

Enhancing the role of Civil Society in Promoting Peace in the Middle East

Introduction

The recent gathering in Madrid of the Forum for a Just Peace in the Middle East which was held in December, 2007, served to launch a discussion between a number of Palestinian, Israeli and Spanish organizations on the role that civil society must fill in promoting peace in the Middle East and ending the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.

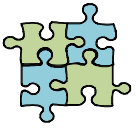
Following the conference in Madrid Palestinians and Israelis continued to discuss the subject independently back in Jerusalem, and jointly decided to establish the Palestine-Israeli Civil Society Alliance (PICSA), as a structural vehicle to support cooperation between local and international civil society actors on a range of pertinent issues.

The Palestinian-Israeli Civil Society Alliance (PICSA) - Mission and Objectives

The Palestinian-Israeli Civil Society Alliance (PICSA) is a coalition of civil society organizations that aims to enhance the role of civil society in supporting and promoting peace, human and civil rights, and democracy in the Middle East. The ultimate aim of PICSA is to enhance the impact of actions taken by civil society organizations towards putting an end to Occupation and to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Objectives:

1. To advocate peace, democracy, human and civil rights by using our influence on local and international politicians to carry out their pledge to reach a peace agreement.
2. To develop, maintain and enhance cooperation structures and tools between Israelis and Palestinians in various fields such as the economy, environment, health, peace education, and other relevant fields.
3. To promote local, regional and international projects that pave the road for peace.



PICSA — PALESTINIAN ISRAELI CIVIL SOCIETY

4. To create an atmosphere more conducive to peace by increasing actions to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the region and implement activities that will aid in putting an end to discrimination, to inequality and to human right violations, in view of alleviating the suffering of the Palestinians, as well as discouraging any type of violent action.

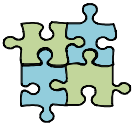
Jerusalem - City of Peace and Coexistence

Following the decision to establish PICSA, members decided together on the first core issue they would jointly work on: Promoting the city of Jerusalem as a City of Peace and Coexistence.

The overall goal of the Jerusalem initiative will be to bring into play the diversity that exists in the city and offer a platform for active debates and discussions among all Jerusalemites, and others, as to the future of the city, generating in the process a voice for civil society, in any future decision making, concerning Jerusalem.

Following an in depth discussion on Jerusalem, PICSA members agreed on the following premises for action:

1. As part of a two state solution, East Jerusalem should be politically separated from West Jerusalem and become part of Palestine. Yet for the future well-being of the city itself it is important that Jerusalem not be divided by a wall or barrier.
2. An independent Palestinian Municipality should be established in East Jerusalem as soon as possible, and the new Municipality should maintain a viable working relationship with the Israeli Municipality of West Jerusalem.
3. All obstacles preventing the development of East Jerusalem into a viable and productive part of the city should be removed.
4. Cooperation concerning development issues pertinent to East and West Jerusalem should include the two municipalities and civil society organizations and in parallel take into account private sector considerations.
5. The two Municipalities and the civil society organizations should be committed to promoting Jerusalem as a multicultural city, open to a variety of influences rooted in the traditions of the three Monotheist religions. They should



PICSA — PALESTINIAN ISRAELI CIVIL SOCIETY

leverage the uniqueness of Jerusalem in promoting its development and prosperity

6. The two municipalities and the civil society organizations should serve as a model of coexistence, showing that cooperation can be viable alternative to conflict in the Middle East.

The Proposed Conference

The aim of this proposal is to hold a 3-day conference in Jerusalem for Spanish, Israeli, and Palestinian organizations, initial members and supporters of the Palestinian-Israeli Civil Society Alliance (PICSA) with the objective of finalizing all aspects related to the establishment of PICSA, officially launching the initiative, brainstorming and outlining the PICSA agenda for the 2008-2009 year and discussing local, regional and international cooperation in promoting PICSA's initiatives and achieving maximal impact. The conference will also aim to further develop the first core issue chosen by PICSA members – promoting Jerusalem as a city of peace and coexistence.

Conference objectives

- 1- Finalize all aspects related to the establishment of PICSA
- 2- Decide on the 2008-2009 PICSA agenda in the promotion of peace.
- 3- Brainstorm and Outline most effective joint activities, as well as local, regional and international cooperative efforts.
- 4- Officially launching PICSA.

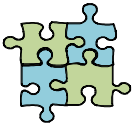
Conference program

Day 1:

Late Afternoon: Arrival and Check in.

Evening: Welcome Dinner and Night Tour of Jerusalem

Day 2:



PICSA — PALESTINIAN ISRAELI CIVIL SOCIETY

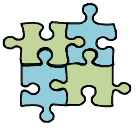
- 09:00 – 11:00: Conference Opening Session – “Enhancing the Role of Civil Society in promoting Peace”
- 11:00 – 13:00: Round Table Discussion: PICSA and initial Core Issue – Jerusalem
- 13:00 – 14:30: Lunch
- 14:30 – 19:00: Tour of East & West Jerusalem: Separation Wall, Home demolition, Qualandia Border and Atarot Industrial Zone, Silwan, Jerusalem Kindergarten and schools, Hand in Hand initiative (so forth...)
- 20:30 – 22:00: Dinner & Discussion with Civil Society Organizations working in Jerusalem

Day 3:

- 09:00-09:45 Discussion on Tour and Introduction to Goals of the Day
- 10:00-12:30 Working Session I (in small groups):
- “Enhancing the Role of Israeli, Palestinian and Spanish civil society in promoting peace- Lessons Learnt and Future Strategies”.
 - “Planning for the PICSA Jerusalem Initiative”
 - Discussion on Additional Core Issues to be addressed by PICSA in 2008-2009
- 12:30 – 13:30 Working Session I - Conclusions and Sub-Group Presentations
- 13:30 – 15:30 Lunch
- 15:30 – 19:30 Working Session II (in small groups):
- Finalizing the PICSA Mission, Goals, General Objectives Mechanism and Administration
 - Finalizing PICSA Jerusalem Initiative Plan of Action for 2008-2009
 - Finalizing PICSA Additional Core Issues and Outline of Projects for 2008-2009
- 19:30 – 20:30 Working Session II – Conclusions and Sub-Group Presentations
- 21:30 – 23:00 Dinner

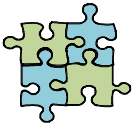
Day 4:

- 09:00 – 11:30 Preparation for Official Launch of Presentations and Written Materials
- 11:30 – 12:00 Final Internal Conference Participants Closing Session



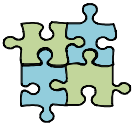
PICSA — PALESTINIAN ISRAELI CIVIL SOCIETY

12:30 – 14:30 PICSA Official Launch Event
14:30 – 16:30 Lunch
Evening: Check Out & Departure



Budget (in Euros)

Object	Cost Per Unit	No. of Units	Total
1- Travel & accommodation			
1.1- Tickets (Madrid – Tel-Aviv-Madrid)	€ 500	10	€ 5,000
1.2- Hotel accommodation	€ 100	40	€ 4,000
1.3- Local Transportation	€ 300	4	€ 1,200
Sub-total			€ 10,200
2- Conference			
2.1 Conference hall & meals	€ 1,000	2	€ 2,000
2.2 Educational tour of Jerusalem	€ 1,000	1	€ 1,000
2.3 Closure and PICSA Launch	€ 1,500	1	€ 1,000
2.4 Printed materials & PR	€ 1,000	1	€ 1,000
Sub-total			€ 5,000
3. Administrative			
3.1 Communications & Admin	€ 1,000	1	€ 1,000
3.2 Local Coordination	€ 750	2	€ 1,500
Sub-total			€ 2,500
Grant- total			€ 17,700



Annex 1

List of Initial NGO Founding Members of PICSA:

1. Palestinian Media & Development Institute (PMDI)
2. All for Peace
3. People's Voice
4. Bnei Avraham
5. ICAHD
6. Building Business Bridges
7. Machsom Watch
8. Bat Shalom
9. Rabbis for Human Rights
10. Peace Now
11. Palestinian Women, SME's & Entrepreneurs Network
12. Old City for Social Development
13. Jerusalem Women's Association
14. Palestine Dialogue Center
15. Progressive Center for Education