



# Joint Statement of Palestinian Civil Society to the World Social Forum

17 janvier 2007

Joint Statement of Palestinian Civil Society to the World Social Forum

Nairobi, Kenya, January 2007

Political Statement and Call to Action on Palestine

Forty years after Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, and almost 60 years after the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe) of 1948, the Palestinian people is at a critical juncture. Global solidarity and support will be decisive in enabling the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, justice and durable peace to prevail.

To date, official diplomacy has failed in enforcing scores of UN resolutions and relevant principles of international law aimed at ending Israel's occupation, colonization, displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people. US-led Middle East diplomacy, favoring military intervention and unilateralism over respect for international law, is also directly implicated in wars and occupation in Iraq and Lebanon, complicit with Israel's colonial regime in Palestine, and actively encouraging division and civil war in the region. Rather than being part of the solution, the US and the entire Quartet—including the EU—have become part of the problem in the region.

After intense efforts, transparent and democratic parliamentary elections were held in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) with the fervent backing of the US and the EU, both of which rejected the election results that brought Hamas to "power," an outcome that was not in line with their plans for the region, particularly their attempt to "convince" the Palestinians to accept limited self-rule in the OPT under the overall control of Israeli military authorities. Subsequently, Israel, the US and most European powers imposed a severe, inhumane regime of sanctions against Palestinians under occupation. In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur, Prof. John Dugard, sanctions were imposed on the occupied rather than the occupier, the first time an occupied people has been so treated.

Poverty, unemployment, de-development, and destabilization of vital institutions providing health care, education and social services were among the immediate results of this merciless blockade. This, coupled with direct foreign intervention, encouraged dispute in the Palestinian political system, undermining the ability for effective coping and eventually triggering open conflict between the two leading Palestinian political parties.

In the meanwhile, Israel has escalated with unprecedented impunity its colonial siege of Palestinian Bantustans ; killing of Palestinian civilians, at least a third of whom are children ; confiscation of Palestinian

land and water resources ; construction of the apartheid Wall, condemned as illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004 ; and wanton destruction of Palestinian agricultural lands, infrastructure and entire civilian neighborhoods. Furthermore, in 2006, the Israeli government issued four times more tenders for housing units—in colonies built on occupied Palestinian land—than in 2005. The recent massacre of defenceless civilians in Beit Hanoun is only the latest episode in this series of war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation force without accountability or censure from the world. By preventing Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the UN investigative commission headed by him from entering the Gaza Strip, Israel, with ample complicity from the West, is repeating the cover-up it got away with after its atrocities in the Jenin refugee camp in 2002. This time, again, world governments chose to turn their heads elsewhere, giving Israel the green light to continue with its criminal policies whose main goal is to instigate a slow process of ethnic cleansing of the OPT, which would achieve its historic objective of having a “land without a people.”

In parallel, Israel’s recent, widely acknowledged defeat in Lebanon has only pushed it further to the right, to the extent that an openly fascist party like Avigdor Lieberman’s is now part of the government. Political disenfranchisement of Palestinians inside Israel has deepened, and racial discrimination against them in all vital domains—family reunification, education, health, land ownership and job opportunities—has increased. Home demolitions, crop destruction and forced displacement of entire communities, mainly in the Naqab (Negev), have become the norm in Israel’s treatment of its own Palestinian citizens.

Since the signature of the Oslo accords in 1993, many years of “peace-making” that ignored the basic requirements of justice have passed in vain, only helping the occupying power to literally cement its hold on the occupied land. Still, Palestinian civil society has not lost hope in achieving a just peace based on international law and universal human rights, most primary among them the right to full equality of all humans regardless of religion or ethnicity. Currently, as in past decades, the most fundamental impediments preventing such a comprehensive and lasting peace from being realized remain Israel’s continued occupation and colonization of Arab lands ; its denial of Palestinian refugee rights ; its persistent expulsion policies ; and its system of racial discrimination against its own indigenous Palestinian citizens. Palestinian civil society representatives strongly believe that, without applying direct, effective and consistent pressure on Israel to end its three-tiered oppression of the Palestinian people, the international community will not genuinely contribute to ending this age-old conflict and to bringing about a just and enduring peace to the entire region.

## **Call to Action**

Based on the above, Palestinian civil society overwhelmingly advocates Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (or BDS) against Israel, similar to the international community’s measures against apartheid South Africa in the past. Consumer boycotts of Israeli products ; boycott of Israeli academic, athletic and cultural events and institutions complicit in human rights abuses ; divestment from Israeli companies, as well as international corporations involved in perpetuating injustice ; and pressuring governments to impose sanctions on Israel are all examples of effective, morally sound, non-violent measures that ought to be initiated and maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by :

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in 1967 and dismantling the Wall ;
2. Ending its system of racial discrimination and recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, including their right to full equality ; and
3. Recognizing the right of Palestinian refugees, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), to return to their homes and properties, as stipulated in UNGA resolution 194.

International civil society, in close coordination with Palestinian and Arab civil society, has a critical role to play in bringing about justice and peace to the Middle East. By adopting diverse, sustainable, and context-sensitive, yet consistent, forms of BDS actions against Israel in various fields, conscientious organizations and individuals can shoulder their moral responsibility to end the Israeli system of colonialism and racial discrimination, providing a genuine opportunity for reconciliation and coexistence for everyone in the region, based on equality and mutual respect for international law and fundamental human rights.

### **The Palestinian Delegation to the WSF-2007, Nairobi :**

- Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) [www.pngonet.net](http://www.pngonet.net) pngonet@pngo.net
- Ittijah - Union of Arab Community Based Organizations [www.ittijah.org](http://www.ittijah.org) ittijah@ittijah.org
- Palestinian NGO Forum, Lebanon NISCVT@socialcare.org
- Acting Steering Committee, Palestinian BDS Campaign
- OPGAI-Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative
- The Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign
- Arab Group for the Protection of Nature APN - [www.apnature.org](http://www.apnature.org) sanabel@go.com.jo
- Stop The Wall Campaign - <http://www.stopthewall.org/> , global@stopthewall.org

- Emplacement : [Vous êtes ici](#) : [Accueil](#) > [ARCHIVES](#) >

- Adresse de cet article :  
<https://plateforme-palestine.org/joint-statement-of-palestinian-civil-society-to-the-world-social-forum>