



## DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

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I. EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF  
PALESTINE HELD AT VIENNA, 30 JUNE TO 1 JULY 1986,  
ADOPTS A DECLARATION

The following Declaration was adopted by the Symposium:

1. We, the first United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, express our thanks to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat for their great efforts, without which this meeting would not have been possible. We are honoured by the presence of the members and observers of the Committee. We are also honoured by the presence of the distinguished speakers and panelists who eminently set the tone and the theme of the Symposium at our opening session.
2. We recognize the historic links between Europe and the Middle East and that the security of Europe cannot be separated from the security of the Middle East. We recognize, too, that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and self-government in its own independent State is not only a central requirement for peace and security, in particular for just and durable peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours, but is also in full accord with one of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
3. We fully uphold the Geneva Declaration on Palestine adopted on 7 September 1983 by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine 1/ and we fully uphold General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, which calls for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, to include representatives of all concerned peoples and States. We are aware that world peace, as well as the human and civil rights of the Palestinian people, have been set back by the non-implementation of the Declaration and Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and we are convinced that non-implementation is the result of obstruction by the Governments of the United States of America and Israel.
4. We confirm absolutely the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in its just struggle for its inalienable rights. Noting the support of the Palestinian people for the PLO, we reject the idea that anyone other than the Palestinian people can decide who should represent them, all the more so as the first implementation of any people's right to self-determination is the choice of its own representation.
5. Accordingly, we call upon all European Governments that do not recognize the PLO to do so. Equally, we call upon all European Governments to support the convening of an International Peace Conference and to work for the realization of such a Conference as a top priority.
6. We view with grave concern the law proposed by the Israeli Government that would make any meeting between an Israeli citizen and a member of the PLO punishable by three years' imprisonment. We call upon the Israeli Government to drop immediately that proposed law and we call upon all European Governments to exert their influence on the Israeli Government to do so.
7. The purpose of our meeting was to develop practical means for European NGOs to work to encourage their Governments in those policies. Our primary work was conducted in workshops and we affirm their conclusions as amended below.

8. The Symposium agrees with the report of the workshop on Civil and Human Rights, which addressed the common objective of advancing public knowledge of Israeli violations of Palestinian rights and emphasized that the case must be sharply and expertly presented in order to attract attention.
9. The violations of human rights in the occupied territories clearly evokes the violations of human rights in South Africa, which have been unanimously condemned by international public opinion.
10. Attention should be focused on specific areas and cases rather than on generalizations.
11. A resource pool of information should be created in the European region, with one organization acting as the central clearing house for information.
12. The Symposium agrees with the report of the workshop on Information and Media that 1987 will mark the anniversaries of important events in the history of conflict in the Middle East. They are: (a) 40 years since the adoption of the General Assembly resolution on the partition of Palestine; 2/ (b) 20 years since the Israeli aggression that resulted in the occupation, which continues, of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights; and (c) 5 years since the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. The workshop emphasized the need for action to be co-ordinated in publicizing those issues.
13. In advancing understanding of the Palestinian situation, special attention should be given to addressing parliamentarians, government officials, trade unions and also tourists visiting the Middle East. Additional attention should be directed towards schools and universities, churches and the media.
14. The Symposium agrees with the report of the workshop on Development, Solidarity and Relief that development projects, relief programmes and humanitarian services are in themselves means for building popular support and affirming solidarity with the Palestinian people in helping it to survive in its own land.
15. Public opinion must be drawn to the need for projects to create employment and to build an economic and social infrastructure in the occupied territories. Solidarity must be demonstrated by educating public opinion on the issue of Israeli oppression. Youth exchange programmes, international seminars and the sponsorship of children should be developed.
16. Certain specific dangers must be avoided, such as acting in charity instead of in solidarity, intervening individually instead of collectively, and jeopardizing the efforts of the Palestinian people to maintain its own community.
17. The Symposium agrees with the report of the workshop on International Peace Movements in especially underlining the importance of associating the European peace movements with achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. There is a common concern over nuclear risk and the situation of tension in the Mediterranean area, from which co-operation can be developed between European peace movements and NGOs concerned with the question of Palestine.
18. Opportunities to do so are especially presented by the forthcoming International Conference of the Year of Peace to be held at Copenhagen in October 1986 and the European nuclear disarmament convention, to be held in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the summer of 1987.

19. Finally, we, the NGOs at the European Regional Symposium, have established a European Interim Co-ordinating Committee. 3/ We request United Nations assistance and financial support for the continuation of co-ordinated European NGO activities. We call upon the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to include this Declaration of the European NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Vienna from 30 June to 1 July 1986, in its report to the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

II. THE INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING ON THE  
QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD AT VIENNA  
FROM 2 TO 4 JULY 1986, ADOPTS A DECLARATION

1. We, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the third United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting. We are indeed honoured by the presence of the members and observers of the distinguished United Nations body.
2. We also wish to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the NGO liaison officers and the staff of the Division and of the Department of Conference Services, including the interpreters, for their valuable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting. We believe this meeting strengthens the bonds between the United Nations and the international NGO community concerned with the absence of a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine and we look forward to increasing levels of understanding, appreciation and co-operation.
3. We also wish to voice our appreciation to the distinguished experts, resource persons and moderators who spoke here and offered valuable historical and political thoughts, as well as a perspective on the important role to be played by NGOs. The practical suggestions emanating from the workshops assisted us in formulating future plans for effective collaboration in linking our efforts to a broader, global network.
4. We recognize that 1987 will be the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 for the partition of Palestine, the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war and the subsequent Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the fifth anniversary of the destructive Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila.
5. We recognize that self-determination of the Palestinian people and their right to self-government in their own independent State in Palestine is a central

requirement for peace and security, for a just and durable peace between Israel and the Palestinian national State and its Arab neighbours, and is in full accord with one of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

6. We fully uphold the Geneva Declaration on Palestine 1/ of 7 September 1983 adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, in favour of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and we fully uphold General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. It is essential that the Conference be inclusive and be attended by representatives of both Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), those Arab States party to the conflict, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, all on an equal footing. We are aware that not only world peace, but also the human and civil rights of the Palestinian people have been set back by the non-implementation of Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

7. We confirm absolutely the international consensus that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in its just struggle for its inalienable rights. Noting the support of the Palestinian people for the PLO, we reject the idea that anyone other than the Palestinian people can decide who should represent it, all the more so as the first act of any people in implementing its right to self-determination is the choice of its own representation. We support the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to fully independent decision-making, through the PLO.

8. Accordingly, we call upon all Governments that do not recognize the PLO to do so. Equally, we call upon all Governments to support the convening of the International Peace Conference and to work for the realization of such a conference as a top priority.

9. We view with grave concern the law proposed by the Israeli Government that would make any meeting between an Israeli citizen and a member of the PLO punishable by three years imprisonment. We urge the Israeli Government to drop immediately that proposed law and we call upon all Governments to exert their influence upon the Israeli Government to do so.

10. We note with great concern the discriminatory policy and practices the Israeli Government committed with regard to the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, and condemn the racist laws and practices that endanger their existence in their homeland. We call upon the Israeli Government to implement equality for the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel. We declare our support for the struggle of the Arab Israeli community together with the Jewish democratic forces for equality and security.

11. We express solidarity with the Israeli peace forces who voice opposition to the oppressive policies of the Israeli Government, within the Israeli Parliament and among the Israeli public. In particular, we express solidarity with those who, as an act of peace, accept imprisonment for their refusal to engage in military service in the occupied territories. We gladly note the emergence of peace forces within the Oriental Jewish Community in Israel. We regard this as a most significant development.

12. We condemn the continuation of repressive measures taken by the Israeli authorities against the Arab population in the occupied territories (arrests, torture, demolition of houses and land requisitions) and call upon all Governments and peoples to urge the Israeli Government to put an end to those measures.

13. We note with great concern the continued attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in and around Beirut and condemn the atrocities committed against the Palestinian people in the camps. We call upon all concerned parties to enforce a durable cease-fire and to ensure the flow of medical and relief supplies to the camps through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other international agencies.

14. We call upon the concerned parties to guarantee the security of the Palestinian people in Lebanon and to guarantee their right to live in security in Lebanon. The presence of the Palestinian people in refugee camps is a result of non-fulfilment of General Assembly resolution 181 (II). We call upon the General Assembly to take the necessary measures to ensure the security and presence of the Palestinian people in Lebanon and elsewhere.

15. We call attention to the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, intervention in Lebanese internal affairs through political coercion and oppressive action in the south. We demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and the release of the thousands held in prison.

16. The aim of this meeting was to develop practical objectives and strategies to be implemented by NGOs around the globe. Our primary work was conducted in plenary sessions and workshops and we affirm the conclusions and proposals of the workshops as we have amended them below. The workshops specifically addressed the challenge of how to build popular support for a just and lasting peace, particularly on special commemorative days in 1987.

17. The Meeting agrees with the report of the Workshop on Development, Solidarity and Relief, which stressed the need for the NGOs to extend their work with the Palestinians. The Workshop affirmed its support for UNRWA and called for more contributions to voluntary organizations that employ people and build economic infrastructure in the occupied territories. Specific projects include promotion of the products of the Samed workshops and those of other Palestinian organizations, creation of a Palestinian calendar for global distribution and the important mobilization of artists, sportsmen and other celebrities in each country to support publicly the Palestinian people.

18. The Meeting agrees with the report of the Workshop on the Peace Movement that there is an indisputable connection between peace in the Middle East and peace and security in the rest of the world. The Workshop noted in particular the danger of nuclear war in the Middle East, the nuclear capability of Israel and the nuclear connection between Israel and South Africa, and the necessity of transforming the entire Middle East into a

nuclear-free zone. It specifically called for new materials to be prepared on those issues for global dissemination and the convening of a special meeting of NGOs with the representatives of peace movements and the participation of the International Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs (ICC) and other NGOs present at the Meeting in major peace events.

19. The Meeting agrees with the report of the Workshop on Civil and Human Rights that the protection of Palestinian human rights should be the highest priority for the 1986/87 meeting of ICC and all NGOs assembled here. The impact of Israel's continued occupation, the continuing violation of international law, the denial of Palestinian self-determination and the strategic relation between Israel and the United States, which directly contributes to the violation of Palestinian rights, were discussed. Several practical proposals were offered, including developing the NGO network to enhance the rapid exchange of human rights data and emergency information and sending a commission of inquiry of eminent persons to investigate and draw international attention to the situation. The workshop also urged the NGOs to form links with the anti-apartheid movement and to devote a week in 1987 to a global focus on Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights.

20. The Meeting agrees with the report of the Workshop on Information, Media and Political Decision-Makers that NGOs need to work with journalists and scientists to encourage a more accurate treatment of the question of Palestine, to form closer ties with anti-racism groups, to become active on Central American issues, to encourage all to observe 1987 as the "Year of Palestine", to facilitate contact between Palestinians and Israeli peace and civil rights groups and to work with tours going to the region. It also emphasized the importance of using specific cases to educate and rally support through the media.

21. We concur that influencing world public opinion, as well as opinion in key countries, is a decisive factor in securing a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine. We will continue to work with local populations to increase their understanding of the issues and the just cause of the Palestinian people in order to mobilize their political, social and spiritual power. We believe that we are uniquely qualified to present the issue to the public in its vital human perspective.

22. We, NGOs present here for this International Meeting, see ourselves as a nucleus of a broader world-wide effort. We commit ourselves to identify and involve many other NGOs in the network.

23. We are aware of the financial constraints challenging the United Nations at this time. Nevertheless, we urge the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue to offer all positive assistance to this NGO movement, including in particular the regular convening of regional symposia and international meetings.



24. We reaffirm the organization and work of the ICC. We confirm the decision to establish the ICC secretariat in Geneva in 1986. We understand that we must support, in every way, this important step towards a more effective global network. We call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to ICC and its secretariat, and to facilitate the convening of meetings of ICC in 1987. ICC looks to even closer relations with the United Nations and its appropriate agencies.

25. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-first session as part of the Committee's report.

### III. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

1. Le Comité français pour le patrimoine culturel palestinien has commenced publication of a bulletin entitled "Presence Palestinienne". In addition the Committee organizes seminars, conferences and other activities to promote understanding of Palestinian culture.

2. The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees has issued its 1985 annual report in which it states that "the Union reaffirms that its role is primarily one of solidarity, based on helping people in helping themselves, and in solving their own problems, and not solving problems for people instead". The programmes of the Union are aimed at the improvement of the health status of the population living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza strip which suffers fundamental health problems that are linked to the absence of a national health infrastructure in the area.

3. The Committee for Palestinian and Jewish Studies, Japan, has drawn attention to the Hiroshima Appeal issued at the conclusion of the International Symposium on Jewish-Palestinian Co-existence held in four Japanese cities during 1985. The Appeal stresses the relationship between the just solution of the question of Palestine and the building of world peace.

4. The International Union of Students advises that at its 1986 Executive Committee meeting particular attention was attracted by the situation in the Middle East. There was a resultant "Resolution on the intensification of solidarity with the struggle of the Arab peoples and students in the Middle East" which stressed the centrality of the Palestinian cause.

5. On the occasion of the Third International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, the Movement of Democratic Women in Israel and the Committee for Women's Equality and Peace, Israel issued a statement concerning their recent activities. These included the holding of a rally at Tel Aviv, with over 150 participants, focusing on the situation of women under occupation as well as the first press conference called jointly by Israeli and Palestinian women marking 8 March, International Women's Day.

6. A report concerning Association Najdeh, Lebanon, founded in 1977 to provide work for Palestinian women refugees indicates that its various workshops in the refugee camps have enabled many women to achieve a great degree of self-sufficiency. This has been a source of strength for the process of rebuilding in such areas as Shatila.

7. The quadrennial Assembly of the United Methodist Women was attended by 8,600 participants. A "Middle East Interest Group" dealt directly with the question of Palestine, featuring the showing of a film strip entitled "Jordan's Stormy Banks" which was produced by the Presbyterian Church USA. A comprehensive list of resources for study and action on the Middle East situation was distributed for use in local groups and churches.

#### Notes

1/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ General Assembly resolution 181 (II).

3/ The 1986/1987 membership of the European Interim Co-ordinating Committee is the following: Finnish-Arab Friendship Society, French NGOs Co-ordination, International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples and the Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic.

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