

GENEVA ACCORDS - PEACE, OR NEW OBSTACLES TO JUSTICE?

The Geneva Accord is an unofficial peace initiative negotiated by Israeli opposition politicians together with members of the Palestine Authority. The initiative violates essential rights of the Palestinians and fails to establish a viable independent state of Palestine. In so doing, it overrides principles of human rights enshrined in international law. The Accord was drafted without consulting the Palestinian people – especially the refugees – whose destiny it gravely affects. Without such consultation, implementation of the initiative will prevent a just and lasting resolution to the conflict.

The Geneva Accord infringes upon Palestinian self-determination:

- Israeli and international forces will maintain a military presence in Palestine (Article 5/7/f), including Early Warning Stations, for an indefinite period (Article 5/8).
- Provisions of the Accord inhibit Palestinian sovereignty by permitting Israeli use of Palestinian air space for military training (Article 5/9/b/i).
- Israeli and international forces will maintain a presence at international borders for several years with the possibility of extensions (Article 5/12).

The Geneva Accord blocks refugee return:

- By placing refugee return under the "sovereign discretion" of Israel (Article 7/4/e/iii), the Accord is in direct violation of U.N. resolutions that put the choice of return in the hands of refugees.

The Geneva Accord allows for illegal annexation of Palestinian lands:

- Implementation of the Accord would legalize the annexation to Israel of much of Palestinian East Jerusalem, as well as other Israeli settlements in the West Bank, in violation of Article IV of the 1949 Geneva Convention, prohibiting annexation of land acquired by force.

The Geneva Accord is vague and incomplete:

- No provision in the Accord addresses the catastrophic damage done to Palestinian life, property, or infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza during the 37-year-long occupation of these lands.
- Land ceded to the Palestinian state in return for annexed Israeli settlements is remote and inferior in quality compared to lands being forfeited by the Palestinians.
- Crucial elements of the Accord are left up in the air until the drafting of a hypothetical "Annex X." The failure to articulate solutions to issues such as: timing of Israeli evacuation of the Palestinian territories; transfer of authority; border demarcation; details of the continuing Israeli military presence in Palestine; and allocation of water and other natural resources, is a prescription for the breakdown of the initiative.

In addition to these faults, the Geneva Accord fails to acknowledge Israel's responsibility for the harm caused by the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in 1947 – 48, again in 1967, and for the suffering of millions under occupation. These injustices are the fundamental cause of the conflict. In spite of its promising rhetoric, the Geneva Accord will not bring about a complete end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands. Rather, in overriding established standards of human rights, the document creates new obstacles to peace and reconciliation.

Relevant documents on the Internet:

Geneva Accord: http://www.heskem.org.il/Heskem_en.asp

A Critique of the Geneva Accord, Phyllis Bennis: <http://www.al-awda.org/phyllisbennis/>

Geneva Accord: Analysis of the Bankruptcy, Paul Burrows: <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article2318.shtml>

U.N. Res. 194: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/c758572b78d1cd0085256bcf0077e51a?OpenDocument>

1949 Geneva Convention: <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/WebCONVFULL?OpenView>

Al-Aqsa Intifada resource site: <http://www.alaqsaintifada.org/geneva/>