

## **International Consortium for Civil Society Peacebuilding**

### **Background:**

The Alliance for Middle East Peace ([ALLMEP](#)) represents a network of over 160 Israeli-Palestinian civil society peacebuilding organizations, and is the lead advocate behind the passage of the bipartisan \$250m Middle East Partnership for Peace Act ([MEPPA](#)). That legislation was the result of over a decade of advocacy toward the creation of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace ([IFP](#)), a multilateral body that – if established – would coordinate and scale both civil society and economic peacebuilding projects that could disrupt many of the conditions which led to this devastating Israel-Gaza escalation.

### **Opportunity:**

While now is not the time to use precious diplomatic bandwidth to create an institution, it is the ideal time to create a more informal International Consortium for Civil Society Peacebuilding (ICCSP, see [here](#) for more information) that can later be institutionalized into something more structured and formal. Such a mechanism would pool and strategically coordinate the complementary strengths, resources and legitimacy of a concert of actors drawn from members of the G7, EU and the Arab League.

Three conditions are vital to its success:

#### **1. Readiness to announce as soon as possible after a full ceasefire.**

- a. Arab States are unlikely to announce participation until a cessation of hostilities, though all members can work discreetly in the interim on preparing the concept so that it is ready.
- b. Complicated questions around governance in Gaza, leadership transition in both Israel and the PA, and several other issues will take time to be resolved. Which will also allow a dangerous vacuum to develop. This helps to fill that vacuum and buy that time.
- c. Civil society activities are not dependent on those governance variables, and include some of the most sincere and dedicated supporters of a negotiated peace within both societies.

#### **2. A clear diplomatic horizon and goal of two states.**

#### **3. Maximally inclusive structure of EU, G7, Arab States +, with open door for new additions.**

This idea was presented in full to the UK Development Minister and to the Shadow Development and Foreign Secretaries, receiving broad support. Its broad contours have also been presented in person to French President Macron, German Foreign Minister Baerbock, the EU, and several key Arab States, among others. In the US, efforts are underway to increase funding available for reconciliation programs between Israelis and Palestinians. Several consecutive steps must now be pursued in order for there to be urgent progress.

The first six months of 2024 could include some of the following milestones:

1. **Convene 25 Israeli and Palestinian civil society leaders** from the peacebuilding field in Europe in early 2024 (confirmed, to be led by ALLMEP). The goal is to map the current threats and opportunities for those committed to peace, agree on some shared principles, ideas and messages, and to create several working groups.  
**Output:** Shared principles and environmental analysis, which can help inform policymakers once donors form the ICCSP.
2. **An exploratory intergovernmental meeting** at senior level to discuss how this group will work, the relative resources, strengths and weaknesses of participating states, as well as the political and diplomatic goals that the ICCSP will be investing and coordinating to achieve.  
**Output:** Agreement to form ICCSP, addressing key issues and commitments.
3. **An inaugural summit**, with the relevant ministers from participating countries as well as representatives from civil society invited as guests for part of the program to help map projects and for the governments to announce the creation of this initial [ICCSP](#). Civil society could attend for 2-3 days beforehand with more junior officials from participating governments, holding working groups on different issues and ideas that could be presented and discussed as part of the high-level meeting.  
**Output:** Statement confirming creation of ICCSP, its goals, some key verticals it will work within, and its commitment to genuine conflict resolution. Seed funding for the first stage of projects should be announced, as well as for key common resources that will benefit all participating governments, such as research, mapping etc.
4. **At the G7 Leaders' Summit in June in Italy**, the Arab States participating in the ICCSP could be invited as guests, and an ICCSP working session could be held so that countries could announce financial commitments and joint projects, with G7 states/Arab League states in partnership.  
**Output:** Financial commitments toward civil society and economic projects in service of final status diplomacy announced as part of the leaders' communique, ideally alongside language that also clarifies larger diplomatic strategy.

### **Conclusion:**

The creation and announcement of the ICCSP along with the restoration of a diplomatic horizon and clear milestones that demonstrate support for civil society peacebuilding will help demonstrate to the world and to local electorates and stakeholders that a broad array of key states are aligned, coordinated, and already moving beyond words to actions in pursuit of genuine Israeli-Palestinian peace.

By starting with civil society, such a process can secure early "wins" as well as fostering greater coordination among key states on issues that are less divisive than others, and with Israeli and Palestinian stakeholders who are more aligned with this vision and with each other. Focusing on civil society can cement multilateral cooperation, and the mechanism can be retained to reconvene for the subsequent, more difficult political and governance issues that will need to be addressed later.