

The Amman Roundtable

Human Security in the Middle East



**Meeting co-hosted by HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal
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Introduction

The Amman Roundtable on Human Security in the Middle East¹ met at a turning point for the region to address its challenges from the vantage point of civil society. Experience makes painfully clear that sustainable foundations for security and freedom can only be constructed by tackling geopolitical challenges from below and rooting policy in the experience, fears, needs and aspirations of ordinary citizens. The Middle East suffers from a deep crisis of legitimacy today. It can neither be addressed by governments alone, nor without their involvement. The peoples of the region are capable of developing their own solutions, and states and citizens around the world owe them solidarity and assistance. In this report, The Amman Roundtable presents recommendations under the following headings:

- Work together for participation, civil society, reform and cooperation in the Middle East
- Build a new Iraq in which state and politics serve the people
- Involve all parties to tackle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

We address these recommendations in the first instance to governments deliberating on which paths to take, in the Arab League, in the G8 and NATO and individually. At this moment of opportunity and danger, leaders have the chance to set a framework for positive change. Civil society groupings and other local and regional actors likewise hold power to transform human security in the Middle East for the better. They deserve to be strengthened.

¹ The Amman Roundtable on Human Security in the Middle East was convened by Oxford Research Group, hosted by Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan and facilitated by the Oxford Process. It brought together Middle Eastern and European citizens with experience in politics, business, the military, civil society, research, psychology, conflict resolution and reconstruction.

Report of the Amman Roundtable on Human Security in the Middle East

1. Human security in the Middle East today

State security today needs to be people-centred. This is not fine rhetoric, but hard reality, as the report of the Independent Commission for Human Security has made clear.² In an era of asymmetrical warfare and global media, ordinary citizens are becoming victims and combatants. State security structures are adjusting to terrorist threats, but this reactive approach is proving inadequate. The time has come to build frameworks for human security: to engage with insecurity's systemic causes and involve non-state actors, working to transform conflicts and other obstacles to human flourishing. The wider Middle East demands that we connect local and geostrategic perspectives; the lens of human security makes that possible.

Human security is understood as economic, social and political security: the 'vital core' of human life, freedom and fulfilment. Its challenges differ from place to place in terms of human need. The Arab Human Development Report, which has helped define the regional agenda, prioritises questions of economic development, the knowledge society, and social and political freedoms.³ As is well-known, 65 million adult Arabs (including half the women) are illiterate, the Arab world translates 300 books every year, one-third of the region lives on less than two dollars a day, and population is rising steeply. Yet in much of the Middle East today, physical security demands priority. The

challenge of psychological security is often neglected. Dehumanisation, disempowerment and humiliation play a central role in sustaining conflict and breeding terror. Equal involvement of women in society and politics is a particular problem. Across the region, greater participation and legitimacy is emerging as essential for sustainable change. Liberal-democratic and Islamic-populist tendencies are strengthening and connecting, developing strategies for reform – or revolution. The coming decade will be pivotal in defining the common future of the peoples of the Middle East.

“In the coalition’s Iraq, an almost unbridgeable gulf has emerged between the Green Zone of power and the Red Zone of the people. Inside the Green Zone, international advisers come and go with abstract strategies for reconstruction and democratisation, sometimes saying Iran when they mean Iraq. In the Red Zone – the country at large – the people are engaged in a great but chaotic debate, caught between insurgents, coalition forces and the vacuum of institutions and legitimacy.”

Iraqi and international participants

Regardless of the rights and wrongs of the Iraq intervention, its conduct to date provides compelling examples (for instance in reports from Abu Ghraib prison) of how not to wield foreign or local power. A great debate also is taking place today in universities, places of worship, cafés, and homes from Casablanca to Tehran. Middle Eastern actors today face the challenge of establishing real frameworks for cooperation among themselves, empowering the region's citizens economically, psychologically, socially

² *Human Security Now*, Report of the Independent Commission on Human Security (2003).

³ See *Arab Human Development Report 2002* and *2003* (United Nations Development Programme).

and politically, and working with allies to resolve their conflicts.

2. Work together for participation, civil society, reform and cooperation in the Middle East

Reform initiatives led from the region will have greater legitimacy than those framed only by outside powers. This needs to be remembered at the G8 and NATO summits and thereafter. If Europe, the US and the broader international community have a contribution to make in the Middle East, the process needs to be one of listening to those on the ground and helping them to gather so that regional ownership can develop.

The US met tremendous resistance to the first draft of its Greater Middle East Initiative. Modelled partly on the Helsinki Process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), its proposals might have appeared reasonable: to strengthen pluralistic civil societies and encourage democratic and economic reforms across the region, while offering aid and trade. But many suspected the Initiative as a Trojan horse after the war in Iraq. It lacked much of the CSCE's multilateral architecture, respect for sovereignty and regional origins, and was framed by misleading comparisons with the 'toppling of dominoes' in the Soviet space.

"The US and the European Union are not the sole responsables of the world. We need to share. We are not looking for people to come from outside and 'take care of us', but to participate with us in giving a gift of security to the world. To use the power each of us has responsibly, we have to understand ourselves as part of a larger whole, a symphony."

Arab participants

The Arab League majority adopted basic principles of cooperation and reform at their latest summit. Ambitious plans for the League's deepening have been mooted, including an elected security council, an Arab parliament, a court of justice, and majority voting. If these are pursued, and address the demands of Arabs, they have much to contribute. But cooperation involving Israel and non-Arab Muslim states and at civil society level is at least as important, and here honest brokers can offer help.

Parallels with the Cold War do not hold for the Middle East. The terrible spectacles of terror and counterinsurgency conceal the reality: There is no monolithic opponent here. The region's problems of human security are systemic, with roots in the historic and present-day actions of its leaders and the West. Processes are needed to create partnerships, not contain adversaries. New structures in the Middle East should be voluntary. They should emerge as preludes to or within multilateral frameworks. And they must address side-by-side the twin challenges of building society among the region's states and opening their citizens' social, economic and political opportunities.

The latest G8 Greater Middle East draft is improved. It is based around a set of new multilateral structures, centrally a 'Greater Middle East Forum for the Future' involving the region's states and civil society. Any such Forum needs to be empowered. It could incubate a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East, as well as helping to guide detailed questions of reform and conflict resolution case by case. The latest draft quotes statements of regional civil society; the final version could also draw on the Arab League's calls for reform and cooperation. Further, the G8 could commit its members to opening

their markets to the states of the Middle East and North Africa.

Cooperation must be guided by the compass of human security, including international law and charters of universal human rights. Regional civil society has already presented a series of eloquent manifestos, not least in the Alexandria Declaration of the Arab Reform Forum calling among other things for “genuine democracy”, independent judiciaries, empowered parliaments, human rights and freedom of speech, association and media. But regional civil society is substantially rooted in Islamic as well as liberal culture, and Islamic social and political forces must be centrally involved in the transformations to come, to help release their progressive potential.

Civil societies in the region can not only exhort governments, but take their place as regional actors. Developing networks hold the seed of a vision in which Middle Easterners become equal citizens, not subjects of their states. Their establishment of structures such as an Islamic World Forum or a Middle East Citizens’ Assembly could develop solidarities, provide a framework for mutual learning, and help build cooperation, leadership and human security from below.

The Amman Roundtable recommends that:

- 2.1 The Arab League expresses determination to work toward processes of regional cooperation and reform, while keeping focus on resolving ongoing conflicts; welcomes the Alexandria Declaration, adopts the Arab Human Rights Charter, and emphasises the importance of full ratification of human rights charters.
- 2.2 Rather than presenting an “Initiative”, the G8 summit offers the states and peoples of the region the first outlines of a “Process” of cooperation for a common future, to be developed with them. Any new multilateral umbrellas and organisations need to be fully empowered, and based and led within the region.
- 2.3 The European Union and the OSCE offer high-level capacity-building support to Middle East forums, in particular to explore processes toward a common regional future including security, democracy, human rights and prosperity, and a Conference on Security and Cooperation.

“From the 1970s through the 1990s, through the East-West Network, the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly and other forums, we built bridges between the peace movement in Western Europe and Eastern European civil society activists, developing solidarity and a shared agenda of peace, democracy and human rights. After the Helsinki Accords, we worked to develop ‘détente from below’. Governments often criticised us for rocking the boat, saying ‘leave it to us’. While authoritarian regimes feared their own people, HCA was based on mutual care and responsibility: an ethos that we are together now, and politics is about human beings. We may be writers, politicians, or window-cleaners, in parties or NGOs, but we make politics together. We believed overcoming the division of Europe was the job especially of civil society, of citizens acting together across national boundaries. During the break-up of Yugoslavia we were among the first to campaign for safe areas and intervention on the basis of human security, sending 300,000 postcards to European envoy Lord Owen. We supported independent media like Radio Zid in Sarajevo, held assemblies and summer schools, and led projects and political campaigns. Above all, we built relationships and learnt from one another. Then Europe was at the crossroads; today it’s the Middle East. We and others like us stand ready to share our experience, and extend our solidarity.”

Founders of the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly

2.4 NATO develops frameworks of cooperation with states in the Middle East, in particular to prepare the ground for a system of regional security cooperation based on transparency, verification, and arms control, and addressing civil-military relations.

“There has been for some time a clash about governance in almost every nation of the Greater Middle East. What is needed is a process from within and not a Trojan horse. Perceived patronage in today’s realpolitik will turn the G8 into adversaries, with dire consequences. It is time to develop an Asian Muslim identity, from Cairo to Calcutta, and a complementary African Muslim identity; to address Arab and non-Arab perspectives of each other’s history and heritage, and bridge the Muslim groups including Sunni and Shia. An Islamic World Forum could contribute to this process. Civil society must be assisted to shoulder its responsibilities. Can we in the Islamic world ‘redeploy’ in partnership with the G2 and G8, transforming the front lines into a meeting ground for security, cooperation and prosperity?”

Prince El Hassan bin Talal

2.5 Civil society is involved fully from local to regional level, in the latter case through new networking and incubation frameworks such as a Middle East Citizens’ Assembly and an Islamic World Forum; international civil society could offer capacity-building support.

2.6 In future support for Middle Eastern civil society, such as a new ‘Foundation for Democracy’ or ‘21st Century Trust’, non-governmental frameworks and local actors play a central part in delivery and the setting of strategy, including Islamic groupings.⁴

⁴ A multilateral Greater Middle East Foundation for Democracy is mooted in the latest G8 draft, alongside a new umbrella for democracy assistance programmes. A Greater Middle East 21st Century Trust based on Islamic financial principles was proposed by US Senator Richard Lugar in March 2004.

2.7 Mutual connections are fostered between people and organisations in the Middle East and in the wider world through education exchanges, twinning programmes, and governance and policy networks.

3. Work to build a sovereign and legitimate Iraq that serves its people

The intervention and occupation in Iraq took place with limited attention to the human security, opportunities, self-image and aspirations of Iraqis, and with substantial disregard for post-conflict planning. Modest successes such as the new Iraqi police force have been overshadowed by the gathering insurgency. Condoleeza Rice was right to say that, “It is not the business of the 82nd Airborne Division to escort children to school”. This does not reflect well on their fitness for purpose today. The safety and empowerment of ordinary Iraqis must be the priorities. In future, forces combining security, civilian and voluntary staff in their planning and delivery can be created to secure human security in such contexts.

The chasm between Green Zone and Red Zone in Iraq is unsustainable. Some coalition media outlets are feared to be “going native” after immersion in Iraq at large; this touchstone indicates the depth of the coalition’s estrangement. Bridges of legitimacy must be built at once between the Iraqi people and centres of power in Iraq. The forms of sovereignty must be filled with positive content: the rule of law, improved security, services and opportunities, and frameworks in which Iraqis are listened to at every level as a prelude to participatory governance.

The security laboratory of Iraq has collapsed into an unruly competition over who can best protect Iraqis – the

coalition, the militias, ex-Baathist units, private companies, insurgents in Fallujah and Najaf, individuals with guns. The threats of insurgency, terror and criminality must be disentangled, and a monopoly of legitimate violence established so that citizens can feel free from constant fear. Law enforcement must be given primacy over counterinsurgency, which feeds security competition. The new Iraqi police force will falter without a framework of law and due process, requiring progress on judicial reconstruction. Improved methods of peacekeeping⁵, violence monitoring, disarmament and gun collection can help to establish a safe environment.

“In Iraq today, people don’t know the true meaning of freedom. To them it means only chaos... tanks, bombs, criminal violence, lawlessness”

Iraqi participant

Military tacticians should recognize that where the local population are humiliated or de-humanised, this will yield recruits for terror. Those who harm women, children or old people, torture or sexually abuse, arbitrarily arrest, destroy property and restrict freedom of movement are missionaries for extremism, as are those who let such actions pass. There is a direct connection between violence and exclusion: the sense of deep powerlessness built up in hearts over years of threat, disempowerment, dehumanisation and fear. Understanding this in no way excuses political violence.

⁵ Titles on peacekeeping include: Shawcross, W, *Deliver Us from Evil: Peacekeepers, Warlords and a World of Endless Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001); Rose, M, *Fighting for Peace* (Time Warner, 1999); Gordon, S, and Toase, F, (eds) *Aspects of Peacekeeping* (London: Frank Cass, 2001); United Nations General Assembly Security Council, *Report on the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations* (A/55/305, August 2000).

Rather, it helps to define concrete and effective responses. People need to feel investment in their communities and a sense of hope. We must prevent the emergence of black holes of despair and lawlessness in Iraq and elsewhere. Otherwise cultures of death, not life, will triumph.

Almost everyone in Iraq agreed on the Brahimi plan, not least because it flowed from a process of listening to all stakeholders. The interregnum between UN appointment of a caretaker cabinet at the end of June 2004 and the election of a sovereign Iraqi government in January 2005 will nonetheless be unstable. Building processes of legitimacy (rule of law, participation and improving daily life) may mean the difference between success and failure.

The organisation of free and fair elections will be the caretaker government’s first priority. But there is tremendous human talent both inside Iraq and among its diaspora, which could be empowered to rebuild society. Meeting basic needs such as freedom from want, food, water, health services, sanitation, electricity and education are key tasks, helping to prepare for economic transition. Women have a potentially pivotal role in building human security, requiring encouragement, support and training. Women now constitute 62% of the adult population of Iraq and over two-thirds of its teachers.

The strategic context may change significantly over the coming year. The UN is not prepared to run a security command in Iraq. But the prospect of precipitous US exit needs to be addressed, not least because the elected Iraqi government may demand it. Planners ought to consider this scenario. A broader framework of international cooperation for Iraq involving

neighbours, Europe and other parties could usefully be explored.

The Amman Roundtable recommends the following action in Iraq:

Security and legitimacy

- 3.1 Give international and Iraqi security forces new rules of engagement under which every person is treated as a citizen with rights and a life of equal value, from the American GI to the Iraqi child.
- 3.2 Restructure the multinational security presence to a combination of police forces and special forces, and limit its presence in major population centres, except as requested by the Iraqi government.
- 3.3 Make a rapid transition from the system of security detainees to one based on arrest warrants and due process.
- 3.4 Accelerate work to retrain and reconstruct the judiciary as a priority, including NGO and twinning assistance.
- 3.5 Apply militia disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes consistently across the board, including groups allied to the coalition, and with a view to building up cohesive and appropriate security and reconstruction capacities.
- 3.6 Train a significant number of women for the Iraqi police forces, for regular duties and to address rising violence against women in public places and in the home.
- 3.7 Give the new government elected in January 2005 full sovereignty in security as in all other matters.
- 3.8 Establish a transitional justice programme for senior regime criminals and brokers of today's violence, with a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and restitution processes to follow; Baath party and security service records to

be transferred from the control of the Iraqi National Congress to that of the interim government at once.

- 3.9 Assess damage and injury caused by the coalition, make restitution and take legal and disciplinary action in public.
- 3.10 All holders of power (the UN, the interim government, political parties and local leaders) root their decisions in wider listening processes.

Reconstruction and capacity-building

- 3.11 International organisations limit staff and consultant turnover – the 'new faces' syndrome – to improve consistency of support and capacity-building, and to offer Iraqi NGOs more management training, operational toolkits and quality standards.
- 3.12 Establish a national education process to inform women of their rights and responsibilities, raise awareness among men of the value of including women in every walk of life, including politics, and expand training programmes preparing women to assume key posts; connections to be fostered with women leaders in the West and other Muslim countries.
- 3.13 Facilitate more twinning work between local and international organisations, based on mutual learning rather than patronage.
- 3.14 Foster a communally integrated education system based on universal citizenship, and introduce peace education down to nursery school level.⁶

⁶ In Northern Ireland, Education for Mutual Understanding was established to enable children to learn to respect and value themselves and others; appreciate the interdependence of people within society; understand what is shared as well as what is different; and appreciate resolving conflict by nonviolent means. Peace education curricula are available from many sources, e.g. the Peace Education Center of the Teacher's College at Columbia University.

The lies, suspicion and betrayals of conflict can fester for decades and erupt into further atrocity. They need to be addressed in public and in safe and controlled environments, one of the most effective being a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). There have been 20 of these, each building on the lessons of the last, the most well-known in South Africa between 1995 and 1998. Reconciliation to ensure a peaceful transition to a shared democratic society sometimes necessitates postponing or rationing justice for the victims and their families. In place of punishment for crimes committed, efforts are made to record and expose the egregious acts and systematic violations of the past. Debate over the efficacy of TRCs often revolve around the conflicting demands of expediency and justice. Nevertheless, they can perform a vital reconstitutive function in transitional democracies. Other approaches include the establishment of centres to document vigilante killings, torture, rape, disappearings and unlawful arrest, in order to organise redress and restorative justice. *(See 3.8 on page 8)*

- 3.15 Assess the environmental consequences of the latest war and its predecessors, including the impact of depleted uranium.
- 3.16 Encourage dialogue between civil society organisations and political parties, to ensure that the political agenda adequately addresses reconstruction issues such as healthcare, education, children and social security.

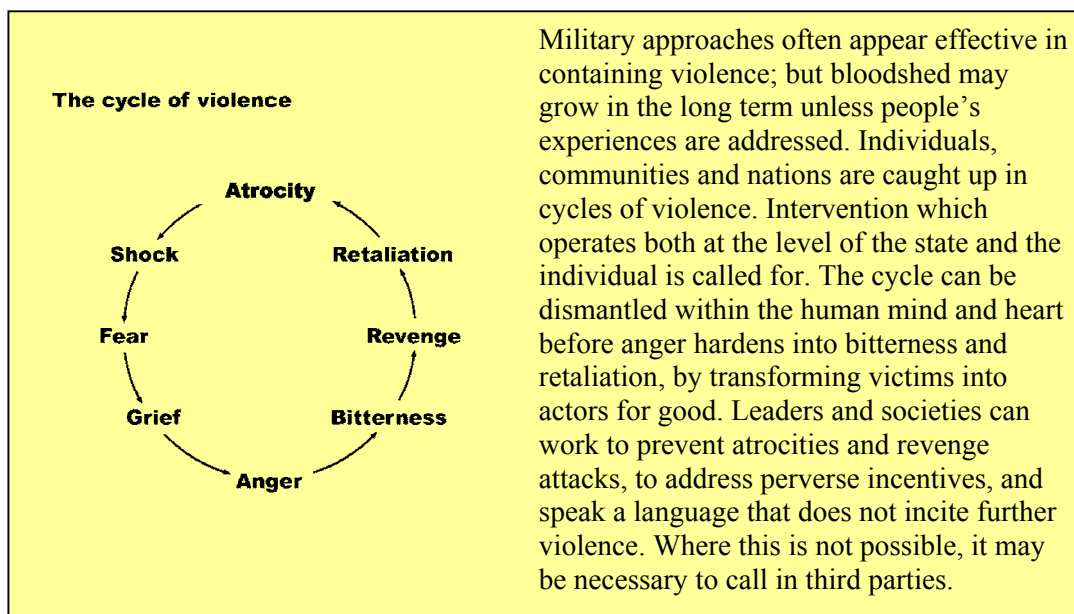
4. Involve all parties to tackle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Since the year 2000, the dance of death through the second Intifada has claimed the lives of over 3500 Palestinian, Israeli and international citizens. As extra-judicial killings, suicide bombings and guerrilla attacks escalated and the human economies began to collapse, Israel deepened the occupation and reasserted full control over large swathes of the West Bank. We have seen widespread house demolition and land confiscation. The subtler violence of checkpoints & curfews has affected all Palestinians, and both sides suffer from the dehumanisation of their counterparts.

Israeli citizens prospered during the Oslo process, but Palestinian citizens were

impoverished; their freedom of movement and trade was constrained, they watched Israeli settlements in the occupied territories double in size, and they suffered under an often corrupt and ill-administered Authority. Palestinians' failure to establish a monopoly of legitimate violence remains a challenge today, both to their capacity to deliver on talks and increasingly, as chaos gathers, to their own citizens' human security. After the rejection of the disengagement plan by the Likud party, Israel's failure to reverse the policy of settlement in the territories appears likewise intractable.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian refugee community languishes in limbo, often discriminated against (in particular in Lebanon), and without prospects of self-determination. Vivid images in the Arab media of counterinsurgency and collective punishment have deepened and broadened the base of popular enmity toward Israel, just as images of Palestinians dancing with body parts in Rafah harden the hearts of Israelis. Perpetual conflict looms.



The new barrier rising in the West Bank and Jerusalem, here a wall nine metres high, there a fence complex 120 metres wide, veers far from the Green Line and cuts through villages and farmlands, creating a severe humanitarian crisis. In combination with the settlements, their bypass roads and a complex of checkpoints, the barrier further threatens to narrow the Palestinians' space to cantons, and to foreclose a sustainable two-state solution. Only modest corrections to its route have been made. The majority of the barrier remains to be built. The closer it runs to the Green Line, the better it will prevent suicide attacks in Israel proper. For separation to work, it must provide hope for Palestinians as well.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the Israeli and Palestinian governments cannot alone resolve their conflict and create human security for their citizens. Without other vehicles for its implementation, progress on the roadmap is stalled. All players should now be involved to tackle this conflict and move toward its resolution. All-party talks could help limit wrecking by excluded groups. The international community (principally the Quartet and the Arab states) can contribute more, by

intensifying its involvement to improve conditions in the territories, and clarifying the diplomatic horizon after the discrediting of Oslo's incremental 'peace process'. Public opinion on both sides supports the cycle of violence, but also a peace deal. Major recent civil society initiatives such as the People's Voice, Geneva Accords and OneVoice clarify that persistent desire.

The Amman Roundtable recommends the following action on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- 4.1 Broker an Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire, most pressingly in Rafah; international law and human rights to be respected by both sides.
- 4.2 Initiate steps toward all-party talks processes, building on recent Palestinian talks in Cairo and involving a broader cross-section from Israel, civil society and the international community, while establishing incentives for the path of politics rather than terror.
- 4.3 Make practical the international consensus (including the US) that Israel should disengage comprehensively from Gaza and move the West Bank security barrier, by concerted pressure and the

- deployment of ‘sticks and carrots’. To Europe in particular: actively support the West Bank separation line if it is based on the Green Line, with due consideration to small-scale land swaps as suggested in extant plans, and with accompanying redeployments, progress on settlements and humanitarian measures.
- 4.4 Develop a package of major international support for socio-economic development in Gaza and the West Bank to improve Palestinians’ opportunities, including a ‘Marshall Plan’ and measures to enable enterprise and trade. To the EU and the Palestinian Authority: explore signing a stabilisation and association agreement.
- 4.5 Members of the Quartet and Arab states develop the modalities of a multinational politico-security presence in Gaza and/or the West Bank, consulting with the parties as appropriate, considering capacity-building, monitoring, security, enforcement and border issues, and technical assistance including elections and judiciary.
- 4.6 Supported by the international community, the Palestinian Authority move toward comprehensive free and fair elections at once, without waiting for Israeli withdrawals. To Israel: facilitate this process in its own long-term interest by lifting measures controlling movement within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. To Palestinians: implement formulas of democracy and human rights for this transitional period.
- 4.7 The international community build a solid consensus within the Quartet and also involving the Arab states on the acceptable outlines of a final status deal and offer it to the parties within the framework of the roadmap, bringing a comprehensive balance to recent political promises.
- 4.8 The Israeli and Palestinian peace movements coordinate their platforms and extend their joint work on non-violent action, while keeping open perspectives for cooperation in future.
- 4.9 International solidarity activists engage with both Israelis and Palestinians, rather than with one side only.

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