

**International Conference “Building a Future on Peace and Justice”  
Nuremberg, 25 – 27 June 2007**

Address by

His Excellency Minister of Justice of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Sharif Al Zubi

Opening ceremony, 25 June 2007

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Your Excellencies

Mr. Gunter Gloser (State Minister for Europe),

Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Federal Foreign Minister)

Colleagues and friends,

Jordan is honored to host with the Governments of Germany and Finland this high level conference. This conclave continues the cooperation between our governments which has proven its value in the pursuit of conflict resolution in the world arena. Our partners, including the International Center for Transitional Justice and the Crisis Management Initiative, will make a major contribution to our discussions be it in the field of transitional justice, humanitarian aid and post conflict development policy.

As a lawyer coming from one of the most troubled regions in the world today, and from a country that has worked tirelessly with Arab states and the international community towards achieving a just peace in the Middle East, I am deeply appreciative of the significance of meeting today in the historic ("Schwurgerichtssaal 600") crown courtroom 600 of the Higher Regional Court in Nuremberg - the scene of the Nuremberg War Crime Tribunals. Our venue emphasizes the fact that peace must include justice if it is to hold. Even if justice is postponed as negotiators try to hammer out a cessation of hostilities or try to negotiate interim peace accords, justice must ultimately be addressed in order to fortify the peace.

In the post World War II era, the rallying cry for conflicts all over the world was: no peace without justice. Today's reality has forced upon populations to accept delayed justice or barely any justice at all in the interim or even final peace accords. How do you give justice to a woman in Bosnia who has lost 13 family members, or to a woman in Hebron whose baby dies at a checkpoint because Israeli soldiers delay her crossing, or to a woman in Tel Aviv whose teenage daughter was blown up on a bus? How do you convince millions of Palestinian refugees that acknowledgement of their right to return to their ancestral homes is possibly the maximum justice they can hope for, but this is the necessary compromise to achieve peace? How do you convince aggrieved populations that compromise and forgiveness are ultimately better than vengeance and continued aggression? Reconciliation is not a dictate handed down when hostilities cease. Victims of torture, rape and degradation have to be convinced that a sense of justice is part and parcel of the final peace.

Coming from a part of the world wracked by daily violence, this meeting, your deliberations and recommendations are of particular importance to us. How do we get to the end goal? What is the optimal relationship between punishment and forgiveness, amnesties, and the importance of establishing structures based on the rule of law? It is not surprising that many of these questions have not been answered. Each crisis is unique, requiring its own creative solutions and compromises. But we can certainly learn from each other's experiences, coming from all over the world, and can develop a broad framework to address these pressing issues.

I am keenly interested to see how the promotion of justice influences the course of the conflict – justice used to have to wait until peace has taken hold. I understand the workshops will look at the cases of Afghanistan, and Lebanon - for example how the Hariri tribunal has impacted the fragile politics of Lebanon. No less important, is the post war plan, certainly absent in post-war Iraq as we have tragically seen, and how the allocation of resources, planning and development influences the shape of peace. Do Iraqis feel the dividends of peace? Do they have a stake in maintaining the peace?

The challenge, no doubt, is to link treaties to the grievances and needs of war affected populations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is here that the view from Jordan can provide some perspective on our topics for this conference. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. There was tremendous hope that a final and comprehensive settlement of all the issues would be achieved - a lasting, just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: Two states, living beside each other in peace and security.

Thirteen years later, our work is unfinished.

Jordan and His Majesty King Abdullah II have continued the work and have urged a measurable process, with a clear end-game and milestones along the way. The commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative, is real.

Regional instability remains a major barrier to the future of the Middle East. It has had global fallout. The current geo-political landscape of the Middle East reflects some of the most pressing global challenges that confront the contemporary world. Sadly, current circumstances in the region, and a sense that the rest of the world doesn't understand or care, through a selective approach of implementing international resolutions, have raised the voices and influence of a militant minority. The majority undoubtedly want peace, but not any peace. For it to last, it has to be a just peace. I can't emphasize enough that the world community must demonstrate neutrality, even-handedness, superior ethics and morality in dealing with the conflict.

If we maintain the status quo, the situation will certainly worsen. As Martin Luther King, jr. said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." If you accept the idea that globalization makes us all a global family, how long can we survive if some members of that family want to burn down the house?

Very simply desperate people do desperate things and they can be more readily recruited by extremists to do their bidding.

It saddens and frightens moderates in the Middle East when we hear more and more people no longer empathizing with victims of violence elsewhere in the world: They say, "Where has the world been for the last 50 years? They do not care about us, let them feel what happens daily in Palestine, Lebanon and now in Iraq. The world has stripped us of our compassion, of our decency and our humanity".

There were many in the international community who were satisfied with the status quo in the Middle East believing the problem would only affect our region. But violent killings are taking

place as part of this status quo. And, as recent events around the world have clearly shown us, Palestinians and Israelis are not the only victims.

From our experiences we know that genuine security will not be achieved through confrontation, but through the pursuit of understanding, on all sides. Even more important, now, is the effort not only to be understood, but to listen and understand others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the Middle East, decades of violence, occupation and undemocratic regimes have wrought havoc on the region, affected the way we think, made once abhorrent acts acceptable to some fringe groups. We have to educate our people to confront extremist aberrations, thriving on the region's instability and the world's complacency.

One critical step is to ensure zero tolerance towards those who promote extremism. Jordan has worked with the international Muslim community to stand firm against extremist interpretations of Islam. In November of 2004 we issued the Amman Message, which tried to clarify the true nature of Islam. It articulates Islam's social values: compassion, respect for others, tolerance, acceptance and freedom of religion, equal dignity of all people, and the pursuit of peace. Over 180 scholars met in Amman. They represented 45 countries, and were supported by fatwas from 17 of the world's greatest Islamic scholars. Together, they achieved, for the first time, a unanimous consensus on a number of critical issues.

Their declarations helped expose the illegitimacy of the extremist fatwas justifying terrorism, which contravene Islamic religious law and violate Islam's principles. Islam does not condone killing innocent, men, women and children in Tel Aviv, New York, Darfur, London, Madrid, Baghdad or anywhere else in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The road to achieving peace is long and arduous. As communities work towards reconciliation and peace, development must proceed on the same track. Simply, people must feel the dividends of peace. Once the treaties have been signed, a different kind of work begins with long-term development and rebuilding communities as its goal. The most stable foundation for security in a region is improved quality of life for its people, and this kind of security can develop only from global partnerships like the Euro-Med and Barcelona process.

King Hussein once said: "It should never be forgotten that peace resides ultimately not in the hands of governments, but in the hands of the people. For unless peace can be made real to the men, women and children of the Middle East, the best efforts of negotiators will come to naught."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope through your work in the next two day, we can arrive at answers to the difficult questions before us. Your creative ideas and discussions may contribute to millions of people living in conflict and despair. Can small countries, like Jordan and Finland, individuals and NGOs meeting here impact the big picture? I would say yes we can tip the scale in our favor. Quoting Margaret Mead "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has".

The pursuit of peace, justice and security are universal. Indeed much of our work at the UN is focused on these issues. I hope the next time we meet I can tell you about hope and progress in our region.

Dear Colleagues,

“A man once asked the Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) what was the best thing in Islam, and the latter replied, ‘It is to feed the hungry and to give the greeting of peace both to those one knows and to those one does not know.’” In that spirit, As-salaam alaykum -- peace be with you, God bless you all.