

Press Release

International Women's Commission Established by Palestinian, Israeli and International Women for a Just and Sustainable Peace

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Istanbul, Turkey — In an energetic effort to work for a genuine negotiation towards a just and sustainable peace based on a two-state solution, 35 Palestinian, Israeli and international women leaders and activists met in Istanbul on 26–28 July 2005.

The group decided to establish for the first time an International Women's Commission to ensure the implementation of the groundbreaking UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 2000) that calls upon all state parties to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels.

"After three intensive days, women were able to overcome differences and agree upon what I view to be the most effective and substantive vehicle to bring about the change so urgently needed in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict," said Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), who convened and chaired this meeting.

The International Women's Commission (IWC) will work to guarantee women's full participation in formal and informal Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, based upon principles of gender equality, women's human rights, international human rights and humanitarian law in any future resolution of the conflict to bring about an end of the Israeli occupation and a just and sustainable peace.

The Commission's work will be guided by a charter of principles that was developed and adopted at the Istanbul meeting. The goal of the IWC is to incorporate diverse women's perspectives, voices, and experiences into the peace process, and make sure that the rights and issues of women affected by the conflict are raised and effectively addressed including issues dealing with women's political, economic, social and cultural rights, and human security.

The group expects to formally launch the Commission in September 2005.