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

**United Nations Headquarters, New York  
23-24 September 2002**

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**I. Introduction**

1. The United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 23 and 24 September 2002, 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 [56/33](#) and [56/34](#) of 3 December 2001.

2. The Committee was represented at the Conference by a delegation comprising Papa Louis Fall (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee;

Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Walter Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The theme of the Conference was “End the Occupation!” Twelve experts were invited to serve as members of the Steering Committee of the Conference (see the list of participants in annex IV). The members chaired the different sessions of the Conference, conferred with the other participants, and drafted the final document of the Conference in consultation with the Bureau of the United Nations Committee.
4. Presentations were made by 21 panellists, including Palestinians and Israelis, and 291 representatives of 113 civil society organizations participated in the Conference. Representatives of 50 Governments, Palestine, 4 intergovernmental organizations and 1 United Nations programme attended the Conference as observers.
5. Participants adopted the NGO Declaration (see annex I) and the NGO Plan of Action (annex II) at the close of the Conference. They also addressed a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations calling for an international protection force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (annex III).

## II. Opening statements

6. **Kofi Annan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a statement read out on his behalf by Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, expressed his conviction that the essential objectives of security and humanitarian relief could not be achieved in isolation, and called for a return to the search for a just and comprehensive solution, which alone could bring security and prosperity to both peoples, and indeed to the whole region. He said that a lot had to change in the way people on both sides of the conflict thought about themselves, about each other, and about the region. In that respect, joint grass-roots initiatives between Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, as well as Jewish and Arab groups in the United States, Europe and elsewhere, should be encouraged. Moreover, the public all over the world, especially within the most influential countries, had to be informed, so that it could grasp the broader picture and the issues at stake. Humanitarian assistance had to be provided urgently to the suffering Palestinian population. In all these areas, civil society could play a very important role, and its commitment was enormously important. He said that although the Conference was in support of the Palestinian people, it also acknowledged the Israeli people’s longing for peace and coexistence. It pointed the way out of the impasse for both peoples, which must be to deal with the root cause of the conflict. The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to a State of their own, must be restored to them.

7. He said that the ultimate shape of a Middle East peace settlement was well known. It had been defined long ago in Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#), and its Israeli-Palestinian components had been spelt out even more clearly in resolution [1397 \(2002\)](#): land for peace; an end to occupation; an end to terrorism; two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. It was essential and urgent to make both peoples more secure, by bringing an immediate end to violence. But all were in agreement that this had to be done within the context of an overall plan, which must address the political, economic, humanitarian and institutional dimensions of the problem. It must spell out reciprocal steps to be taken by the parties in each of the phases. In short, a process that was both performance-driven and hope-driven was needed.

8. The Secretary-General said that Palestinian reform and political progress were essential, but they must be accompanied by Israeli measures to improve the lives of Palestinians, notably by allowing the resumption of economic activity and the movement of goods, people, and essential services; by easing or lifting curfews and closures; by returning the tax revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority; and by putting an immediate stop to all Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Palestinians must work with the United States and regional partners to reform their security services and combat terrorism. Both sides should work to enable the civilian population of the West Bank and Gaza to benefit from normal policing and law and order. Israelis and Palestinians should re-establish security cooperation. For his part, he pledged to continue to do whatever it would take to help these peace efforts, in cooperation with all regional and international actors, including civil society organizations. He said that the determined and coordinated mobilization of global civil society could play a decisive part in bringing the final peace settlement closer.

9. **Papa Louis Fall**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the core problem of the conflict was the continuing Israeli occupation and the series of illegal acts associated with it. The occupation eventually dehumanized both peoples and defeated the stated aim of guaranteeing security for Israel. The subjugation and humiliation of the Palestinian people, the abject impoverishment of Palestinian communities and individuals, the “above-the-law attitude” of the settlers, all this led to a growing alienation between the two peoples, increased resentment and frustration, and empowered the most extreme elements to pursue their zealous goals.

10. He said that the contempt by the Israeli Government for the resolutions and decisions of the different organs of the United Nations was constantly ignored by the most powerful members of the Organization. The continuing failure of the Security Council to enforce the implementation of its own resolutions and to exercise fully its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations with regard to this conflict was by no means justifiable. The inaction by the High Contracting Parties with regard to applying the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention had led only to more suffering of the civilians on the ground. The competent international bodies, first and foremost the United Nations and its Security Council, should take appropriate action and move to fully discharge the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine. As a first, decisive step there had to be a robust international presence in the area to guarantee the safety of both Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Moreover, there had to be a concrete plan tied to a rigid timeframe of three years towards the realization of the vision of two States, within the 1967 borders, including a concrete step-by-step mechanism covering the political, economic and security fields. That plan should be submitted to the Security Council for approval and should be implemented without delay. At the end of the process, the Israeli occupation had to end and the Palestinian people must be given the opportunity to exercise its inalienable rights, including the creation of a fully sovereign Palestinian State.

11. He said that Governments acted out of political constraints. But politics was no longer a matter for Governments alone. The constant interaction at the United Nations of the different layers of the international community gave the hope that the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, coexisting in peace would become a reality in a not so distant future. The Committee considered that civil society had to play a crucial role to achieve this goal and, therefore, the Committee continued and strengthened its cooperation with NGOs, academic institutions, parliamentarians and the

media representatives. He said that, in view of the daily violence directed towards the Palestinians, more intensified efforts by civil society organizations should be particularly focused on the protection of the Palestinian people. An effective international presence on the ground would certainly serve also the desire for security of the average Israeli. The delivery of emergency relief to affected Palestinians should be another area of priority. States Members of the United Nations should be urged through parliaments, NGOs and public opinion to take the necessary measures to uphold international law and implement the United Nations resolutions, including those of the Security Council. He emphasized that the role of NGOs in educating public opinion about the root causes of the conflict and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained crucial.

12. **Nasser Al-Kidwa**, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, said that the Palestinian people had had to face, over the years, the denial of their existence, massacres and the confiscation of their properties. Over the past two years, the occupying forces had continued carrying out extrajudicial killings, kidnapping Palestinians and destroying property and agricultural lands. They had prevented the movement of people, goods, and even international NGOs and humanitarian agencies. The Israeli forces had not stopped their actions even in periods of calm. He said that Prime Minister Sharon's intentions were clear. They included destroying the Palestinian Authority, breaking the will of the Palestinian people and creating a vacuum and chaos. Mr. Sharon did not wish to see an independent Palestinian State in place but rather the absence of Palestinian leadership. He did not want to see a lasting solution to the conflict, and had said in a newspaper article that the Oslo accords were "outdated". Mr. Sharon was pushing the region to the brink of a huge catastrophe by undertaking an international campaign based on lies to mislead international public opinion.

13. Mr. Al-Kidwa said that Israel was giving the impression that its current actions against Palestinians were in reaction to suicide bombings. That was far from the truth, as the first suicide attack had taken place in 1994, some 27 years after the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory. It was the occupying forces that had created the suicide bombers in the final analysis. Israel was the only country that was still involved in colonizing others in a post-colonial period. It systematically violated international and humanitarian law and publicly rejected Security Council resolutions. He said that the only way to end the tragedy was to find the road to peace. A comprehensive approach must not only look at political, economic and security issues but must also achieve a declaration of intention. That approach must not only focus on the principle of two States, but also decide on the actual borders between the two States. That was the only way to guarantee majority support for a solution by the Israeli and Palestinian populations. A multinational force in the context of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter was also needed.

14. **Thomas Neu**, representative of American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), and member of the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said that AIDA was an umbrella organization that provided a forum in which over 50 international NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza convened and coordinated activities on a regular basis. In recent years, AIDA had also constituted a Humanitarian Steering Committee, which had assumed an even more active role than AIDA had ever played before, due to the urgent need to respond to and eventually bring an end to the current conditions. Individual AIDA members had close partnerships with local NGOs, and most of the local staff members were Palestinian; therefore, AIDA reflected the same kinds of concerns as the Palestinian NGOs. ANERA's field staff carried out a range of activities that was typical of many of the international NGOs, comprising both long-term development assistance and short-term relief aid as needed, with a combination of private and public funding sources. Some of the NGOs focused more on advocacy or reconciliation issues, and others focused their attention more closely on one set of programmes, such as those dealing with the handicapped. The NGOs came mostly from Europe, North America and East Asia and had diverse organizational structures, different constituencies, varying strategies and individual views.

15. He said that most of the international NGOs had gone to the Occupied Palestinian Territory in order to assist longer-term development efforts, with a focus on helping it to catch up with the regional and world economy. Lately, however, they had had to focus on providing cash or food assistance to the most needy, assuring the delivery of medicines, and even tankering water to particularly vulnerable communities. The international NGOs should not assume the responsibility of local NGOs, however; when they became aware of a service that should be provided or a gap that should be filled, they should do so in a way that supported the role of Palestinian civil society and the institutions needed for sustainable local services. He said that Palestinian communities needed considerable assistance just to return to the resources and rights they possessed before the start of the second intifada. However, it should not be implied for even a moment that this would be sufficient progress or that the situation before the present crisis had been acceptable. The predicament was directly related to the occupation, and the only lasting solution was to end the occupation.

16. In the course of the Conference, general statements have been made by a number of delegations. The representative of the African Union said that the question of Palestine had always been on the agenda at meetings of the Organization of African Unity. He said that the Security Council was the appropriate body to maintain world peace, and that all States Members of the United Nations should bring pressure on any State that tried to use the veto against resolutions in support of the Palestinian people.

17. The representative of the League of Arab States said that Prime Minister Sharon's intention to obstruct any peace process, maintain the occupation and quell the Palestinian will was obvious. The Prime Minister had publicly reneged on the Oslo accords and the other peace agreements. In Beirut in March 2002, the Arab Summit had endorsed an Arab peace initiative that would have paved the way to a permanent, just and comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The initiative had been based on Israel's total withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, ensuring the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital and the just solution of the Palestine refugee problem, in return for concluding a peace agreement between the Arab States and Israel and ensuring security for all countries in the region. He emphasized that the Arabs had extended their hands in peace; however, Israel had turned a deaf ear to the initiative and insisted on carrying on the conflict and continuing its hegemony. The international community must assume responsibility for the principles of international legitimacy before the outbreak of a catastrophe in the region would reverberate around the world.

18. The representative of Sri Lanka said that Israelis and Palestinians should be brought together simply to talk and offered his country as a venue for such talks.

### III. Plenary sessions

**Plenary I**  
**The daily face of occupation**

19. The panellists in this plenary session focused their presentations on: closures, checkpoints, fences; settlements, bypass roads, cantonization; extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions; military attacks, siege, curfews; and the economic and humanitarian crisis.

20. **Gabi Baramki**, President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP) in Ramallah, said that Palestinians had been living for the past two years under the reign of terror. There had never been a worse time in the past 35 years of the Israeli occupation. Life in Ramallah, compared to the rest of the cities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, was fairly straightforward. People had got used to the fact that Fridays were curfew days and that curfew on the other days was “only” for 12 hours, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. But this “normal” life was becoming shattered by the imposition of full-day curfews three or four days in a row according to the whims of the Israeli Government. The situation was worse in the cities in the northern West Bank. Nablus, for example, had been under curfew for over three months now, lifted only a few hours every week to 10 days. The world community was oblivious of what was happening. He said that during curfew, people would feel imprisoned in their own homes.

When the curfew was finally lifted, people would realize that they were still in a bigger prison because of the roadblocks surrounding the city, not allowing people in or out, except on foot and through difficult terrain. It was clear that those roadblocks did not provide any measure of security and one could only describe them as sadistic outposts to humiliate, insult, and frustrate people, be they students going to school, labourers trying to go to work, or ordinary people who simply needed to obtain their daily provisions from the city. There were now 260 such checkpoints distributed all over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, making it impossible for any semblance of normalcy to take place.

21. He said that, in any city in the West Bank, one could not but observe the wanton destruction that tanks, bulldozers, and personnel carriers had meted out on the infrastructure of the city: mangled carcasses of cars run over by tanks and bulldozers, trenches dug in new roads, hundreds of trees uprooted from gardens and sidewalks and used as barriers, the destruction of government offices including appliances such as computers and copiers, and the destruction of homes and buildings that reminded one of the bombed cities of London and Berlin during the Second World War. These were vengeful, malicious acts that qualified as war crimes against the civilian population, for which Israel should be held responsible. As much as the occupation, the settlements constituted the most serious obstacle to peace. Armed settlers had committed heinous murders of civilian Palestinians: farmers in their fields; families at ad hoc road-blocks, and, most recently, elementary school children by planting bombs on school premises. Their acts went unchecked by the Israeli army, which in fact was there to protect them.

22. Mr. Baramki said that what was worrying Palestinians more than all these acts was the fact that they were going on with hardly any reaction from the international community. And more frightening was what Prime Minister Sharon was planning for Palestinians in the future. He had used all the above violations of human rights and war crimes as tests for world reaction. After all, “mini-massacres” had been going on for the past four months almost unnoticed. The usage of the word “massacre” to describe the killing in the Jenin camp had been dismissed finally because of the claim that “only” 50 people had been killed during the campaign. In view of the inaction or rather deafening silence of the world community and the green light from the United States in the form of accepting acts of “war against terror”, Prime Minister Sharon could now go ahead with his plan: the ethnic cleansing, euphemistically called “transfer”, of a large number of the Palestinian population into neighbouring Jordan.

If he succeeded, that would be a catastrophe of enormous proportions. If, on the other hand, Palestinians refused to budge, which most likely they would try to do, as they had seen what happened to Palestinians in the past wars, then genocide would be awaiting them. In both cases, the consequences for world peace and security could not be predicted, let alone the effect on the conscience of the world community in general and the Jews in particular. There was now great urgency for action. There needed to be international protection under United Nations auspices in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 while pressing for an end to the occupation.

23. **Jessica Montell**, Executive Director of B’Tselem in Jerusalem, said that as an Israeli human rights organization, B’Tselem’s primary mission was to combat Israel’s repressive policies by generating opposition to those policies among the Israeli public. That mission was exceedingly difficult in the current climate because Israelis were focused exclusively on their own safety and viewed respect for Palestinian human rights as a luxury they could not afford. Perhaps most worrisome was the severe dehumanization of Palestinians that had permeated Israeli society. There was little attention to the human suffering generated by Israeli policies, as if Israelis no longer saw Palestinians as fully human. This was best illustrated by the Israeli policy of using Palestinians as human shields. On the Palestinian side, Israelis had also been dehumanized, as illustrated by the widespread popular support for suicide bombings and other killings of Israeli civilians. Palestinians, as the weaker party to the conflict, might also view respect for Israeli human rights as a luxury they could not afford.

24. She said that the loss of sight of the other’s basic humanity might be caused by the fact that there was so little human contact between Israelis and Palestinians. Palestinians were now sealed into their communities, with the most insidious of the movement restrictions not the soldiers at the roadblock, but the unstaffed obstacles, such as the trenches, piles of concrete and barbed wire. While many Palestinians had been killed in armed confrontations with Israeli forces, it was also the case that hundreds of Palestinian civilians had been killed without ever seeing who pulled the trigger. Israeli society had always existed with little personal interaction with Palestinians, yet today this phenomenon had increased. This lack of human contact, combined with the violence and brutality, was extremely dangerous. It had led to a polarization of both Israeli and Palestinian societies in their views of the other. While each side mourned its losses, there was virtually no sympathy for the suffering on the other side. In fact, the suffering only increased the desire for revenge and for measures that would cause the other side to suffer.

25. Ms. Montell said that given such a grim reality, human rights must be central to all efforts at resolving this conflict. The challenge of civil society was to put a human face and a human cost to the suffering. The dangerous dehumanization of this conflict could only be countered by reasserting the basic human dignity, the unique human worth of each individual human being. For Israeli civil society, this meant stating unequivocally that even if Israel’s restrictive policies contained a measure of security benefit, they could not justify the collective punishment involved.

For Palestinian civil society, this meant stating categorically that regardless of the power asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians, attacks targeting Israeli civilians were an abomination not justified by any suffering. This included civilians living in settlements. Individuals did not lose their fundamental right to life because they lived in settlements, in contravention of international law. The party that must be held accountable for Israel’s settlement policy and the human rights violations that had resulted was the Israeli Government. International civil society had an equally important role to play in ending the dehumanization of the occupation. This meant insisting on human rights as a vital component of any political process, lobbying for effective enforcement of human rights standards, and making human rights relevant to all, Israelis and Palestinians alike. All must work to ensure an end to the occupation so that every individual might live in dignity and security.

26. **Fahed Abu-Akel**, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA, said that the Church had begun its mission work in the nineteenth century in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and Palestine. It had been working in the Middle East since then establishing churches, schools, hospitals and clinics. It had been supporting Israel since 1948 and, at the same time, supporting the rights of Palestine refugees. The theological basis of its work was that no enduring peace, security or reconciliation was possible without the foundation of justice. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently. The Holy Land was God's gift to Palestinians and Israelis. They must live justly and mercifully and be good stewards of it.

27. He said that the Church acknowledged the sufferings and injustices committed against Jews, especially those inflicted in the Holocaust; however, they did not justify the injustices committed against the Palestinian people. Justice claimed by one people at the expense of another was not justice. Since Israel had displaced Palestinians, destroyed their villages and towns, denied their basic human rights, and illegally dominated and oppressed them, it was morally bound to admit its injustice against Palestinians and assume responsibility for it. Palestine refugees had the right of return according to General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Israel's unilateral action to alter the status of Jerusalem was illegal and invalid, and sharing the sovereignty of Jerusalem was imperative to a moral and just peace. He said that NGOs in the United States must assume a larger role in changing the situation. The way the media in the United States covered the conflict had created the image that all Palestinians were violent. It was very important for NGOs in the United States to educate the public that Palestinians were a civilian population as well.

28. In the ensuing discussion, a representative of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation called for strategies to create a campaign to push for United Nations-sponsored protection for the Palestinian people. A representative of the Olof Palme International Foundation in Barcelona said that the role of NGOs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was to rebuild infrastructure again and again every time it was destroyed by Israel. Practical ways to stop the Israeli aggression had to be created in order to put an end to this endless cycle. A representative of the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development in India said that people-to-people interactions were crucial to end the conflict, and the United Nations had a decisive role to play in that context. A representative of the World Citizen Foundation in New York proposed that a peace assembly composed of both Israelis and Palestinians, including legislators, intellectuals, religious and business leaders, be created and that it be engaged in a peace process. A representative of the Palestinian American Congress in New York said that among the Palestinian cities under curfew, the city of Nablus should be given particular attention. The city had been under curfew for over 90 days, and malnutrition was widespread and an epidemic was possible. He noted that there was little media coverage of this situation.

29. A representative of the International Secretariat in Solidarity with the Arab People in Lisbon said it was clear that there was a systematic plan to liquidate the Palestinian leadership not only politically but even physically. The oppressor and the oppressed should not be put on the same level. A representative of the Global Campaign to Rebuild Palestinian Homes said that her campaign had been helping Israelis and Palestinians who tried to rebuild demolished Palestinian homes. The campaign aimed to raise awareness beyond what the media misrepresented so that people could begin to understand why a just peace was needed. A representative of the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine in Washington, D.C., said that the occupation was costing billions upon billions of dollars, and the United States was the largest contributor. He drew the attention to two initiatives in the United States: Stop US Tax-Funded Aid to Israel Now! (SUSTAIN) and a nationwide student group that encouraged the Government to divest from Israel. A representative of Boston Mobilization said that there must be a battle to change the perceptions of the United States citizens. When they began to equate Palestinian citizens with human citizens, changes would happen in the country. His organization had an education programme to encourage high schools to introduce a special curriculum and tried to create alternative media.

## **Plenary II**

### **Civil society and occupation**

30. Presentations in this plenary session were focused on: confronting the occupier - grassroots activism in the Palestinian territory; emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to the victims; coordination and cooperation on the ground; and strengthening NGO networks in times of crisis.

31. **Huwaida Arraf**, co-founder and organizer of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), said that the ISM was a Palestinian-led movement, with Palestinians and international activists using non-violent methods and strategies to confront the Israeli occupation. The occupation was plague, and it was the root cause of the violence in the region. The strength of ISM activists was not in arms. Their strength was in the truth and justice of the Palestinian cause, and in believing that the Palestinian people deserved equal rights. She pointed to three major reasons why the presence of international activists in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was essential. First, although Israeli soldiers had no qualms about opening fire on non-armed Palestinians, they were reluctant to do so if Palestinians were accompanied by international activists. Second, the presence of international activists raised more media attention. The media outlets were interested in what their own people did; thus, international activists could give a voice to Palestinians by joining their activities. Third, international activists, after returning, shared with their communities the stories about the situation in the Occupied Territory. There would eventually come a time when everyone would know of the grave injustices that had been committed and ask why the international community had not acted sooner.

32. She said that there were only two stipulations for joining the ISM: one must believe in the right to freedom of the Palestinian people based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law; and only non-violent direct action methods would be used. As long as the two stipulations were held to be true, one could be an individual or an organization, could have any religious background, and could be from any country to join the ISM. She drew the attention to the ISM's upcoming "Olive Harvest Campaign", during which international activists were to accompany Palestinian farmers reaching their land and harvesting olives in order to protect them from attacks by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

33. **Ghassan Andoni**, President of the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People (PCR) in Beit Sahour, West Bank, said that it was very dangerous to maintain the occupation for decades, thus raising generations of occupiers that took advantage of the occupied as a daily routine. He said that in contrast to the idea that the first intifada had been a failure, it had actually worked. The occupier had lost control and panicked, and changes had been brought about. He said that one could not bring peace by merely thinking peace. Peace had to be waged at the same level as war was being waged. The existence of separate Palestinian and Israeli peace movements would not lead to peace, but there needed to be an active Palestinian resistance and an Israeli peace movement. Palestinians had the duty to resist the occupation.

34. He said that although civil disobedience would work easily in a society where the minority ruled the majority, the numbers of Israelis and Palestinians were about the same. Therefore, there needed to be a different approach in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Palestinians needed to dismantle the tools of the occupation - the tool of control and the tool of expansion. Instead of adjusting their lives to the needs of the occupier, Palestinians needed to crack down the tool of control - checkpoints, roadblocks and curfews - and, thus, transfer the crisis to the occupier. Then the occupier would have to adapt to the resistance of the occupied. This was the only way to change the reality and give the occupier different ideas.

The occupier had to be convinced that it would be easier without the occupation, without having to place a number of soldiers in the Occupied Territory. He said that the vast majority of Palestinians were suffering but not actively involved in resistance; therefore, all the manpower had to be mobilized to start a real resistance. He said that civil society had an important role in confronting the occupation; however, Palestinian NGOs lacked funding. Moreover, some Palestinian NGOs had developed without a base of community volunteers. To be able to engage in the efforts to bring about peace, the NGOs needed close relations with the community.

35. **Yehudit Harel**, Spokesperson for Gush Shalom in Tel Aviv, said that the role of the Israeli peace movement had become more crucial than ever. The peace movement must carry on a relentless struggle on two fronts: to rebuild the support of the Israeli people for a just and equitable peace for both peoples, and at the same time to call on the international community to step in immediately by sending international forces under United Nations auspices to protect the Palestinian people and help to put an end to the endless cycle of bloodshed. It had to be noted that a large part of the Israeli people wished to see a capable and balanced international protection force deployed in the region. She said that the Israeli people also needed to be protected from the catastrophic consequences of the belligerent policies of the current Israeli Government. The warmongers in the country had their own sinister agenda and they might make use of a state of war and chaos that might prevail in the region in order to carry out old schemes of an ethnic cleansing directed against the Palestinian people. It was the peace movement's role to make that impossible by any means.

36. She said that a new peace movement had emerged since the outbreak of the current intifada and many anti-occupation protests and direct solidarity actions with Palestinians had been held by a variety of grassroots movements and NGOs. She mentioned Ta'ayush - the Arab-Jewish Partnership founded after the outbreak of the current intifada that organized many food and medicine convoys to Palestinian villages. Activities aimed at defying the siege and closure at checkpoints and in besieged villages had also been organized by Gush Shalom, the Coalition of Women for Just Peace, Rabbis for Human Rights, Machsom Watch and others, and hundreds of Israeli citizens, both Jewish and Arab, had taken part in these activities. Other anti-occupation activities had been organized by the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, Physicians for Human Rights, and the recently established Israeli Committee for International Protection. She said that the Israeli peace activists regarded the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation as a struggle for national liberation and, therefore, totally rejected the "war against terrorism" and "war for the very existence of Israel" concepts. They tried to reframe the Israeli acts in the context of a colonial war, a war for the sake of the settlements intended to destroy the Palestinian Authority and maybe even the existence of the Palestinian people on their own land.

37. **Walid Badawi**, Deputy Director of the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP), said that since its establishment by a General Assembly resolution in 1978, UNDP/PAPP had become one of the leading humanitarian and development organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It had mobilized approximately \$400 million in resources on behalf of the Palestinian people. It currently had over \$145 million in ongoing projects active in every part of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and a staff of 150, principally Palestinian employees. The tangible results of the programme's two decades of work were clearly visible in the hundreds of classrooms, water-supply networks and sewage collection systems, hospitals and primary health clinics, environmental protection and rehabilitation, and community development, as well as the capacity-building of the Palestinian Authority. Recent incursions by Israeli troops had had a devastating effect on the Palestinian economy and on development. The current situation presaged a looming humanitarian crisis.

38. He said that in the Jenin refugee camp, some 800 families had been made homeless. In addition to the many killed and wounded, 24-hour curfews had been imposed in all occupied refugee camps, towns and villages. Many West Bank cities had been under continuous curfew for the past two years, with as little as 75 days of freedom. Curfew was incarceration of entire populations by other means. Of the almost 3 million people of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, more than 2 million - some 62 per cent - were vulnerable due to food insecurity, special hardship, and housing and shelter damage. According to the World Bank, some 70 per cent of Palestinians were living in poverty. He said that since the beginning of the current crisis, UNDP/PAPP had undertaken a number of emergency initiatives and projects aimed at generating employment. Decentralization and cooperation with local partners such as NGOs and grassroots organizations was another key feature of those programmes, as the mobility of national and even international staff had become increasingly difficult. Employment generation covered four areas of activity, including the development of social and municipal infrastructure; agricultural activities; economic development and capacity-building; and support to the health sector. UNDP/PAPP was supporting Palestinian civil society institutions in efforts to assume their rightful role in the reform efforts currently under way. PAPP's approach allowed partner organizations to be involved in projects from design to implementation. Even in times of crisis, sustainable human development was not only possible but also crucial to making the transition from conflict situations to sustainable State-building.

39. **Thomas Neu**, representative of American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) and member of the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said that focusing each NGO's efforts on a manageable set of activities and linking up in solidarity with those who carried out complementary activities were the only way of accomplishing the many important tasks that needed to be done. In the case of ANERA, it could mobilize considerable resources, both cash and in kind, for the construction, furnishing, equipping and provisioning of classrooms, clinics, kindergartens, rural roads and water systems, even at times industrial zones and IT centres. ANERA had engaged in providing in-kind medical commodities at a scale of about \$10 million per year. ANERA and others had also focused on job creation efforts, recognizing that lack of disposable income, not the lack of food, had caused malnutrition among a distressing proportion of the population, especially children, infants and mothers.

40. He pointed out that the NGOs could not fulfil their role if they endangered their status vis-à-vis Israel, in terms of visas, staff travel permits, customs duty exemption, VAT reimbursement, etc. In an equally important sense, they could not carry out their work effectively in the Occupied Palestinian Territory without proper local registration and approval by the respective Palestinian ministries. The bottom line consideration for many international NGOs in the region was that they were guests of two administrations, Israeli and Palestinian, and must refrain from taking overtly political positions against either of them. The same was true with respect to their own Governments. They did not see themselves as advocates or adversaries of the policies and peace plans of their respective countries of origin. Political expression was more properly the function of local NGOs. An effective democracy and a thriving civil society were of course essential to Palestinian progress, but it was not for international NGOs to become immersed in the details of another people's struggle to establish representative and responsive governmental structures.

41. Mr. Neu said that in the midst of the current most serious humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1967, their NGOs faced immense operational difficulties that certainly seemed to be arbitrary and unnecessary. Even their food trucks and water tankers very often were denied passage, just as ambulances and mobile clinics had often been turned back or subjected to long delays since the outbreak of the intifada. Some NGO staff members still did not have travel permits and must either stay at home or assume the many risks of travelling about without permits. The international staff members of some NGOs had found it nearly impossible to obtain visas to live and work in the Palestinian areas. For those reasons, there had been a steady increase in the frequency of interaction and the degree of cooperation among international and national NGOs. They had developed new structures, such as the Humanitarian Steering Committee and a humanitarian response coordinator relating to all the members of AIDA. Coordination between AIDA and the Palestinian NGO network had also increased, partly due to the recognition that they faced a similar range of practical issues. He said that the most urgent operational concerns for all the agencies could be included under the concept of "access". Because of the urgency and importance of these issues, a group of AIDA members had taken an unprecedented set of joint actions including issuing a joint press release, holding a press conference, meeting jointly with foreign diplomats in Jerusalem and Israeli officials in Tel Aviv, and speaking out through the international media. AIDA members had issued a statement concluding that Israel's closure policy was responsible for malnutrition as it caused poverty by preventing access to employment and provisions.

42. In the discussion, a representative of Lawyers Without Borders in Connecticut said that the diplomatic solution of the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem had been largely the result of the presence of young international activists marching every day towards the Church peacefully. Their presence had drawn international attention and that had led to the pressure on Israel. When she had visited Jenin in a group of 40, Israeli soldiers had escorted them politely, but when she had visited in a group of 10, they had been shot at and nearly killed. She suggested that there was great safety in numbers. The large presence of international activists who had no goal but to solve the problem in a peaceful way was part of the answer. A representative of the United Nations Association of Egypt in Cairo proposed that the Conference adopt an immediate action plan in view of the unprecedented sufferings of the Palestinian people and that a delegation composed of representatives of the Conference participants visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory to show solidarity with the Palestinian people. A representative of Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail in Tunis said that the United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine must be implemented without double standards. Otherwise, the credibility of the United Nations would be undermined.

43. A representative of Boston Mobilization said that the issue of a possible United States war against Iraq should be linked to the Palestinian cause because he had witnessed Israel's swift military movement immediately after the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 under the cover of a complete media blackout of other events taking place in the world. A representative of the International Secretariat in Solidarity with the Arab People in Lisbon said that ways to address the conflict should not be reciprocal and ending the occupation must be the precondition for any other measures. He proposed that a delegation of representatives of the Conference participants headed by the Chairman of the Committee visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory to convey the viewpoints of NGOs. He also proposed that an explicit reference to the danger a United States war against Iraq would pose to the Palestinian cause and to the whole region should be reflected in the final document of the Conference. A representative of Friends of Sabeel - North America in Oregon proposed that the Conference participants prepare and sign a letter demanding that President Bush suspend all financial aid to Israel until it ended the occupation.

44. A representative of Médecins Sans Frontières said that her organization had been working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for more than 10 years and that it had had to extend its mental health care programmes since September 2000. Her organization's priorities in every conflict it was involved in were access to and protection for civilians. A representative of the International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation in New Jersey said that the only weapon left to Palestinians was one of non-violence that could appeal to Israelis' hearts. A representative of Save the Children - Canada said that although the Security Council had expressed in resolution 1379 (2001) its determination to give the fullest attention to the question of the protection of children in armed conflict when considering the matters of which it was seized, none of the Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine referred to the special protection needed for children. She called on the participants to lobby the Security Council to commission the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to travel to the region and obtain specific child protection measures from Israeli and Palestinian leaders. The findings of such a mission and regular updates on the implementation of the measures obtained should be made public. A representative of the Palestinian American Congress in New York said that no more resolutions were needed and simply the existing resolutions must be implemented. A representative of Friends of Sabeel - North America in Oregon said that one of the major challenges was to broach the media situation and find out ways to get the truth conveyed in the media.

### **Plenary III**

#### **Challenging the occupation**

45. The panelists in this plenary session discussed: making the occupation visible; establishing facts about the Israeli military actions; advocating the realization of Security Council decisions; efforts to address impunity for crimes committed against Palestinian civilians; and educating constituencies, influencing public opinion.

46. **Lamis Andoni**, a journalist based in Boston, drew attention to the superimposed scripts used to justify Israeli and United States policies towards the Palestinian people. One of them was that the Palestinian leadership was the main problem. The Palestinian people had understood instinctively that the destruction of Chairman Arafat's compound had been aimed at delegitimizing the Palestinian existence, and it had been a prelude to the political liquidation of the Palestinian people and their rights. She said that the reforms demanded by the United States did not match the reforms desired by the Palestinian people, and the two kinds must be differentiated. Palestinians wanted actively to determine their own future, while the United States wanted to pave the way for a new leadership that would be more palatable to Israel and the United States. The script envisaged the United States, with its demands for reform and regime change, emerging as the liberator of Palestinians, but they were not ready to let the United States interfere in the name of reform to legitimize the occupation. Another script was that the main problem was Palestinian violence. That cast the Palestinian struggle as a threat to security, rather than a struggle for their inalienable rights, and aimed to criminalize all Palestinians. She said that the right of return and all other rights guaranteed by international conventions and United Nations resolutions should not be tampered with to fit the superimposed scripts. Imposed language, such as "reforms", "democracy", "extremism" and "security" should be rejected. The struggle against the occupation should not be confined by what was acceptable to the American Administration.



47. **Jeff Halper**, Coordinator of the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHN) in Jerusalem, called for an immediate and complete end to the occupation as one of the fundamental conditions for ending the century-old conflict between Jews and Palestinians. The other conditions were the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, a just resolution of the refugee issue and the evolution of a regional political-economic system that included all the peoples of the area. He pointed out that Israel had succeeded in removing the occupation from the political discussion by denying it entirely and laying claim to the entire land from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. That position had not been accepted by any other State; however, it received important backing from the United States by reclassifying the occupied territories as disputed ones. Presenting its rule as “administrative” allowed Israel to avoid the accountability embodied in international humanitarian law, in particular in the Fourth Geneva Convention.

That was accompanied by an unwillingness of the international community to enforce its own covenants. Playing the “administrative” card enabled Israel also to conceal its occupation behind a seemingly innocuous façade of laws, bureaucracy, a permit system, closures, etc. He continued that another key element in Israel’s ability to deflect public attention from the occupation was its framing of the conflict in terms of “a war against terrorism”. That type of reductionism only obfuscated the source of the conflict and terrorism. Removing all context to Palestinian terror, seen by some as resistance, cast the Palestinians as mere fanatics trying to destroy Israel. In the meantime, occupation was becoming institutionalized as a permanent situation of apartheid.

48. He emphasized that civil society should play a major role in rectifying the situation. The Palestinians could not end the occupation by themselves, and the Israeli public was paralyzed by a lack of political vision and a debilitating political system that disenfranchised its voters. He opined that Israel would not give up its occupation voluntarily. Israel considered itself the sole and exclusive claimant to the entire Land of Israel, and while the more liberal elements were willing to entertain the notion of a Palestinian Bantustan that would relieve Israel of the Palestinian population, no Israeli Government would willingly consent to the establishment of a truly viable and sovereign Palestinian State. A just solution must be imposed by the international community, and civil society had to play an instrumental role in that effort.

49. Mr. Halper said that civil society had to make the occupation visible, bringing it back to the centre of the political debate. In that effort, it should adopt the language of human rights, pointing to the collective and individual rights that were inalienable and universal, the right to self-determination, to live free of occupation, colonization and oppression. Simply holding Israel accountable to existing international law, such as the Fourth Geneva Convention, would dismantle the occupation and set the path for a just peace. Also, the fundamental imbalance between the Israelis and the Palestinians should be emphasized. Israel was an internationally recognized State with one of the most powerful military forces in the world, and an economy more than 20 times greater than that of the Palestinians. The Palestinians were a scattered, stateless, impoverished, vulnerable, powerless and traumatized people, lacking any coherent territory and possessing only lightly armed militias. While Palestinians must also be held accountable for their action, including the use of terrorism, their situation was qualitatively different from that of the Israelis using state terror and systematic violations of human rights. In conclusion, he highlighted the need for more effective strategies of communication, suggested a number of sustained campaigns and called for civil society to act as watchdogs, carefully monitoring moves towards renewed negotiations to ensure that they were actually leading to dismantling the occupation.

50. **Adam Shapiro**, representative of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), said that the occupation was at the core of the conflict. For Palestinians, resistance meant confronting the occupation by going about their daily life, walking in the streets under curfew, going to school and getting an education while the soldiers dominated the streets. The ISM’s mission was to get internationals out in the streets of the Occupied Territory, to challenge soldiers at the “chokepoints”, to push forward with humanitarian aid shipments and not be turned aside or prevented from accessing the refugee camps. In Jenin, the humanitarian shipments that had got through had been left in the city proper. Only the action of the ISM members in smuggling the supplies in on their backs had seen them delivered to the refugee camps. He noted that an element of racism existed in the conflict. When a Palestinian boy had been walking in the street under curfew with ISM activists, a bullet fired without warning from an Israeli soldier had killed only the Palestinian boy. No other evidence was necessary to prove that to the Israeli soldiers, lives of whites were more valuable than those of Palestinians. He said that the paradigm of the conflict must be changed. The conflict should not be cast as Israelis versus Palestinians. It was the oppressor against the oppressed, who sought freedom.

51. **Richard Falk**, Professor of International Law and Practice at Princeton University in New Jersey, said that the fate of the Palestinian people was one of the greatest tragedies in the post-colonial era. On the question of Palestine, the United Nations had a mixed record. It deserved credit for setting forth over the years the rights of the Palestinian people under international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the authority of the Organization itself. The United Nations also continued to lend moral authority to the Palestinian struggle. But at the level of implementation, the United Nations had failed miserably to protect the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. Because of that failure, it was critically important to arouse civil society to use its leverage as a matter of greatest urgency to mount pressure to end the criminal occupation. It must be insisted that the resolutions applying to the Palestinian people be taken as seriously as the resolutions applying to Iraq. Never had the Palestinian ordeal been as desperate as today, and never had the challenge to the conscience of humanity been greater. The international community must give Palestinians a way out of the dilemma of surrender or desperate forms of violent resistance. It was time to realize that the occupation was not only illegal and criminal, but was also an exterminist one seeking to obliterate the existence of the Palestinian people. He called upon the international community not to allow this to happen.

52. He pointed out that there were two sets of issues that underlay the criminality of the occupation. The first set arose from Israel’s refusal to accept the United Nations resolutions, beginning with the resolution in 1967 obliging it to withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as its flagrant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. There was also the criminality of the military and political leaders who continuously violated the obligations of international law. It had been the practice of the international community, going back to the Second World War, to say that the leaders that violated fundamental rights of people were committing crimes against humanity. The international community had waited for too long to castigate the Israeli leaders for the crimes they had committed. It was up to the voices of civil society to speak truth to underscore the extent to which crimes were daily being committed against the Palestinian people. He recommended that the General Assembly be encouraged to adopt a resolution seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the occupation, including such aspects as the collective punishments and the settlements. This would be a further consciousness-raising process that would crystallize in unmistakable terms the criminality and illegality of the occupation. He also recommended that civil society form an independent international commission to look into the crimes against humanity, the violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the failure to implement the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian people. A commission of respected international moral authority figures could help to increase the political potency and leverage that civil society needed to exercise.



53. **Bruce Robbins**, Professor at Columbia University in New York, drew the attention to half-page and full-page advertisements of an open letter in national and local newspapers in the United States, signed by hundreds of American Jews, and entitled "Peace in the Middle East: An Open Letter from American Jews to Our Government". He said that both the American Government and American Jews had a special responsibility. The American Government's financial and political support had made possible the intransigence and brutality of the recent Israeli policy. It was American Jews' imagined unanimity as a pro-Israel voting bloc that had made it so difficult for even liberal politicians to distinguish between support for Israel and support for the occupation. What the signers of the letter had wanted to say as loudly as possible was that they unreservedly supported Israel's right to exist in peace and security, but they did not support the occupation. They did not support the curfews and checkpoints, the destruction of homes and fields, the wholesale murder at a distance by tank shells and helicopter missiles, the unending expansion of settlements on the Palestinian land, the children shot down in the street, and the violent hostage-taking of an entire civilian population. None of these should be happening under their names. The letter called for a prompt resolution of the conflict based on two sovereign States partitioned along the pre-1967 borders as modified only by mutually agreed territorial swaps.

54. He said that given the decades in which the American media had overbalanced the picture in favour of the Israeli side, their effort at symmetry had been criticized by many as unbalanced against Israel. The signers of the letter had decided that they would be able to do more for the rights of Palestinians by working with American Jewish public opinion than they would be by speaking from outside it and demanding an abstract justice that could not possibly command majority support among both Israelis and Palestinians. What they had discovered within American Jewish public opinion had been a surprisingly strong commitment to fairness for both sides. He said that there had been one item in the letter that most people had not heard before from American Jews. The letter had broken an unspoken taboo on questioning American aid to Israel. The letter had proposed that the massive financial subsidies should no longer be unconditional but should be conditioned on Israeli acceptance of a two-State settlement.

55. Mr. Robbins said that one lesson to be learned from the letter campaign concerned the power of the Internet for grass-roots people who were geographically dispersed. Another concerned the power of non-experts, who knew no more about the Middle East than what they read in the newspaper, to find their own way into the newspaper by the force of common-sense fairness, the force of their numbers and their passionate generosity. Those people mainly had only small sums to contribute, but deeply wanted to end their anonymity and to see their views represented in public. A third concerned the sense of belonging. Despite a lack of firm statistics, it appeared that the movement was not specifically Jewish, in that its members were not used to being counted, first and foremost, as Jews.

56. **Ziad J. Asali**, President of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in Washington, D.C., said that arguments in favour of Palestinian human and national rights tended to be cast in terms of international law or historical justice. Polling research indicated, however, that many Americans were unmoved by both argument styles. American scepticism about international law could not be overstated. Citing Security Council resolutions and other relevant aspects of international law was not so influential in a society long conditioned to regard the United Nations as a forum for anti-American sentiment. Americans instead passionately believed in the supremacy of American constitutional law and self-defined national interests. Similarly, many Americans did not show much interest in historical rights and wrongs, preferring instead analyses of existing situations. Indeed, the evidence strongly suggested that neither Israeli arguments about ancient ties to the biblical homeland nor Palestinian arguments about dispossession and ethnic cleansing in 1948 did much to create support among Americans for either side. He said that what Americans responded to was humanitarian issues, which they could identify at the visceral and cultural levels. The spectacle of suffering and cruelty caused by Palestinian suicide bombings against Israeli civilians had solidified support among Americans for Israel's brutal policies of repression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Certainly, the experience of the September 11 attacks had strengthened such support.

57. He emphasized that an understanding of the realities of life under occupation was most strikingly missing from the American consciousness. Few Americans were aware that the occupation even existed, many believing that East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were in Israel, and that Israel behaved in a democratic manner in those areas. This situation was exacerbated by the many voices that had been attempting to argue that the occupation had never existed or had somehow been ended by the Oslo process arrangements. Americans needed to be educated about the fact that the 3.5 million Palestinians living under Israeli occupation were the largest group of non-citizens in the world today living under the rule of a foreign military dictatorship. It was probably the case that most Americans had the impression that Palestinians in the Occupied Territory were citizens in Israel or enjoyed rights analogous to citizens of Israel. Also, there was virtually no understanding of Israel's tactics of collective punishment and economic warfare.

58. Mr. Asali pointed out that if the American public were to become genuinely aware of the realities of life under occupation and the extent to which the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians was characterized by positions of ethnic dominance and subordination based on radical forms of discrimination, the widespread response would be outrage. In order to promote an understanding that the key to peace was an end to the occupation, it must be made clear that occupation meant living without citizenship, and without access to and representation in the occupying Government. Such a situation was, by definition in the American cultural context, a scandal and totally indefensible. He recalled that Americans had been outraged by the systematic denial of freedom and disenfranchisement of the indigenous African peoples in South Africa during the apartheid era. The key had been a public education campaign that had successfully explained to millions of ordinary Americans how the non-white peoples of South Africa were being subjected to radical forms of discrimination based on their racial and ethnic identity.

59. **Na'eem Jeenah**, Spokesperson for the Palestine Solidarity Committee and President of the Muslim Youth Movement in Johannesburg, said that one of the reasons why the South African struggle against apartheid had been so successful was that there had been one clear message known to everyone regardless of their affiliation: "One person, one vote, in a non-racial, democratic South Africa." The message that was useful for the South African solidarity movement with Palestinians was "same story, different country", and linking apartheid South Africa with Israel would be a useful hook for solidarity activists in various parts of the world to articulate their message. He also drew attention to the "Release Mandela" campaign. That campaign had been more than just a call for the release of one political activist, and it had been based on the assumption that the day of Nelson Mandela's release would be the beginning of the end of the apartheid. In terms of the Palestinian struggle, a parallel emphasis could be placed on the return of Palestine refugees. The day when the right of return was accepted would be the beginning of the end of the Israeli oppression against the Palestinian people.

60. He said that in South Africa, one could not be a respectable campaigner against globalization, privatization, etc., if one was not in support of the Palestinian cause at the same time. That meant that Palestinian activists also had to be involved in other struggles, including local ones, and in this way the Palestinian struggle could be accepted as a struggle of all people. All the strategies used for the movement against South Africa's

apartheid must be brought out, dusted down, adopted and reused. These included the call for sanctions, severing diplomatic ties and consumer, cultural and academic boycotts. It had to be remembered that international isolation of South Africa could not have worked without internal resistance. International isolation of Israel could not succeed if it was not accompanied, on an ongoing basis, by resistance from within the Palestinian society. The duty of solidarity activists was to strengthen the isolation of Israel on the one hand and assist the Palestinian resistance on the other.

61. In the discussion that followed, a representative of Artists against the Occupation said that in Canada, there was an effort to draw a parallel between Canada's First Nations indigenous peoples and the Palestinian people in terms of the relationship between indigenous cultures and colonialism. A representative of the Palestinian American Congress in New York said that there were necessary forms of resistance for the Palestinian struggle and that the words "Palestinian violence" should not be used to describe those. A representative of the United Association of Egypt in Cairo called for the convening of an NGO conference inside the United States aimed at countering the distortions of the media coverage of the legitimate Palestinian resistance. A representative of the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine in Washington, D.C., said that since Americans did not fully understand the issue, it would be useful to change the term "occupation" to "foreign military dictatorship". With reference to Mr. Jeenah's proposal for a campaign similar to the "Release Mandela" campaign, he proposed launching a "Release Marwan Barghout" campaign.

62. A representative of the New Jersey Solidarity Movement said that there could not be a justice movement that failed to address the Palestinian struggle. Any local campaigns could incorporate the Palestinian question. A representative of the Jigvansu Tribal Research Centre in New Delhi said that it was important that American Jews supported the Palestinian right to a State because they comprised a very strong lobby in the United States. A representative of Alternatives in Montreal called for the launching of a civil disobedience campaign against the occupation, similar to those held in the United States in the 1980s against apartheid.

#### **Plenary IV**

#### **Ending the occupation**

63. The panellists in this plenary focused their presentations on: national and international campaigns to mobilize public opinion; legislative and political advocacy - reaching politicians and decisionmakers; Israel's responsibility for its actions - compensation of Palestinian victims; protection for the Palestinian people - direct action by grassroots organizations; learning from past successes - the worldwide anti-apartheid movement; and the United Nations - guardian of international legitimacy and civil society's ally in ending the occupation.

64. **Terry Greenblatt**, Director of Bat Shalom in Jerusalem, said that Bat Shalom was a national feminist grassroots organization established in 1994, committed to working for an end to the Israeli occupation and a just resolution of the conflict. It worked in partnership and shared a set of joint political principles with a Palestinian NGO, the Jerusalem Centre for Women. What political feminists had historically seen as their mission was to challenge the stereotypes, status quo, conventional wisdom, and lack of real information that plagued the societies. In response to the pervasive perception that there was no one to talk to on the "other side", Israeli and Palestinian women had initiated a Public Correspondence and Joint Declaration Campaign in the national Israeli and Palestinian press. They had introduced positions, strategies and values into the public discourse of both societies, proposed alternative formulas and analyses for moving out of the current paralysis, and ensured a consistent, joint condemnation of the individual and collective abuse of human rights, closures, incursions, sieges, demolitions, and attacks on and targeted assassinations of the Palestinian leadership.

65. She said that despite the fact that Israel's security had not improved under the coalition Government's policies of force and subjugation, the majority of Israeli Jews still believed that military initiatives were the correct response to the current situation, and that respect for human and civil rights were a luxury they could not afford at a time when the nation was struggling for its very survival. Moreover, the tidal wave of public sentiment, patriotism, and the impending "global battle against evil" had rendered political opposition, as well as the liberal peace camp, totally impotent. Women's national campaigns had evolved within this socio-political context. They were attempting to grow an Israeli anti-occupation movement that understood that peace was possible but would require painful and expensive measures, with the end of the occupation being a first step, not a solution. She said that peace required an almost colossal national "un-learning and re-learning" process for the Jewish population of Israel. It would demand an honest analysis of the Israeli historical narrative, an acknowledgement of its responsibility in turning millions of Palestinians into refugees from their homeland, and an unconditional recognition that the security and future of Israel depended on the security and viable future for its Palestinian neighbours.

66. Ms. Greenblatt said that Bat Shalom had recently launched the "What did you do today to end the occupation?" initiative, a campaign promoting everyday acts of resistance to the occupation, such as boycotting products manufactured in the settlements. Women distributed brochures with lists of settler-produced goods in front of supermarkets and grocery stores around the country. In the "Women, Land and National Liberation" programme this year, they had commemorated Land Day by amplifying the voices of internally displaced refugees. Palestinian women had educated the Jewish public on the significance of the individual and collective right of return and on women's historical and national connection to their land. Elder women who had experienced the *Naqba* had guided Jewish women and their children on alternative political tours through their now-destroyed villages and given personal testimonies of their lives before 1948. Noting that Israel was squeezing the lifeblood out of an entire population, she said that her organization continued to express its rage against Israeli policies, the military forces that implemented them, and the profound silence of Israeli civil society. Construction of the "security walls" would further isolate, devastate and exploit vast areas of agricultural lands, which would neither provide the security desired by the Israeli public nor suppress the Palestinian aspirations for a sovereign nation.

67. **Phyllis Bennis**, Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) in Washington, D.C., said that the fact that the lives of other vulnerable civilians needed to be put at risk in between the Israeli forces and Palestinian civilians, a protected population under international law, stood as a powerful indictment of the international community's failure to uphold international law. When the occupying Power refused to provide protection for the people under its occupation, such protection must be provided by the United Nations. When the Security Council was unable to carry out its obligation to provide protection for the Palestinian people, the obligation shifted to the General Assembly.

68. She said that the General Assembly should be re-empowered. In the first 30 years of United Nations history, important decisions had been made by the General Assembly. The partition resolution had been adopted by the General Assembly, not by the Security Council. The venue and engine for the activities for decolonization had been the General Assembly. The United Nations could be an ally in the struggle against the Israeli occupation, but only if civil society worked to make it one. Conference participants must struggle to make their voices heard and demand a place at the table. It would be a long struggle and extend far beyond the issue of Palestine and the end of the occupation, but civil society must maintain the pressure on the United Nations to make the words "We the peoples" in the Charter descriptive of the actual state of affairs. It must criticize the United Nations when it fell short and blame the United States for incapacitating the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in the implementation of resolutions.

69. Ms. Bennis said that as Governments would not act on their own, civil society had to raise its voice. It was not an easy task to create an international campaign to end the occupation because of the divergent national particularities in terms of what it meant to work in solidarity with the Palestinian people. In the United States, for example, the issues of aid to Israel, the planning of war in the region as well as other issues shaped how civil society's work on the question of Palestine should be formed, but those issues were not the most fundamental issues to be addressed in many other countries. However, it was international law that should form the basis for broad international action against the occupation. International law was providing the framework for education and action.

70. **Pierre Galand**, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP), said that given the possibility of a seismic eruption along the two shores of the Mediterranean, Europeans' collective awareness had built on the need for European and Arab Governments to participate more actively in finding a solution to the Palestinian question and ending the occupation. The idea of coexistence in the Mediterranean region had led to the focus on the question of Palestine. One of the main initiatives of European civil society had been to pressure the European Parliament to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement in view of Israel's disregard for the Barcelona Declaration, which had been adopted in 1995 by the EU countries and others in the Mediterranean region based on respect for human rights, democracy and peace.

71. He emphasized that more important than strengthening the capacity of organizations was strengthening the capacity of people to become actors in their societies and define the priorities of activities on the question of Palestine. On civilian missions, hundreds of Europeans visited the Occupied Palestinian Territory for solidarity activities. After returning to their countries, those activists helped to counter Israeli propaganda in their communities by describing the reality on the ground as witnesses and lobbying national and European parliaments. They also organized twinning arrangements between their communities and Palestinian towns. For example, the City of Brussels had sent hospital workers to Palestinian hospitals in Ramallah and Gaza. The ECCP had proposed in Brussels that households with children should purchase school supplies for Palestinian children for each school supply purchased for their own children. The ECCP had obtained an aircraft from the Belgian Ministry of Defence to deliver the supplies for children to the ground. This initiative had had a large impact on the mobilization of public opinion.

72. Mr. Galand called for urgent international campaigns for the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israel, who had been abandoned by the international community as "terrorists". Child prisoners in Israel were a cause for utmost concern. The time had come to hold an international meeting on Israel's systematic violations of human rights. One of the ECCP's initiatives was to set up a people's court at an international level, similar to those established during the Viet Nam War and the apartheid era, which would consist of eminent personalities such as Nobel Prize winners.

Acknowledging the difficulties of coordination, he emphasized the success of the European coordination led by the ECCP and called for the formation of coordination mechanisms in other regions of the world.

73. **Juan Carretero Ibáñez**, Secretary-General of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) in Havana, said that OSPAAAL, in cooperation with Mexican organizations, had organized a second International Solidarity Conference with the Palestinian People in Mexico City in June 2002. More than 100 representatives of organizations from 35 countries and four international organizations had attended the Conference, and the participants had adopted an action plan and demanded the end of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. He said that Israel intended to justify all sorts of violations of other people's rights under the context of its "national security", while the international community remained silent and concealed that there was a powerful aggressor and an attacked people. Civil society had a very important role in clarifying the truth of the conflict. The Palestinian people had a right to resist and defend themselves against foreign occupation in order to recover their legitimate national rights as guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations. All peoples had to fight to achieve their self-determination and national independence, and the media's attempts to equate all Palestinian patriots with terrorists should be rejected.

74. He said that Israel would not enjoy security as long as it did not commit itself firmly to the fulfilment of General Assembly resolution [194 \(III\)](#) and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and

338 (1973). Iraq was being accused of possessing weapons of mass destruction and threatened with war, but Israel, which constantly violated Security Council resolutions and possessed all types of weapons without declaring them to the international community, acted unimpeded.

Parliaments, non-governmental organizations and other sectors of the international community must encourage Governments to take efficient measures to ensure that the Fourth Geneva Convention was respected. Israel must be punished just as the apartheid regime of South Africa had been punished. Its membership in the United Nations must be suspended, and those responsible for murders must be tried as war criminals.

75. **John Rempel**, Chair of the NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine and representative of the Mennonite Central Committee to the United Nations, said that his Working Group, operating directly at the United Nations, had two foci in advocating the rights of the Palestinian people: pressing for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and for the full engagement of the Security Council in taking initiatives to implement the resolutions. The Group consisted of organizations that had historic ties to the region and to Muslims, Jews and Christians there. The Group's understanding was that neither Israel nor Palestine could be secure and free if both were not secure and free. He lamented the marginalization of the United Nations decision-making and implementation process for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and stressed that the conflict had such unmistakable implications for regional and even world peace and security that it clearly fell within the mandate of the Security Council as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. However, Israel had concluded that its survival was possible only by an exclusive political and military alliance with the one super-Power. Palestinians had also turned to the United States as the only arbitrator powerful enough to bring about changes. They had gone "the second mile" in willingness to negotiate for its cause under adverse circumstances but without any tangible results. This tragic fact had led the Group to redouble its advocacy with United Nations players, with the public, and with its own constituencies to support the United Nations as the final arbiter mandated by international law to oversee a just settlement of the conflict.

76. He said that as NGOs whose support constituencies were largely North American, they admitted their work in conveying to them and to the wider public the true picture of the conflict. There was a widespread and false perception that the conflict was between two equals who needed to find a way of co-existing on disputed land. The truth was that Israel was an occupying Power and that no just future for either Palestine or Israel was possible without an end to the occupation according to Security Council resolutions. He said that the development of the Palestinian economy had been sabotaged to the extent that domestic and international agencies had been reduced to supplying relief to masses of displaced and malnourished people. This deplorable state of affairs had shifted the focus among some international, governmental and NGO donors to thinking of the core problem as a humanitarian one requiring solely structural solutions, rather than a political one. He strongly cautioned Governments and NGOs against forms of cooperation with Israel that abetted this redefinition of the core problem and marginalized the Palestinian Authority and other domestic agencies. He said that the Working Group stood behind the Ecumenical Campaign to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine and other civilian initiatives such as Christian Peacemaker Teams and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel to the extent that they operated according to criteria set by relevant Palestinian organizations.

77. **Nadia Hijab**, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, said that there needed to be a global movement that put its weight behind just peace and the implementation of United Nations resolutions to end the Israeli occupation. Each country had ties with Israel, and many countries had signed on to international conventions and United Nations resolutions applying to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Governments must be encouraged to use every non-violent means possible, including trade and aid, to apply international law and end the occupation. If the rule of law was not applied, people would take the law into their own hands and resort to violence. Seeking to apply the rule of law to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would not just be protecting the rights of Palestinians and Israelis, but preserving global peace for all humanity.

78. She emphasized that the Campaign's framework was international law and human rights. People responded resoundingly to the language of human rights, especially when it was not presented in the language of lawyers and diplomats. Human rights were grounded in the principles and values that all human beings held dear. The framework of law and human rights enabled a diversity of groups, whatever their background, to sign on to the Campaign. Moreover, by calling for the application of international law to the conflict, discussions of what the outcome should be could be avoided. The aim was the application of the rule of law, and there were clear resolutions applying to the conflict. She said that the Campaign focused on changing United States policy from policies that supported occupation to policies that promoted peace and justice. Focus was essential to success, and the members who were involved in other activities were careful not to sidetrack the Campaign. The specific United States policies on which the Campaign focused were: the continuing military aid to Israel in violation of national and international law; the role of United States corporations through the sales of arms and equipment to Israel despite the ongoing occupation; and the use of the veto at the United Nations to prevent its greater role and the possibility of an international protection force.

79. Ms. Hijab said that the strategy of the Campaign was education for mobilization. The majority of the people in the United States, as well as in other countries, were either uninformed or misinformed about the basics of the conflict and the role of their Government. The Campaign was investing in a long-term process of education based on human rights and international law in order to mobilize people behind a change of policy. Investing in long-term education based on rights and the law gave people tools for analysis not just of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but of all other domestic and international conflicts, and people would be able to relate specific human rights violations to discrimination that had affected them in their lives, or the lives of those they cared about at home and abroad. Moreover, grounding people's knowledge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in clear principles meant that they were less likely to be swayed by emotions based on who was dying today, the victims of an assault on a refugee camp or a suicide bombing. They would be able to see their way clear to take action. The Campaign was producing fact sheets on the conflict within this framework and working on other educational materials for workshops and discussions. The Campaign also supported direct actions to address the levers of policy. The members were working at the district level to lobby their Congressional representatives to support a just peace. They were also working in their districts to stop corporations from selling arms and bulldozers to Israel as long as the occupation continued.

80. In the discussion, a representative of Neturei Karta International said that for generations, Jews and Muslims had coexisted in peace and harmony in Palestine and there was no reason they could not do so now. Zionism and Judaism were totally separate issues. He said it was hurtful for him, as an Orthodox Jew, that all the oppression against Palestinians was being done in their name. A representative of the International Secretariat in Solidarity with the Arab People in Lisbon suggested that the NGO Declaration to be adopted by the Conference include a demand to immediately end the siege of Chairman Arafat and an appeal to worldwide NGOs to work with United States NGOs to stop a war against Iraq.

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## ANNEX I

### NGO Declaration

We come together as non-governmental and civil society organizations committed to the United Nations goal reflected in the theme of this conference: "End the Occupation!". Our organizations, in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America, in the Middle East, together with our Palestinian and Israeli partners, are working in our countries to bring this goal to fruition.

It is very appropriate that we meet at the United Nations given the permanent responsibility the Organization has for the question of Palestine. We believe that the immediate cause of the conflict is the occupation by Israel since 1967 of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. We demand unequivocally: "End the occupation!" – a call rooted in international law and the position of the United Nations.

As civil society organizations, we are appalled by the international community's failure, so far, to provide serious protection for Palestinian civilians living under military occupation. While efforts have been made in the United Nations towards such protection, the use and threat of a veto by the United States has prevented passage of the appropriate resolutions. In its place, non-violent activists of non-governmental and civil society organizations from around the world, at extraordinary personal risk, have mobilized to provide human protection to Palestinians facing the onslaught of military occupation. We highly commend the work of these brave activists. However, we believe that the necessity of their presence, as the only buffer between helpless civilians and a powerful military machine, stands as an indictment of the international community's failure to provide the

serious protection of Palestinian civilians living under occupation that is required under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We fear that the consequences of a U.S. war against Iraq will be calamitous for Palestinians and others in the region. Specifically, we are gravely concerned that such a war could be used to conceal the “transfer” – ethnic cleansing – of Palestinians from their homeland.

We are angered and dismayed at the deterioration of humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and at the escalation of repressive measures being used against the Palestinian people, its leadership and its institutions, in particular the siege of Yasser Arafat’s headquarters in Ramallah, by the Occupying Power in violation of the Geneva Conventions. Those include annexation and settlement, the reoccupation of Palestinian cities and blocking of roads between them; expulsions and targeted assassinations of scores of Palestinians; attacks on ambulances and medical personnel; house demolitions; destruction of water storage facilities; uprooting of thousands of fruit and olive trees; 24-hour curfews; almost permanent closures of towns, villages and cities; and excessive use of force, including weapons of war such as F-16 bombers and helicopter gunships used against apartment houses, refugee camps and other civilian targets, causing the deaths of numerous Palestinians. We deplore the loss of innocent lives on both sides.

#### **Our Call:**

- We look to the United Nations to bring an end to these violations. We believe that the United Nations, its Charter, its resolutions, as well as the Geneva Conventions and other sources of international law, provide the best framework for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict and ending Israel’s occupation, leading to conditions of justice and a comprehensive and lasting peace.
- We hold Israel accountable to end the occupation, and to implement the Geneva Conventions’ protections of Palestinians while it is ending the occupation.
- We hold the international community responsible for protecting Palestinians living under an illegal occupation, through ensuring implementation of the Geneva Conventions’ protection of occupied populations and civilian population in times of war and through enforcement of the numerous United Nations resolutions calling for an end to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.
- We recall the words of U.S. President George W. Bush, in a far different context, when he asked whether United Nations “resolutions [are] to be honored and enforced, or cast aside without consequence?” We believe all United Nations resolutions must be honored and enforced, and we believe the consequences for failing to honor and enforce the decisions of the international community are serious and have a global impact. Such violations of the Geneva Conventions constitute grounds for war crimes prosecution under the terms of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. We know that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) serve as the linchpins of diplomatic peace efforts. We urge full and immediate compliance with those resolutions. We also call on our Governments and on the international community acting in concert to ensure swift and comprehensive enforcement of all outstanding resolutions regarding Israel’s illegal occupation, non-compliance with the Geneva Conventions, human rights and other violations.
- We urge the parties to return to the negotiating table and to seek with the support of the international community a just and comprehensive settlement to the conflict. It should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2001) and lead to the end of Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security. It must also include the right of return, the status of Jerusalem and other outstanding issues.
- We call on the United Nations to establish a Women’s Commission of Palestinian, Israeli and other peace activists, in accordance with the mandate of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

#### **Our Commitments:**

- We commit ourselves and our organizations to work within our own countries, to pressure our own Governments and parliaments, and to urge the United Nations itself, in particular the members of the Security Council, to move quickly to create an international interposition (buffer) and protection force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, recognizing that any protection force must be tied to a political process leading to an end to the occupation. Should the Security Council continue to be paralyzed on this issue, we call on the General Assembly to exercise its authority to consider this issue and to reach its own determination and decision regarding the authorization, mandate, funding, recruitment and deployment of such an international force. Such an international force would provide crucial protection for Palestinian civilians living under occupation as well as for Israeli civilians deprived of personal security as a consequence of occupation. We intend to press our own Governments to support such a move in the General Assembly.
- We will continue to support the NGO and civil society movements inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory that are working under tremendous odds to provide for the humanitarian needs of their people and for the realization of an end to occupation. We will continue to participate in and support the work of those groups working directly to protect Palestinians from the military assault of the occupation forces.
- We will work to press our own Governments, as well as regional and international organizations, to fully implement all relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine, including those dealing with the end of the occupation, the creation of a Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem, the right of return, the removal of settlements, and related issues. We look forward to continuing to coordinate our work and campaigns with the NGO network on the question of Palestine worldwide. We also call for full implementation of paragraph 14 of United Nations Security Council resolution [687 \(1991\)](#) which calls for the establishment of a “zone free from weapons of mass destruction” throughout the Middle East.
- We encourage the United Nations and its Secretary-General to take the lead in the international efforts to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution.

- We commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for hosting this NGO and civil society forum. We express our deep thanks to the Division for Palestinian Rights and other units of the Secretariat for their work in preparing and organizing the forum. We urge the Committee to continue to convene such international and regional forums to enable the network of international civil society organizations to continue its coordination of campaigns until such time as the occupation is ended.

As non-governmental and civil society organizations, we stand with the United Nations in the effort to realize the goal of this Conference: to End the Occupation.

New York, 24 September 2002

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## ANNEX II

### NGO Plan of Action

We, non-governmental and civil society organizations gathered in this international forum, commit to joining our efforts and resources to uphold international law, end the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and provide international protection for the Palestinian people.

- We will work with our Governments and parliaments to ensure that the United Nations Security Council and/or General Assembly authorize an international interposition (buffer) and protection force as a first step to ending the occupation and implementing outstanding United Nations resolutions regarding a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Such a force, with a well-defined mandate and within a clear timeline for an end to occupation, will spare Palestinian civilians further death and destruction at the hands of the occupying Israeli military forces and the illegal acts of successive Israeli Governments in the occupied Palestinian territory. It will also protect Israeli civilians from acts of violence which are a consequence of the brutal 35-year-old occupation. At the same time, we will continue to support and participate in the important work of the international citizens movement to provide protection for and solidarity with Palestinians living under occupation.
- We will use all means at our disposal to educate the public in our countries about the realities of life under occupation and the daily violations of Palestinian human rights – including the rights to life, liberty, freedom of movement and association, shelter, food, education, health, and self-determination – and about the actions they can take to uphold international law and to oppose such violations of human rights, including boycotts, divestment, and suspension of aid and trade until the occupation is ended. This includes pressure on Governments to implement such sanctions.
- We call on the General Assembly to request from the International Court of Justice an advisory opinion regarding the illegality of Israel's occupation, including issues of settlements, violation of the Geneva Conventions and other violations of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.
- We commit ourselves to help establish an International Citizens Commission to investigate violations of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions, and the Geneva Convention.
- We call on the signatories to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to hold Israel accountable for its actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, many of which constitute war crimes under the Conventions. We will ring the alarm about the consequences for the region of a United States war against Iraq for the region. We will work to ensure that the "transfer" - or ethnic cleansing - of Palestinians that has happened twice over the past century never happens again, and that past wrongs are righted in accordance with international law.
- We endorse the efforts of all organizations represented here today that are working to uphold Palestinian human rights, in particular those responding to the call by Palestinian NGOs to provide civilian international protection for the Palestinians, helping farmers with their olive harvest, organizing a peaceful circle of hands around Jerusalem, rebuilding demolished Palestinian homes, and other initiatives. We will reinforce our support for the Israeli anti-occupation movements.
- We call for a worldwide Day to End the Israeli Occupation and Support International Protection and a Just Peace in coordination with the plans of Grassroots International Protection for Palestinians.
- We will coordinate our work, using among others the tools that technology makes available to us (a web site for our organizations, list serves, and conference calls). We call on the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations as well as NGOs to contribute to fund an international coordinator, office, travel, and meetings, to further support the coordination of our work.
- We thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for convening this Conference in response to the Plan of Action adopted at the United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People in Madrid in 2001, and for their ongoing support of our work. We call on the United Nations to host regional NGO meetings and to host an international conference in 2003, so that we can assess progress and commit to further steps in support of a just peace.

New York, 24 September 2002

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### ANNEX III

#### Letter addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

23 September 2002

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

On behalf of the more than 400 participants in the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People convened today at United Nations Headquarters, we would like to extend to you our appreciation for your continuing support for a greater United Nations role in ending the Israeli occupation and reaching a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestine, based on the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State.

We are committed to continuing and increasing our own work to end the occupation and to demand of our Governments that they support a greater United Nations role in this effort.

Particularly in the light of the current crisis and the possibility of an even greater crisis to come in the region, we urge you to reiterate, and even more, to make every effort to ensure implementation of, your earlier important call for a “robust international protection force” under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to protect Palestinians living under occupation and those Israeli civilians whose security may be threatened by the consequences of the occupation.

We pledge to you our support and our commitment to work for implementation of this call by our own Governments around the world.

Thank you.

Don Betz  
Chair of the Steering Committee  
of the United Nations International Conference  
of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
New York

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### ANNEX IV

#### List of participants

##### Steering Committee

Mr. Ziad Asali  
President, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Gabi Baramki  
President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace  
Ramallah

Ms. Phyllis Bennis  
Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies



Washington, D.C.

Ms. Kathy Bergen  
National Coordinator, Middle East Peace Education Program,  
American Friends Service Committee  
Philadelphia

Mr. Don Betz  
Representative of international NGOs on the question of Palestine  
Edmond, Oklahoma

Mr. Pierre Galand  
Representative of European NGOs on the question of Palestine  
Brussels

Mr. Jeff Halper  
Coordinator, Israeli Committee against House Demolitions Jerusalem

Ms. Nadia Hijab  
Co-Chair, Steering Committee, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation  
New York

Mr. Juan Carretero Ibañez  
Secretary-General, Organization of Solidarity Among the Peoples  
of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL)  
Havana

Mr. Na'eem Jeenah  
Spokesperson for the Palestine Solidarity Committee and President of the Muslim Youth Movement  
Johannesburg

Mr. Bernard Ravenel  
Representative of the French NGO Platform on Palestine  
Paris

Mr. John Sigler  
Coordinator, United Nations Association of Canada  
Ottawa

#### Speakers

Mr. Fahed Abu-Akel  
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA  
Atlanta

Mr. Ghassan Andoni  
President, Rapprochement – Centre for Dialogue and Understanding  
Beit Sahour

Ms. Lamis Andoni  
Journalist  
Boston

Ms. Huwaida Arraf  
Co-founder and Organizer, International Solidarity Movement  
Ramallah/Washington, D.C.

Mr. Ziad J. Asali  
President, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Walid Badawi  
Deputy Director, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People  
United Nations Development Programme  
New York

Mr. Gabi Baramki

President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace  
Ramallah

Ms. Phyllis Bennis  
Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies  
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Richard Falk  
Professor of International Law and Practice, Princeton University  
Member of Inquiry Commission, Commission on Human Rights  
Princeton

Mr. Pierre Galand  
Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs  
on the Question of Palestine  
Brussels

Ms. Terry Greenblatt  
Director, Bat Shalom  
Jerusalem

Mr. Jeff Halper  
Coordinator, Israeli Committee against House Demolitions  
Jerusalem

Ms. Yehudit Harel  
Spokesperson, Gush Shalom  
Tel Aviv

Ms. Nadia Hijab  
Co-Chair, Steering Committee, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation  
New York

Mr. Juan Carretero Ibáñez  
Secretary-General, Organization of Solidarity among the  
Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL)  
Havana

Mr. Na'eem Jeenah  
Spokesperson for the Palestine Solidarity Committee  
President of the Muslim Youth Movement  
Johannesburg

Ms. Jessica Montell  
Executive Director, B'Tselem  
Jerusalem

Mr. Thomas Neu  
Representative of the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA),  
member of the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA)  
in the Occupied Palestinian Territory  
Washington, D.C.

Mr. John Rempel  
Chair of the NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine,  
representative of the Mennonite Central Committee to the United Nations  
New York

Mr. Bruce Robbins  
Professor, Columbia University  
New York

Mr. Adam Shapiro  
Representative, International Solidarity Movement  
Washington, D.C.

of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Papa Louis Fall  
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations  
Chairman of the Committee and Head of Delegation

H.E. Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla  
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations  
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi  
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations  
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Walter Balzan  
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations  
Rapporteur of the Committee

H.E. Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa  
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Kieran Prendergast  
Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Governments

Argentina, Brazil, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Viet Nam

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 Union, European Union, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference

United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

United Nations Development Programme  
Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP)

Civil society organizations

Acre Arab Women's Association  
The Advocacy Project  
Al-Haq  
All Pakistan Women's Association  
All Pakistan Women's Association, North America  
Alternatives - Action and Communication Network for International Development, Inc.  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Near East Refugee Aid  
Apostolic Catholic Orthodox Church

The Arab-American Family Support Center  
Artists against the Occupation  
Association of Arab American University Graduates  
Baptist World Alliance  
Bat Shalom  
Boston Committee for Palestinian Rights  
Boston Mobilization  
Brehon Law Society  
B'Tselem  
Canadian Palestinian Foundation  
Caritas Internationalis  
Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine  
Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development  
Church of Humanism  
Coalition of Women for Just Peace  
Communication and Coordination Committee for the United Nations  
Congregations of St. Joseph  
Darbar-e-Chishtia Complex  
Direct Action for Justice in Palestine  
Egyptian United Nations Association  
Equality Now  
Fellowship of Reconciliation  
Friedrich Ebert Foundation  
Friends of Sabeel – North America  
Fundación Internacional Olof Palme  
Fundación Promoción Social de la Cultura  
General Board of Global Ministries  
German Peace Council  
Global Policy Forum  
Grassroots International  
Ibda'a Dheisheh Refugee Camp  
Independent Student Coalition for the International Criminal Court  
Information and Research Foundation, King Hussein Foundation  
International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation  
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions  
International Solidarity Movement  
International Youth and Students Movement for the United Nations  
Instituto de Investigación, Documentación y Derechos Humanos de la República Dominicana  
International Federation on Aging  
International Secretariat in Solidarity with the Arab People and their Central Cause, Palestine  
Islamic Heritage Society  
Japanese Committee for the Children of Palestine  
Jews against the Occupation  
Jigyansu Tribal Research Centre  
Lawyers Without Borders  
Loretto Community  
Lutheran World Federation  
Madre  
Médecins Sans Frontières  
Mennonite Central Committee, United Nations Office  
Mercy International Association  
Methodist Federation for Social Action  
Middle East Children's Alliance  
Middle East Fellowship of Southern California  
Middle East Peace Foundation  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
National Arab American Business Association  
National Training Center for Resource Center Directors  
Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada  
Neturei Karta International  
Network of Arab American Alumni and Professionals  
New Jersey Solidarity Movement  
New York Solidarity Movement for a Free Palestine  
PAC – Boston  
Palestine Aid Society  
Palestine Red Crescent Society  
Palestinian American Congress  
Palestinian Mother and Child Care Society  
Peace Action  
Pioneer People Trust  
Platform of French NGOs for Palestine

Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Princeton Middle East Society  
Promoting Enduring Peace  
Rawdat El-Zuhur  
Rebuilding Homes Campaign  
Save the Children  
Simon Wiesenthal Center  
Sunbula  
Union of Charitable Societies – Jerusalem  
Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail  
United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries  
United Nations Association International Service  
U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation  
US Peace Council  
US Servas  
Women's Democratic Movement in Israel  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
Work in Progress  
World Citizen Foundation  
World Federation of Democratic Youth  
World Federation of United Nations Associations  
World Learning  
World Vision International  
Youth Bloc

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