

*Jerusalem, 4 December 2006*

## **Statement by the Coalition for Jerusalem calling on the EU to approve and publish its 2006 report on East Jerusalem**

The highest body which represents the Palestinian Civil Society (PNGO) and the Coalition for Jerusalem which enfoldes Religious Dignitaries, Public Figures and Professional Associations, in addition to the Palestinian NGO Community in East Jerusalem, are hereby calling on the highest European Union diplomatic representation in Brussels to painstakingly consider the publication of this year's European Union report on East Jerusalem and not to put its contents on ice.

The heated outcry of the European Representatives in East Jerusalem and Ramallah to the high Council of their member states to take action - "while there is still time" - to improve the chances for a two state solution was unfortunately suppressed by some European Foreign Ministries when they vetoed the planned publication of last year's report.

This veto enhanced Israeli's ability to blank out the realities of Israeli policies in East Jerusalem—its total disregard of International and Humanitarian law, its relentless effort to seize Palestinian land by force and to replace the Palestinians of East Jerusalem by illegal Jewish settlers through myriad inhuman and illegal tools. The veto also helped Israel to blank out its policies to change the landscape of East Jerusalem, including the Old City, through issuing a City Master plan, which includes the occupied and illegally annexed East Jerusalem, as part of the eternal capital of the "Jewish" state.

Aligning political orientations towards Israel's unilateral visions on the part of the European leaders, and heaping blame on the PA on the part of these leaders, had not yielded the "illusion" change of direction in Israeli aspirations or politics. On the contrary, the outcome was a whole scale incursion and war crimes in Gaza, and a total invasion and war crimes in Lebanon. These wars, which defy International humanitarian law, came in the wake of unilateral disengagement from both areas. The Israeli full engagement in East Jerusalem, which was underway while "Israeli disengagement" was in process in Gaza will undoubtedly result in Internationally unnoticed war crimes in East Jerusalem due to continuous blanking out of Israeli policies.

The de facto measures, which Israel stepped up since the report was shelved, resulted in more annexation of Palestinian land in and around East Jerusalem to build more Jewish settlements and to complete the "Separation Barrier". The report specifically anticipated this as it states: "This de Facto annexation of Palestinian land will be irreversible without large scale forced evacuations of settlers and the rerouting of the barrier"... "When the barrier is completed, Israel will control all access to East Jerusalem, cutting off its Palestinian satellite cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah, and the West Bank beyond."

The EU's foreign policy chief who persuaded the ministers to drop the report may have acted in good faith for fear of undermining Europe's influence over Israel. However, they may have noticed a climb down of Europe's influence in the entire peace process. The fear of alienating

Israel ended in alienating the European countries' role in brokering a two states solution, a danger that the report tried to fend off.

The Middle East peace process is at a critical junction now. And Europe may still have time to rethink its positions in order to play an active role in the Middle East by supporting the enactment of International law.

A new EU report about East Jerusalem is being drafted by the representatives of the European Countries in the Occupied Territories again this year. For We the representatives of PNGO and the Coalition for Jerusalem urge the member States Foreign Ministers not to withhold its publication, by overestimating "Olmert's ceasefire" proclamations.