



Closing statement of the third Bil'in Conference on Grassroots Non-violent Resistance, which was held in the village of Bil'in on June 4-6 2008

The Third Bil'in Conference on Grassroots Non-Violent Resistance, which was held in the village of Bil'in near Ramallah, was widely attended by officials and citizens alike, including Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, the representative of President Abbas, members of the PLO Executive Committee, members of the Palestinian National Council, and representatives of various political parties and civil society groups.

There was also international participation, including delegations of peace activists from France, Italy, Spain, Germany, England, Canada, Ireland, Greece, Switzerland, the United States and the Netherlands, in addition to Israeli peace activists. The total number of participants were around 500 hundreds participants.

This conference coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba and forty-one years of the Occupation of Palestinian Territories (the Naksa). This conference was held as Israeli violations against our people have been escalating. Israel continues to build the Apartheid Wall in the face of international opposition, and continues its colonization and confiscation of Palestinian land, especially in Occupied Jerusalem, in order to Judaize it and cut it off from the Palestinian hinterland, in blatant violation of international law. Israel is doing so in order to create new facts on the ground and prevent any political resolution to the conflict.

In the meantime, Israel continues its policy of ghettoizing Palestinian territories through the use of roadblocks - which now number more than 590 - and via hundreds of closures, house demolitions, and military land confiscation orders, in addition to the unjust blockade imposed on the Palestinian Territories, especially the Gaza Strip, and the massacres that accompany these inhuman practices. All this is happening despite talk of an imminent political resolution.

Facing this painful reality, the Palestinians have no option but to continue expressing their rejection of all the practices of the occupation through active nonviolent resistance to it.

At the opening of the conference, we began with a welcome from the Conference Steering Committee which stressed that although the support of international donors to the Palestinian people is important, it must be set against the fact that investment in Israel has increased from US\$500 million in 2002 to US\$37 billion in 2007 in spite of the fact that Israel refuses to comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 2004.

Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, representing President Abbas, stressed the importance of supporting popular struggle in Palestine and promoting it in order to confront the ongoing Israeli measures against the Palestinian people. Fayyad called upon Israel to adhere to a just political settlement based on international legitimacy and law, and through a framework of peace that guarantees security and stability for the two peoples in two neighboring states along the 1967 borders. The Prime Minister also stated that colonization and the creation of facts on the ground will not bring security to Israel, and praised the resistance of the popular committees in all the Palestinian Territories.

Dr. Rafiq al-Husseini, Chief of Staff to President Abbas, stressed the importance of popular struggle and creating new ways to resist the occupation, and that the road to the liberation of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Wall, removal of the settlements, freeing Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails and attaining the rights of the Palestinian people, must pass through Bil'in.

Louisa Morgantini, Deputy Speaker of the EU Parliament, said that the Parliament must work to put an end to the occupation and lift the blockade, and revive the agreements signed between the two sides. She emphasized the importance of adhering to international resolutions, especially those relating to Jerusalem as a shared capital for both peoples. She also addressed the tragic situation in Gaza and demanded an end to the siege.

Mairead Maguire, the Irish Nobel Laureate and activist, accused Israel of denying the Palestinian people their basic right, and stated that Israeli policies lead to the perpetuation of a state based on racism and the creation of facts on the ground.

In a letter, former US President Jimmy Carter addressed the participants, and stated that "you prove that the Palestinian dream cannot be undermined silently." Carter stressed that the continuation of Israel's land confiscation policy is one of the major obstacles on the road to peace.

Nasser Al Qudwa, the chairman of the Yasser Arafat Institute emphasized that there could be no peace under the Occupation government that is building settlements.

The conference received a video message of support from former UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor Zaragoza. Contributions also came from Israeli and international solidarity activists. All the Palestinian national parties who participated spoke of the importance of grassroots resistance and its effectiveness as a strategy in the same way as it was in the first Intifada.

The speeches cited Bil'in's recent experience as the model of grassroots non-violent resistance in several ways, including popularly and legally and that the conference was not restricted to Bil'in but extended to other Palestinian places.

The Conference agreed upon:

On the Palestinian level:

1. Palestinian national unity is essential to establish a Palestinian state.
2. Calling on the Palestinian Presidential and governmental institutions to commit to work seriously to implement the ICJ ruling against the Apartheid Wall, and the subsequent UN General Assembly Resolution.
3. Calling on all official Palestinian bodies to support the grassroots non-violent resistance and to take a serious political position against the building of the Wall and settlements and the Judaization of Jerusalem.
4. Calling on all national factions to place grassroots non-violent resistance at the top of their respective programs, beginning with boycott and leading to their full participation in direct actions.
5. To support the continuation of Palestinian popular struggle as one of the main strategic tools, which is based on the successful experience in resisting the Wall and the heritage of Palestinian struggle, including the first Intifada.

6.

On the Israeli level:

1. Strengthening relations with Israeli peace movements that participate in our struggle against the Occupation system.
2. Rejecting any form of normalization with the Occupation or its institutions and personnel.

On the international level:

1. Strengthening relations with international solidarity activists, and mobilizing greater numbers of peace and justice activists to support the Palestinian cause.
2. Calling on organizations, unions, associations, civil society groups and international peace activists to do the following:
 - a. Promote the Palestinian narrative to counter Israeli propaganda;
 - b. Promote boycott, divestment and sanctions; ask all movements, bodies and associations of international peace activists to campaign for a boycott including the withdrawal of investments in Israel as well as the application of economic sanctions, in particular the EU-Israel Trade Association Agreement.
 - c. Pressing official international organizations, especially European governments, the European Union, Japan and the United States to decline Israel's requests for improved relations until Israel implements all its international legal obligations, including the 4th Geneva Convention, and ceases its violations against the Palestinian people.

Bil'in, June the 6th of 2008

**Third International Conference
Bil'in, Palestine
4-6 June 2008**

This February we passed the third anniversary of the weekly non-violent protests in opposition to the "work-site of shame" for the Apartheid Wall that has annexed almost 60% of the land of Bil'in village in the West Bank. Bil'in has become a symbol both of the theft of land across Palestine and of the power of non-violent grassroots movements in building local and international resistance to Occupation.

The International Conference will be held in June 4-6:

1. To show internationals real life examples of the struggles and suffering of Palestinians
2. To extend the Popular Non-Violent Struggle

3. To strengthen the relationship with the international solidarity movements and to find new ways to strengthen and support the popular struggle

WHEN: 4-6 June, 2008

WHERE: One day of the conference will be held in each of the following locations:

- Bil'in Village near Ramallah
- Jerusalem
- The southern West Bank

PROGRAM: We are working to finalize the program, details will be released as soon as they are finalized.

COST: Accommodation per night 20 Euros, plus Conference Registration of 30 Euros

PROGRAM

Bil'in 3rd International Conference on

Nonviolent popular struggle (June 4-6)

Program

Wednesday, June 4 2008

9.00 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 - 11.00 Opening Session

1- President Abbas

2- Prime Minister Fayyad

3- Louisa Morgantini

4- Marid Maguire

5- Video Message from Nelson Mandela

11:00 - 12:00 Professional Analysis Seminar (Facts sheet Presentation)

Update on the current Palestinian situation given by Dr. Jad as Haq Arij Center

12:00 - 12:30 Break

12.30 – 14.00 Panel 1:

The international solidarity with Palestinian people

European Parliaments member and head of the international delegations

14.00 – 15.30 Launch Break.

15.30 – 17.00 Panel 2:

Discussion of the Role of the Palestinian Political Parties in Supporting the Popular Resistance and the importance of popular struggle:

Abdullah Al -Efrangi (Fatah)

Saleh Raffat FEDA

Mustufa Bargouthi (Al Mubadarra)

Qais Abu Leila (PFDP)

Khaled Monsour (PPP)

ABD ALRAHEEM MALOOH (PFLP)

17.00 – 17.30 Break

17:30 - 19:00:

Real Examples from the Grassroots Resistance and Palestinian Suffering

Sami Sadiq (Jordan Valley, Al Aqaba Village)

Hani Amer (The North, Masha Village)

Dr. Inad Sarahi (Jerusalem)

A Representative from (Tel Rumieda, Hebron)

19.00 Ending of the first day.

Thursday June 5, 2008

9:00AM-7PM Solidarity visits to some critical Palestinian Villages

Group 1 Jordan Valley, facilitator Fathi Ikhderat

Group 2 The North, Qalqilya and Salfit, facilitator mohammed Aboushi

Group 3 The South, Bethlaham and Hebron, facilitators Abdul Hadi Hantash, Ingrid

Group 4 Jerusalem, facilitators Khalil Tafikgi, Jamal Juma

18.00 Return to Bil'in (Dinner and Open Activities)

Friday June 6, 2008

9:00 - 12.00 History of the Non Violent Resistance in Palestine:

- The Experience of Bil'in and the Legal Situation with the Israeli Supreme Court in Bil'in (Bilin representative and village attorney Micheal Sfard).

- Press Conference

1:00-3:00 Ending the conference with the weekly nonviolent demonstration.