

**Before it is too late!
EJJP calls for a bold European initiative
for a just peace in the Middle East**

**Resolution adopted by the
5th Annual Convention Berlin, 1 – 3 June 2007**

5 June 1967 marked the beginning of the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbours, in which Israel conquered the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Sinai.

The current German Presidency of the European Council will terminate at the end of June and the G8 summit will be hosted by and held under the auspices of the German Chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel.

By meeting in Berlin on the eve of the 40th anniversary of Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian Territories, European Jews for a Just Peace (EJJP) wishes to demonstrate its concern at the indifference of the European Union (EU) and the G8 nations towards Israeli violations of international law and the plight of the Palestinians.

In particular, it urges the President and members of the European Council to take decisive action to bring about an end to the Israeli occupation and allow a sovereign and viable Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem before it is too late for any prospect of peace and stability in the Middle East.

EJJP takes the opportunity of the German Presidency and the G8 summit to appeal urgently to all those attending to put pressure on Israel, to end its occupation and to accept a viable, contiguous Palestinian state. The continuation of this conflict is central to the whole region, since, over the last sixty years, Israeli policies have fanned the flames of political, ethnic, and religious extremism in Arab and Muslim countries.

Recalling forty years of occupation we hold successive Israeli governments responsible for contravening international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention on a daily basis in the occupied Palestinian territories.

We draw attention to the numerous reports of these violations produced by a wide range of reputable organisation, both international and in Israel/Palestine itself including Al-Haq, Amnesty International, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, B'tselem, European Union officials, Gisha, Human Rights Watch, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Physicians for Human Rights, Public Campaign Against Torture in Israel, Rabbis for Human Rights, War on Want and the World Bank – as well as the work of the United Nations through its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the UN's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

In recent years these have documented in great detail:

- massive land grab and water confiscation, roadblocks, sieges, closures; extrajudicial killings, collective punishments, house demolitions, and arbitrary administrative detention. There are almost 11,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, among them hundreds of women and children; and torture is routinely used.
- the expansion of the occupation in the West Bank in recent years by the construction and route of the ‘separation’ wall/fence that divides Palestinians from Palestinians, and annexes large areas of Palestinian land in a de facto redefinition of Israel’s borders. The fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian territories – with Gaza totally isolated from the West Bank, and the West Bank itself fragmented into zones and sub-zones between which travel is difficult if not impossible.
- deliberately fostering a fragmentation of Palestinian civil society by implementing policies that strangle any possibility of economic development and encourage Palestinian emigration.

These measures, taken as a whole undermine any viability of a Palestinian state and thus the possibility of a two-state solution, which is the basis for all peace plans recognised by the international community.

Double standards apply to Israel and to the Palestinian Authority

We condemn the policy of double standards applied by the United States and the European Union to Israel on the one hand and to the Palestinian Authority on the other.

A double-standards policy is practiced when:

- the EU, as a part of the Quartet, demands that Palestinians relinquish the use of violence while accepting the use of excessive and disproportionate violence by Israel;
- the EU accepts openly racist ministers and parties in the Israeli Government who explicitly advocate ethnic cleansing (such as Avigdor Lieberman), while punishing the entire Palestinian population for positions taken by Hamas;
- Jews, from Israel or elsewhere, are given financial inducements to move into the occupied Palestinian territories while Palestinians are deprived of freedom of movement in their own territory;
- Palestinian citizens of Israel are prevented by law from living with spouses from the occupied Palestinian territories, while the rights of Jewish citizens are not similarly restricted;
- Israel controls the right of Palestinians from the occupied territories to move within the territories themselves, or abroad, especially to economic, educational or trade-promoting trips to Europe or elsewhere, while Israelis are free to promote economic, trade and educational activity abroad;

Foreign passport holders, both Palestinians and others, are increasingly

unable to live and work in the occupied territories because of the Israeli refusal to renew visas – with a devastating impact on universities and other organisations, while Israel’s educational system and economy continues to benefit from free access for foreign passport holders.

- citizens of the occupied territories - be they Palestinians by birth or else foreign spouses of mixed Palestinian families - are deprived of their right to move in and out of the occupied territories and specially to undertake economic, educational or trade-promoting trips to Europe, by not getting visas to return, while Israeli salesmen and representatives can freely travel wherever they want to.

This double-standards policy is seen most clearly in the strangling of the Palestinian economy by a combination of Israeli border controls and the boycott of the Haniyeh government, while Israeli goods are imported into Europe on preferential terms under the EU-Israel Association Agreement. This continues despite the fact that Israel is in clear breach of Article 2 of the Agreement (viz that “Relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement”). At the same time, the Palestinians are shunned, both economically and politically.

It also aggravates the frustration felt by Muslim youth in Europe, themselves victims of discrimination. As Jews we fight the discrimination and double standards in Europe and the Middle East with them,

Jews in the past have been subjected to double standards. We object to such a double-standards policy being practiced by our national governments and by the European Council towards the Palestinians.

This policy of double standards is putting Jews in Israel and indeed all over the world at great risk, because Israel claims to represent all Jews.

Punished for practicing democracy in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Over the last forty years, restrictive demands relating to their democracy and leadership have been placed on the Palestinians that would not be imposed on any sovereign nation. The Palestinians – a people under military occupation – held democratic elections not once, but twice, despite the fact that candidates were impeded in campaigning and voters from voting.

After being denied their democratically elected government in the first place the Palestinians succeeded with the support of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia in the formation of a National Unity Government that

involves all relevant political parties in the Occupied Territories and which has, as a government, complied with the Quartet's conditions; a big step, requiring tough compromises on all sides under extremely difficult conditions. Yet the Palestinian Authority still faces a Western boycott and hence a denial of democracy that is morally unjustified, and dangerously myopic. It is a collective punishment of the Palestinian people as a whole and has undermined all basic public services including education.

This Convention calls upon the European Council

- to end the boycott of the Palestinian Government and the collective punishment that has been imposed on the Palestinian people since the democratic election held in Palestine in January 2006.
- to recognize and back the Palestinian Unity Government. The EU Council's president as well as the Council as a whole should reactivate the Quartet and campaign actively for the recognition of the Palestinian government. The member states of the EU as well as other responsible EU bodies should not only resume direct economic aid to the Palestinian Authority as a matter of urgency but systematically set up a network of economic, cultural and scientific cooperation, joint ventures etc. in order to help to build up the infrastructure, skills and competence, that are needed in order to establish a viable Palestinian state.
- to demand of Israel that it transfer Palestinian tax and customs revenues it is withholding to the PA, especially since its refusal to do so has resulted in thousands of teachers and other public employees going unpaid. The increasing restrictions on the freedom of movement of people and goods are the main cause of the deterioration of the social and economic situation of the Palestinians. This crisis has escalated considerably since last year's decision to suspend direct payments to the Palestinian Authority despite the launching of the Temporary International Mechanism and significantly increased project-aid.
- to compel Israel to free the imprisoned Palestinian ministers and MPs immediately. The mere fact that the speaker of the Palestinian parliament, Aziz Dweik, 20 MPs and eight members of the democratically elected Hamas Government were detained by Israel on 29 June 2006, and the Minister of Education, Dr Nasserdene Shaer and others only last week, without protest by the governments or parliaments of any of the G8 states calls into question any belief in the moral and political high ground of western freedom and democracy.

Since the 1980s, the PLO has on several occasions recognised the state of Israel in its 1967 borders. EJJP now calls upon the international community – particularly the European Council – to demand that Israel acknowledges the Palestinian people by recognising a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders.

Over the 40 years of occupation, and with the tacit acceptance of much

of the international community, the Israeli Government has felt entitled to breach International Law, the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention. The G8 states and even the United Nations have condoned the Israeli refusal to accept the decisions of the International Court of Justice with respect to the illegality of the route of the barrier. The United Nations and the international community as a whole have failed to implement any effective sanctions against Israeli breaches of International Law

Contempt of crucial Arab peace initiatives

EJJP deplores Israel's arrogant rejection of, and the G8 nations downplaying of the Saudi peace initiative, originally launched by the Arab League in Mecca in March 2002 and recently revived. The initiative calls for the recognition of the state of Israel by all the Member States of the Arab League, full peace and normalized relations between them, in exchange for a complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem.

We call upon the international community and in particular urge the EU to demand that Israel respond positively to the Arab proposals that were once again unanimously ratified at the meeting of the League of Arab States in Khartoum in May 2006 and now once more in Riyadh in March 2007.

Conclusion

EJJP takes the opportunity of the G-8 summit at Heiligendamm under the German Presidency of Chancellor Angela Merkel to remind the G8 Member States and the EU that Israeli/Palestinian conflict is the central one in the region. Israeli policies over the last sixty years bear a major responsibility for violence in the Middle-East.

The core of the problem is the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory since 1967. Moreover, the daily recurring experience of injustice in the illegally occupied Palestinian Territories prevents a peaceful resolution of the old injustice done to the Palestinians when they were forced to leave in 1948. All this further fuels the spiral of violence.

EJJP reminds the European leaders of the decision taken by the EU in March 2004, when the presidents of the European countries declared unanimously their opposition to any deviations from the 1967 borders that were not mutually agreed between the two parties. It should be stressed that due to the imbalance of power between the two parties, such an agreement between them can only be reached if the EU is prepared to see strong pressure applied on Israel to meet its international obligations

EJJP concurs with a report of the renowned International Crisis Group of October last year: “So long as the roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict are not addressed, it will remain a bottomless source and pretext for repression, radicalisation and bloodletting, both in the region and beyond.” There will be no peace – neither for Israel nor for Palestine – without a sovereign and viable state of Palestine within the borders of 1967, the disbanding of the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, the establishment of Arab Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital, and a just solution of the Palestinian refugee problem.

EJJP calls for a decisive shift of European Union Middle East policy

After forty years of Israeli occupation the time has come for the inauguration of a new era in which the peoples of the Middle East can pursue their own political, economic and social agendas.

EJJP calls on the European Council to

- end its collective punishment of the Palestinian people since January 2006 by recognizing and backing the Palestinian Unity Government;
- demand of Israel that it transfer Palestinian tax and customs revenues it is withholding to the PA;
- compel Israel to free imprisoned Palestinian ministers and MPs immediately – as well as all other political prisoners;
- urge a positive response from Israel to the recently reaffirmed Saudi Peace initiative of the Arab League.
- apply sanctions to bring about an end to the Israeli occupation.

We all have a stake in ending the occupation, in building a sovereign Palestinian state in the borders of 1967 and in implementing a just and viable peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike.