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## From education to action: How civil society can mobilise for a just peace.

### PART I: Facts on the ground.

The first part of the paper focuses on outlining the key elements of the reality on the ground in Occupied Jerusalem. This includes: (i) The illegality of Israel's unilateral annexation; (ii) Colonisation through settlements; (iii) Promotion of far-right settler groups/Judaisation; (iv) Land zoning and home demolitions; (v) The Separation Wall; (vi) Residency rights/denial of rights; (vii) Discriminatory socio-economic policies.

### PART II: The importance of global civil society.

In response to this reality, civil society plays two, connected roles:

1. Education and awareness-raising, in part as a solution to Western media bias.
2. Providing a way for people to respond and take action to bring about a just peace.

The advantages of civil society in the current situation include:

- a. Civil society can speak with the kind of strength and clarity that governments rarely can.
- b. Civil society can help in providing new ways forward after 20 years of an official peace process that has produced very little.
- c. Civil society can communicate a clear message to the general public and policy makers yet target different sectors with tailor-made communication strategies. There is coordination between different organisations, but as a network of groups working with autonomy.

### PART III: A new initiative: 'A Just Peace for Palestine' in the UK.

I will present an example of civil society protecting Jerusalem, which features characteristics that can be applied in other situations. 'A Just Peace for Palestine' is a new initiative in the UK, enabling grassroots activism with a focus on the churches in a framework of inter-religious action.

- i. A strong, clear message that focuses on rights and the fact that justice for Palestinians is good for Jewish Israelis.
- ii. Shaped by the 'on the ground' reality.
- iii. A direct link from awareness-raising to response.
- iv. Taking the lead from grassroots peacemakers resisting occupation.
- v. Inter-religious action. This is especially important in terms of Jerusalem, and for the conflict as a whole, as a means of countering polarisation and extremism.

### The presenter

Ben White is a freelance journalist, writer, and human rights campaigner, specialising in Palestine/Israel. His articles have appeared in publications like The Guardian online, Al-Jazeera English, New Statesman, Christian Science Monitor, and Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. His book, 'Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner's Guide' has been praised by the likes of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Professor Ilan Pappé, and Karma Nabulsi. White has given talks at Amnesty International in London, the Houses of Parliament, and numerous university campuses and churches in the UK, US, and Canada. He is currently campaign coordinator of 'A Just Peace for Palestine', an initiative of UK-based NGO Amos Trust, which seeks to enable and mobilise the faith community in Britain to speak up and take action for a just peace.

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