

# Palestine: No to Unjust Peace!

## A Response to Madrid Social Forum's Misrepresentation of Facts

By [Palestinian Delegation](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Global Research, December 14, 2007

[foroporlapaz.org](http://foroporlapaz.org) 14 December 2007

Yesterday, 13 December, we were shocked to read the statement posted on the website of the Forum for a Just Peace in the Middle East, as it entirely and intentionally misrepresented the facts and the factors that motivated the now growing boycott of the Forum. We feel obliged to correct these falsities and to present the facts, as they are, to all those who are still committed to a peace based on justice, international law and universal human rights.

(1) The communiqué starts by saying that only “one part” of the main entities sending delegations to the Forum has withdrawn. This is not true. It ignores the fact, which everyone knew yesterday, that our Israeli civil society partners, led by the Alternative Information Center (AIC), the Syrian Golan Heights delegation and the Lebanese delegation have all announced their withdrawal, as well. But even if the Palestinian delegation led by PNGO were the only one boycotting, it should not have been dismissed with such disrespect by anyone claiming to support a just peace in the region. After all, this is the **main** delegation, as the organizers have always insisted, since the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory remains at the very core of the turmoil and colonial conflict in the Middle East.

(2) The first point in the communiqué claims that the facts mentioned in PNGO's press release announcing its withdrawal were not connected to reality. This accusation, made under clear pressure from above, is both insulting and categorically unacceptable. Our Spanish partners know well that the premises and arguments outlined in the Palestinian position are accurate and precise. The official pressure that led to issuing such an unfortunate communiqué is itself proof of a key point mentioned in PNGO's press release: that the Forum's main body, the International Committee, is no longer in control of the agenda.

(3) The glaring truth that the communiqué fails to mention, despite the fact that it was *the main reason* behind our withdrawal, is that an Israeli *establishment* delegation, larger than the original delegation led by AIC, was indeed undemocratically invited by Spanish officials against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Forum's main organizing body. Furthermore, we all know that, in a grave violation of the set rules, none of the organizations participating in this illegally invited alternative delegation has endorsed the Forum's Reference Document, the key condition of participation, as agreed by consensus since the Forum's International Committee meeting in July.

This delegation comprises Israeli organizations and municipal officials who are *on record* opposing the application of justice, international law and universal rights to reach a sustainable and genuine peace in the Middle East. Here are merely two examples: one of them, the mayor of Dimona, is a Member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency,

the main organization responsible for institutionalizing Israeli apartheid laws that racially and structurally discriminate against all “non-Jews” in Israel. Another, the mayor of Migdal Haemek, holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Israel army. His “town” sits on top of a Palestinian village that was ethnically cleansed by Zionists during the 1948 Nakba. All the members of that illicitly invited Israeli delegation (which, unfortunately, includes a few largely unpopular and unrepresentative Palestinian organizations as well) share one thing in common: they are all on record opposing the fundamental and inalienable right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in accordance with international law. They all deceptively call themselves a “peace” camp, when in reality they advocate peace devoid of justice and in contravention of international law and basic human rights.

This is the major fact that was not shared with the Spanish and international public.

(4) The communiqué falsely states that the Palestinian delegation reached its decision to boycott “without the necessary dialogue.” In fact, the Palestinian delegation coordinators were in constant dialogue with our Spanish partners in the International Committee and the administrative structure throughout this crisis, up to the very last minute before issuing the press release to announce the withdrawal. They all know that.

(5) Some background to the current crisis is in order. In the International Committee’s meeting in Madrid, on 20 October, the Committee members were surprised by an overt attempt to impose the participation of a mostly Israeli, uninvited, delegation in the International Committee, for “balance.” That attempt was defeated, thanks to the consensus in the International Committee against this high-handed power politics. The delegation included representatives of establishment Israeli political parties that have been historically (up to the moment) responsible for the ethnic cleansing, occupation, colonization and all the war crimes committed by the Israeli army against Palestinian civilians. How can any reasonable person suggest their participation in a Forum designed to launch processes leading to **justice** and peace?

And what does “balance” mean in the context of racist and colonial oppression? Is there balance between colonizer and colonized? Oppressor and oppressed? Did European governments back in the 1980s insist on “balance” between anti-apartheid and pro-apartheid South African groups? Why do they expect Palestinians to accept this misleading and immoral attempt to portray the colonial conflict as a mere “dispute” between two equal sides with equivalent moral and political claims?

(6) Point 3 in the Forum’s communiqué claims that the “Geneva Initiative” has “never been a part of this process, nor [will] they send any kind of delegation to the Forum.” On the Forum’s website\* [1] (even today), however, the list of scheduled workshops shows on page 11 a workshop by the Geneva Initiative and its partners! Another long workshop, on page 4, is run by, among others, the so-called “Peace Voice,” another of those Israeli groups advocating **injustice** as the path to “peace.”

In short, a different agenda has been imposed on the Forum, shifting its character from a serious, even noble, civil society effort to envision and advocate an alternative path to peace, based on justice, human rights and international law, to yet another “peace” show, in a long series of similar shows, advocating an essentially unjust “peace.”

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