total of their exports. Several NGOs in Brazil and Argentina had spread the news and criticized idea of signing of the treaty while Israel was continuing to build the wall and attacking Gaza. In the end, the treaty had not been signed and it had been postponed until further notice.

28. After 11 September, the United States had submitted several United Nations resolutions in order to push countries to condemn terrorism using the threat, real or imaginary, of the presence of Al-Qaida in Latin America. For the State Department, the triple frontier between Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil was a major concern because of the important Arab community living in that region. The Governments of the three countries had denied the presence of terrorist groups, and no international organ, media, or United States agency had ever found any proof of the presence of terrorist groups.

29. **Pierre Galand**, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP), said that currently the new version of war was globalized. The wars in Lebanon and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were part of a redeployment of the war at the country level – a confrontation by the United States as super-Power leading the West and the rest of the world. Today the West, including the Europeans, considered Israel to be on their side in the confrontation. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had for some years been accelerating the redefinition of its strategic plan to control the world. NATO was a Western and Atlantic alliance, but was now becoming active not only in the Middle East but also in the Pacific, spreading to Japan and New Zealand, and intended to have Israel as a full new member. Also, most Arab countries had privileged relationships with NATO. He expressed concern about how Europe had been positioning itself since last April, when it had suspended assistance to the Palestinians following the American boycott of Hamas. It was essential

to realize the imbalance of the Europe-United States strategy of bringing pressure to bear to prevent Iran from carrying out nuclear research while tolerating the continuation of research in Israel, which was a nuclear Power with more than 400 warheads. In addition, last August, Europe had provided to Israel two submarines with nuclear capacity and with a range of 4,400 kilometres. It was urgent to demand the denuclearization of the Mediterranean for civil society, including Arab civil society.

30. Mr. Galand concluded his presentation by proposing the creation of a Russell tribunal for Palestine, as was done for the Viet Nam war, to investigate war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, not only to condemn Israel but also to show the international community, multilateral institutions, Israel, the European Union, the United States and the Arab countries their obligations and responsibilities. The ECCP had already contacted the Russell Foundation about such a project.

31. **Dror Etkes**, Director of the Settlement Programme of Peace Now, said the main problem was that the Israeli public had never realized that the Palestinian presence in Palestine was not an historical accident and that the Palestinian people were the indigenous people of the land. That very simple realization was, unfortunately, still far away from mainstream political and historical Israeli discourse. Most Israelis had never understood what the settlement enterprise meant for the Palestinians in terms of being unilateral, imposing an Israeli-centric reality not only on land occupied in 1948 but also on land occupied in 1967.

32. Currently, there were over 250,000 Israelis living in areas beyond the Green Line not unilaterally annexed to Israel, plus over 190,000 Israelis living in areas which had been annexed to Israel, namely East Jerusalem. Altogether, about 440,000 Israelis were living in areas that had been occupied after 1967. Those Israelis were living in dozens of areas within the municipal areas of Jerusalem, within other settlements in the West Bank and in more than 100 entities generally referred to as “illegal or unauthorized settlements”. In the West Bank, only 1 of 10 inhabitants was Israeli while 9 were Palestinian.

33. He pointed out that the barrier divided the West Bank into two parts; 70,000 settlers living in about 70 different settlements would remain east of the barrier and the rest of them, including those who lived in East Jerusalem, would remain west of the barrier. The rationale behind the barrier was clear – demography. Mr. Etkes expressed optimism that the Israeli occupation in the West Bank had reached its final step with the attempt of the Israeli Government to “correct” the fundamental and principal contradiction that the settlement enterprise and the occupation of the West Bank had created in terms of presenting Israel with two choices: one, apartheid; or two, a bi-national system. Neither was a price the Israeli political system was willing to pay. The barrier had been created in order to allow the Israeli Government to escape from the contradiction that the settlement enterprise had created. In other words, the Israeli Government would annex areas where most of the settlers were living, at the expense of the Palestinians’ future. The convergence plan had been created by Prime Minister Olmert in order to save Israel from this contradiction. Colonial systems had collapsed throughout history because they became too expensive and because contradictions within the system had become so cruel and so visible that something had to be changed. Israeli society would need a longer period to learn gradually what was possible and durable.

34. Mr. Etkes concluded his presentation by saying that the main role of the international community was to help both sides. The Israeli side had to assume responsibility for its collective choices. Also, it was necessary to help Palestinians assume responsibility for their collective choices. The only realistic and durable solution had to be based on the principle of the two-State solution.

Plenary II

Strengthening civil society initiatives

35. **Raji Sourani**, Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) in Gaza, said his organization had held a conference in Europe on universal jurisdiction for lawyers. Civil society should adopt strategic choices to support that kind of initiative. Another initiative was the planning of a conference in early November in Geneva, with the presence of international and regional human rights organizations and solidarity groups from five continents, some United Nations bodies, members of the European Parliament and the European Commissioner for Human Rights. The aim was to update participants on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Lebanon war had derailed the entire focus of what was happening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel had effectively used the situation to increase the pressure on the ground. The Swiss Government, as the depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention, should convene a conference of the High Contracting Parties. Article I of the Fourth Geneva Convention clearly stated that the High Contracting Parties should ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances. Israel, since 1967, had never recognized the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, except for 43 days only, and since then Israel had regarded the Occupied Territory as administered or disputed territories, and had never recognized the Territory as occupied. Europe was sanctioning a people under occupation, which had never happened before in history, and it was giving privileges to Israel, which committed systematic war crimes and played the victim in the conflict.

36. **Michel Warschawski**, Director, Alternative Information Centre, said that the rules of international law and the numerous United Nations resolutions had become obsolete in the war for protection and imposition of democracy against the global threat of terrorism. United States unilateralism had replaced international institutions. The Israeli neo-conservatives had preceded the American ones by four years. The three most important elements of that policy were that there was no longer occupation of the Palestinian Territory by Israel but a terrorist threat against Israel; the Palestinians were no longer victims, and Israel was not an occupying Power – the Israelis had become the victims, and the Palestinians the aggressors; and United Nations resolutions and international law had become obsolete in the war against terrorism.

37. This new global reality required a readjustment of strategies by solidarity movements. It would be necessary first to deconstruct the discourse of fatality of the current world system and concentrate on the idea that “Another world is possible – another world is necessary”, and to base the alternative approach on the notion of law and the rights of the individual and of peoples. Only good-neighbourly relations, along with economic and cultural cooperation, would bring real security. One proposition would be to send an international force to the region, under United Nations auspices, as the Palestinian Authority had been requesting for the past five years. Another proposition aimed at ending Israeli impunity would be recourse to the International Criminal Court or an international tribunal to judge and punish individuals responsible for massacres and war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Lebanon. The system of two weights/two measures delegitimized the international system and fed the discourse on the clash of civilizations. It was also important to re-establish trust among peoples and the possibility of change, which meant efficiently re-mobilizing public opinion, with the participation of trade unions, political parties and churches. It was in that context that the debate of the solidarity movement should be replaced by a boycott, disinvestment and sanctions campaign. In addition, it was important to build a North-South alliance of solidarity with the Palestinian people. Finally, the Palestinian struggle had to be linked to the issue of democracy. The Palestinian struggle and the struggle for the national rights of the Palestinian people, now more than ever, were part of an international reality involving global war, a strategy of world recolonization and the struggle of peoples for liberty and democracy and for a Middle East without war or occupation.

38. **Jamal Juma'**, Coordinator of the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, spoke about the importance of the World Social Forum (WSF) to the Palestinian cause. The WSF, with all its weaknesses and problems, was currently the largest and most inclusive process and series of events drawing together civil society. Its most recent global meeting held in 2005 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, attracted more than 150,000 participants and thousands of groups and organizations from all over the world. Outreach to this forum could thus be crucial in posing the Palestinian question centrally among civil society at large. Networking among global actors, leading towards a strong alliance under the banner of "Another world is possible", was in the interest of the Palestinian people and solidarity groups. The claim that the Palestinian question was a "special case" was not helpful to the Palestinian struggle. The Palestinian struggle was intertwined with the fate of the region and the global struggle for justice. Palestinian solidarity groups and Palestinian organizations, while retaining their independence, would be able, through outreach and engagement, to involve a diverse movement in support of the Palestinian cause.

39. Mr. Juma' said that anti-war-movement assemblies held at the last three WSF meetings had mentioned the Palestinian issue in their declarations. However, there was currently no dynamic support for translating those statements into action. There were significant possibilities for strengthening coordination and the common struggle as well as the engagement of global movements in the context of a call for a free Palestinian State, based on the strategy of boycott divestment and sanctions, in order to ensure that statements turned into action. The general readiness to accept the importance of the Palestinian cause was a positive starting point. There was a need, however, to ensure that certain organizations led the process and that the participants in the events were stimulated to deal with the issue and see its centrality for the entire region and globally. The underrepresentation of Palestinian and Arab organizations in the International Council and at the WSF event had to be overcome. Further, solidarity groups such as the ICNP might consider asking for membership in the Council. It was important that the growing solidarity and boycott, divestment and sanctions movements all over the world be represented. Encounters not only with anti-war movements or human rights organizations, but also with a variety of struggles, could help to broaden significantly the spectrum of support and make it possible to learn from other experiences.

IV. Closing statements

40. **Na'eem Jeenah**, Co-Chair of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine, said that a critical, urgent and dire situation prevailed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where a determined and deliberate war was under way against the civilian population. History would not forgive the international community if it did not increase its commitment to making even greater sacrifices and contributions to the Palestinian struggle and to the attainment of justice for the Palestinian people.

41. **Riyad Mansour**, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, said that there was a tremendous amount of frustration in the Middle East and that the situation could not continue. The moral power of the international community clearly supported the cause of the Palestinian people, as was evident from the resolutions adopted every year within the United Nations. But there was a need for will and a strict timetable, overseen by the Security Council, to make progress and resolve the situation.

42. **Paul Badji**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the goal was an end to the occupation and the establishment of a viable Palestinian State within the 1967 borders. It was not merely an option; it was a legitimate right based on international law and United Nations resolutions, whose validity was undeniable. There were huge obstacles on the path to achieving that goal. Some of them could be surmounted only through civil society initiatives, which were reflected in the adopted Plan of Action.

Annex I

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING NETWORK ON PALESTINE

2006 Plan of Action

We meet again, civil society organizations committed to ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to achieving the still unrealized rights, including the rights of self-determination and return of the Palestinian people. We anchor our work in human rights, international law, the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions, and a commitment to internationalism, a just peace and the belief that the United Nations remains central to ending the occupation.

We face a new crisis of war and occupation, a crisis in which Palestinians continue to suffer, even beyond the suffering imposed by decades of brutal occupation and apartheid.

The war against Lebanon and the continuing assault on Gaza have created new realities. Israel's unilateralism has been exposed, and its Gaza "redeployment" has been shown to be false. The living conditions of Palestinians under the occupation continue to deteriorate, and Palestinian refugees continue to be denied their international rights, including their right of return. Palestinians in Jerusalem and elsewhere face ethnic cleansing.

The current crisis has undermined the efforts of the United States to reorder the Middle East on the basis of a United States plan justified in the name of "democratization". If democracy had any meaning at all, the United Nations and, indeed, every one of its Member States would accept the recent Palestinian election and establish full relations with any democratically elected authority in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – regardless of whom the Palestinian people select. Instead, the international community, and the United Nations itself, have stood by, paralysed in the face of the United States–orchestrated boycott of the Palestinian Authority and of Israel's blatantly illegal kidnapping of 41 democratically elected parliamentarians and 8 cabinet ministers of that Government. It is a badge of shame for us all.

Thirty years ago, the United Nations recognized, condemned and committed itself to opposing the international crime of apartheid. Crucially, it defined the crime of apartheid as a general crime against humanity, not specific to the then-reality of South Africa. Today, 12 years after the end of apartheid in South Africa, we are reminded that Israel continues to practise a system of apartheid and, further, is perpetuating the longest occupation in recent history. We civil society organizations and activists from around the world join with the United Nations once again to identify, condemn and commit ourselves to opposing these heinous crimes. As we were in the past, we are again determined that the perpetrators of that crime be brought to justice.

Despite the two-year-old advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that held Israel's apartheid wall to be illegal, the construction of the wall is nearly complete. The wall encircles Palestinian towns and cities in the most massive land grab since 1967. We call on the United Nations to implement the totality of the Court's opinion – especially the section calling for the illegal wall to be dismantled. We, civil society organizations, take seriously our responsibility regarding the wall. We have engaged with the issue of the illegal building of the wall and will continue to do so in order to effect the implementation of all components of the Court's opinion and of the General Assembly resolutions on enforcement.

Our meeting here in Geneva, is taking place at a critical and historic moment. We can either shut our eyes to the urgent crisis facing the Palestinian people and the obligations of the international community to end it, or we can seize this moment to push for a real movement forward in order to achieve a just peace. We have decided to be part of those working to create a new reality, based on justice, human rights and international law – to end the occupation and realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent, sovereign Palestinian State, with its capital in Jerusalem. We thus make the following call:

Call to action

We call on the United Nations and its Member States:

1. To provide international protection for the Palestinian people living under occupation.
2. To bring to justice in the International Criminal Court, or in another international or national forum based on universal jurisdiction, those guilty of war crimes against the Palestinian people.
3. To encourage and impose sanctions, especially in the form of ending the murderous arms trade with Israel, and to end sanctions that have been imposed against the elected Palestinian Authority and the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

As for civil society, we commit ourselves to the following:

1. To work in the coming months, with Palestinian civil society movements and non-governmental organizations, to mark the fortieth anniversary of the occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. That commemoration will include a wide range of educational and cultural campaigns, all culminating in a Global Day of Action on 9 June 2007, the fortieth anniversary of that occupation, under the slogan “The world says no to Israeli occupation.”
2. To expand our global boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign to ever-broader sectors of our countries and regions, based on building a non-violent movement of opposition to Israeli apartheid and occupation, including an urgent campaign to end the sanctions against the democratically elected Palestinian Authority.
3. To mobilize to demand that our Governments urgently provide international protection to the Palestinian people living under occupation, including efforts to bring to justice those guilty of war crimes against the Palestinian people. We will also support efforts to enforce the Geneva Conventions and all United Nations resolutions and to convene a new international peace conference for the Middle East with the United Nations at its centre.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Speakers and resource persons

Ahmed Abdirahman	Co-Chair, International Coordinating Network on Palestine Project Officer, Middle East and North Africa, Alternatives – Action and Communication Network for International Development Montreal
Xavier Abu Eid	Vice-President, General Union of Palestine Students Santiago
Mustafa Barghouthi	Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council Ramallah
Bahia Amra	Health Development Information and Policies Institute Ramallah
Phyllis Bennis	Co-Chair, International Coordinating Network on Palestine Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies Washington, D.C.
Pedro Brieger	Sociologist and journalist on international affairs Buenos Aires
Lourdes Cervantes Vasquez	Head of the Political Department, Organization of Solidarity among the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America Havana
Arlene Clemesha	Board Member, Institute for Arab Culture Professor, University of São Paulo São Paulo
Adi Dagan	Spokesperson, Coalition of Women for a Just Peace/Machsom Watch Tel Aviv
Victor De Currea-Lugo	Expert in international law Visiting fellow, Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action Madrid
Chris Doyle	Director, Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding London

Noura Erakat	National Grassroots Organizer/Legal Advocate, U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation Washington, D.C.
Dror Etkes	Director, Settlements Watch Project, Peace Now Jerusalem
Jonathan Frerichs	Programme Executive, World Council of Churches Geneva
Pierre Galand	Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine Senator, Belgian Parliament Brussels
Angela Godfrey-Goldstein	Action Advocacy Officer, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions Jerusalem
Jamal Juma' Ja'afreh	Coordinator, Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign Jerusalem
Na'eem Jeenah	Co-Chair, International Coordinating Network on Palestine Spokesperson, Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa President of the Muslim Youth Movement Johannesburg
Jennifer Loewenstein	Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre University of Oxford Oxford
Riad Malki	Director-General, Panorama – Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development Ramallah
Catherine Maynard	Human rights lawyer, Hickman and Rose Solicitors London
Ben Smoes	Founder/Chairman, International Forum for Justice and Peace Hoevelaken, The Netherlands
Raji Sourani	Director, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights Gaza Strip
Achin Vanaik	Professor of international relations and global politics Department of Political Science, Delhi University New Delhi
Michel Warschawski	Founder and Director, Alternative Information Centre Jerusalem

Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Paul Badji	Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Chairman of the Committee and Head of Delegation
Ravan A.G. Farhâdi	Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations Vice-Chairman of the Committee
Victor Camilleri	Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations Rapporteur of the Committee
Riyad Mansour	Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Sergei Ordzhonikidze	Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva
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States Members of the United Nations

Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine

Non-member States maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters

Holy See

Entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the
work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters

Palestine

Intergovernmental organizations

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
 African Union
 European Commission
 League of Arab States
 Organization of the Islamic Conference

Other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers
 in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly
 and maintaining permanent offices at Headquarters

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

United Nations bodies and specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization
 International Atomic Energy Agency
 International Labour Organization
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
 United Nations Development Programme
 United Nations Environment Programme
 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator
 United Nations Population Fund
 United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
 United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Civil society organizations

Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (Cairo)
 Aide Sanitaire Suisse aux Palestiniens (Geneva)
 Al-Haq (Ramallah)
 All Ukrainian Party of Peace and Unity (Kyiv)
 Alternative Information Centre (Jerusalem)
 Alternative Tourism Group (Geneva)
 Association France Palestine Solidarité (Paris)
 B'nai B'rith International (Geneva)
 Buenos Aires University (Buenos Aires)
 Caritas International
 Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (New Delhi)
 Coalition of Women for a Just Peace/Machsom Watch (Tel Aviv)
 Collectif Urgence Palestine (Geneva)
 Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (London)
 Culture of Afroindigenous Solidarity

Danish Palestinian Friendship Association
 Department of Political Science, Delhi University
 Deutsche Palästinensische Gesellschaft (Hanover)
 Euro-Med Movement (Malta)
 European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (Brussels)
 General Board of Global Ministries/Sabeel (Jerusalem)
 General Union of Palestine Students (Santiago)
 Groupe pour une Suisse sans armée (Geneva)
 Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute (Jerusalem)
 Hickman and Rose Solicitors (London)
 Institute for Arab Culture (São Paulo)
 Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action (Madrid)
 International Coordinating Network on Palestine (Washington, D.C.)
 Fédération internationale des ligues de droits de l'homme (Paris)
 International Forum for Justice and Peace (Hoevelaken/Bern)
 International Service for Human Rights (Geneva)
 Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (Dublin)
 Médecins du monde (Paris)
 Meyrin (Lausanne)
 Meyrin-Palestine (Geneva)
 Middle East and North Africa Alternatives-Action and Communication Network for International Development (Montréal)
 Middle East Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University (Oxford)
 Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples (Geneva)
 Norwegian Refugee Council (Geneva)
 Organization of Solidarity among the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (Havana)
 Palestine Centre for Human Rights (Gaza Strip)
 Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa (Johannesburg)
 Palestinian American Culture and Friendship Association (Gaza Strip)
 Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (Jerusalem)
 Palestinian Legislative Council (Ramallah)
 Palestinians Without Frontiers (Fontenay-sous-Bois, France)
 Panorama – Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development (Ramallah)
 Plateforme des ONG françaises pour la Palestine (Paris)
 Portuguese Movement for the Rights of the Palestinian People and for Peace in the Middle East (Lisbon)
 Secours Social Palestinien (Geneva)
 Settlement Watch Project, Peace Now (Jerusalem)
 Solidarity Committee in Basel/Geneva (Arlesheim, Switzerland)
 The Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (Jerusalem)
 U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (Washington, D.C.)
 World Council of Churches (Geneva)
 World Federation of Trade Unions (Athens)

Media

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Annex III

SUMMARIES OF WORKSHOPS

1. The representatives of civil society organizations in the workshop on the theme “Broadening, Deepening and consolidating global constituencies” agreed that the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign constituted the main framework to ensure the consolidation of a global action solidarity movement, offering a concept of gradual action for any solidarity movement. In Europe, organizations called for the suspension of the European Union Association Agreement with Israel. In South America, organizations continued to mobilize against the free trade agreement with Israel. It was noted that the war against Lebanon opened up possibilities for expanding and consolidating constituencies with the global anti-war movement.
2. The workshop on the theme “Campaigns targeting the occupation” stressed the need to provide the Israeli public with more information on events on the ground. The end of the occupation would not necessarily mean the end of apartheid for Palestinians. The Paris Protocol should be implemented. Also stressed was the importance of using existing laws to take legal action against Israeli military leaders who may have committed war crimes, thus aiming to make an impact on the Israeli establishment.
3. Participants in the workshop on the theme “Campaigns to uphold international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the construction of the wall” proposed creating a working group to follow up on the Court’s advisory opinion and the convening of an international diplomatic conference of the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. In addition, the idea should be realized of taking Israeli military leaders to court in various countries, as happened in the United Kingdom. Finally, the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign should be strengthened.
4. Participants in the workshop on the theme “Mobilizing public opinion, including media strategies” stressed the need for an alternative media strategy. The media had become a 24-hour business, and it was important to make sure the right news was seen in the blogosphere, with sound bites, vivid images and the best speakers, so as to get the media interested. There were some challenges: the general public and the media were quite tired of the issue because it had been going on for so long and people had become desensitized, and the media were always interested in dealing with new issues; the delegitimization of Hamas and the Palestinian struggle; and the false notion that some kind of peace process was going on, that the occupation had ended in Gaza and would soon end in the West Bank, as some politicians kept repeating “This interferes with the peace process”. An additional challenge was seen in efforts to confuse the issue - there was a global threat, and there was no longer an occupation. A “Free Gaza” campaign was proposed because it could be the beginning of a debate. It was stressed that in Europe, after 2003, there had been a shift in public opinion brought about by the work of grass-roots organizations: Palestinian and Israeli organizations, church groups, civil missions and trade unions had visited the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reported back on what they had experienced.
