

THE PEOPLES VOTE

PRINCIPLES FOR A GRASS ROOTS CIVIL MOVEMENT

Rationale

1. The Israeli and the Palestinian peoples have been fighting each other for almost a century, each believing in its exclusive right to the same piece of land, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. In this struggle, thousands of people on both sides have been killed, tens of thousands wounded and hundreds of thousands turned into refugees.
2. Despite the recent upsurge of violence and bloodshed, public opinion polls have shown that, in each of the two nations, there is a solid majority believing that the only way to end the conflict is through a compromise, based on the principle of "two states for two nations". Such a solution one based on mutual trust, separation by consent and peaceful co-existence, has so far been obstructed by extremists on both sides. By spreading fear and distrust, they have prevented the leaders from finalizing, ratifying and implementing a comprehensive peace treaty.
3. The extremist acts will only come to an end and the voice of the people will only be heard if an atmosphere of trust can be established between the parties. In order for a trust building dialogue to be institutionalized, it is proposed to set up a joint, Israeli-/Palestinian council. The council will seek support from the majority of the people in both nations for a document setting out the basic principles to bring the conflict to its end. These principles, agreeable to both sides, will address the issues at the heart of the conflict in a clear and dignified manner. This document is expected to provide the momentum for the creation of a civil, grassroots movement that will spread its message, gain support and grow in influence, until politicians adopt it as the basis for a comprehensive peace agreement.
4. The movement will be led by a public council to be composed of twenty representatives from each side: ten mayors or municipal representatives and ten intellectuals, communal or religious leaders (a total of 40 members). The council will be co-chaired by a Palestinian and an Israeli public figure, neither of whom has political aspirations.
5. The launching of the movement and its operation will be carried out mainly by volunteers from both nations and will be financed by both domestic and international contributions.

The Council

- a. The council will be asked to confirm its agreement to the guidelines of understanding (See attached document)
- b. The council will solicit the support of the solid majority in both peoples for the principles set out in the document.
- c. Every Palestinian and Israeli citizen aged 18 and above will be asked to affirm support by signing it. International observers will supervise the signing process
- d. The council will conduct the campaign until over 50% of the adult Israeli and Palestinian populations have signed the document.

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- e. Upon obtaining the majority needed for the authorization of the document, the council will submit it jointly to the official decision-makers of both sides for implementation.

International Supervision / Support

6. The establishment of the council and ratification of the document by the majority of the two peoples will be conducted under international supervision in order to grant legitimacy to the process and validate its results.
7. International involvement will take the form of a multinational and UN presence in the area.
8. A persona of international reputation and status in the field of peace making will be appointed as the "honorary international chair" to the Israeli /Palestinian council.

Statement of faith

By thus voicing the will of the majority of the two nations we believe that:

- It will be possible to successfully launch a grass roots civil movement based on the core values of trust, equality, mutual respect and hope for peace prevailing amongst both peoples.
- We will witness the emergence of a new and innovative leadership amongst both peoples that will work to implement the will of the people by incorporating these principles into a comprehensive peace agreement.
- The painful confrontation between extremist minorities on both sides, which today obscure the authentic will of the two peoples for a peaceful settlement, will be terminated or, at least, greatly reduced.

When The Peoples Vote, thereby taking their fate into their own hands and expressing their willingness to enter into a dialogue, each nation will discover the humanity of the other and the common interests of both.

The Peoples Vote

A Grass Roots Civil Movement