



Joint Statement



"... both sides expressed concerns about hateful language and images emanating from the other, citing numerous examples of hostile sectarian and ethnic rhetoric in the Palestinian and Israeli media, in school curricula and in statements by religious leaders, politicians and others.

We call on the parties to renew their formal commitments to foster mutual understanding and tolerance and to abstain from incitement and hostile propaganda. We condemn hate language and incitement in all its forms. We suggest that the parties be particularly cautious about using words in a manner that suggests collective responsibility."

From the Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report (The Mitchell Report), 30.4.2001

"Words Can Kill, Too" - A Joint Palestinian-Israeli Action for an Alternative Public and Media Discourse Gets Underway

KESHEV - Center for Protection of Democracy in Israel and MIFTAH - The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, announce the launch of a joint project monitoring media coverage and professionalism on both sides.

The two organizations, Israeli and Palestinian, today declare the launch of a long-term joint project monitoring the media in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories. The aim of the project is to encourage a public and media discourse free of incitement, prejudice and dehumanization of the other in Israel and Palestine, through monitoring, research, advocacy, and lobbying activities. The project will facilitate the development of an independent media and a culture of moderation, tolerance, and understanding between the two peoples, and implementation of the anti-incitement provisions in the Road Map without jeopardizing the freedom of expression.

Through the framework of this project, patterns of daily media coverage of the conflict will be examined on both sides, in an effort to influence and change problematic coverage and discourse. Findings from the monitoring will be forwarded to the different media outlets, decision-makers and the general public.

Both organizations recognize the growing importance of this project in light of the recent years' increase in patterns of media coverage that feature dehumanization, de-legitimization, bias and hate-filled expressions toward the other. Both organizations recognize the vital role media plays in intensifying or moderating the public discourse, as can be seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Rwanda where journalists have been put on trial before an international war crimes tribunal and have been convicted of war crimes because of their remarks in the media, which contributed to killings in these areas. This is further proof for the claim that has gained acceptance in the international community, asserting that "words can kill, too".

KESHEV and MIFTAH will be publishing a joint report of their findings every three months in three languages, Arabic, Hebrew and English. Reports should enable policy makers, media outlets and public to review and re-evaluate the information and narratives given to them as facts. Both organizations believe that civil society has a vital role in urging journalists to meet the ethical standards of the profession and to be thorough, accurate and fair in their reporting.

Further Details: MIFTAH 02-2989490; KESHEV 02-5672002