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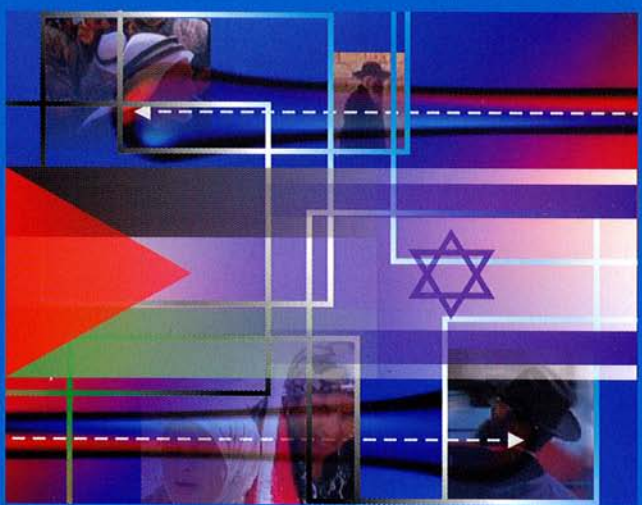
# Peace in the Middle East

## P2P and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Adel Atieh, Gilad Ben-Nun, Gasser El Shahed,
Rana Taha and Steve Tulliu



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## P2P and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Adel Atieh, Gilad Ben-Nun, Gasser El Shahed, Rana Taha
and Steve Tulliu

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## ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| PLO | Palestine Liberation Organization |
| PNA | Palestinian National Authority |
| PNGO | Palestinian NGO Network |
| P2P | People-to-People |
| UNSCR | United Nations Security Council Resolution |

## INTRODUCTION

By all accounts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has shown itself to be highly intractable. Decades of fighting and talking alike, have hardly managed to sway it off course. The mental and physical anguish visited upon the Israeli and Palestinian people by this dreadful state of affairs is evident to all, and in particular to the protagonists themselves. The benefit of peaceful relations between Israelis and Palestinians hardly needs explaining.

This study is concerned with the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its starting point is the notion that ordinary Israelis and Palestinians have a crucial role to play in the settlement of their struggle. However achieved and irrespective of its final outcome, the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must necessarily involve the mutual reconciliation of the two people. Without it, the continuation of violence is but a certainty. Any peace agreement that lacks the genuine support of the public on each side is bound to run foul of continued resistance and thus, sooner or later, to come undone. Moreover, the direct implication of the Israeli and Palestinian people in efforts to reach a peace settlement, beyond laying the basis for its popular acceptance, might also contribute to its attainment.

If the mutual reconciliation of Israelis and Palestinians is indispensable to a peaceful settlement of their conflict, then this reconciliation must somehow be achieved. At a minimum, mutual reconciliation suggests the reciprocal embracing of Israelis and Palestinians of the principle of peaceful coexistence based on the joint recognition of their national rights. This implies a profound shift in national mentalities on both sides. Societal beliefs of enmity and belligerence dominant in each community would have to be discarded in favour of more benign views of one another and broad support for peace. For such a transformation to occur, the deliberate, concerted efforts of groups and individuals acting to reshape social ideation through confronting established mentalities with alternative views are necessary. Peaceful societal beliefs hardly flourish of their own account in times of war, and even less so when war is so protracted and complete that it engages society as a whole on a daily basis for decades on end.

The signing of the Oslo Peace Accords by the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993 and 1995 gave scope to a multitude of so-called people-to-people (P2P) programmes. Organized primarily by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and financed by international funds donated by foreign governments and philanthropic foundations, these projects sought to encourage ordinary Israelis and Palestinians to a better understanding of one another and thereby to a process of mutual reconciliation. A decade after their launch, however, the return of violence between Israelis and Palestinians together with the collapse of most P2P activities makes it clear that these political objectives have not been reached. This study examines the failure of the post-Oslo P2P programmes and suggests ways in which these may be revised and renewed in the future.

The study is organized into three main sections. Section one inquires into the failed post-Oslo P2P programmes, and outlines a plan for their reconceptualization. The lack of success of previous P2P projects is largely due to structural defects inherent in their design, which made them ill adapted to changing circumstances and inadequate to their tasks. To address these, we propose a thorough restructuring of the organization and operation of P2P programmes. Section two, illustrates the practicability of our suggestions by showing how revamped P2P projects could be implemented in two key areas of Israeli and Palestinian social life closely related to the conflict: politics and the news media. Lastly, recognizing that ultimately the implementation of any P2P activities whatsoever depends on the capacities of local actors to assume such actions, section three examines the ability of local Israeli and Palestinian NGOs to undertake P2P programmes in view of the legal and political circumstances within which they have to operate. The study concludes with a summary of our findings and an outline of policy guidelines.

## POST-OSLO P2P PROGRAMMES IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: ASSESSMENT AND ALTERNATIVES

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is widely acknowledged as one of the most intractable conflicts of our time.[1] Intractable conflicts are protracted, often very violent affairs that engulf societies in their entirety. They also tend to nourish the formation of excessive war-supporting or belligerent societal beliefs.[2] Societal beliefs comprise those fundamental mental attitudes held

in common by society that shape society's essential views of the world and orient its conduct. War-supporting societal beliefs are part of all armed conflict, but in intractable conflict, they are raised to extremes. This, in turn, makes intractable conflict all the more difficult to resolve. Societies in which belligerent beliefs receive much importance find it difficult to admit or even conceive of peaceful conflict settlement. In consequence, beyond a formal peace agreement, the peaceful resolution of intractable conflict must often be accompanied by a process of mutual reconciliation,[3] without which the formal agreement may not stand, or may not be reached at all.[4] In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict commencing such a process was the explicit purpose of the numerous P2P projects carried out by NGOs on both sides in the wake of the Oslo Accords.

The Oslo Peace Accords (1993 and 1995) marked a decisive point in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Besides setting out the conditions for Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza and stipulating the beginning of negotiations on a permanent status for Palestine, the Accords established the mutual recognition of the state of Israel and the Palestinian nation.[5] In addition, they recognized the necessity of the mutual reconciliation of the Israeli and Palestinian people. The so-called Oslo II Agreement contained an entire annex (Annex VI) on civil cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians in the economic, scientific, social and cultural fields. Under the heading "The People-to-People Program" (Article VIII), this devised an explicit framework to enable the two sides to "cooperate in enhancing dialogue and relations between their peoples" and to "take steps to foster public debate and involvement, to remove barriers to interaction, and to increase the people to people exchange and interaction within all areas of cooperation".[6]

After Oslo II, the "People-to-People Program" served as the legal and political basis for the implementation of a multitude of cooperative projects by local Israeli and Palestinian NGOs. Management of the programme was conferred on the government of Norway in collaboration with Israeli and Palestinian participation.[7] Focusing mainly on joint activities, the programme provided funding for projects linked to issues such as adult dialogue, culture, education, the environment and the media.[8] Overall, more than 170 initiatives were given financial support. Yet, despite these considerable efforts, the virtual collapse of the Oslo peace process and outbreak of heavy violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the guise of the *intifada* and Israeli reactions make it is clear that the "People-to-People

Program" has failed to attain its objective of transforming Israeli and Palestinian societal beliefs.

The general failure of the post-Oslo P2P activities raises the difficult question of what went wrong.[9] If the future is to differ significantly from the past, an attempt to answer this question is essential. We take up this challenge in the remainder of this section.

We begin our analysis of the post-Oslo P2P programmes by noting the following. In examining the failure of previous P2P projects, we are interested in discovering their defects as a lot, and not of this or that individual action. This suggests that the appropriate level of our analysis is the aggregate or the structural. Although individual P2P projects may well have had their particular shortcomings that may have led in one way or another to their specific failure, the individual deficiencies of any one project cannot sufficiently account for the general problems of the whole of the programmes, just as the particular outcome of any one P2P project cannot sufficiently account for the overall outcome of the programmes.[10]

A structural analysis of the organization of the post-Oslo P2P programmes reveals five major general deficiencies. First, P2P activities possessed a pronounced individual bias in that they were very much oriented toward the individual rather than the group. As a rule, P2P projects brought together individual Israelis and Palestinians in the hope that positive personal contacts between them would challenge preconceived ideas of one another by confronting these with a contrasting experience.[11] While this approach has its justifications, the fact remains that exchanges between individuals affect at most individuals' perception of one another, but leave untouched individual perceptions of the others as a group. Thus, while personal encounters between Israelis and Palestinians did indeed improve participants' perceptions of one another, they failed to affect the perceptions that participants held of the others' nation, which is in fact what is required for the alteration of war-supporting societal beliefs.[12]

Second, despite their intention to the contrary, activities undertaken under P2P generally failed to reach important sections of society. By relying primarily on established institutional channels such as professional associations, private schools and women's groups for their implementation, P2P projects ended up by excluding large portions of the community. Furthermore, a difficulty emerged with language. Whereas many

Palestinians understand Hebrew, only a few Israelis understand Arabic. As a result, joint P2P activities often had to be conducted in English, the only common tongue, which further limited the scope of participation, particularly on the Palestinian side.[13] This poor reach achieved by P2P programmes in practice stands in marked contrast to their avowed aim of reaching all parts of society and contradicts the logic of mutual reconciliation, which seeks the transformation of beliefs across society.[14]

Third, post-Oslo P2P programmes generally ignored the tremendous socio-economic disparities present between Israeli and Palestinian participants in joint projects with the result that the latter frequently became marginalized and disaffected. Thus, it often happened that poor, uneducated Palestinians were hurled together in joint projects with much wealthier and more knowledgeable Israelis who could marshal resources far beyond the scope of the Palestinians and who thus came to dominate P2P activities to the detriment of the Palestinians, actual or perceived. The result of this was that Israeli eagerness for joint activities was often met with Palestinian scepticism and resistance, a situation hardly conducive to the promotion of better mutual relations.[15]

Fourth, the overwhelming majority of P2P actions conducted were explicitly of a joint nature. Because their aim was to challenge established stereotypes through confronting participants with the alternative experience of positive personal encounters, post-Oslo P2P projects were almost entirely arranged as joint activities. However, indispensable as such activities may eventually be, they ignore the fact that fault lines of conflict exist as much within societies as they exist between societies. Before societies can profitably engage one another in dialogue, they must first be able to talk to and agree among themselves.[16] Omitting intra-communal discussions in favour of inter-communal dialogue, as the post-Oslo P2P programmes did, could in no way be helpful and, as it turned out, was not.

Lastly, activities launched under P2P took an extremely (and inexplicably) static view of time. This was so in two ways. First, against all historical considerations, post-Oslo P2P actions were premised on the implicit assumption that violence between Israelis and Palestinians would remain muted, as at the time of the Oslo Accords, or would grow ever fainter as political relations continued to improve. This, in turn, resulted in a situation in which the P2P activities (i.e., collaborative encounters between willing Israelis and Palestinians) were in fact largely dependent on

an environment of benign security and political conditions (i.e., freedom of movement and decreasing animosity) with the inevitable consequence that when things turned out otherwise (i.e., mounting violence, restrictions of movement and growing recrimination) the projects could not but succumb (i.e., very few have survived the *intifada*).[17] Second, P2P programmes were largely oriented toward the present (i.e., the prevailing situation), paying little heed to the future (i.e., the expected coexistence), and virtually none to the past (i.e., the experienced strife).

The structural defects of the post-Oslo P2P programmes suggest a need for the reconceptualization of these projects. In our view, such a reconceptualization must take account of three main complementary notions: stages, groups and equity. Looking back on the structural deficiencies of the post-Oslo P2P actions, we see that the omission of a historical perspective in P2P projects is a fatal mistake. A reconceptualized P2P perspective would fully take this into account by carefully including in the construction of P2P projects awareness of the significance of stages. At a minimum, this would comprise the following three elements: an awareness of the importance of the shifting, sometimes radically so, security and political conditions and their attending consequences for the operation of P2P programmes; an awareness of the partitioned life of the conflict into a past, present and future; and an awareness that societies must first be able to come to grips with themselves before being able to do so with others. At the same time, a reconceptualized P2P approach would also be mindful of the paramount fact that mutual reconciliation refers to the mutual reconciliation of societies, which ultimately depends on shifting societal perceptions of the other side as a whole, or equivalently, as a national group. A reconceptualized P2P would recast all P2P activities in this light by ensuring that all actions serve to introduce and relate the individual participants to apposite social groups, first nationally, then with reference to the nation of the other. Lastly, a reconceptualized P2P programme would be particularly sensitive to the need for an equitable distribution of roles among participants, and neutral, pressure-free socio-political settings and operating procedures, particularly when both Israelis and Palestinians are involved.

To illustrate more fully what we have in mind, we offer the following outline of a reconceptualized P2P programme. To begin with, a revamped P2P programme would make a clear distinction between activities carried out within the national community and activities carried out between

national communities, and would recognize the legitimate and indispensable place of both. Before communities are able to talk to and agree with one another, they must first be able to talk to and agree among themselves. Unless each community is first able to come to grips with itself, hopes of bringing the two communities together in a process of mutual reconciliation are likely to be disappointed, as they have been already. Hence, a reconceptualized P2P programme would divide activities into two consecutive stages: one intra-communal, the other inter-communal. The initial intra-communal stage would emphasize national dialogue on matters related to the peaceful resolution of the conflict with the aim of building national cohesion and consensus on a common vision for the future. After national positions mature sufficiently, the subsequent inter-communal stage would follow and would concentrate on discussions between participants with the aim of fostering understanding of each other's national stance developed previously and constructing joint approaches to the settlement of the conflict as part of a desired shared future. Throughout, emphasis would be placed on relations and perceptions of participants of apposite social groupings. In the first stage, national factions would be introduced to one another and encouraged to explore each other's point of view. In the second stage, participants would be exposed to the society of the other side, with its common threads and cleavages, and the national stance elaborated earlier. At the same time, a reorganized P2P programme would promote activities that speak to the three broad life phases of the conflict—past, present and future, each of which raises its own concerns and necessities. For example, whereas the past might be concerned with such issues as the history of the conflict and the accumulated emotional stress and mutual resentment begat by decades of vicious fighting, the present could be concerned with prevailing conditions and the difficulties of daily life in a state of continual all-encompassing war, while the future might be concerned with the challenges attending an eventual peaceful coexistence of the two societies, and how to arrive there. A reorganized P2P programme would treat each of these concerns respectively, both within each national community, and across national communities. Furthermore, the programme would take into full account the shifts in security and political conditions likely to occur over the life of the programme and would design activities to be able to cope with these as necessary. P2P activities tailored to benign security and political conditions falter when these disappear, while activities adapted to difficult security and political conditions prove much too modest when circumstances improve. To have effect, P2P actions must be able to operate in fair and poor times alike, at the appropriate level.

In other words, they must have the flexibility to adjust operations according to prevailing conditions and the opportunities afforded by these.[18] Lastly, all through the programme, participants would be placed on an equal footing that removes socio-political or cultural distortions that cloud perturb proceedings, through procedural measures that promote equity, fairness and sensitivity in the roles and burdens assumed and mutual respect.[19] Some of these measures may simply be organizational, such as striving for a balanced mixture of participants from across society or between societies, while others may be of a more subtle nature, such as diffusing psychological stress or behavioural biases unconsciously carried by participants through skilful facilitation.

## P2P REVAMPED: EXAMPLES OF RENEWED ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN P2P ACTIVITIES

Thus far, we have looked primarily at the past: the post-Oslo P2P experience and its ultimate failure. Our interest, however, is obviously in the future. We are after all concerned with the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rather than its history. In this section, thus, we turn our attention to the future and, based on our proposed reconceptualization of P2P programmes outlined above, consider examples of possible P2P projects that could be implemented in two key areas of Israeli and Palestinian social life: politics and the news media.[20] Evidently, we are unable to present an exhaustive design of these P2P programmes, especially since much of the actual organization of the programmes would depend on the participants themselves. Our discussion here is illustrative, yet we hope still instructive. In each instance, we proceed in the following manner: we begin with a short account of the situation as it currently stands, and then go on to outline a plan for a possible P2P programme.

### P2P in the Political Domain

The current political landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is defined by the eruption of the second Palestinian *intifada*, Israel's unsuccessful attempts to crush it, and the subsequent official and civil diplomatic responses in the form of the roadmap, Israel's proposed disengagement from Gaza and the Geneva Accord.

What is now known as the second Palestinian *intifada* began on 28 September 2000 with Palestinians rioting in protest over the visit of the then Israeli leader of the opposition (and current Prime Minister), Ariel Sharon, to the Temple Mount or Haram al-Sharif. While Sharon's visit to the holy site precipitated the violence, the most likely explanation for the origin of the *intifada*, and its persistence, lies in the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process initiated at Oslo and the state of political despair in which this left Palestinians.[21] The failure of Israeli and Palestinian officials to reach agreement on the final status of a Palestinian state at the US sponsored summit at Camp David in July 2000, looked to Palestinians as the end of all hope for a peaceful settlement to the conflict.[22] In the absence of a viable political perspective, Palestinians increasingly turned to violence and those who practiced it.[23] Although implementation of the Oslo Accords and related agreements had always been problematic, with both sides committing their share of infractions,[24] the prospect of a final settlement based on Oslo had limited altercations between the two.[25] With the seeming collapse of Oslo and all hope for peaceful settlement removed, the stage for the *intifada* was set.

The Israeli reaction to the Palestinian *intifada* can only be described as forceful. In essence, it has amounted to a series of coercive military, economic and political measures designed to crush the uprising by punishing Palestinian society and eliminating those thought responsible for the acts of violence. An in-depth enumeration of these measures and of Palestinian counter-responses would be both futile and too distracting for our purposes here, which are only to sketch the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, we simply note that despite great suffering on both sides,[26] this latest bout of violence continues, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is once again in a state of miserable deadlock.

The sombre background of incessant violence established by the *intifada* and Israel's attempts to suppress it has understandably led to renewed political efforts to resolve the conflict. Current official efforts focus on the so-called roadmap and the proposed Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. The roadmap is a peace plan worked out by the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations in collaboration with Israeli and Palestinian officials.[27] Its proclaimed objective is the formation of an "independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip "living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours" that would "end

the occupation that began in 1967" on the basis of the "Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, UNSCRs 242, 338 and 1397, agreements previously reached by the parties, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah—endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit—calling for acceptance of Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security".[28] The plan proposes to achieve this goal by 2005 in three contingent consecutive phases. The first phase is dedicated to ending the violence, normalizing Palestinian life and building Palestinian governing institutions. During this phase Palestinians are expected to end their attacks on Israelis and reform their parliamentary and security institutions, while the Israelis are supposed to dismantle settlements built since March 2001 and begin to withdraw from the occupied territories.[29] This stage was supposed to last until May 2003. The second phase, deemed a transition phase, envisages the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders and limited sovereignty. The phase was slated to last from June 2003 to December 2003, but implementation was to be contingent on the successful outcome of phase one. The last phase, which was to span from 2004 to 2005, envisaged the negotiation of an agreement on the permanent end to the conflict, which would address all outstanding issues including borders, the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and Israeli settlements.

At present, the roadmap is at best stalled, with both sides having widely disregarded their obligations.[30] The reform of Palestinian institutions has proved slow and ineffective, while Palestinian acts of violence against Israelis have continued unabated. On the Israeli side, no dismantlement of settlements has taken place and reprisals against Palestinians have proceeded without restraint. In short, more than one year after its launch, the parties have failed to implement even the first phase of the roadmap.

In addition to the roadmap, or perhaps as an alternative to it, most recently, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unveiled a plan for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank.[31] Under the plan, Israel would evacuate all of its settlements in Gaza as well as some in the West Bank, in stages, by the end of 2005.[32] Although in principle not meant as a substitute for an eventual negotiated final settlement, the plan is intended to effect a de facto separation of Israeli and Palestinian territories, as an intermediate security measure. The plan, however, is highly controversial and its eventual fruition is difficult to predict. To begin with, the withdrawal faces significant opposition within Israel, and Sharon has already had to amend it to make it more palatable.[33] As well, the plan is

bitterly contested by the Palestinians who see it (together with the security fence that Israel is building in the West Bank) as an attempt by Israel to delimit the territory of an eventual Palestinian state.

Besides these official efforts at finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, another semi-official attempt may be counted, the so-called Geneva Accord. Negotiated by Israeli and Palestinian political figures on their own account,[34] this informal accord details a permanent settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The main clauses of the Accord include the creation of a Palestinian state with borders approximately equal to those of the territories annexed by Israel after the Six Days War of 1967, joint Israeli-Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem, recognition by the Palestinians of the state of Israel, and the renunciation of claims of a right of return to Israel by Palestinian refugees.

Although only an informal initiative, the Geneva Accord represents the only public document that details the potential elements of a final settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nevertheless, despite its evident interest, the Accord has been greeted with scepticism and hostility locally. Both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Legislative Council have rejected it, and militant parts the Israeli and Palestinian publics have condemned it violently, although the principle of the Accord appears to have popular support on both sides.[35]

The current political landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict presents a dreary picture. Renewed violence and acrimony form the background against which any new P2P political activities will have to operate. Evidently, this is a difficult matter, yet in view of the present situation, exemplified by the conflagration over the Geneva Accord, the launch of a revamped P2P political programme seems essential.

The controversy over the Geneva Accord on both sides indicates the deep political divisions and lack of a clear consensus in favour of peace within both Israeli and Palestinian societies.[36] A P2P project aimed at shifting societal beliefs in the direction of peace would begin by first addressing the problem of national consensus on each side. Such a project would seek to address three endemic problems plaguing both Israeli and Palestinian societies: the absence of a shared vision about the political future, the glaring discrepancy between current acts of violence and the settlement of the conflict, and the lack of a genuine space within each

society outside of established institutional constraints wherein to discuss the problems raised by the previous two points and possible responses to them.

To address these, the P2P project would begin by establishing two separate processes of dialogue—one within each community—to foster intra-communal discussion aimed at articulating a long-term political vision to which each society could aspire, identifying the obstacles to the realization of this vision, and deciding on the practical steps to be taken to surmount these barriers. The organization of these discussions might proceed as follows. In the first instance, a careful mapping and information exercise would identify the actors that the project could include and familiarize them with the scope and aim of the project. Here, particular attention should be paid to reaching out to groups that would normally be excluded such as settler and religious groups, and military and security personnel, on the Israeli side, and militants on the Palestinian side. Thereafter, the participants should be brought together in neutral, pressure-free settings and encouraged to discuss the issues identified above, from a social and historical perspective, from society's past to its future, with a view to reaching as broad as possible a consensus, which could then be related to more official national political instances and institutions. Here, care should be taken to insulate the programme from the vagrancies of fluctuating security and political conditions by designing activities in such a way so to be able to resist shifts in surrounding circumstances, perhaps by considering early on how activities might operate under different situations, and making the possible allowances. Lastly, keeping in mind that difference in means is also very much a part of national life, care should be taken to arrange discussions such that the influence of resources is minimized to the greatest extent possible by a balanced mixture of participants and socio-politically neutral settings and activities.

As mentioned, the programme would initially divide into two parallel streams, one Israeli and one Palestinian, with the general aim of reaching consensus on each side. Nevertheless, throughout the process, each side should be made aware and reminded as necessary, of the existence of an identical stream on the other side to encourage perseverance and even camaraderie. Once national consensus on each side matures sufficiently such that participants from each community are able to articulate a national political vision of the future, a follow up stage of the programme would seek to bring together the Israelis and Palestinians who took part in the initial phase and involve them in a similar process though this time at the inter-

communal level. This inter-communal dialogue would aim at reaching political consensus between the two communities, and its organization would follow that of the intra-communal discussion, with the necessary amendments as may be dictated by the greater complexity of arranging activities across communities divided by entrenched ongoing conflict.

## P2P in the Domain of the News Media[37]

The political significance of the news media in the shaping of public opinion throughout the world in the present day of mass communication is well established and need not be reargued here. Through its representation of current events the news media can reinforce or challenge established societal beliefs.[38] In the case of intractable conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the significance of the news media is so much the greater. The prolonged duration and deep societal impact of the conflict accentuates the significance of current events associated with it and the importance of those bodies that serve to present and interpret these.

The generally accepted role of the news media is to inform the public on the content of current events by presenting these in a fair and accurate manner. Although reporting on an intense protracted conflict involving one's nation is admittedly a delicate matter, within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both Israeli and Palestinian news media seem to fall far below this standard. In brief, instead of striving for a fair and accurate rendering of events, the news coverage on the part of both the Israeli and Palestinian press is rather marred by censorship, national bias and sensationalism.

Censorship, or political interference with the reporting of events by official authorities, regularly impinges on the work of both Israeli and especially Palestinian news organizations.[39] Censorship sways the reporting of news according to official interests, thereby distorting the information presented to the public. Censorship may be administered through many different means that may be more or less direct and more or less forceful, and its severity may well vary, however, its final aim is always the same: the deformation of information according to some preconceived official purpose.

In the Israeli press, censorship takes place mainly as attempts by the Israeli authorities to influence the reporting of news through the manipulation of language and restrictions on the access to information. As an example, in 2002 the respected Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz reported that the Israel Broadcasting Corporation sought to ban the use of several politically sensitive words on public radio and television stations at the request of a government minister.[40] Meanwhile, access to field military sources is limited to those journalists possessing a security clearance, and access to areas of unrest in the West Bank and Gaza is made difficult or down right impossible by restrictions of movement due to roadblocks, stringent curfews and area closures imposed by the Israeli army.

In the Palestinian media, the problem of censorship is much more pervasive and acute. Palestinian news organizations are subject to interference by both Palestinian and Israeli authorities, which sometimes even manages to overlap. By virtue of their control of the main media outlets Palestinian authorities exercise extensive influence on the reporting of Palestinian news organizations, which are obliged to echo the views of the PNA. The three main Palestinian daily newspapers as well as the principal radio and television stations are all more or less directly connected to the PNA, and the PNA also finances a host of several other less significant publications.[41] Moreover, Palestinian authorities are quick to close down independent news media agencies whose reporting is considered inconsistent with official positions,[42] and journalists who express dissenting opinions routinely run the risk of harassment and imprisonment by the various Palestinian security services.[43] This climate of fear and control has produced a marked tendency of self-censorship within the Palestinian news media, which are reluctant to diverge from the wishes of Palestinian authorities.[44] A current example of this is the refusal of the Palestinian press to cover the demonstrations of discontent with the rule of the PNA that recently erupted in Gaza.[45]

Besides the strong influence of the PNA, Palestinian news organizations also have to contend with pressure exerted by the Israeli authorities. Palestinian newsprint edited or distributed within Israel or the territories claimed by Israel is subject to Israeli oversight and may be altered or banned if deemed provocative. Israeli law allows the Israeli government to censor any reporting from Israel or the occupied territories on security grounds, and Palestinian publications circulating within Israel require a permit, and may be censored or banned if thought inflammatory. Ironically,

this means that two of the main Palestinian daily newspapers, Al-Quds, which is edited in East Jerusalem, and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, which is edited in Ramallah but also distributed within Israel, are subject to censorship by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities. Most significantly, the routine obstruction and even targeting of Palestinian journalists,[46] and the habitual closing or outright destruction of Palestinian press offices in the occupied territories by the Israeli army during military operations seriously hampers the capacity of the Palestinian news media to report on current events.[47]

In addition to censorship, the representation of daily events by Israeli and Palestinian news organizations generally suffers from a pronounced national bias. In reporting the news, both the Israeli and Palestinian media take a highly nationalistic and hence partial view of matters, with each eagerly endorsing its national stance, bitterly denouncing that of the other, and diligently disregarding all that might suggest otherwise. Thus, while the Israeli press typically exonerates the Israelis and vilifies the Palestinians, the Palestinian media glorifies the Palestinians and demonizes the Israelis, and both overlook evidence to the contrary.

The reporting of Israeli actions with regard to the Palestinians in the Israeli press is generally couched in innocuous language, which obscures and deforms their actual nature, and transforms them into normal justifiable measures under the circumstances when in fact they are nothing of the sort. As such, Israeli military operations in the West Bank and Gaza are typically presented as defensive reactions to Palestinian violence, the confiscation of Palestinian lands and destruction of Palestinian homes becomes security engineering work or widening of the margins of settlements, and the assassination of Palestinian militants and bystanders, against all international legal norms, are transformed into selective strikes.[48] Moreover, all Israeli newspapers generally unquestionably accept the version of accounts put to them by the Israeli army and transmit these to the public without further verifying their accuracy or at least indicating that they are in fact official accounts.[49] Lastly, notably absent from the Israeli press are questioning regarding the reasons for the current situation, considerations of the desperate plight of Palestinians and its constant deterioration under the weight of Israeli retaliatory measures to the *intifada*, and inquiries into the excesses of the Israeli army.

In contrast, the Israeli press stigmatizes the Palestinians by depicting them as aggressive, inhuman and untrustworthy. Any form of Palestinian

civil disobedience is automatically treated as violence and aggression, violence, even of the stone throwing kind, is hastily assimilated to terrorism, and any attack against Israeli soldiers or civilians is taken as evidence that the Palestinians have no desire for peace. The Israeli press report stories telling that the Palestinians use their children as human shields and send them out to be shot for the sake of publicity or that Palestinian medical staff refuse to evacuate the injured again in order to attract international attention and sympathy. Palestinian victims of violence are treated as faceless numbers or merely as Palestinians or Arabs, but not as individuals with common lives worthy of empathy. Whereas Israelis live in cities and communities, Palestinians live in areas and places, and even Palestinian citizens of Israel are not Israelis but Arab residents. Lastly, Palestinian views with regard to incidents, when presented at all, are prefaced by expressions of reservation which implicitly raise doubts about their authenticity and hence of the reliability of their authors.[50]

In the Palestinian media the situation is almost exactly the opposite. The Palestinian press bestows its acclamations on Palestinians, who are portrayed as a victimized people heroically struggling on. Thus, Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers or civilians are approvingly termed legal resistance and the perpetrators of these attacks are celebrated as martyrs.[51] The Israelis, in contrast, are cast as the ruthless aggressors and occupiers. Any Israeli action against Palestinians is trumpeted as an undisputable display of aggression, and the Israeli army is commonly referred to as soldiers of the occupation, killers or child killers, while Israelis in general are labelled Zionists. To underscore the ruthlessness of the Israelis and the victimization of the Palestinians, the unsubstantiated use of prohibited weapons and marshalling of extravagant plots are routinely attributed to the Israeli army, and any unfortunate spectacular incident is reason enough for levelling another accusation.[52] Moreover, even when these charges are clearly shown to be false, they are never retracted or corrected. The partial reporting of events is another mark of national bias in the Palestinian news media. For example, Israeli retaliations against Palestinian attacks are widely reported but the sequence of events that triggered the retaliation is not. As well, any international condemnation of Israeli actions is reported in full, but similar condemnations of Palestinian conduct, even when emanating from the very same source, fail to be mentioned. Most flagrantly, though, all Palestinian ills are blamed on the Israeli occupation, but the transgressions of Palestinian authorities such as the blatant abuse of power and the miscarriage of justice are wilfully overlooked.[53]

Besides censorship and national bias, the third prominent defect that characterizes the reporting of news by the Israeli and Palestinian media is widespread sensationalism. In this context, sensationalism refers to the deliberate presentation of current events in an exaggerated, emotional manner designed to attract and exacerbate public emotions.[54] Like censorship and national bias, sensationalism interferes with and distorts the coverage of news. Because it seeks to play on and ultimately inflame emotions, sensationalism favours the coverage of extreme, dramatic events at the expense of other more modest though more relevant ones, and presents these in the most melodramatic and shocking manner, rather than in a pondered way that might be more conducive to reflection.

In many ways closely linked with national bias, sensationalism is rife in the Palestinian press. Coverage of the *intifada*, especially of violent incidents such as clashes between Palestinian youths and the Israeli army and the death of children, is attributed overwhelming attention in the Palestinian news media. Since the beginning of the *intifada*, Palestinian newspapers and TV have devoted numerous pages and much footage to the depiction of the goriest scenes of the uprising. The main Palestinian newspapers often carry photos of clashes and martyrs on the front page while gruesome photos of dead and injured Palestinians accompanied by emphatic headlines and commentaries praising the *intifada* and its martyrs and urging them on fill several pages.[55] Palestinian TV routinely shows dramatic scenes of violence, which it transmits repeatedly throughout the day, often in a décor of nationalistic poems or nationalistic music for greater effect.[56]

As in the Palestinian press, sensationalism is also very much a part of the coverage of events by the Israeli news media.[57] The reporting of attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians by the Israeli press is largely comparable to the coverage of clashes and violence by the Palestinian media. Photos and footage of victims, blood and mourning frenzies are spread over multiple newspaper pages and routinely shown on TV for hours on end, all accompanied by agitated eyewitness accounts and editorials dramatizing the situation and calling for vengeful retaliation against Palestinians militants with all available means.[58]

As noted, the role of the news media is to inform the public about current events and related matters. In times of conflict, and particularly protracted conflict where national survival is often thought to be at stake, current events take on a special importance. As the main social conduits of

relating the news to the public, the news media has considerable influence in shaping the latter's view of the conflict. Depending on the stories it tells, the news media may reinforce established war-supporting societal beliefs, inevitably dominant during conflict, or it may challenge them. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Israeli and Palestinian news media clearly reinforce belligerent societal beliefs. Censorship, national bias and sensationalism, three of the main salient features of the Israeli and Palestinian press, all work to bend the news in favour of established war-supporting beliefs. A P2P programme in the realm of the news media would seek to reverse this situation, or at least attenuate it to the greatest extent possible.

A recent study of the role of the news media in the Israeli-Palestinian and Northern Ireland conflicts, emphasized the importance of a joint press by noting that "the more extensive the shared news media, the more likely the media will play a constructive role in the peace process".[59] Joint media diminish national excesses in the coverage of news by forcing journalists to find a way of presenting events that is acceptable to all. Since "the Israeli and Palestinian media are completely separate and, as a consequence, ethnocentric in their orientation",[60] a P2P programme in the area of the news media might well aim to create a joint Israeli-Palestinian press, or an approximation thereof.

At first sight, the formation of a common Israeli-Palestinian press, especially as concerns radio and television, which are broadly accessible to the entire spectrum of society, would seem promising. However, this is most likely beyond the possibilities of a P2P programme. The level of resources needed, the delicate issues of where to locate facilities and how to manage operations and relations with local authorities, and even the challenge of widely differing mentalities of Israeli and Palestinian journalists, make the establishment of a common Israeli-Palestinian news media unattainable for a P2P programme. Instead, focusing on means and strategies to achieve results similar to those promised by a common media, without actually having one, is likely a more reasonable aim.

A P2P programme in the area of the news media could follow the suggestions outlined above and already illustrated in the area of politics. The programme would seek to replicate the benefits of a joint media of curbing national excesses in the reporting of news. It would do so by bringing journalists from both sides into common projects to examine the

problem of reporting and identify ways and means of addressing this. Initially the programme would concentrate on building networks of journalists within each national community. Participating Israeli and Palestinian reporters would gather among themselves to discuss issues related to the presentation of current events within their own communities in view of the challenges posed by censorship, national bias and sensationalism, and attempt to work out strategies of how to recognize and attenuate these. After intra-communal discussions mature to the point that a clear awareness of the problem of reporting and possible national solutions emerge on each side, discussions could be shifted to the inter-communal level, where Israeli and Palestinian journalists could grapple with these same issues but from a cross-national perspective. Journalists from each side would then become familiar with the circumstances and opinions of one another, and attempt to find joint solutions to shared difficulties. What actual common measures might be envisaged would depend on the participants themselves, but possibilities include the cross checking of news stories before they are reported, the co-authoring and cross publishing of news articles, and even reporter exchanges between media organizations. At the very least, the regular contact and open exchange of views between journalists from both sides alone could contribute to greater mutual understanding and moderation in the reporting of news.

The organization of the P2P programme at both the intra-communal and inter-communal stages, should follow closely our other recommendations for the restructuring of P2P programmes. For example, such talks should be encouraged to adopt a historical perspective whereby the role and conduct of the news media is discussed in relation to the past, present and future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Possible themes to be explored might include the depiction of the past of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the media, the relation of the coverage of current events and to the unfolding of the conflict, and the connection between the reporting of news and the evolution of the conflict. Furthermore, these discussions should be pursued especially with a reference to society, with an emphasis on understanding the relation between the media and society, and participation should be balanced so as ensure a reasonable mixture of journalists from different press organizations and types of media and, in intra-communal activities, of journalists from each side. Lastly, activities should be structured such so that they are able to withstand crises and cope with likely fluctuations in surrounding political and security conditions. In fact, the occurrence of political crises may turn out to have special

importance for the programme. Their coverage in the Israeli and Palestinian news media could be the best indication of the state of the programme.

## LOCAL NGOS AND P2P PROGRAMMES: WHAT CAPACITY FOR ACTION?

In the previous two sections we looked at the reasons behind the failure of the post-Oslo P2P programmes, which we traced to their structural defects, we proposed a scheme for how to remedy these, and illustrated our ideas with examples of revamped P2P programmes that might be launched in the areas of politics and the news media. However, the ability to launch any new P2P programmes depends in large measure on the capacity for action of local NGOs who would carry out such activities. In this closing section we examine the ability of local Israeli and Palestinian NGOs to operate P2P programmes in view of their surrounding circumstances. Here, once again, our analysis is structural. We do not focus on specific NGOs, but rather on the legal and political environment within which NGOs on either side have to operate in general, which largely delimits their capacity for action. In one sense, the ability of local NGOs to sustain P2P activities in the past suggests that they are well capable of doing so in the future. Yet this suggestion may be misleading. As we have seen, the past has been fatal to P2P programmes, circumstances have changed considerably since the start of the second *intifada*, and proclaiming that NGOs are capable of action on the basis of past evidence says nothing about their eventual limitations. Ultimately, it may be that a renewal of P2P programmes is simply beyond the actual capacities of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs. In that case alternatives would have to be sought.

Prior to the advent of the PNA, NGOs occupied an important position in Palestinian society.[61] In the absence of a local Palestinian government, NGOs provided valuable social services such as housing, education and health. Established mainly by different political factions, NGOs also served as an expression of political allegiance and instruments for political competition within Palestinian society. During the first *intifada*, they played a key role in the organization and support of the uprising.[62]

The establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994 brought a significant change to the political environment within which Palestinian NGOs operated. Anxious to extend its authority over Palestinian

society, the PNA set out to limit the influence of the NGOs and bring them under its control.[63] As such, the PNA took over many of the larger social functions previously handled by NGOs and directed international funding to its various ministries, thereby depriving NGOs of their more prominent roles and of much of their financial support.[64] Moreover, the PNA established a Ministry of NGO Affairs (1999) and introduced measures to regulate the licensing and operations of NGOs. Lastly, the PNA absorbed many of the NGOs that initially had been part of the PLO, which actually became part of the government. After its institution, thus, the PNA sought to assert its political pre-eminence over NGOs through a variety of legal, political and financial measures.[65]

Because the legitimacy of the PNA is founded on its handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this issue is determinant in how the PNA deals with NGOs. The PNA is supportive of NGOs that follow its political agenda on this point and ostracizes and marginalizes those that do not.[66] The result of this policy is that in terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian NGOs are politically indistinguishable from the PNA in that they share the same political outlook and agenda.[67] This, in turn, suggests that Palestinian NGOs have little scope for initiating and sustaining independent actions. Their role being mostly to relay and implement official policies rather than to challenge and influence these, Palestinian NGOs have by and large little ability to carry out activities that are not sanctioned by the PNA. Indeed, in the mid-1990s, as relations between the PNA and the Israeli government began to unravel, Palestinian NGOs active in the area of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began to lose their capacity for action. Indicatively, in October 2000, after the eruption of the second *intifada*, the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), an association comprising the most influential Palestinian NGOs, issued a declaration calling on all Palestinian NGOs "to stop all joint programs and activities with Israeli organizations, especially projects conducted in the framework of the 'People-to-People' program…as well as any other project aiming at normalization with Israel", and to "abstain from relations and work with Israeli NGOs, until the latter publicly announce their support for the Palestinian people's rights to establish its independent state on its land occupied in 1967 with Jerusalem as its capital, in addition to the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their original homes and properties."[68]

On the Israeli side, NGOs gained importance in the late 1970s as suppliers of social services in the context of a shift in the provision of civil

services from the public to the private sector executed by the Israeli government of the day.[69] As the role and importance of NGOs began to grow, however, so did the interest of the Israeli government in overseeing their activities. As a result, in the 1980s and 1990s Israeli governments introduced a series of legal and financial measures to regulate the status and operating procedures of NGOs. Most notably, the 1996 amendment of the Non-Profit-Non-Government Organization Law of 1980, provided the Ministry of the Interior with explicit regulatory and oversight responsibilities over NGOs, and obliged these to disclose their sources of income and report their expenditures. In addition, the "Proper Management" principle introduced by the Israeli government in 1998, mandated that access to public funding and tax privileges by NGOs requires the possession of a certificate of "Proper Management" issued by the Ministry of the Interior, certifying NGO management practices.

As in the Palestinian case, the more or less direct efforts of the Israeli government to regulate the activities of NGOs appears to speak poorly about NGOs' ability to carry out independent actions. Yet, in practice, the situation is somewhat different, as attempts by Israeli authorities to influence NGO policies through financial and other regulatory measures are partially thwarted by the complexity of the task and by the civil rights privileges enjoyed by Israeli NGOs as part of an open society. The complexity of state structures makes the effective regulation of NGO policies through the prospect of financial constraints difficult to achieve. For example, since NGOs can access at the same time multiple sources of funding—different governmental ministries and agencies, multiple levels of government, and private and foreign funds—the capacity of the government to sway NGO policies thorough funding considerations is quite limited. In addition, Israeli civil rights principles such as "freedom of association", "freedom of speech", "freedom of thought" and the like make it difficult for the Israeli government to directly tamper with NGO activities. This means that despite the various regulatory measures introduced by different Israeli governments, Israeli NGOs retain a significant margin of autonomy and are well able to carry out activities independent of the wishes of official authorities.[70]

The capacity of Israeli NGOs to act independently of the policy of the Israeli government is clearly evident with respect to the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Whereas the position of successive Israeli governments toward the Palestinians have wavered between negotiations

and the use of force, Israeli NGOs active in this area have by and large held constantly to a position of discussions and collaboration. This steady commitment to a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians has placed Israeli NGOs at times squarely in contradiction with the stance of the Israeli government. For example, since the failure of the Camp David talks in July 2000, Israeli NGOs have been largely at odds with the forceful policy of the Israeli government with regard to the Palestinians. The ability of Israeli NGOs to sustain this opposition, confirms their capacity to act independently of official policies. Yet, on the other hand, the relative lack of success of Israeli NGOs in pressing their views against official policies—Israeli society and policy makers appear increasingly removed from the NGO position[71]—and the ability of the Israeli government to marginalize and sometimes even abort the activities of Israeli NGOs in this area suggests that in spite of their autonomy of action Israeli NGOs are not necessarily in a position to accomplish their aims.

The initiation and implementation of revamped P2P programmes as discussed in this study supposes a capacity on the part of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs to undertake such actions. Evidently, P2P programmes, be they in the political, news media or any other sphere, need not necessarily be carried out in opposition to the wishes of official authorities on either side. Yet, in order to ensure their viability, it is also clear that such programmes must be able to surmount immediate political circumstances such as rejection by official authorities, which could try to block or impeded P2P activities for their own political purposes. This requires of local NGOs a certain ability to carry out actions independent of the policies of their respective national authorities. Our examination of the capacity of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs to carry effective action, if need be, even in the face of official opposition, is not encouraging in this regard. While Israeli NGOs have the necessary autonomy to pursue activities separate from the policies of the Israeli government, their capacity to do so successfully is not beyond question. On the other hand, Palestinian NGOs, largely linked to the PNA, have little margin or inclination to adopt policies contrary to the official stance of the PNA. These conclusions suggest that the launching of revamped P2P programmes might well have to be preceded or accompanied by a shift in the attitudes and capacities of local NGOs, particularly Palestinian ones, if they are to be viable at all, or that alternatively that they might have to be entrusted to international agencies or NGOs to the extent that these are able to meet the trust of both Israelis and Palestinians and to operate effectively free from local political

interference. A further alternative could be to attempt to implement these programmes through existing or new joint Israeli-Palestinian NGOs, whose combined structure already indicates a greater willingness for autonomy. This alternative, however, might be difficultly compatible with intra-communal activities, which are the most significant part of our overhauling of P2P programmes.

## CONCLUSION

We end this study with an overview of our main argument followed by an outline of policy guidelines drawn from it. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is widely considered as one of the most intractable conflicts of our time. Intractable conflict is distinguished by its longevity, high violence and deep societal impact, particularly upon societal beliefs, those fundamental ideas held in common by society that shape society's view of the world and conduct. Whereas all conflict inevitably entails war-supporting or belligerent societal beliefs, intractable conflict pushes these to excess. As a result, the peaceful resolution of intractable conflict is so much more challenging. Society steeped in belligerent beliefs has difficulty to accept or even conceive of peaceful conflict settlement. The formal resolution of intractable conflict, therefore, often requires an accompanying process of mutual reconciliation between the communities involved, whereby popular beliefs in each society transform from belligerent perceptions to peace-supporting ones.

Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the promotion of the mutual reconciliation of Israelis and Palestinians was the purpose of the numerous P2P programmes launched after the Oslo Peace Accords. Implemented by local Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, these programmes sought to promote encounters and collaboration between ordinary Israelis and Palestinians with a view to challenging the hostile views each held of the other, thereby commencing a process of mutual reconciliation. Despite their laudable intentions, however, these programmes were plagued by a number of structural defects, which made them largely ineffectual and untenable.

The structural flaws of the post-Oslo P2P programmes may be summarized as follows: emphasis on individual relations, selective participation, unbalanced treatment, joint steering and static. A renewal of

P2P programmes would have to correct these deficiencies, by reversing them. Thus, instead of favouring relations between individuals redesigned P2P programmes would privilege relations between individuals and social groups. They would also broaden participation to include those normally left out, would strive to ensure equity in participation, would concentrate in the first instance on building consensus within the national communities and only then between them and would adopt a more dynamic view of the conflict both in terms of its history and changing circumstances.

P2P programmes so reconceived could be implemented in several areas of Israeli and Palestinian social life, two of the more crucial ones, because of their dire condition and significant impact on the course of the conflict, being those of politics and the news media. Current political relations between Israelis and Palestinians are described by the violence of the Palestinian *intifada* and Israeli reprisals, and by failed diplomatic attempts to overcome these. Renewed P2P activities in this area would try to foster consensus between differing groups on possible solutions to the conflict first within each national community and then between national communities, while taking into account all the other factors outlined above, especially the dynamic aspects of the conflict. Similarly, in the domain of the news media where censorship, national bias and sensationalism combine to feed mutual national antagonism, P2P actions would attempt to overturn or diminish these by initially gathering journalists from each community and encouraging them to devise national solutions and then introducing them to journalists from the other side and prompting them to explore joint answers, all the while taking into account the dynamic nature of the conflict, balance in participation, and stress on relations between the individual and apposite social groupings.

A renewal of P2P programmes, nonetheless, presupposes a capacity to carry out such actions. The post-Oslo P2P programmes were implemented in large measure by local Israeli and Palestinian NGOs. A quick look at the ability of these organizations to act in accordance with the likely requirements of revamped P2P activities raises serious doubts. Palestinian NGOs are largely affiliated with the PNA and therefore dependent on it for their actions. This raises severe difficulties, because, obviously, NGOs must have the capacity for action independent of the wishes of local authorities, whose opposition may well have to be occasionally circumvented, if P2P programmes as envisaged here are to be viable at all. Israeli NGOs have a greater scope for action independent of official policy, although, they have

not shown themselves to be particularly effective; while NGOs' efforts have multiplied regularly, Israeli society and policy makers are increasingly taking an opposite stance. Taken together, these suggest that a renewal of P2P programmes may have to be preceded or accompanied by a revamping of Israeli and even more so Palestinian NGOs' capacities, or, alternatively, be entrusted to external tutelage provided this is able to redress the shortcomings of local NGOs, without introducing other major ones.

## Policy Guidelines

- Accompany formal peacemaking attempts with concomitant efforts at promoting the mutual reconciliation of Israelis and Palestinians;
- Renew P2P programmes conducive to a process of mutual reconciliation;
- Reconceptualize P2P programme designs and to include the following structural features:
  - emphasis on building relations between individual and social groups;
  - broad participation to include those normally left out of such exercises whether for political or socio-economic reasons;
  - balanced composition of participants and neutral operational procedures to avoid the marginalization of participants;
  - division of P2P activities into two consecutive stages: an initial one consisting of parallel intra-communal activities aimed at building national consensus among national groups; and a subsequent one of inter-communal activities aimed at reaching cross-national consensus between participants from the two communities;
  - emphasis on the dynamic aspect of the conflict, both in terms of its historical dimensions of past, present and future, and of the procedural flexibility needed to deal with shifts in surrounding security and political conditions;
- Emphasize P2P programmes in the domains of politics and the news media;
- In the political domain, emphasize the building of consensus: first on parallel national political visions of the future of each community and steps to achieve this, and second on a cross-national political vision of the future based on peaceful coexistence and ways to realize this;

- In the domain of the news media, promote the discussion and elaboration of possible solutions to the problems of censorship, national bias and sensationalism in the national media by journalists on each side; bring journalists from the two sides together in discussions about excesses in the national coverage of news aimed at working out cross-national answers to the problem;
- Promote the abilities of local NGOs for independent and effective action with a view to being able to implement P2P programmes;
- Supplement the efforts of local NGOs in the implementation of P2P programmes with efforts by foreign NGOs or agencies, should these prove to be better positioned to achieve their aims.

**Notes**

1 The Israeli-Palestinian dispute reaches back to over one century ago; it has been characterized by frequent violence and large-scale war. See Ifat Maoz, "Peace Building in Violent Conflict: Israeli-Palestinian Post-Oslo People-to-People Activities", draft article prepared for the *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, (2003) and Manuel Hassassian and Edward Kaufman, "Israeli-Palestinian Peace-Building: Lessons Learnt", European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, http://www.xs4all.nl/~conflic1/pbp/part1/9_lesson.htm.

2 Similarly, societal beliefs may be understood as "society's members shared cognition on topics and issues that are of special concern for society and contribute to their sense of uniqueness". For a fuller discussion, see Daniel Bar-Tal, "From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2000.

3 For a discussion of the notion of mutual reconciliation, see Bar-Tal, op. cit., who summarises the concept in the following terms: "Reconciliation in the psychological framework refers to a societal-cultural process that encompasses the majority of society members, who form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship between the two groups. It is not a formal process, because it requires change of societal beliefs. It may begin independently of the conflict process, before the opposing sides even begin to negotiate, but the conflict resolution process always

accelerates the reconciliation process. Nevertheless, the latter always continues for years, and even decades, after the last agreement of the conflict resolution was signed."

4 Consider, for instance, the following assessment: "The gap between top-down and bottom-up peace-building was felt very clearly at the time of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's murder, during the subsequent sabotage of the peace process by bombs, and the renewed settlement-building during the Netanyahu era." Sami Adwan and Dan Bar-on, "Introduction", in Sami Adwan and Dan Bar-on (eds), *The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Peace-Building Between Palestinians and Israelis*, PRIME, New Orleans: Hauser Press, 2000.

5 Similarly, Herbert Kelman appraises the importance of the Accord as follows: "The Israeli-Palestinian agreement of September 1993 represents a fundamental breakthrough in the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict. The crucial element of this breakthrough is the mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, expressed in the exchange of letters between the late Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat and in the opening of formal negotiations between the two sides. Israel's recognition of the PLO constitutes acceptance of Palestinian nationhood and signals—to Palestinians, to Israelis, and to the rest of the world—that the most likely eventual outcome of the negotiations, after a peaceful transition period, will be a Palestinian state… PLO recognition of Israel constitutes a formal acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the State of Israel within its pre-1967 borders, and opens the door to the recognition of Israel by Arab states and acceptance of its rightful place in the region." See Herbert C. Kelman, "Social-psychological Contributions to Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in the Middle East", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 1998.

6 See http://www.mideastweb.org/intanx6.htm.

7 The Norwegian government entrusted the administration of the programme to the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, which in turn established a secretariat for the programme as well as much of the theoretical impetus for its activities. Norway was also a leading funder of the programme.

8 For general information on the "People-to-People Program", see http://www.people-to-people.org/. Ultimately, many of the P2P actions undertaken actually exceeded the scope initially envisaged in Annex VI.

9 Most of the post-Oslo P2P activities came to an end after September 2000 amidst the mounting violence of the second Palestinian *intifada* and Israeli reprisals.

10 For examples of individual P2P actions, see Maoz Ifat, "Peace Building in Violent Conflict: Israeli-Palestinian Post-Oslo People-to-People Activities", draft prepared for the *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society (IJPCS)* special issue on Palestinian-Israeli Relations, July 2003 as well as Adwan and Bar-on, op. cit.

11 This was based on social psychology theory, which holds that conflicting individuals will tend to change their negative views of one another when they become aware of similarities in their structure of opinions. See Ben Mollov and Chaim Lavie, "Culture, Dialogue and Perception Change in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", paper presented at the International Association for Conflict Management Annual Convention 20-23 June 1999, http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~steing/conflict/Papers/israelipalestiniandialogue.pdf.

12 To clarify the distinction we are trying to make between appreciation among individual participants and appreciation of the other group by the individual participants consider the following description of the outcome of a P2P programme carried out between Israeli students from Bar-Ilan University and Palestinian students from the Hebron area: "Family visitations and strong friendships developed during the process between the principle organizers, and they have responded to each other during illness and joy and have expressed condemnation and condolences to each other in the wake of violent events on either side." Clearly, this refers to relations built among individual participants, but says nothing about the eventual perceptions of the individual participants in relation to the group or community of the other. Our contention here is that although developing good personal relations between individual Israelis and Palestinians is a positive step, of greater importance is the development of better individual Israeli and Palestinian perceptions of the other community, and that these two developments are not automatically related.

13 On this point, see Hassassian and Kaufman, op. cit.

14 Hassassian and Kaufman also make the point that the lower segments of society tend to be "more emotionally antagonistic to each other." This further speaks to their deliberate inclusion in P2P activities and more generally any peace process. See Hassassian and Kaufman, op. cit.

15 For a similar assessment, see Hassassian and Kaufman, op. cit., who note that: "the gaps in the educational, technological, and socio-economic levels, and years of consolidation as a democratic entity—all of these factors increase the disparities. One of the consequences is that we often find more Israelis seeking Palestinian partnership than vice versa—a problematic situation when planning activities based on equality which also means numeric parity."

16 For a related argument, see Herbert Kelman's claim that: "In so far as the conflict is between two societies, it becomes important to examine what happens *within* each society. In particular, this view alerts us to the role of internal divisions within each society in international conflicts—i.e. the crucial relationship between *intra*group and *inter*group conflict." Kelman, op. cit. p. 9.

17 Hassassian and Kaufman, op. cit., also note that: "The practical limitations on the freedom of movement and the effect of humiliation by Israeli security forces combine to generate a mood among Palestinians that is adverse to voluntary participation in cooperative endeavours with Israeli partners." Between 1995 and 2000, an average of 41 P2P projects were funded each year. In 2001 and 2002, these fell to five and four projects, respectively. More tellingly, the number of applications for funding fell from a high of 173 in 1999 to a low of five in 2001. See the "People-to-People Program" since 1995 at http://www.people-to-people.org/.

18 Adwan and Bar-on advise that, "in addition to dedicating themselves to current activities, organizations should reserve some resources to 'test' and prepare for future scenarios by formulating appropriate responses that can be refined when the appropriate occasions arise." Dan Bar-on and Sami Adwan, "PRIME's Role in supporting the Collaboration of Palestinian and Israeli NGOs", in Adwan and Bar-on, op. cit., p. 69.

19 This matter can become quite intricate in that the imputation of roles and images among participants is subject to complex factors that go beyond the immediate confines of the programme itself. For example, Bar-on and Adwan note that in joint activities Palestinians tend to consider themselves as representatives of their peoples' misery. This puts Israelis participants on the defensive, and the resulting psychological tensions can ruin planned activities. Furthermore, Palestinians taking part in such programmes are often chastised in their community for their participation. This raises their level of stress and aggravates tensions already latent in the programme. Lastly, the zeal of

some Israeli participants can at times be overbearing, with the effect that Palestinians become alienated. See Ibid.

20 We have selected these domains because of their tremendous importance to course of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

21 The unravelling of the Oslo peace process has a long and sorted history. For a short review of the highlights, see Craig Kauffman and Christopher L. Brown, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict", Southern Center for International Studies, http://www.southerncenter.org/me_june03_lesson3.pdf.

22 Although in practice negotiations between Israeli and Palestinians officials continued into January 2001 culminating at Taba, Egypt, nothing definitive was achieved.

23 Support for Hamas among Palestinians had reached a reported 40%-50% already by 1998. See Moshe Ma'oz, "The Oslo Agreements: Toward Arab-Jewish Reconciliation", in Robert L. Rothstein (ed.), *After the Peace. Resistance & Reconciliation*, London: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1999, p. 82.

24 Overall, most of the clauses of these accords were implemented reasonably well: Israeli civil and military administration withdrew from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, and a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) embodying the nucleus of an eventual Palestinian state was established. However, strong opposition by sections of Israeli society and continued Israeli settlement activities on the one hand, and suicide bombings by Palestinian factions opposed to Oslo, notably Hamas, on the other, ultimately stifled the process and plunged both sides into the deep violence of the past few years. See Ma'oz, op. cit., p. 68.

25 This is corroborated by the appreciable decline in Israeli and Palestinian casualty rates between Oslo and the beginning of the second *intifada*.

26 Setting all else aside, since the beginning of the second *intifada* over 2,300 Palestinian and over 750 Israeli casualties.

27 The roadmap was officially unveiled on 30 April 2003. For an electronic copy of the document, see http://www.un.org/media/roadmap122002.html.

28 The acronym UNSCR refers to United Nations Security Council resolutions.

29 Interestingly, under the heading "Civil Society" the plan also calls for increased funding for P2P activities.

30 The roadmap, in its initial incarnation, is clearly dead. However, its memory lingers on and, officially at least, all sides insist that it is still valid. See, for instance, James Reynolds, "2003 in the Middle East", BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3354597.stm.

31 The exact relation between the roadmap and the Sharon disengagement proposal is controversial. The proposal appears to be the result of the failure of the roadmap, yet, officially, at least in some quarters, the roadmap remains valid and the Sharon plan is (or could be) compatible with it. From our point of view, concern over the compatibility between the roadmap and the Sharon plan is a moot point.

32 At the moment this means 21 settlements in Gaza and 4 in the West Bank, although indications are that the pullout from the West Bank may be more extensive.

33 See, for instance, Likud's rejection of the plan and the political turmoil that the proposal has caused, despite its approval by the majority of Israelis. For Likud's reaction to the plan, see "Le Likoud désavoue Ariel Sharon pour la troisième fois", *Le Monde*, 19 August 2004.

34 Respectively led by former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and former Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.

35 The negotiators of the Accord have been accused of betraying their respective communities. The principle of the Accord may have public support, but some of its specific points are very controversial. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3245838.stm.

36 The political implications and importance of which are succinctly put by Daniel Bar-Tal as follows: "Strong opposition of political parties and/or nonparliamentary organizations, which have the support of the elite and/or the masses, may impede the reconciliation process. The groups opposing reconciliation may continue to delegitimize the members of the adversary group, which adds fuel to the intractable conflict… Reconciliation thus requires building the extensive and intensive support of society members, in order to weaken the opposition to this process." See Bar-Tal, op. cit., pp. 361-62.

37 We limit our discussion to the news media, because this is the part of the media that has the greatest and most immediate influence on the conflict. Several media-related P2P projects were carried out as part of the "People-to-People Program". These, however, were of very limited scope and of a joint nature, and evidently quite different from what we

have in mind. See http://212.106.91.70/p2p/details.asp?id=M-96-013.

38 With reference to the role of the news media with respect to conflict, Gadi Wolfsfeld notes the following: "The news media can play a role in the promotion of peace. They can emphasize the benefits that peace can bring, they can raise the legitimacy of groups or leaders working for peace, and they can help transform images of the enemy. The media, however, can also serve as destructive agents in the peace process. They can emphasize the risks and dangers associated with the compromise, raise the legitimacy of those opposed to concessions, and reinforce negative stereotypes of the enemy." See Gadi Wolfsfeld, "The News Media and Peace Processes: The Middle East and Northern Ireland", United States Institute of Peace, http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pwks37.pdf, p. 8.

39 Indicatively, a recent survey of press freedom in 166 countries, ranked the Israeli occupied territories a mere 146th (Israel itself was ranked 44th), and the PNA administered areas a sad 130th. See "World Press Freedom Ranking 2003", Reporters Without Borders, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=8247. Generally, Israeli censorship is primarily directed at the Palestinian and other foreign media. Palestinian censorship, in contrast, is mainly directed at the indigenous Palestinian media.

40 See "Media Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Media_coverage_of_the_Israeli-Palestinian_conflict, and "Israel and the Occupied Territories—Annual Report 2003", Reporters Without Borders, http://www.rsf.org/print.php3?id_article=6605.

41 The largest Palestinian daily newspaper, Al-Quds, is funded by the PLO and operates under the guidance of the Head of Preventive Security in the West Bank, the Editor in Chief of the second-largest daily, Al-Ayyam, is media advisor to Yasser Arafat, while the third most popular daily, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, is run by the PNA and its Director-General is as well an advisor to Yassre Arafat. The main Palestinian radio and television stations are also run by the PNA. See "A War of Words: Israeli and Palestinian Media Coverage of the Al-Aqsa Intifada", The Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, http://www.phrmg.org/monitor2001/ nov2001.htm.

42 The Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, describes the situation as follows: "The closure of private stations and other measures became a matter of course whenever a sensitive incident occurred in the

Palestinian Territories or even farther afield, as events in Iraq showed" "A War of Words", op. cit., while Amnesty International notes that: "The PA has also closed down newspapers, research centres, news agencies, and television and radio stations for making critical remarks about the PA", Amnesty International, 5 September 2000, http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGMDE210202000. See also "Media in Palestine: Between the Hammer of the PNA and the Anvil of Self-Censorship", The Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, http://www.phrmg.org/ monitor2000/mar2000-media.htm.

43 See, for example, "Palestinian Authority—Annual Report 2003", Reporters Without Borders, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6602; "Media in Palestine", op. cit.; and Nabil Khatib, "Media-Communication Strategies: The Palestinian Experience", http://www.passia.org/seminars/99/media_and_communication/khatib2.html, who also recounts the anecdote of Al-Quds journalist Ala' Mashharawi, who was arrested six times by six different security services for the same reason of having reported on Hamas.

44 The prevalence of self-censorship within the Palestinian press is widely acknowledged. See, for instance, "Media in Palestine", op. cit., which includes the following remark: "A journalist in Palestine faces external censorship that restricts his freedom of opinion and expression. He or she faces self-censorship that limits the initiative to think on issues that he or she believes may surpass the drawn red lines. This fact made the local press only look like parrots that repeat what is expected from them without asking or criticizing anything".

45 For the controversy over the reluctance of the Palestinian press to cover discontent in Gaza with the rule of the PNA, see "Gaza Journalists' Group Must 'Think Again' Over Call to Ban Reporting of Internal Crisis, International Federation of Journalists, http://www.ifj.org/default.asp?Index=2620&Language=EN.

46 See "Al-Aqsa Intifada Press Freedom Violation Statistics", International Press Institute, http://www.freemedia.at/intifada_statistics.htm#Top. Also, since January 2002 Israeli authorities have suspended the accreditation of most Palestinian journalists and media workers, making it even more difficult for them to carry out their reporting tasks.

47 The NGO Reporters Without Borders gives the following account of a recent situation: "The Israeli army's Operation Rampart, which began at the end of March on the West Bank, temporarily silenced nearly all radio and TV stations and stopped the distribution of two of the three main Palestinian daily newspapers. During the occupation of Nablus

by the Israeli army, only one of the six local TV stations remained on the air. From 29 March, all five FM radios listened to by the inhabitants of Ramallah fell silent. The daily *Al-Quds*, based in East Jerusalem, was the only paper that appeared but roadblocks and curfews in the Palestinian Territories hampered distribution. *Al-Ayyam* and *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, published in Ramallah, did not appear for several days. On countless occasions between April and June, but less frequently after that, the Israeli army raided, destroyed, ransacked or occupied Palestinian, Arab and foreign media offices." In 2003 alone, the Israelis are said to have occupied or destroyed at least 15 foreign and Palestinian media offices. See "Palestinian Authority—Annual Report 2003", Reporters Without Borders, http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6602.

48 See "A War of Words", op. cit.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 The Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, for example, paints the following picture: "Since the beginning of al-Aqsa Intifada, the three Palestinian daily newspapers have focused their attention on the confrontations between the Palestinian youths and the Israeli army, by placing photos of martyrs and clashes on the front page, with the headlines in big red letters. Two of them have reserved 3-4, sometimes 7 or 8 pages with a permanent headings "Intifada of the Holy Shrine al- Aqsa" (Al-Ayyam) and "The masses continue their march and sacrifice for al- Aqsa" (Al-Hayat al-Jadida)." Ibid.

52 See, for instance, the case of Issam Joudeh Mustafa Hammed, reported by the Palestinian Human Rights Monitor, who was reported by the Palestinian press to have been tortured to death by Israeli settlers. An investigation by the US NGO Physicians for Human Rights into the incident, showed the cause of death to have been in fact a car accident. The Palestinian press never corrected the initial account, but did publish an excerpt from the report of the investigation, which deplored the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians. Ibid.

53 For examples of the silence and even complicity of the Palestinian press in the face of abuses by Palestinian authorities, see ibid.

54 Similarly, Wolfsfeld, op. cit., p. 15, describes the phenomenon of sensationalism in the press as follows: "Sensationalism refers to the extent to which journalists feel obliged to construct and present news stories in a melodramatic style. Sensationalist norms place a high value on emotionalism rather than reason, on entertainment rather than

information, on specific events rather than long-term processes, and on personalities rather than institutions."

55 Coverage of the *intifada* across several pages underneath aggressive headlines is a permanent feature of several Palestinian newspapers. As an illustration, the NGO Palestinian Human Rights Monitor offers the following account: "Since the beginning of al-Aqsa Intifada, the three Palestinian daily newspapers have focused their attention on the confrontations between the Palestinian youths and the Israeli army, by placing photos of martyrs and clashes on the front page, with the headlines in big red letters. Two of them have reserved 3-4, sometimes 7 or 8 pages with permanent headings "Intifada of the Holy Shrine al-Aqsa" (Al-Ayyam) and "The masses continue their march and sacrifice for al-Aqas" (Al-Hayat al- Jadida). …The newspapers have praised the Palestinians who carried out attacks against Israeli soldiers or settlers". See "A War of Words", op. cit.

56 Ibid.

57 See Wolfsfeld, op. cit., especially pages 21-29, who assesses the situation as follows: "The Israeli media have become increasingly sensationalist in recent years. … The two most popular newspapers—*Yediot Ahronot* and *Ma'ariv*—employ a tabloid format that includes large colourful headlines, the extensive use of visuals, and an extremely dramatic and emotional form of coverage. … The electronic media in Israel have also become more sensationalist."

58 For instance: "'marathons of mourning' with twenty-four-hour call-in shows, constant hours of sad music, and lurid coverage of the funerals…", Wolfsfeld, op. cit., p. 23. For examples of coverage of specific incidents, see "A War of Words", op. cit.

59 Wolfsfeld, op. cit., p. 5. See also Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

60 Ibid., p. 26.

61 See, for instance, Muhammad Mulish, "Palestinian Civil Society", in Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995, as well as www.cisp-ngo.org/CISPIntranet/Biblioteca/Medio%20Oriente/Summerschool_contrONGen.pdf.

62 See "Blowing Against Many Winds: Palestinian Human Rights NGOs in the al-Aqsa Intifada, South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre, http://www.hrdc.net/sahrdc/hrfeatures/HRF65.htm.

63 The general attitude of the PNA is well summarized by the following statements: "To the question of whether or not the PNA wants to control the NGOs; the answer is yes. It wants to control them because

it believes that this is its role as a government… If the fact that the role of government is to rule is accepted, then these NGOs fall within the domain of government and should be ruled by government; they cannot be independent entities associated with donors… The PNA wants the NGOs to operate legally and be accountable to the government… the PNA requires the following from the NGOs: that they be legally registered; that their activities be officially supervised; that their spending be properly monitored; that their funds be audited on a regular basis; that their sources of income be made public; that they publicly declare their loyalty to the Palestinian cause." Mohammad Eldajani, "Government and Civil Society Relationships and Roles: A View from the PNA", paper presented at the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) seminar on Civil Society Empowerment Through Training and Skills Development, PASSIA, Jerusalem, August 1997.

64 Mahdi Abdul Hadi, "NGO Action and the Question of Palestine", Dialogue on Palestinian State-Building and Identity, PASSIA, Jerusalem, August 1997.

65 Primarily: restrictive auditing and control of their budgets, objectives and functions. For example, to be able to receive foreign funds NGOs must obtain permission from the PNA, which can influence how these funds are to be spent. See Manuel Hassassian, "The Role of Palestinian NGOs in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution", in Adwan and Bar-on, op. cit., p. 26.

66 NGOs that criticized the Oslo Accords were branded as opposition groups and were subjected to political and physical pressure. Islamic NGOs tend to focus their activities on social issues. Reportedly they comprise 10%-14% of all social institutions in the West Bank and Gaza. See Sara Roy, "The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine", *Middle East Report*, No. 214, Spring 2000.

67 Strictly speaking, no Palestinian NGOs deal directly with conflict resolution; most deal with social issues, and are not necessarily associated with the PNA. We refer here to those few NGOs that were established as a result of the Oslo peace process and are explicitly concerned with supporting this process. See Hassassian, op. cit., p. 28.

68 For the text of the declaration, see http://www.pngo.net/intifada/Normalization%20statement.htm.

69 Between 1882 and 1948, prior to the establishment of the Israeli state, Jewish NGOs carried out a host of political, economic and social functions for the Jewish community settled in Palestine. After the

creation of Israel in 1948, the state took over most of these responsibilities.

70 In brief, despite the regulatory measures, the Israeli NGOs are often able to operate as "non-territorial governments". See Nitza Nachmias and Amiram Bogot, The Government of Israel's Control of NGOs: Legal Dilemmas and Structural Constraints", *International Journal for Not-for-Profit Law*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, December 2000.

71 As Ilan Pappe puts it: "Even a non-professional eye can tell that there is a great disparity between the number of people engaged in peace activities and the time and energy invested in it, and between the principal intransigent mood and orientation of the Israeli public, particularly the Jewish part of it." See Ilan Pappe, "The Peace Oriented NGOs in Israel", in *Civil Society: Democratization in the Arab World*, Ibn Khaldun Centre for Development Studies, Vol. 8, Issue 86, February 1999. Opinion polls also show that the percentage of Israelis who favour ending negotiations with the Palestinians even if it means going to war increased from 13% in 1997 to 28% in 2001, while the percentage of those who favour continued negotiations decreased from 53% in 1997 to 42% in 2001. See Asher Arian, "Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2001", Memorandum No. 60, Jaffe Centre for Strategic Studies, August 2001.