



**DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS**

**REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN
NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

Theme: "Fifty years of dispossession of the Palestinian people"

**United Nations, New York
15 - 17 June 1998**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 17 June 1997, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 52/49 and 52/50 of 9 December 1997. The theme of the Symposium was "Fifty years of dispossession of the Palestinian people".
2. A total of 55 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Canada and the United States of America, 12 of them as observers, participated in the work of the Symposium, as well as 9 panelists and 6 workshop facilitators and resource persons. Representatives of 14 Governments, 2 intergovernmental organizations and 3 United Nations bodies as observers. A delegation of Palestine also attended.
3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; George Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur; and Mankeur Ndiaye (Senegal).
4. The Symposium was opened by Mr. Farhâdi, who made a statement of behalf of the Committee. Statements were also made by M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, and by David Graybeal, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC). The closing meeting was chaired by Mr. Farhâdi. The plenary meetings were chaired by designated NGO representatives.
5. The first panel, on the theme "Memory: remembering the Palestinian history", considered three topics: "Historical consequences of the political developments since the adoption of the partition resolution", "Memory and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" and "Implementing the right of self-determination: the peace process and the Palestinian state". Presentations were made by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Professor of Political Science at Birzeit University; Don Peretz, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Binghamton University, State University of New York; Randa Farah, Research Fellow at the Center for Studies in the Contemporary Middle East in Amman, Jordan; Marc Ellis, Research Fellow at Harvard University; and Baker Abdel Munem Amin, Head of the General Delegation of Palestine in Canada.
6. The second panel, on the theme "Conscience: strategies for contesting the future", also considered three topics: "Upholding international legitimacy", "The need for international protection and support of the Palestinian people" and "Mobilizing public opinion." Presentations were made by Ruhama Marton, Chairperson of Physicians for Human Rights; Michael Lynk, Labour Lawyer and Professor of Law at the University of Ottawa; Keith Jennings, Director of the African-American Human Rights Foundation in Washington, D.C.; and Amira Hass, Journalist and correspondent for the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz.

7. The third panel was on the theme "From memory to conscience - the consequences for NGO work in North America" and provided for an open discussion with the participation of all the panelists from panels I and II.

8. Six workshops were held on the following topics: "NGO campaign for East Jerusalem"; "NGO campaign for Palestine refugees"; "The effects of the closure"; "Campaign against settlements"; "Mobilizing North American public opinion"; and "NGO support for respect of the Fourth Geneva Convention with regard to the question of Palestine". Annex I contains the recommendations of the workshops.

9. Six members of NACC were elected for the period 1998-1999.

II. OPENING STATEMENTS

10. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, emphasized in his opening address the importance the Committee attached to the role of the North American NGOs in that influential region. NGOs should be aware of the opportunities and responsibilities they had in generating support for the Palestinian people. At the same time, they should ensure that their work was complementary to the efforts of the international community which reflected a growing consensus on the essential elements for a peaceful settlement. Those elements included the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem; an end to the policy of settlement and land confiscation; and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees.

11. Mr. Farhâdi pointed out that the international community, including the Committee, had welcomed the peace process initiated at Madrid in 1991 and recalled the major achievements of that process so far, namely, the mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the signing of binding agreements between the parties, the partial withdrawal of Israeli forces, the Palestinian elections and the establishment of a Palestinian administration over parts of the Palestinian territory. The agreements reached between the parties had embodied a commitment to the land for peace principle, and, although they did not represent the desired final settlement, they had been essential steps towards that objective. For the Committee as well as for the NGOs supporting its goals, it was essential to do everything possible to advance the peace process, while continuing to strive for the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined by the General Assembly. It was necessary to continue to press for the scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached and for Israel to refrain from using its dominant position to achieve gains on the ground in advance of the final status talks. It was also necessary to continue to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people in its efforts to develop its human, social and economic infrastructure. The Committee's programme of work was

directed towards attaining those essential objectives. The Committee had also decided to request the inclusion of an item related to the "Bethlehem 2000" project in the agenda of the Assembly's next session. The project was a Palestinian Authority initiative with international appeal and visibility, which should help promote Bethlehem as a beacon of peace, justice and reconciliation on the eve of the next millennium.

12. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, recalled that 50 years ago, an entire people had been deprived of their national rights and uprooted from their lands and homes. When Palestinians had commemorated that occasion on 14 May with a million-person march, the Israeli army had opened fire indiscriminately, killing several people, including children. He condemned attempts by Israeli officials and some United States officials to blame the Palestinian victims for being killed. He continued by saying that it was not only a time to remember the past 50 years, but also a time to gather strength. In the past few weeks, the world had continued to witness Israel's intransigence through the arrogance and inflexibility of its Government. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was dealing with the United States' proposals for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territory in a manner that demonstrated that he did not want the negotiations to succeed.

13. Mr. Al-Kidwa emphasized that Israeli settlements in the occupied territory were illegal, and that the territory was Palestinian land and would remain so; that the compromise accepted by the Palestinian leadership was not a compromise on the West Bank and Gaza and never would be; and that the Palestinian people remained committed to peace under the existing accords. He called upon the international community to make the necessary decisions before the available opportunity was lost. The Palestinian people would never settle for a partial justice, after suffering a half century of injustice. He expressed appreciation to the First Lady of the United States for her statements in support of the Palestinian cause, not only because her position was just, but also because she recognized that it was the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East.

14. David M. Graybeal, Chairman of NACC, characterized Israel's aggressive and intransigent policy as the major problem. He criticized the United States favouritism towards Israel which had made a mockery of its claim to be an honest broker between the parties. The United Nations should not allow the United States to flaunt the clear directives of the Security Council and continue to use its veto to protect Israel against world opinion. It was the United States that pledged liberty and justice for all, but was selective in who that "all" included. It was the United States whose Declaration of Independence claimed "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind", but which now ignored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He urged the United Nations to confront the United States over its shameful use of power, and to call upon it to participate democratically in the great parliament of mankind.

15. Referring to the role of the NGOs in the United States, he said that a combination of powerful factors had blocked the launching of an outcry of public opinion over the injustices perpetrated against the Palestinians during the 50 years of dispossession. Hollywood and television had a steady output of Jewish and Israeli heroes standing against sinister and

treacherous Arabs; and the print media had publications filled with pro-Israel and anti-Arab propaganda. The Christian Churches were also influential in supporting Israel and ignoring the Palestinians. As the NGOs of the United States and Canada considered how to change public opinion, they were numbed by the power of the forces that confronted them. He pointed to a division among the NGOs with regard to the Palestinian Authority; some supported it as the authoritative voice of the Palestinian people; others criticized it for the Oslo Accords and its human rights record. He recalled that the 1997 International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine had recognized the state of Palestine, with borders in accordance with the 1988 Declaration of Independence, and called upon all NGOs to join in recognizing that State.

III. PANEL DISCUSSION

Panel I. Memory: remembering the Palestinian history

16. Presentations were made on the historical consequences of the political developments since the adoption of the partition resolution, on memory and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on the peace process and the Palestinian state as a way of implementing the right to self-determination.

17. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Professor of Political Science at Birzeit University and Professor Emeritus at Northwestern University, stated that, in 1947, the General Assembly, where Europe and America had a majority, had voted to legitimize and accelerate the process of dispossessing the Palestinian people. This was an unprecedented act in the history of the century and ran counter to the beginning process of dismantling the colonial system in Asia and Africa. Owing to its military superiority, Israel had seized first 80 per cent and then, in 1967, all of mandated Palestine. The Palestinian people had lost all control over their identity, politics and development. Israel had also succeeded in erasing a good deal of the Palestinians' historic and living heritage on their land. Politically, the international community had appeared to bypass the issue for many years. Only in 1974, after the address of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, to the General Assembly, two important resolutions had been adopted, recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to sovereign statehood in the West Bank and Gaza, and extending observer status to the PLO in the United Nations.

18. He continued by saying that the Palestinians themselves had been engaged, during all those years, in building their national institutions to address their needs in the fields of education, culture, economics, social welfare and others, and in waging the political struggle by all legitimate means to dismantle Israel's military occupation and to realize the Palestinian right to return. The intifadah made it clear that Israeli military superiority could not bring about Palestinian surrender, and that the conflict had to be resolved by political means only. Referring to the Oslo Accords, he stated that they had significantly modified the Palestinian national consensus that had revolved around the right to self-determination and independent statehood in Palestine. The West Bank and Gaza continued to be controlled by the Israeli military and Israel had retained its ability to confiscate Palestinian lands, build new settlements and impose closures, thus controlling the lives

of most Palestinians. He urged Palestinian and Israeli decision-makers to promote policies that were more consistent with the international consensus on Palestinian rights to sovereignty, statehood and return, by ending the military occupation and by accepting the principle of equal coexistence of Palestinians and Israelis on the land of Palestine.

19. Don Peretz, Professor Emeritus at the State University of New York, Binghamton, pointed out that the plight of the Palestinian refugees had been the most persistent obstacle to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Governments seemed to have pushed aside the refugee question by largely avoiding the issue in the Camp David Agreements, the Oslo Accords and in the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. He noted that the official Israeli position disavowed any responsibility for creating the refugee problem although, in recent years, new Israeli historians with access to official documents had questioned their Government's stand. While Israel had acknowledged that compensation was due, it had qualified its offers for payment with demands for compensation to Jews who left the Arab world during the 1950s and that payments be directed not to individual owners, but to a general fund. The Arab countries had insisted on the implementation of resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

20. He said that, nowadays, most solutions focused on the use of compensation funds for refugee absorption and integration through regional development in such countries as Jordan. Funding could come from redeployment of funds given to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); another source might be a share of the \$3 billion Israel received annually from the United States. As regards the right of return, Israel should recognize it as legitimate; its implementation, however, would be only feasible within a State of Palestine. In conclusion, he referred to a plan proposed by Donna Artz in her book Refugees into Citizens, based on the permanent, regional absorption of the refugees in which all participants in the Middle East peace process would share responsibility for coping with the problem and cooperate to transform refugees into citizens.

21. Randa Farah, Associate Researcher at the Center for Studies on the Contemporary Middle East in Amman, said her studies had drawn on the narrative of three generations of families in the Al-Baq'a camp, the largest refugee camp in the Middle East located close to Amman. She said that Palestinian refugees had crossed and continued to cross territorial, political and cultural boundaries. Popular memory had played a crucial role in forging Palestinian identity and had influenced the way nationalist politics were formulated. The refugee camp had become the site of resistance for refugees and freedom fighters, symbolizing Palestinian resilience, history and predicament.

22. She said that the dream of return had been jolted by the Oslo Accords. It continued, however, in a transformed way, suggesting an Islamic revolution, global events, a pan-Arab movement or a social revolution. The various narratives from the camp had also shown that the peace agreements were irrelevant to the 1948 refugees. Camps were now socio-economic categories without political perspectives. Refugees in the Palestinian diaspora felt that they were being marginalized by the historical process. Popular memory, however, did not disappear

through fading political and geographic boundaries. Palestinians today could not tolerate how one people such as the Israelis were encouraged to remember the fiftieth anniversary of the Jewish State, while the Palestinians were encouraged to engage in realpolitik and to forget.

23. Marc Ellis, Research Fellow at Harvard University, said that for all those involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the search for a path beyond the present situation, the founding of Israel and the Palestinian catastrophe were forever joined together. The only remaining question was whether their fruits of division and atrocity would continue, or whether a way would be found to create a new reality that took the division between celebration and commemoration to a level of unity hitherto unknown in the conflict. He said that Israel had now conquered all of historic Palestine, and the Palestinian population of almost 3 million people within Israel and the occupied territory had become a remnant population. In the light of that situation, the Jewish State had only three options: to conquer another people permanently and to dominate them through second-class citizenship within the 1967 borders of the State and some form of limited autonomy in the occupied territory; to give up the occupied territories and to accept a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as the shared capital; or to include Palestinians within Israeli society as citizens with equal rights and responsibilities. The first option would necessitate a permanent militarization of Jewish and Israeli life, while the latter would gradually transform Israel into Israel/Palestine.

24. He continued by saying that the old options, two States for two peoples, a Palestinian mini-State in the West Bank and Gaza, or Palestinian autonomy without statehood, must be left behind. Because of demography, culture, economy and architecture, Israel/Palestine already existed regardless of the option chosen. As their history was joined together, so too was the future, as freedom, justice, security, normalcy, healing and prosperity could only be found by Jews and Palestinians united. Shared land meant shared destiny as regards culture, politics, economy or religion. He noted that there were increasing numbers of Jews and Palestinians who saw their future intertwined in the broadest sense of the term, who struggled for an end to domination and the creation of a common homeland - Israel/Palestine - in their aspiration to pursue normalcy, security and happiness.

25. Baker Abdel-Munem Amin, Head of the General Delegation of Palestine in Canada, pointed to some frequently asked questions on the status and the future of the peace process and stressed that all the Palestinian people supported peace and that the majority supported the ongoing peace process. It was, however, not a secret that some Palestinians were against the Oslo process. Those for and against the peace process differed on "what price" to pay for "which peace"; and each Palestinian, whether supporting or opposing the peace process, had his/her own opinions and arguments, based on a patriotic Palestinian point of view, and believed that his/her position was the correct one. Every event on the ground or in the international arena related to the question of Palestine, influenced the number of supporters and opponents of the peace process, equally among the Palestinians and the Israelis. He called upon political leaders and the international community to create the positive events that would help peace to prevail.

Panel II. Conscience: strategies for contesting the future

26. Participants discussed the need for international protection and support of the Palestinian people, how to uphold international legitimacy and how to mobilize public opinion.

27. Ruhama Marton, Chairperson of Physicians for Human Rights, said it was important to distinguish between the psychological processes that governed the public and the policy makers. The public was unconsciously denying reality. People generally preferred not to know about the Middle East situation and were ignorant of the reality surrounding the issues. Policy makers found it easier and more convenient to feign ignorance. NGOs needed to change public opinion by providing information about issues that were publicly denied and not addressed. In order to do so, strategies must be developed to counteract the psychological defences used by the public and policy makers. NGOs had to make people, policy-makers and Governments uncomfortable.

28. She said that over the past 10 years her own organization had tried to change many things, including the use of torture against Palestinian prisoners. When confronting the Israeli Government about human rights, they had bombarded it with facts and cooperated with those journalists who were prepared to challenge and change the consensus. The term "torture" was taboo in Israel, and the systematic use of torture could not be admitted by the Israeli public since it contradicted their image of being humane. It was, therefore, important that stories and facts challenged the idea that there was no torture, and eventually that type of denial would stop. The issue of torture and the involvement of Israeli doctors in it also needed to be placed on the international agenda. As a result, the Israeli public was increasingly aware of the use of torture, and relevant NGOs were proud of that achievement. The United States public was very sensitive to violations of human and civil rights. NGOs should publicize case histories and raise demands. Particular approaches to the American Medical Association should also be pursued.

29. Michael Lynk, Labour Lawyer and Professor of Law at the University of Ottawa, said that the political and social aspirations of the Palestinians had a solid grounding in the accepted principles of international law. They included self-determination, peace in their homeland and in the region, the right of the refugee population either to return home or to receive fair compensation, a claim to Jerusalem, the right to be free from occupation and its deleterious effects and the right to control their own natural resources, such as agricultural land and water. Reliance upon those principles strengthened arguments for the Palestinians to live as any other people as they sought support from the international community. He stated that attempts at peacemaking in the Middle East had been marred by an ample imbalance of political power between Israel and the Palestinians, resulting in peace agreements that were not only one-sided, but ultimately unworkable. Putting international principles of rights and duties at or near the centre of efforts to reach a successful resolution of the question of Palestine could be a harbinger for the future conduct of relations between troubled neighbours in the region.

30. He said that for the Palestinians in post-Oslo circumstances, the requirement for protection arose from the continued interference by Israel with the internationally recognized entitlement to human rights, characterized by a prolonged, repeated and malevolent pattern of human rights violations towards the Palestinians; the ongoing usurpation by Israel of the Palestinians' economy, territory and resources, which displayed an intent by Israel to expropriate those lands and resources permanently; and the denial of legal and social status properly owed to the Palestinian refugees in the occupied or exile lands where they presently resided. Those patterns of behaviour not only infringed upon the fundamental human rights and refugee rights guaranteed by international law, they also jeopardized the opportunity for sovereignty and self-determination that the Palestinians had the right to exercise. He listed the instruments of international law that had to be applied to the conflict and called, in particular, for a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure its respect. He also argued for the application of the Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951 to the Palestine refugees as a practicable means to improve their fragile legal status in some of their host countries.

31. Keith Jennings, Director of the African-American Human Rights Foundation in Washington, D.C., said that most people in the United States did not know what was going on with respect to the situation in Palestine. Today, there was a great sense of frustration among the Palestinian people that stemmed not only from the pace of the peace process, but also from the fact that the Palestinian Authority existed but did not have the tools to do an effective job. The current United States mood had been shaped by a number of factors ranging from stereotyping to the existence of probably the most hostile Congress ever with regards to the Palestinian cause. Most people in the United States would be unable to name any notable Arabs or Arab-Americans, and many knew very little about the rich diversity that comprised Arab culture. Television and film could be blamed for that situation, through negative stereotyping of Arabs in the news media as well as in adult and children's entertainment. The increased political influence of the Christian right which emphasized the shared Judaeo-Christian heritage was another factor influencing United States public opinion.

32. He said that, in order to mobilize public opinion, it was important that NGOs started to reach out to different sectors and communities. The support for peace needed to be based on the support for the rule of international law. NGOs had to perform collectively as public relations firms for justice because the Arabs needed a new media image. In forging a durable peace, it needed to be recognized that Israeli security and Palestinian justice were two sides of the same coin. Understanding between the people of the United States and the Palestinians had to increase, and ways to foster citizen-to-citizen contact through cultural and educational exchanges needed to be found. Also, a systematic campaign of public education towards building a broad-based constituency for Palestinian self-determination had to be undertaken.

33. Amira Hass, journalist and correspondent for the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, stated that in her contacts with the Palestinians, she faced increasingly anger, sadness and the recognition of impotence to change the current situation. The Oslo Accords were to eliminate gradually the occupation in exchange for a decline in Palestinian resistance. In practice, however, they led only

to a different form of occupation, distancing the occupier somewhat from the occupied by a number of intermediate bodies, still controlled by the Israeli Government. In addition, the peace process should have brought a considerable improvement of the economy leading to better living conditions. Instead, the gross national product had declined every year and families had had to reduce their living costs. Owing to Israeli restrictions, there was hardly any export of Palestinian products, nor an exchange between the West Bank and Gaza.

34. She said that the promise of a political entity had been based upon territorial integrity between Gaza and the West Bank, which meant ensuring Palestinians freedom of movement at least between the two territories. Instead, there had been a complete dismantling of Palestinian territory and demographic separation between Palestinian residents of the two and between Palestinians and Jews, who had full freedom of movement. Israel still controlled the lives of the Palestinians. One new form of control was the granting of certain freedoms and privileges to the Palestinian leadership while the majority was denied basic economic and social rights.

Panel III. From memory to conscience - the consequences for NGO work in North America

35. Participants continued the discussion of the issues raised during the two previous panels with the participation of the above-mentioned panelists. Workshop facilitators presented the results of the deliberations in the six workshops. The gist of the discussion is reflected in the recommendations of the workshops contained in annex I to the present report.

IV. CLOSING STATEMENTS

36. David M. Graybeal, Chairman of NACC, called upon NGOs to implement the various action proposals. Even if not all issues commanded a consensus, NGOs were unanimously united in support of the Palestinian people and would do their utmost over the next year.

37. Somaia S. Barghouti, Counsellor in the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, representative of Palestine, thanked all NGOs for their participation in the Symposium and their continued efforts to assist the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve their inalienable rights. She also thanked the various panelists and the participants in the workshops, who had addressed a number of serious issues over the last three days.

38. Ravan A.G. Farhâdi, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, stressed the fact that the Symposium had concluded the programme of meetings of the Committee for the year, and that the Committee would concentrate on various intergovernmental efforts culminating in the session of the General Assembly during the next months. The Committee strongly believed that at this difficult stage of the political process, every effort should be made to complement and support the important decisions and initiatives made by so many influential Governments and intergovernmental organizations in support of the Palestinian people.

39. Referring to the different views expressed during the meeting, he expressed the Committee's deep appreciation of all those who had spoken in support of its objectives and who were determined to continue their useful work. In the light of comments made by some, however, he reiterated the legislative basis of the Committee's mandate in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined by the General Assembly. Although individual NGOs might also have other objectives and work on other issues of concern to them, the purpose of the NGO network on the question of Palestine and of the meetings sponsored by the Committee was to support the mandate and goals of the Committee. Concluding, he expressed the Committee's wish to continue to cooperate with NGOs that supported its efforts and shared its objectives.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the workshops

The non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine held in New York from 15 to 17 June 1998 met in six workshops to discuss concrete actions by NGOs in support of the Palestinian people. Summarized below are recommendations for action supported by the participating NGOs.

Action towards the United States Congress

- To organize, on 22 October 1998, in Washington, D.C. a day of lobbying Congress and the Administration. NGO representatives will visit their respective congressmen on Capitol Hill, and a second delegation will visit the State Department to discuss the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem and the closures;
- To prepare the lobby day through information campaigns in the media, the screening of videos on public channels, letters to the editors and the like; to identify congressmen and celebrities supportive of or sympathetic to the Palestinian people and to register their support; to send articles, speeches, letters and information notes to congressmen to help to educate them on the issue;

Action against Israeli settlements

- To illustrate to the United States public how the settlements and the by-pass roads divide the West Bank and Gaza, disconnect communities and disrupt the daily lives of the Palestinians, thus rendering a just solution of the question of Palestine impossible; and to compare this situation to such well-known concepts as 'bantustanization' in apartheid South Africa;
- To tie in the North American campaign with the activities of Gush Shalom, an Israeli NGO organizing a boycott of products manufactured in the settlements;

Action to support a just solution for Jerusalem

- To promote tours to Jerusalem as a way to educate various groups; to include a visit to settlements in the tour programme as well as meetings with Palestinian families living in the occupied territory; to produce a fact sheet on closures and to distribute it to tourist groups visiting the Holy Land; and to include in the next Symposium programme a specific workshop on tours and travel;
- To sponsor the reprint of the advertisement of "Shared Jerusalem" in various newspapers;

- To join Gush Shalom's international campaign for "Our Jerusalem";

Action against closures

- To inform public opinion that closures constitute a part of the occupation policy of successive Israeli Governments; to connect the demand to lift the closures with the establishment of a safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza, and not just ask for access of Palestinian workers to Israel;
- To ask NACC to organize a national day of closure with demonstrations and teach-ins; to use the form of street theatre, maybe in the vicinity of an Israeli mission, to illustrate the realities of the closures;
- To expose and criticize publicly United States companies that export products to Israel that are used to enforce the closure and to build settlements.

Action to promote implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention

- To make the provisions of international law a tool in the argumentation of NGOs; to demand the fulfillment of Israel's obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention as part of public relations campaigns; to write to media representatives drawing their attention to the provisions of the Convention; and to demonstrate clearly in the argumentation the illegal character of Israel's actions in the occupied territory;
- To use international law, and in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention, as a tool to reach out to new groups of people, the military, Viet Nam veterans, scholars and clerical lawyers, to get them interested in the subject and to use their channels of communication to support governmental action in support of the Convention;
- To ask national United Nations Associations and their local affiliates in cities and towns to put the issue on their agenda and to organize campaigns to ensure respect for the Convention;
- To include international law and the question of Palestine in law curricula at universities;

Action towards the media

- To organize, on a regular basis, a media watch, correcting inaccurate or biased information, with letters to the editors, by phone and/or fax to editors, with the focus on settlements, Jerusalem and closures, and to oppose the stereotyping of Palestinians and Arabs;
- To encourage United States journalists working in the Middle East to write regularly about

the closures, and, in particular, tell the effects on individual lives and families;

- To write articles for publication in health magazines informing physicians of the effects of the closures on the public health situation in the occupied territories;
- To produce audiovisual material, in particular videos, dealing with the closures and to screen them as often as possible; to publicize existing videos such as "Jerusalem - an occupation set in stone?", "Checkpoint" and "People on the land"; to show videos in churches after Sunday service; to use community access television to screen these videos; and to advertise such broadcasts widely; and to call local public broadcasting stations and ask them to broadcast "People on the land", which is available to them free;
- To include a Palestinian speaker in presentations in communities, clubs, churches and universities; to educate communities by organizing a dialogue between a Palestinian and a Jewish speaker on the prospects for peace; and to establish a roster listing the names of possible speakers on the issue for conventions, conferences, university lectures, church meetings and others;
- To match families in Palestinian towns with United States families to get them to know one another on a more personal level;

Action on Palestine refugees

- To carry out public campaigns for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), affirming the right of return of Palestine refugees; to initiate advocacy action for the expansion of the definition of the word "refugee" to include all dispossessed Palestinians; and to urge Governments to support UNRWA and to refrain from reducing their contributions;
- To establish links between NGOs in North America and those in the Middle East working on the refugee issue;

Action to improve networking

- To solidify the networking between the different NGOs in North America by using electronic mail for the coordination of activities; to establish an "e-mail tree"; to ask NACC to enhance its webpage; to use the Internet to disseminate information on the closures; to update existing websites regularly; to ask NACC to add a chapter on closures to its webpage; to add a chatroom to give an opportunity for an exchange of views; to share successful campaigns or activities in the NACC newsletter "Connections"; to include in one issue of NACC newsletter a page on the closures;
- To reinforce local and regional coordination between like-minded NGOs to improve the impact of activities.

ANNEX II

List of participants and observers

Participant NGOs

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Washington, D.C.
 American Educational Trust, Washington, D.C.
 American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia, PA
 Arab Women's Council, Potomac, MD
 Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region, Kyle, TX
 Canadian Arab Federation, Scarborough, Canada
 Canadian Arab Women's Association, Quebec, Canada
 Canadian Council of Churches, Winchester, Canada
 Christian Peace Conference, New York
 Church of Humanism, New York
 Coalition for Peace in the Middle East, Youngstown, OH
 Episcopal Church, New York
 Federation of American Arab Organizations, Long Beach, New York
 Friends of Jerusalem/American Neturei Karta, New York
 Friends of Sabeel, Philadelphia, PA
 General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, New York
 General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, New York
 Holy Land Foundation, Richardson, TX
 International Association of Democratic Lawyers, New York
 International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation, Inc., Piscataway, NJ
 International Movement for Unity Among Races and Peoples, Madison, NJ
 Labor Committee on the Middle East, San Francisco, CA
 Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestinian States, Louisville, KY
 Lutheran World Federation, New York
 Methodist Federation for Social Action, Staten Island, New York
 Middle East Fellowship of Southern California, Burbank, CA
 Moral Re-Armament, New York
 Muslim World League, New York
 National Council of Churches, New York
 National Training Center for Resource Center Directors, Richmond, VA
 Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada, Toronto, Canada
 North Park University Center, Chicago, IL
 Palestine Aid Society, Ann Arbor, MI
 Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Stone Mountain, GA
 Palestine Red Crescent Society, Queens Valley, New York
 Palestinian American Congress, Kew Gardens, New York

Pax World Service, Washington, D.C.
 Princeton Middle East Society, Sommerset, NJ
 United Church Board for World Ministries, United Church of Christ, New York
 United Holy Land Fund, Chicago, IL
 United Nations Association of Canada, Kanata, Canada
 World Organization of Jews from Islamic Countries, New York

Observer NGOs

Amnesty International, New York
 Bread for the World Institute, Silver Spring, MD
 Catholic Worker, New York
 Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, Paris
 General Union of Palestinian Students, Brooklyn, New York
 International Presentation Association, New York
 Lebanese Friendship Society, Brooklyn, New York
 Middle East Preservation of Secure Travel Sites (MEPOSTS), Columbus, OH
 New York Committees of Correspondence, New York
 Pan Asian Congress of Mathematicians, New York
 Sojourners, Washington, D.C.
 Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Coordinating Committees for NGOs on the question of Palestine

North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC)

Panelists

Baker Abdel-Munem Amin
 Ibrahim Abu-Lughod
 Marc Ellis
 Randa Farah
 Amira Hass
 Keith Jennings
 Michael Lynk
 Ruhama Marton
 Don Peretz

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

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

George Saliba
Rapporteur
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations

Mankeur Ndiaye
Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations

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

Governments

Afghanistan
China
Cuba
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ecuador
France
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Italy
Jamaica
Malta
Peru
Senegal
South Africa
Turkey

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

League of Arab States
Organization of the Islamic Conference

Other organizations 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

United Nations bodies

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

