

PRESS RELEASE

25 years after Oslo, NGO coalition urges a new principled way towards peace

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JERUSALEM – A report published today by a coalition of 80+ international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) claims that the Oslo Accords have failed to create a pathway to peace for Israelis and Palestinians. The NGOs call for the world to commit to a new principled path towards peace, focused on human rights and accountability of all parties.

The report's publication marks the 25th anniversary of the Accords, a set of agreements signed by The Palestinian Liberation Organisation and Israel in September 1993.

"NGOs see every day how Oslo's stalled progress has damaged people's lives. Oslo's promise of a 'just, lasting, and comprehensive' peace was never fulfilled. It's time for a new narrative and a principled way forward", says Christoffer Burnett-Cargill, Director of the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) which authored the report.

The report, entitled *25 Years after the Oslo Accords – Time for a New Narrative*, emphasizes the need for a political solution to ensure prosperity and lasting peace in the region. It urges Israel, the Palestinians, and the international community to find a renewed way forward based on six principles, including upholding international law and recognizing Palestinians' right of self-determination.

The report warns that, in the absence of peace, international aid programmes are one of the only things sustaining life in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). It also claims that aid cannot achieve political solutions, that the international community must not keep using aid to paper over its acceptance of the failure of the Oslo Process, and that costly and vital aid programmes must be matched by political and legal effort to address the root causes of human suffering in Israel and the oPt.

The report traces the Oslo Accords' unraveling over the past 25 years. Without accountability and sustained pressure from the international community, the Accords' early promise of peace was never realized. Life in the oPt has devolved into cycles of poverty, violence, and human rights violations under Israeli military occupation.

Especially in Gaza, a blockade since 2007 has made life abysmal. Daily power outages plague the territory, 96% of tap water is unsafe to drink, and nearly three-quarters of the shoreline is polluted by raw sewage.

But peace between the two peoples could dramatically change this situation, according to the report. For example, in Area C of the West Bank, which is controlled by Israel, only 1% of land is planned for Palestinian development. The World Bank estimates that, if the Palestinian National Authority were given control of Area C, Palestinian GDP and employment levels would increase 35%.

While the members of AIDA are proud to support critically needed humanitarian and development assistance to communities in the West Bank and Gaza, it is not sustainable. "We must work together to change conditions on the ground to reduce dependency on this assistance, and provide for full self-determination, economic development, security and peace. We cannot afford to wait another twenty-five years, the time for action is now. Land for peace, security for peace, have failed. It is time for a new narrative, rights for peace", concludes Christoffer Burnett-Cargill.

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