

English translation of Shalom 5767 (Berliner Erklärung)

Shalom 5767 (Berlin Declaration)

For decades the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have lived as neighbours. The opportunities for mutual development and cooperation are there. But instead their lives are poisoned by war and violence, by threat and terror, by mutual hatred, contempt and disrespect.

The root of the problem is the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory since 1967. The Occupation humiliates and disenfranchises the Palestinians. It paralyzes their economic, political and social life. Moreover, this daily recurring experience of injustice prevents a peaceful resolution of the old injustice done to the Palestinians when they were forced to leave in 1948. All this further fuels the spiral of violence.

It is time to break through this spiral and pave the way for a lasting solution which will

- allow the Palestinian people self-determination and a life of dignity
- ensure an existence within internationally recognized borders for both nations
- bring peace to the entire region and thereby make the whole world a safer and more peaceful place.

In both societies, Israeli and Palestinian, there have long been voices calling for rapprochement; the Geneva Accord (www.genfer-initiative.de) is a prime example. These voices need support.

However, support from Germany is lacking. There is a reason for this: sixty-one years ago, with the defeat of Nazi Germany, the mass murder of the European Jews under the leadership of Germans came to an end. Shame and grief about this crime lead many people to remain silent about the politics of the Jewish State of Israel.

But this silence makes new injustices possible.

In an attempt to break this deadlock we – as Jews in Germany – have drawn up and signed this Declaration. We are dismayed to see how the State of Israel, which was founded with such high hopes, has become trapped in an impasse of violence.

We call upon the German government, together with the European Union,

- to no longer tolerate the Israeli policy of occupation
- to promptly end the boycott of the Palestinian Authority
- to strive earnestly for the realization of a viable Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and the entire West Bank that was occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, a state with full sovereignty and freedom of movement.

This will have to be combined with provisions for the security of all states in the region, particularly Israel, which is living in a state of constant fear, but also the neighbouring states. It will become possible to resolve questions relating to the right of return of the Palestinians driven out by Israel in 1948 consensually if Israel, as a sign of its willingness for reconciliation, acknowledges the injustice of the expulsion. The status of Jerusalem as capital of both states will have to be settled. The Arab League has put forward a proposal for a settlement with Israel. Peace could be within reach.

“What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour”. This was how Rabbi Hillel summed up the essence of Judaism two thousand years ago. This should also be the guiding principle for all human activity today – in politics too.

Please support this declaration with your signature or by registering on www.shalom5767.de.