

Florence Declaration of June 13, 2007

The Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations and individuals committed to peace, justice and freedom in their troubled region, have gathered in Florence, Italy on June 11-13, 2007 under the auspices of the government of the Tuscany Region to seek Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement and to promote coalition building with Europe aimed at ending the occupation and furthering peace and coexistence.

The meeting was over shadowed by the tragic events in Gaza which adds another dimension to the suffering of the Palestinian people. The participants urge for an immediate stop of the violence.

In cooperation with the regional government of Tuscany, the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum has moved forward in order to influence both the rhythm and the pace of the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, through organizing this significant Civil Society Peace Summit, aiming to establish a wide coalition of Israeli-Palestinian-European peace forces, that will work in coordinated effort to pressure governments for the urgent renewal of political negotiations, with the objective of ending the occupation, establishing an independent and viable Palestinian state, based on 4 of June 1967 borders, side by side with Israel and ending the conflict.

Never before, has the time for peace become so short. We are on the edge of the precipice. Accordingly, the reaction of civil societies on both sides of the conflict comes at a time when there is a stalemate at the negotiation level, lack of strong political leadership, and public apathy towards a political horizon. Our action intends to build trust and cooperation at the grass-roots level as a first step in the building of a broader peace movement that will include the social, economic, cultural and political sectors of both societies, towards reconciliation. The summit, after three days of deliberations, concluded with the adoption of the following basic positions and proposed actions:

Stressing the role that civil society organizations can play in creating the conditions for the promotion of Palestinian-Israeli peace process,

- all participants commit themselves to the achievement of a comprehensive, lasting and just peace between Palestine and Israel, based on UN resolutions that call for ending the occupation and for the establishment of two states through political negotiations, and
- accept the Arab Peace Initiative as a basic framework for peace negotiations, and call to stop any unilateral action, including settlement expansion, building the wall on the Palestinian territories, and all unilateral measures in east Jerusalem that will jeopardize the two state solution, and
- call for a comprehensive cease-fire which when achieved, will set favorable conditions for the renewal of the stalled negotiations.

We call on Europe – the European Union, National and Regional Governments and civil society - to become actively involved in the collective search for Israeli-Palestinian peace, and to develop determination for achieving this objective. At the same time, the participants commit themselves to work together to turn this summit into a permanent European-

Israeli-Palestinian Alliance for peace, by establishing a Tripartite Steering Committee. The TSC will be composed of the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum, European NGOs and the Regional Government of Tuscany that will develop its own structure and to oversee an action plan and mechanisms for its implementation, based on the attached agreed-upon recommendations made by the different working groups. The TSC will work to identify and mobilize the required resources needed for the implementation of the action plans. The TSC should seek to attract to it further Arab, regional and international participants, at governmental – national, regional and local, private sector, and civil society levels to be incorporated into the Peace Alliance.

We recognize the efforts made and the commitment on the government of the Tuscany region, to build a network of regional and local authorities in Europe aimed at promoting cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians and to hold an annual conference of the Peace Alliance. The participants would like to extend their thanks and appreciation to Mr. Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister of Italy, and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their participation and interest, and extends special thanks to the Government of the Region of Tuscany for its contribution and commitment to Israeli-Palestinian peace in general and to the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum in particular.

<http://www.genfer-initiative.de/>

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