Partners for Peace: Women in Israel and Palestine
Working for an End to the Conflict and Lasting Reconciliation
The Nobel Women’s Initiative uses the prestige of the Nobel Peace Prize and courageous women peace laureates to magnify the power and visibility of women working in countries around the world for peace, justice, and equality.

**Our advocacy is organized around three main pillars:**

**Women Forging Peace**—We advocate building long-term peace supporting women who are engaged in nonviolence and other alternatives to ending war and militarism, and support the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and other peace building efforts.

**Women Achieving Justice**—We support work to achieve justice for women, including accountability for crimes committed against women and an end to widespread impunity.

**Women Advancing Equality and Human Rights**—We support human rights defenders, including those working for women’s equality and climate justice.
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A Message from Jody Williams and Mairead Maguire

Checkpoints litter the roads as young men stand guard with guns, relaxed and prepared to take the life of another. Children are raised fearing their neighbours. Whole communities become refugees as bulldozers turn their homes to dust. Hate, pain, and death hang like clouds, casting shadows of suspicion on the land below. These are the images of two nations struggling to live side by side on the same piece of land.

The evening news often brings us stories from Israel and Palestine, yet they usually focus on male political leaders in the region engaged in what appears to be a futile peace process. They are brought together on carefully manicured lawns far from the chaos of everyday life, shaking hands and posing for cameras. They repeatedly assure the public that every meeting is a step forward in sorting through the labyrinth of this protracted conflict.
What is missing from most of these newscasts is what is happening on the ground, with civil society, in Israel and Palestine. In particular, women are emerging in inspiring numbers to challenge decades of war and militarism. While their leaders sit in office, far from the realities of a society at war, the women of Israel and Palestine are making tangible, positive strides toward peace. So, in September-October 2010, the Nobel Women’s Initiative led a delegation to the region. We wanted to connect with the numerous women who have made it their mission to build peace within the turmoil.

In a world where militarism is almost sacred and anxiety reigns, there are countless courageous Israeli and Palestinian women who have made it their life’s work to bridge the conflicted groups. They look past the divisiveness of the two distinct narratives history has handed the nations, and rather, they consider the future. In the face of violence and discrimination, they’re organizing peace rallies and building incredible movements. They’re taking communities torn apart by decades of violence and creating better futures from the rubble.

Frustrated with the ineffectiveness of their leaders, they’re forming their own networks and promoting open dialogue. They build understanding, tolerance, and most importantly, forgiveness. Together, they mourn lost sons, counsel daughters, protest in the streets, challenge laws, and work toward a day when the walls between the two nations will disappear.

The seeds for peace are being sown by the women of Israel and Palestine every single day. During the Second Intifada – the Second Palestinian uprising – Israel left negotiations claiming there was “no partner for peace” in Palestine.

Yet the reality was that politicians simply had no interest in seeking a sustainable peace. The following report profiles a number of Israeli and Palestinian individuals and organizations who we met during the delegation and who rally against traditional perceptions of hate. They stand up for the human rights of members of both nations, often facing backlash and persecution. They promote alternatives to militarism, contribute to policy and research, promote women’s rights and needs, and nurture reconciliation in the troubled region. They work across lines of gender, nationality, and religion for a just, equal, and nonviolent society.

If the leaders of Israel and the international community are serious about seeking a lasting peace in Israel and Palestine, they will find the women within these pages are waiting for them.
Map of Israel/Palestine indicating the delegation’s route

LEGEND

Israel/Palestine

The delegation visited:

A. Jerusalem
B. German Colony, East Jerusalem
C. Ramallah, West Bank
D. Hebron, West Bank
E. Bil’in, West Bank
F. Haifa
G. Nazareth
H. Gush Etzion, West Bank (Israeli Settlements)
I. Beit Jala, West Bank
J. Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem
K. Old City, Jerusalem
Introduction

The Nobel Women’s Initiative regularly leads delegations to places of conflict or where sustainable peace still has not been achieved. The delegations are a means to bring women from different sectors – corporate, academia, media, policy, and the arts – to meet and support women activists who are promoting peace and justice in other parts of the world. After the delegations, the Nobel Women’s Initiative and delegation members share what they have learned to their networks around the world, with a particular focus on highlighting the powerful strategies being employed by women’s groups to advance peace.

The delegation to Israel and Palestine in September-October 2010 witnessed the decades of violence the region has suffered, and was undertaken to show solidarity with the women who have dedicated their lives to creating peace. Led by Nobel Peace Laureates Mairead Maguire and Jody Williams, the delegation included American women from various walks of life; a rabbi, a lawyer, a journalist, and two philanthropists.

This powerful group of women spent ten days in Israel and Palestine visiting organizations, politicians, and individuals in the communities of Ramallah, Hebron, Nil’in, Bil’in, Haifa, Nazareth, and Jerusalem.

In these pages, we’d like to introduce you to some of the extraordinary women and organizations we met during the delegation.
The Peacemaking Women of Israel and Palestine
Jaclyn Friedman

When I was invited to join the Nobel Women's Initiative's delegation to Israel and Palestine, I was like many well-meaning citizens of the global community. When I did think about the region's ongoing conflicts, I felt great sadness and unease, but never urgency or hope.

I had been hearing about “the crisis” — and attempts to resolve it — for decades. There seemed little reason to imagine that anything I could do could make a difference there, one way or another. So I focused my energies elsewhere, until the Nobel Women came calling.

When I first returned from our week in the region and friends and colleagues asked me the inevitable “how was it?,” I found myself delivering the same message over and over. It's the message I want you to remember as you read the stories in this report. It surprised me the first time it fell out of my mouth, because it sounds so contradictory, and yet I knew it was true. It’s simply this: things are so much worse than I’d even imagined. And there’s so much more hope than I could have dreamed.

That both my assessment of the nature of the crisis and my understanding of what could be done about it were so muted in comparison to the realities on the ground has everything to do with the anti-feedback loop much of the Western media has built around the region. Like a soundproofed studio from which only carefully curated tracks are amplified, censorship runs deep. Nowhere is this phenomenon more pronounced than in my home country of the U.S.A., where justification of our political and financial “investments” in the region is always job one.

Whatever you’ve heard or haven’t, make no mistake: the situation is desperate, and the window of opportunity for real international intervention is closing fast. If the Israeli government continues to build illegal settlements on Palestinian land, there will soon be little incentive for Palestinians to negotiate at all. There’s also the looming risk that, if the conflict is left unresolved, it will be referred to the UN Security Council, where neither Israelis nor Palestinians will have a say in their future. That’s not an outcome that anybody wants.

Meanwhile, conditions are unconscionable. Palestinian children and pregnant women are dying at checkpoints
while they wait to be allowed through to seek medical care. Two-thirds of the residents of Gaza are refugees and eighty percent are reliant on UN food aid. Gazan women are forced into early marriages, and, in the words of one Gazan woman, kept in a “vicious circle of ignorance and submission.” Palestinian citizens of Israel face 23 Israeli laws guaranteeing them unequal treatment in housing, employment, access to social services and more. Israeli mothers watch their children be raised by the state to be soldiers and sent off to arm the border. Young people who refuse to serve are jailed. Israeli activists who dare to speak publicly for peace are targeted by vicious smear campaigns, their organizations targeted and undermined by the Israeli government. Palestinians in the West Bank lose their homes, their land, their shops, access to school for their children — anything they have can be seized by the Israeli government, at any moment, for any reason.

These circumstances are not accidental, nor are they inevitable. They are the direct result of the unchecked rule of corrupt, entrenched governments, enabled by a potent cocktail of Western political machinations and the soulless opportunism of global capitalism. When international diplomats throw their hands up in frustration and say “There are no partners for peace in Israel and Palestine,” they mean the governments of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. It’s true that these few powerful leaders and their enablers are not partners for peace. The preservation of their power is contingent on war. But they don’t represent the wishes of the majority of their peoples.

Given all of this, it’s not surprising to discover that the crisis underlying all of the violence, poverty, insecurity, corruption and desperation is a crisis of hope. Over and over we heard and witnessed the same thing: the majority of both peoples want peace, and the majority of both peoples believe it can’t be done, or that the “other side” doesn’t want it. This fear of the other runs deep. Many Palestinians can see no difference between an individual Israeli and the occupying force that bombs their cities and seizes their land. The Israeli settlers we met believed that if they went into Ramallah they’d be murdered in the street — a belief we checked with numerous peacenik Israelis who said it just wasn’t true. In fact, we met with many Israelis in Ramallah, as it is hard for Palestinians to leave the West Bank, so most Palestinian-Israeli coalition work must take place there. One study quoted often to us by our guides showed that seventy percent of Israelis believe it will never happen. It’s not hard to see why — each time peace has been promised over the years and decades, the situation has only worsened. That kind of profound and continual heartbreak does permanent damage to the heart’s ability to hope.

And yet, even in the face of this, hundreds — probably thousands — of women on this little stamp of ancient, embattled land get up every day and work for peace on behalf of the rest of the seventy percent who can’t bring themselves to hope. Israeli mothers and grandmothers spend their days observing the Israeli soldiers at the border, documenting their behaviour and calling on them to treat Palestinians with respect and dignity. Haneen Zouabi, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, serves every day as a Member of the Knesset, knowing full well she doesn’t have a coalition powerful enough to pass or block a single law, but insisting on giving voice to her community in the halls of power anyhow. Israelis and Palestinians gather together to stand in front of Israeli government bulldozers, refusing to allow communities to be separated from their olive groves and schools by the illegal border wall. Women who have lost loved ones in the conflict — women who have suffered that unimaginable loss — meet together in pairs, one Israeli, and one Palestinian, and learn not only to forgive but to love one another. While we were there, hundreds of Palestinian women met together to address the gender oppression in their communities and governments, and to organize for equality and justice. These extraordinary women — many of whom we met with — don’t lack solutions. They lack resources and power. They are our partners for peace, if only we will partner with them.

“Things are so much worse than I’d even imagined. And there’s so much more hope than I could have dreamed.”

Jaclyn Friedman
It is perhaps bold to suggest that the experts and politicians are wrong, that other paths are possible, that there are partners for peace eager and waiting for the world to join them in the crucial work of *Tikkun Olam* – a Hebrew phrase meaning ‘healing the world.’ It’s certainly bold to imagine we can succeed when so many have already given their lives trying. But if these women can get up every day and work for peace in the face of that inescapable history, then we must be bold enough to work for their success.

Think of what these women have already accomplished. They have stopped bulldozers. They’ve created and aired a prime-time soap opera modelling ways Israelis and Palestinians can reconcile. They’ve paved the way for Palestinian women to start their own businesses and pursue higher education. They’ve made it easier to resist the Israeli draft. They’ve organized a global campaign for boycotts, divestment and sanctions in pursuit of justice. They’ve worked together in coalition for decades, despite overwhelming global forces bent on tearing them apart. Now imagine what they could accomplish if just a fraction of the international resources — money, media, and influence — that currently flow into the region to enable and profit from the status quo were redirected toward their already heroic efforts. It’s possible, but only if we all act together.

When we embarked on our delegation, some of us were long-time collaborators and compatriots to each other, and others of us were strangers. Some of us were already intimately involved in efforts to resist the relentlessly violent conflict between Israel and Palestine, others of us having never set foot in either land. Though we travelled together, we each had our own responses to what we witnessed and experienced, sometimes building on each others’ insights, other times disagreeing vehemently. But we came away with several key agreements about how to move forward. The first is that, in order to forge a way forward, Israelis and Palestinians must agree to disagree about the past. Those of us in the international community must follow this advice as well — rehashing who started what when, whose violence was most justified, and whose losses have been greatest keeps us in an endless cycle of violence and loss. We can only start from now, and build on the landscape that exists in the present, with the conditions as they are now. This is easier said than done, of course, but if women who have buried their own children due to the conflict can practice the kind of forgiveness that Robi Damelin of the Parents’ Circle defines as “the giving up of one’s just right to revenge,” then surely we can learn how to follow their lead.

Once we’ve begun to see conditions as they are, we must insist on consequences for those who create and enable these conditions. The Israeli government must face consequences for continuing to build illegal settlements on Palestinian lands, for evicting Palestinian citizens of Israel from their homes on false (or no) pretences, for ongoing war crimes and violations of United Nations rules in Gaza, and for building the border wall far inside the agreed-upon border with Palestine. The Palestinian governments — Hamas in Gaza, and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank — must be sanctioned for their anti-democratic, anti-woman regimes. And the people and corporations profiting from the ongoing violence and occupation must be made to pay instead.

In the end, the people of Israel and Palestine want what all people want. They want their children to have access to education, they want to be able to support their families, they want safe homes and safe bodies and freedom of movement and freedom from fear. They want to have hope again. When 120,000 Palestinian women were surveyed as part of a three-year women’s empowerment project, the women identified the following main problems: unemployment, lack of health care, equal rights in the labour market (including vocational choice), and affordable higher education — social priorities that will likely sound familiar to all of us, no matter where we live.

Despite all history to the contrary, the peacemaking women of Israel and Palestine believe in us. Everywhere we went, when we asked, “what can we do to support your efforts for peace?,” the answer was the same: tell our story. Tell everyone that we are here, that we’re doing the hard work of peacemaking every day, that we can prevail, but we need help. Even though the world has thrown their hands up and left them to struggle on their own for so long, they not only believe that we can help them, they believe that if we understand both what’s at stake, and what’s possible, that we will help them. Against all odds, these women believe both in peace and in us. We could do nothing more important than to return the favour.
What does palestinian
means When We Do It Big
street
hi

& talent To show the
up You’re Rappin Skill’z And Throw It DOWN In A
album against the zionist occupation And
the Blood Shed to stand up saying ENough IS enou

Hip Hop “X” will be filmed and presented
to the supporting group’s for palestine
rise the level of Hip Hop culture in palestine
Partners for Peace

KAYAN-FEMINIST ORGANIZATION

The mission of Kayan starts with a simple premise – that social change can be achieved when women are empowered to take a more active role in both the private and public sphere. The group’s name, meaning “being” in Arabic, is basic to the idea that change will occur once women can make decisions about their own lives and exert influence within greater society.

Made up of Arab-Israeli feminists, Kayan tackles the significant inequality within its community. Only one in five Arab women are part of the Israeli workforce. Many do not have access to education and are trapped in traditional household gender roles. With no decision-making power, access to resources, or platform for their voice to be heard, women’s needs are too often neglected and completely ignored. For Arab-Palestinian women living in Israel, the already desperate situation is worse; “they suffer double discrimination – once as Palestinians and again in their own community because of their gender,” observed Shirin Batson-Khoury, coordinator of Kayan’s Legal Department.

Kayan advocates for Arab women – Israeli and Palestinian alike – to have full and equal rights within all legal, economic, and social spheres. Yet Shirin noted that religious courts continue to discriminate against women, especially in cases involving family law or sexual harassment. The group has also found that despite Arabic being an official language in Israel, most legal information continues to be published only in Hebrew, making Arab women vulnerable to an abuse of their rights. To address this, Kayan provides much needed legal aid and advice to low-income Arab women.

The group also works to overcome basic barriers generating poverty and dependence, such as a lack of job training. They provide workshops, seminars, and easy-to-read guides in Arabic, as well as one-on-one counselling. This brings information about household finances and social rights directly to women who would otherwise be without it. A Kayan member explained, “We see that women can quickly improve their situation if they have access to relevant information and are encouraged to take an active approach towards their personal economy and savings.”

Making Arab-Israeli women proactive members of society, Kayan encourages knowledge-building and personal development. Grassroots organizing at the community level chips away at the gender gap within the governing leadership by empowering women to become more actively involved. A testament to their success, Kayan continues to grow and join with fellow women’s coalitions in the region to promote dialogue across communities.

KAYAN-FEMINIST ORGANIZATION was established in 1998 to promote the rights of Arab women in Israel. The feminist grassroots group strives to empower Arab women to become effective leaders and become part of the decision-making process – both in the private and public domain.

- www.kayan.org.il
- www.facebook.com/KayanFeministOrganization
- kayan@netvision.net.il

“I hope that the Israelis and Palestinians could see us as a model and see that it is possible for us to live together.”

Shirin Batson-Khoury, Coordinator, Kayan Legal Department

Delgates with the International Women’s Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace
Parents CIrCle-FamIlIeS FORum

For members of the Parents Circle-Families Forum, the craft of paper-making is a form of not only artwork, but also peacebuilding. Aesha Faress is a shining example of the power of creative healing. As she sits among groupmates – both Palestinian and Israeli – she holds a newspaper clipping describing the arrest of her uncle during the First Intifada. “This was the beginning of our tragedy,” she says, while crushing the news clipping and adding green leaves of lemon and sage. By sharing her story and creating something beautiful from her tragedy, Aesha breathes new life and new hope into her uncle’s memory.

Aesha is just one of the many raised in an occupied state, with her family’s basic freedoms limited. She weaves childhood photos demonstrating the hardships of growing up in Palestine into her art and optimistically remarks, “I still await and hope for a beautiful life of peace and freedom.”

Paper-making is not an activity that comes to mind when thinking of peacebuilding projects. And yet, the creative art form is one of many programs initiated by the Parents Circle-Families Forum to bring Israelis and Palestinians together. The group fosters open dialogue and mutual understanding between families from both sides of the conflict who are experiencing loss and grief.

Women – mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters – have a strong influence in both Israeli and Palestinian communities, and members of the Parents Circle-Families Forum view their role in the national reconciliation process as vital. Initiatives such as paper-making are a small beginning, allowing each woman an opportunity to share her story, to tell of “our pain and our prayers for change.”

A lack of trust and empathy between the Israeli and Palestinian communities are driving forces allowing the cycle of violence to flourish. But for Parents Circle-Families Forum members, the idea of revenge must stop, replaced instead by the idea that through conversation we can all find the humanity in others. “You have many choices of what to do after loss,” one member stated. “Each time we meet, hand in hand, we will make it better. It gives me hope.”
Initiating meetings and classroom dialogues, the Parents Circle-Families Forum brings together members of the other community to discuss their own experience and break down the wall of the unknown. Always looking for new ways to engage the warring groups, the Parents Circle-Families Forum launched the “Crack in the Wall” project in 2010. The project harnesses the power of social media to break through barriers and create a space for conversation and engagement between Israelis and Palestinians. Through Facebook, those seeking peace have an opportunity to challenge racism, hatred, and injustice, and reflect on the challenges of living in a deeply militarized society. For many, this type of meeting is the first time they are exposed to the other’s narrative and serves to humanize the group as a whole.

One member commented, “Before, seeing the violence, I hated all the Israelis. Then my husband was killed, and I hated more. I thought – ‘how can I talk with them?’ After I told my story, many Jewish people were crying and some came to me and wiped away my tears, and it was different.”

The group’s greatest strength is their resilience; even in the face of renewed fighting in early 2009, Parents Circle-Families Forum members continued to visit schools and the group cemented their close ties with one another, giving them courage to continue. Day by day, person by person, the Parents Circle-Families Forum is creating a framework for reconciliation – and fostering a new generation to achieve sustainable peace.

PARENTS CIRCLE – FAMILIES FORUM was established in 1995 to bring together Israelis and Palestinians grieving for a family member, killed due to the conflict. The group fosters dialogue between the two communities, using public and media outreach, to begin and encourage the process of reconciliation.

• www.theparentscircle.com • www.facebook.com/ParentsCircleFamiliesForum • www.twitter.com/ThePCFF • office@theparentscircle.org
"If we don’t succeed, we destroy not only each other, but ourselves.”

Naomi Chazan, Israeli Activist and Politician

NAOMI CHAZAN

“Women have always been at the forefront – the most consistent and the most persistent,” declared long-time activist and academic Naomi Chazan on the role of women in Israel’s peace movement.

Founder and President of the New Israel Fund, Naomi has focused her work around the core principles of freedom, justice, and equality. She stressed that these are the same principles on which the state of Israel was founded.

Naomi mobilizes Israeli and Palestinian women to move ahead together, rather than being separated by negative societal and political pressures. Separation can lead to apathy about the current state of affairs – and that is why in-person meetings between the two communities are necessary. “People-to-people interaction is vital,” Naomi said, “but not just for the sake of talking – it must be for the sake of making change.”

For Naomi, both civil society and political leaders need to be involved in forming sustainable peace – precisely why she became involved in politics. In 1992, Naomi was elected into Israel’s legislature – the Knesset. For a decade, she served as a legislator for the Meretz, a social democratic party.

During her time in office, Naomi continually faced the problem of peace negotiations collapsing under the stress of conditions and constraints placed upon each party. Doubt about people’s true intentions prevailed and almost always ensured failure. “Do not underestimate how much scepticism undermines progress…Scepticism is a prescription for inaction,” she explained.

Naomi’s New Israel Fund – a partnership of Israeli, North American, and European groups - provides financial and technical support to community-based peace organizations. Over 800 civil society groups working for peace have been jump-started through the Fund.

Naomi is continually working to find common ground upon which peace negotiations can find their footing. She advocates for increased civil society presence at peace negotiations in order to minimize the gap between people and leadership. Naomi has also drawn attention to the roots of the conflict to ensure that the underlying issues of violence and equality are addressed in any agreement. Despite widespread mistrust, Naomi continually emphasizes that respect for “the other” and a mechanism for a reconciliation process are key components for lasting peace.

NEW ISRAEL FUND was founded in 1979. The group provides funding to community-based organizations in Israel promoting peace, justice, and equality. Through its efforts, the Fund has become a leader in advancing democracy in Israel and is credited with helping over 800 local organizations get their start.

• www.nif.org • www.facebook.com/newisraelfund
• www.twitter.com/newisraelfund • nif@nif.org.il

Delegates touring Old City, Jerusalem

Naomi Chazan
"Because we are women and we are vocal against the occupation, they call us radicals and dismiss us as feminists. We have to constantly remind the public that we don't live a normal life here in Israel, that it's not normal or natural to oppress other people."

Isha L'Isha Activist

**ISHA L'ISHA**

One of the oldest grassroots feminist organizations in Israel, Isha L'Isha began in the city of Haifa as just a few women coming together for open conversation. The group has now grown to a coalition of five organizations and its members laugh off the "radical" designation they have been given. As one woman mentioned, "In Israel, anyone who opposes the government is considered a 'radical.'"

Among the group members, all have been personally affected by the ongoing conflict and seen their families torn apart. Many of the women's close relatives are serving in the armed forces and some have children who have been imprisoned for refusing enlistment.

One woman, whose son would change out of his Israeli military uniform before her Palestinian friends came to visit, explained, "There are things we're not talking about and there are things that need to be said. How do you raise your sons and daughters in this context? How do you get through the day in a way that doesn't make you lose sleep? It's incredibly difficult to discuss this, some might even say politically incorrect to discuss this, but these are our lives."

Isha L'Isha activists emphasize that in a country plagued by conflict, women's voices and needs have been marginalized and silenced in the name of "national security." Through the organization's core program, they work to redefine security to include the personal, social, economic, cultural, and health aspects – all from a women's perspective.

They bring issues that are not on the public agenda to the forefront, such as human trafficking, prostitution, and reproductive rights. One of their most successful endeavours is the Guns Free Kitchen Tables Campaign – an initiative to end the bloodshed caused by the unsanctioned use of security weapons by off-duty guards. In a nation where militarization is so deeply embedded in the collective conscience, campaigning against the right to bear arms was no easy task. But as a result of their dedication and unabashed advocacy, the group succeeded in bringing the issue to the Israeli government, who agreed to strictly enforce the law that security weapons must not leave the worksite – undoubtedly saving countless lives from careless death.
Even with great success in the political and policy arenas, Isha L’Isha remains passionately committed to grassroots change. Each and every day, at least two of the organization’s grandmothers travel to the border checkpoints with cakes and messages of peace for the young soldiers. As one Isha L’Isha activist remarks, “You should see the little children - they are 18 years old, but are children. We have to always remind them to find the humanity in the ‘other.’ The occupation corrupts our young people terribly.”

The women travelling to the checkpoints also take turns documenting the realities of the border conflict. They record everything – from children denied access to critical medical care to soldiers’ abuse of power – and publish it in a daily newspaper for all to see. In doing so, they expose injustices and bring the humanity of the conflict to life.

The group’s ongoing documentation, education, research, and legislation efforts have led to a number of projects evolving into independent organizations through the years. Describing the value of the work they are undertaking to Israeli-Palestinian society, one member said, “The issue of how the political is personal and the personal is political is an incredible weight we carry here.”

The group undertakes research and public outreach in the form of seminars and brings women from both Israeli and Palestinian communities together in safe spaces to discuss personal dilemmas. Apart from providing a larger communication network, it allows for trust to be built between women from the conflicted nations. Though the process may be slow, Isha L’Isha activists know that by promoting nonviolence and advocating against discrimination, they are creating change – and with that, a brighter future for everyone.

ISHA L’ISHA was founded in 1983 and as the oldest grassroots women’s organization in Israel, is one of the leading feminist voices in the country. Based in Haifa, the group promotes the rights of all women and girls in the country. It provides a safe environment to address issues relevant to women including reproductive rights, violence against women, discrimination, and sexual identity.

• www.isha.org.il • isha@isha.org.il
• www.facebook.com/pages/Isha-LIsha-Haifa-Feminist-Center/194056310615412

Delegates listen to members of Isha L’Isha
ZAHIRA KAMAL

“It is not strange that historical events of Palestine were the driving force that has determined my life. I grew up hating the Israelis without even knowing or meeting them,” explained Zahira Kamal, a renowned Palestinian author. But this childhood filled with hate eventually turned into a life dedicated to mending the unease between the splintered communities.

Zahira has been the predominant woman’s voice in Palestinian literature for over three decades. Writing on gender and Israeli-Palestinian relationships, her thoughts are often transformed into active dialogues with Israeli groups. Her experiences growing up in Palestine have had a direct influence on her work. Zahira emphasizes – both in her writing and in lectures – that the two communities have to meet face-to-face and get to know one another. She explained that the settlements, the walls, the checkpoints, and the resulting forced separation results in apathy; “If I don't know anything about you, why would I bother about you?”

Emphasizing the significant role women play in the political arena, whether for the promotion of women’s rights or for overall democracy, Zahira noted that women’s political participation has grown within Palestine in recent years. Zahira herself has been actively involved, both as the first Minister of Women’s Affairs in the Palestinian National Authority and a member of the leadership of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Her political activities earned her a jail sentence in 1979 followed by six years of town arrest in Jerusalem in 1980. Despite this unjust discrimination, Zahira continued on in politics. When there was a split in her party, she left with the Palestinian Democratic Union (PDU), supporting the Madrid and Oslo peace negotiations with Israel. Representing the PDU, she led the Women's Affairs Technical Committee at the Madrid Conference, monitoring women's issues in the interim peace agreement. In 2011, Zahira became the first woman elected as leader of a Palestinian political group, representing the Palestinian Democratic Union as secretary-general.

Despite a long and undoubtedly tiring political career, Zahira continues to be an active advocate for women's rights, working with women's organizations in Gaza. These independent, non-profit Palestinian groups empower women and advocates for gender equality through advocacy, capacity-building, and action-focused research. Zahira has won numerous awards for her work promoting peace and, in 2005, was one of the 1000 women proposed as a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

“I believe that women have a strong desire and need for peace. I also believe that we are able to work out our relationships and live with each other – in peace and harmony.”

Zahira Kamal, Author, Politician, and Activist
MADA AL-CARMEL: ARAB CENTER FOR APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH

The first research center in Israel gathering data from the perspective of Palestinians, Mada al-Carmel continues to this day to be the only group conducting research from the outlook of the nation's women. Himmat Zu'Bi, the Center's Gender Studies Project Coordinator, explained that the organization “fills the critical gap in knowledge.”

Highlighting that it is not the identity of the researcher that is significant, but rather the researcher’s perspective, Mada al-Carmel promotes analytical evaluation rather than simply accepting mainstream “orientalism” or the “other-ing” of Palestinians.

The Center’s goal is to be a hub for critical research, providing Palestinian students and analysts with a place to discuss their findings and possible implications for human and national development. Building relationships with researchers around the world, Mada al-Carmel staff create public policy proposals designed to improve the political, economic, and social conditions of the Palestinian peoples.

The group has found that Palestinians, especially women, are vastly underrepresented in Israel’s labour force. A lack of infrastructure, public transportation, and daycares in Arab villages impede Arab-Israeli women’s ability to work outside of the home. The low employment rates contribute to Palestinian families living below the poverty line in Israel.

Mada al-Carmel researchers highlight the necessity of having Palestinian citizens at negotiation tables with Israel. They also underline the need to recognize the long-term rights of Palestinians in Israel, rather than just addressing issues arising from the occupation. As one Palestinian researcher asked, “If the occupation ended today, what would be changed in our situation?”

The backlash the center has faced for its work is significant – from local and international institutions alike. Recently Mada al-Carmel had funding revoked for two projects by Canada’s International Development Research Center despite having no complaints about quality or progress. After the Nobel Women’s Initiative intervened on Mada al-Carmel’s behalf, the group was able to reach a settlement and has been able to continue its work.

MADA AL-CARMEL generates and provides information, critical analysis, and diverse perspectives on the social and political life and history of Palestinians. They are committed to supporting Palestinian and other academics to develop critical approaches, exchange ideas, and advance their research.

- www.mada-research.org
- https://www.facebook.com/MadaalalCarmel
- https://twitter.com/mada_alcarmel
- mada@mada-research.org

“Peace will never be long-lasting unless it is a just peace.”

Einas Odeh-Haj, Associate Director, Mada al-Carmel

Einas Odeh-Haj, Associate Director, Mada al-Carmel

Members of Mada al-Carmel speak with delegation
Partners for Peace

ROBI DAMELIN

Personal loss is often at the heart of many activists' struggle for peace in the Israel-Palestine region. While revenge by grieving family members can spur attacks, the sadness also motivates mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters to seek dialogue with the opposing community. The process of reconciliation, and forgiveness – for an individual, a family, or an entire nation – takes patience, time, and much internal effort.

In the spring of 2002, Robi Damelin's 28 year-old son David was killed by a sniper while serving in the Israeli armed forces. Upon hearing of her son's death, Robi declared that no blood would be shed in David's name. She dedicated herself to fostering an open exchange between Israeli and Palestinian families through the Parents Circle-Families Forum. The group provides grieving families with an opportunity for discussion and promotes an understanding of “the other” – the first step towards any type of reconciliation.

Yet, when the young man who killed David was apprehended and jailed, Robi's own grief was tested. Despite advocating for reconciliation between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, she now had to directly face forgiveness herself. “How can I go around the world talking about reconciliation and peace, if I myself am not ready to start on this path,” she questioned.

After months of reflection, Robi wrote a letter to the family of the sniper, which was delivered by Palestinian members of the Parents Circle-Families Forum. “…After your son was captured, I spent many sleepless nights thinking … about what to do, should I ignore the whole thing, or will I be true to my integrity and to the work that I am doing and try to find a way for closure and reconciliation,” she wrote. “Our lives as two nations are so intertwined, each of us will have to give up on our dreams for the future of the children who are our responsibility.”

Born in South Africa and with activist roots in the country's anti-apartheid movement, open and honest dialogue between conflicted communities shapes Robi's work. Pushing the importance and involvement of political leaders in the reconciliation process, Robi understands the struggle that comes with convincing anyone to steer away from the path of anger and towards forgiveness.

“The word ‘forgiveness’, when it comes from some place genuine, is an extremely powerful word. Nations can be changed with this word.”

Robi Damelin

Partners for Peace
NEW PROFILE

New Profile begins with the mandate that war is a matter of choice and therefore, change needs to come from within. As one activist remarked, “We are turning our attention inside, towards Israeli society. If we don’t change, nothing will.” The group strives for a transformation of the nation – from militarization to peace, from oppression to equality, from occupier to respectful neighbour.

After having moved from the United States and raising her family in an Israeli collective community, Ruth Hiller’s 15 year-old son declared he was a pacifist. While still three years away from his 18 birthday and enlistment in the Israeli army, Ruth realized she would be unable to help her son evade the mandatory draft.

Ruth put her efforts into being a vocal opposition against the war – joining demonstrations and groups for peaceful activism and eventually cofounding New Profile.

Working with youth, New Profile aims to instil the idea of peace in the younger generations with the hope that critically thinking about conflict will lead to long-term changes in society.

Operating youth groups in several regions of the country, New Profile forums provide a safe space to reflect and openly deliberate current events and political decisions – such as whether or not to enlist in the army. As the movement grew and gained momentum, Ruth’s activism allowed her son – and others like him – to evade imprisonment.

Even today, there is little support available for conscientious objectors despite the fact that almost a quarter of every graduating high school class chooses not to serve in the military. Those who make this decision face a possible prison sentence as punishment. New Profile provides a counselling network for those who choose not to enlist, as well as necessary guidance and support. In 2009 alone, New Profile assisted approximately 2000 conscientious objectors.

Still, three quarters of youth do choose to enlist, whether willingly or as a result of social pressure. A large part of the problem is the deeply ingrained militarism in Israeli society. From playgrounds filled with cannons and warplanes, to ‘educational’ lectures from military leaders, to advertisements glorifying military service, the message that war is good is everywhere. For entire generations raised in this environment, the notion of a world without conflict doesn’t even register. In 2008, New Profile led the “Making Militarism Visible” campaign to expose the subtle ways that war and aggression have been naturalized in Israel. The Campaign has transformed into a roaming exhibit, instigating dialogue one person and one community at a time.

This progressive organization also operates a legal aid network that involves a number of law firms offering legal support for resisters and their families. The legal branch advocates for the universal human right to conscientiously object enlistment to be enshrined in Israeli law, while also dealing with the day to day legal complications of an embattled clientele.

“I think Israeli youth are voting with their feet. We don’t trust the establishment anymore. We don’t want to be in war. We don’t want to be in Gaza. We don’t want the world to look at us thinking we’re those terrible, vicious Israelis. We want to be part of the MTV generation, we want to be just like everybody else”.

Ruth Hiller, Cofounder, New Profile

Artwork collected by New Profile from an Israeli nursery school colouring book
Partners for Peace

Despite the much needed and highly successful side projects, New Profile’s focus remains empowering the next generation. The heavy emphasis on security in Israel has significant implications on a young population constantly surrounded by the idea they are under threat. As one member commented, “I’m still realizing what I’ve been brought up with.”

NEW PROFILE is a group that actively works to decrease militarism in Israel’s society by supporting youth who choose not to participate in the mandatory military service. New Profile provides legal and counselling services to those who identify as conscientious objectors and are often jailed as a result.

www.newprofile.org • www.twitter.com/NewProfileOrg • info@newprofile.org

HANEEN ZOABI

When the state of Israel was formed in 1948, the Palestinian population significantly outnumbered its counterparts. Since then, the numbers have changed and Arabs are a minority within the country – with heavy restrictions placed on their freedoms. Within the political system their presence in Israel’s governing Knesset is even smaller.

For women, the situation is worse: they face discrimination as Arabs and then again as women in a deeply patriarchal society. In spite of this, women – like Haneen Zoabi – are challenging the status quo and entering politics. Haneen is the first Arab woman from a party representing Arabic interests to sit on the legislative body of the Knesset. Paving the way for others, her party, Balad, now has a one-third minimum of women candidates.

A priority for Haneen is the need to recognize Palestinians as equal citizens in Israel. The state cannot view granting citizenship as a favour, Haneen argues; “I am not an immigrant. This is my homeland. We are the indigenous people.” Citizenship rights, however, are continually ignored, and students are not even allowed to study Palestinian history in Arab schools.

Yet the idea of equality is a complex one that stands in the way of any successful peace agreement. Haneen explained that Palestinians cannot be equal in a “Jewish State,” as this is both a religious and political statement. “I am not Palestinian in the Knesset. I’m a non-Jew. No Palestinians or Arabs are mentioned in the law. They are referred to either as non-Jews, Israeli Arabs, or minority peoples,” Haneen stated.

Underlining that this requires a transformation of the basis under which negotiations take place, Haneen argues that there needs to be a challenge to the occupation – not just a freeze of further settlement. Negotiations have been approaching the idea of peace with a flawed logic, spurred by the refusal to acknowledge the unequal situation created by the occupation. Refusing to broach the subjects of equality and citizenship, negotiators act as if each side comes to the table on equal terms while in reality the opposite is true.

Within this frame of inequality between Israelis and Palestinians lies the marginalization of women. Yet Haneen believes the two are intimately connected; when people learn to reject discrimination, all marginalized groups are liberated. Despite being a small group in the Israeli government, Haneen insisted that “real negotiation is taking place on the ground” and that her party represents an important voice that needs to be heard.

“You can’t enter negotiations without asking the occupiers to end the occupation... How can you discuss negotiations without challenging reality on the ground?”

Haneen Zoabi
ADALAH: THE LEGAL CENTER FOR ARAB MINORITY RIGHTS IN ISRAEL

In October 2000, Israeli police shot and killed 13 Palestinians during street demonstrations. With no support or signs of redress from the government, the families of the dead turned to Adalah for help.

Meaning “justice” in Arabic, Adalah promotes and defends the rights of Palestinian and Arab citizens in Israel. The organization is the only independent human rights organization providing legal support for their community, and uses international law to bring cases in violation of Palestinians’ constitutional and human rights to Israel’s Supreme Court.

Adalah maximizes resources by taking on cases with broad impact. For example: the lawsuits of individual Palestinian prisoners who are denied their basic rights are used to demonstrate that Palestinian prisoners suffer discrimination as a group due to racist policies and laws.

According to the organization, there are over 6,500 Palestinians classified as “security” prisoners – from those convicted of murder to affiliating with certain groups. They are imprisoned in harsh conditions, prohibited physical contact with outside visitors, denied education or rehabilitation, and undergo severe isolation. Over 200 of these prisoners are women, and more distressing – some 300 are children under 18. In contrast, Adalah found that Israeli prisoners convicted of organized crime are allowed access to a telephone, and even a noted assassin was allowed visitors.

Despite this, the discrimination in Israel’s justice system is difficult to prove and Adalah activists continually face resistance – not only from authorities, but also their fellow community members. One lawyer mentioned that her work has angered friends, as they had become conscious to the inequality present in their daily lives. They complain, “We were ignorant and you forced us to see. We were able to live here and not see it; look what you’ve done to us,” she says.

“It’s very easy to grow up in the Jewish-Israeli majority community and be totally ignorant, totally blind. And if you don’t see it, it doesn’t exist. I think the biggest thing we at Adalah are doing is not letting them be ignorant.”

Orna Kohn, Senior Attorney, Adalah
Even with so many obstacles, Adalah has made strides in challenging unfair Israeli laws – especially in promoting the rights of imprisoned Palestinians. After a six-year struggle, prisoners who have young children are now allowed visits and physical contact. The organization also provides legal commentary on proposed and pending legislative bills in the Knesset, as well as offering consultations to individuals, student committees, non-profit groups, and institutions.

Adalah continues to advocate on behalf of the most basic rights of Palestinians. The organization launched a challenge against a Citizenship Law banning unification of Palestinian citizens of Israel and those in the Occupied Territories – which forces families to live apart. Even though the Supreme Court dismissed the suit, Adalah persists with its fight against the restrictions, challenging new amendments, and submitting documents to the United Nations.

ADALAH: THE LEGAL CENTER FOR ARAB MINORITY RIGHTS IN ISRAEL was established in 1996 to promote and defend the legal rights of Palestinian and Arab citizens in Israel. The group provides consultations, brings legal interventions to Israeli courts, and appeals judgements to international institutions.

- www.adalah.org
- www.facebook.com/Adalahpage
- www.twitter.com/adalahcenter
- adalah@adalah.org
As a child, Sahar Vardi often accompanied her father in the countryside as he worked with Palestinian villagers. The peace activist would share stories of Palestinians attempting to cross checkpoints and the reprehensible treatment they endured – instilling activist roots in the young girl.

“The shock was not from the brutality of the occupation or of a specific soldier,” Sahar recalled, “but from witnessing the day to day situation of going through checkpoints, fearing the demolition of their homes, and knowing that every 18 year-old soldier has the power to control their life. I could not bring myself to be that soldier and to hold such power over people who are my equals.”

After graduating from high school, the teenager wrote a letter to Israel’s Minister of Defence and other government officials detailing the reasons for her refusal to serve. In her letter she recounted her early experiences with the Palestinian villagers; “They did not seem to be any different to me than most people I saw walking down the streets. The only visible difference was that they had green IDs... I did not understand the full meaning of the different colour of the ID, but I did understand the simple meaning: separation.” Sahar was imprisoned for six months.

Now in her early 20s, Sahar is part of Shministim, a group of conscientious objectors who refuse to enter the mandatory Israeli military service. Believing in peace and the possibilities of reconciliation, the Shministim are repeatedly imprisoned for refusing the draft.

Sahar is also an active voice against the eviction of Israeli Arabs to build more Jewish settlements. While walking through the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, she noted that four large families of over 200 people have already been evicted. The area has become a place for weekly joint Israeli-Palestinian protests. Families who are evicted are given no new housing and no compensation, becoming refugees as their property is seized.

Her work is not without its risks: Sahar has endured being spit on, sworn at, and physically assaulted. Despite having been arrested multiple times, with three indictments to her name, the young activist’s resolve to continue her work remains steadfast. It is her responsibility as an Israeli, Sahar stated, to be vocal in resisting the government’s occupation of Palestine.
Partners for Peace

COALITION OF WOMEN FOR PEACE

During the Second Intifada, or Second Palestinian Uprising, then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak returned from failed negotiations and said that there was simply no partner for peace in Palestine. The countless women who had spent years promoting dialogue, equality, and nonviolence between the two nations were left feeling stunned and bitterly disappointed that the Israeli government had been unable to find common ground with the Palestinians.

Peace Activist Eilat Maoz said that while some of her allies gave up hope, the peace movement regrouped and grew stronger; “It was crucial to create a platform in which women who were working against the occupation and for peace and justice for many, many years could come together to increase their visibility and their possibility to influence the public discourse.”

The Coalition of Women for Peace was established in 2000 as a result, bringing together independent women and feminist peace organizations. The group creates a platform for women to join together and influence public discourse by bringing women’s issues to the forefront of the mainstream anti-occupation movement. Eilat, who serves as General Coordinator, noted that coming together into the coalition “was like creating a megaphone, a speaker for our little voices.”

The women of the Coalition have continued to promote peace and nonviolence in the region. In 2006, they mobilized against the Second Lebanon war, holding daily demonstrations in Haifa in addition to organizing national peace protests. The Coalition continues to campaign against the occupation of Palestine and the militarization of the Gaza strip – with the activists dedicated to ensuring all citizens are allowed to live without restrictions.

Inspired by the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, one of the Coalition’s main undertakings is the Occupation Industry Research Projects to determine what makes the occupation profitable and for whom. Eilat, who called it “activist research,” said it was designed to deepen the discussion surrounding boycotts and divestment from Israel.

With the dominance of a masculine militarism in Israeli society, Eilat emphasized the importance of women being front and center as actors for peace. The Coalition is not only committed to end the occupation and find an alternative to militarism, it is also actively engaged in advocating for the full involvement of women in peace negotiations. The group focuses on coalition-building between organizations as a way to build room for dialogue and ensure the peace movement is inclusive – often reaching out to marginalized groups such as the large Russian-speaking minority. The Coalition is committed to capacity building within its member organizations, providing assistance in raising and managing funds for projects such as the political empowerment of young women, as well as leading workshops focused on eradicating racism and advocating for peace.

COALITION OF WOMEN FOR PEACE was founded in 2000. A feminist organization against the occupation of Palestine, the Coalition is a leading voice in the peace movement within Israel bringing together women from diverse identities together for a just society. Activities include capacity-building, media outreach, legal assistance, and research.

www.coalitionofwomen.org
• www.facebook.com/pages/Coalition-of-Women-for-Peace/94205446262
• www.twitter.com/cwp_live • cwp@coalitionofwomen.org
At a Glance:
MORE PARTNERS FOR PEACE

**BTSELEM: THE ISRAELI INFORMATION CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES** was established in 1989 by academics, lawyers, journalists and members of the Knesset. The group documents human rights violations within the Occupied Territories in an attempt to transform policy and ensure that Israel complies with international law.
- www.btselem.org
- mail@btselem.org

**STOP THE WALL** is a coalition of Palestinian organizations that coordinate action against the Israeli separation wall. Established in 2002, it has been the main grassroots body to mobilize collective efforts. It is also known as the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign.
- www.stopthewall.org
- www.facebook.com/stop.the.wall.campaign
- mobilize@stopthewall.org

**IR AMIM: FOR AN EQUITABLE AND STABLE JERUSALEM WITH AN AGREED POLITICAL FUTURE** was founded in 2000 and seeks a sustainable political solution for Jerusalem. The group monitors developments which could affect the stability of Jerusalem, and is actively involved in outreach on current policies affecting the city.
- www.ir-amim.org.il
- mail@ir-amim.org.il

**JERUSALEM CENTER FOR WOMEN** was established in 1994 as a direct result of discussions between prominent Israeli and Palestinian women on how to include more Palestinian women in civil and political society. The center provides leadership training for young Palestinian women, as well as draws international attention to violations of Palestinian women’s rights.
- www.j-c-w.org
- info@j-c-w.org

**JUST VISION** was formed in 2003 in response to the lack of media coverage of Israeli and Palestinians working for peace. Just Vision uses film to share the stories of peacebuilders on the ground, reaching audiences around the world.
- www.justvision.org
- www.facebook.com/JustVision
- www.twitter.com/justvisionmedia
- info@justvision.org

**MACHSOM WATCH: WOMEN AGAINST OCCUPATION AND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS** have been reporting daily on the activities at Israeli checkpoints and military courts since 2001. Their reports are published online and sent to elected officials.
- www.machsomwatch.org
- machsomwatch@gmail.com
PALESTINIAN MEDICAL RELIEF SOCIETY is a health organization founded in 1979. The group of Palestinian medical professionals seeks to improve access and quality of healthcare Palestinian peoples receive.

- www.pmrs.ps
- www.facebook.com/Palestinian-Medical-Relief-Society
- www.twitter.com/pmrsonline
- pmrs@pmrs.ps

PALESTINIAN WORKING WOMEN SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENT was established in 1981 and works to end discrimination against women. The group bridges the grassroots and works to develop information and outreach programs to empower women to become leaders in Palestinian society.

- www.pwwsd.org
- www.facebook.com/Palestinian-Medical-Relief-Society
- www.twitter.com/pmrsonline
- pmrs@pmrs.ps

PALESTINIAN YOUTH ASSOCIATION FOR LEADERSHIP AND RIGHTS ACTIVATION was established in 1999. Its activities are geared towards Palestinian youth, giving them the tools needed to become upstanding citizens and leaders in society.

- www.pyalara.org
- www.facebook.com/PYALARA
- pyalara@pyalara.org

RABBIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS was founded in 1988 to advocate for human rights in the Jewish tradition. It has over 100 members in Israel who are ordained Rabbis and students.

- www.rhr.org.il
- www.facebook.com/RabbisForHumanRights
- www.twitter.com/rhrs
- info@rhr.israel.net

UNDP PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE began field operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1980, after the General Assembly adopted Resolution 33/147 mandating the United Nations provide economic and social assistance to the Palestinian peoples.

- www.undp.ps
- www.facebook.com/pages/UNDP-Palestinian-territory
- www.twitter.com/undppalestinian
- info.undpps@undp.org

WOMEN’S CENTRE FOR LEGAL AID AND COUNSELLING was established in 1991. The group seeks to address gender-based violence within the private and public spheres of Palestinian society. The group has an advocacy program, as well as a service unit for women who are victims of violence.

- www.wclac.org
- www.facebook.com/pages/Womens-Centre-for-Legal-Aid-and-Counselling
- www.twitter.com/wclac_english
- info@wclac.org

WOMEN IN BLACK is a global movement of vigils organized by women wearing black to protest the military policies of government. A vigil in Jerusalem is held every Friday from 1-2:00pm at Paris Square.

- www.womeninblack.org/en/jerusalem
- gsvirsky@netvision.net.il
Endnotes
DELEGATION PARTICIPANTS

Rabbi Amy Eilberg
Co-Director, Yedidya Center for Jewish Spiritual Direction
Amy is a frequent speaker in congregations across the United States on Jewish spirituality, peace-making, and Jewish feminism. In 1985, she became the first woman ordained as a Conservative rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Amy remains deeply engaged in the peace and reconciliation efforts in Israel-Palestine, as well as on wider issues of conflict in the Jewish community.

Ann Patterson
Trustee, Peace People
Ann is a family therapist at the Quaker Center in Belfast where she provides counselling and support for families from divided communities. She co-founded Peace People, a pacifist movement that played a critical role in promoting the peace process in Northern Ireland. Ann has acted as an independent observer in numerous war-torn countries, previously visiting Palestine in support of the local peacebuilders and human rights activists.

Jaclyn Friedman
Executive Director, Women, Action, Media!

Janaan Hashim
Lawyer, Amal Law Group LLC
Janaan is a criminal lawyer at the first law firm founded in the United States by Muslim women. Previously she served as an assistant defender at the Illinois State Appellate Defender’s Office. Janaan often appears as a guest speaker on issues affecting Muslims, Islam, and women’s rights in Islam. Her talk show can be found on the first radio call-in show produced by Muslims for mainstream America.

Jody Williams
Nobel Peace Laureate
Jody received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for her work to ban antipersonnel landmines through the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). Since 2006, Jody has channelled her efforts for promoting sustainable peace through the Nobel Women’s Initiative, which she chairs. She is a prolific writer and recently completed her memoir, My Name is Jody Williams, detailing her work for social justice.

Kathleen McIntire
Philanthropist & Healer
Kathleen is a passionate teacher and healer, committed to women’s issues. With a background in business, she is the owner and founder of MoonBear Sanctuary, a retreat center located on 28 acres in Northern California. Kathleen is currently writing a book, “The Healing of Humpty Dumpty,” that focuses on bringing the feminine back into wholeness.
Lauren Embrey
President, Embrey Family Foundation
Lauren takes issues that particularly affect women – including domestic human trafficking, leadership development, and gender equity – and tackles them through strategic funding. As President and CEO of the Embrey Family Foundation, she directs grants and supports multiple organizations that provide services to mothers, women and children. In 2009, Lauren received the Women that Soar Award for Philanthropy and the Champion of Human Rights Award.

Mairead Maguire
Nobel Peace Laureate
Mairead was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for her extraordinary actions to end the sectarian violence in her native Northern Ireland. She has since dedicated her life to promoting peace and justice around the world. Mairead regularly travels to Palestine and Israel to support local activists in their struggle for human rights, equality, and nonviolence.

Nobel Women’s Staff and Consultants

Liz Bernstein
Executive Director
Liz is the founding Director of the Nobel Women’s Initiative. Previously, Liz served as Coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) for eight years. She lived in Thailand and Cambodia for a decade, where she co-founded the Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation, the Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines, and worked with local peace, justice, and women’s rights organizations.

Janhabi Nandy
Manager of Policy and Advocacy
Janhabi is the Manager of Policy and Advocacy for the Nobel Women’s Initiative. Previously, Janhabi worked as an attorney serving the Pacific island nation of Micronesia as an Assistant Attorney General, working as a disability rights attorney on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, and representing plaintiffs in civil rights and toxic tort cases in New York.

Lesley Hoyles
Coordinator of Events and Operations
Prior to joining the Nobel Women’s Initiative team in June 2010 as the Coordinator of Events and Operations, Lesley worked for a number of non-profit organizations, including Planned Parenthood Toronto and Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa. Lesley is passionate about women’s rights and reproductive rights. She is also a musician and a cyclist.

Kim MacKenzie
Advocacy and Communications Program Associate
Kim is the Program Associate for Advocacy and Communications with the Nobel Women’s Initiative. Prior to this she worked for five years at the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization. There she was the founding Coordinator of the Public Education Program, responsible for devising and implementing public education, cross cultural training, advocacy and communications strategies for the organizations.

Judy Rand
Photographer, J. Rand Images
A freelance photographer and videographer, Judy has worked extensively with the Nobel Women’s Initiative documenting delegations, conferences, and media events. A member of the Professional Photographers of America and the Association of Media Photographers, Judy provides professional videography and photographic services for private, corporate and nonprofit clients. Her portrait studio is located in Huntington, NY.
Acknowledgements

This report would not be possible without the courage of many women in Israel and Palestine who face daily violence and threats for their remarkable work. We dedicate this to them.

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We would also like to extend our deepest appreciation to Ashley Armstrong, Shannon Sommerauer, Bonnie Thorsbury and the other interns who contributed their talents and passion to this report.

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