

COEXISTENCES MANIFESTO

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The situation of oppression, the occupation of the West Bank and settler violence, the bombardments and attacks against Israel, the carnage of 7 October 2023 and the capture of hostages, the destruction of Gaza and the massacre of its inhabitants, are the multiple faces of a devastating cycle. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is getting worse and worse. It creates unrest, fractures societies and fuels ever more aggressive rhetoric. Polarisation is increasing and divisions deepen in Switzerland too where the number of racist, antisemitic and antimuslim attacks are exploding.

In the face of the pervading feeling of hopelessness and despair, Coexistences refuses to give way to fatality. We proclaim that there is another voice, another way which categorically rejects hate.

Coexistences whose action consists in receiving, for short stays, mixed groups of Israelis and Palestinians who are engaged in a process of dialogue, is confronted with more and more demands for these stays. We also have an increasing demand from citizens in Switzerland who want to become involved in a positive and constructive approach.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- To support the right of Palestinians to establish a sovereign, independent and viable State;
- To support the right of Israel to exist in security, to be recognised by its neighbours
- To support dialogue, essential for any democratic society, and for the groups emanating from Israeli and Palestinian civil societies who work for a rapprochement.

Coexistences wants to take another path than that of the extremists of both sides who incessantly exalt the dehumanisation of the adverse party.

OUR COMMITMENTS

TO ACT IN FAVOUR OF MEETINGS ENCOUNTER AND DIALOGUE

The effort towards dialogue between civil populations is indispensable in all reconciliation processes. We support all those who build bridges, forge links, favour communication, understanding, co-resistance and partnership.

Listening without judging, avoiding simplification, dismantling prejudices, overcoming fears and ignorance, eschewing competing victimhoods, recognizing the needs of others, favouring coexistence.

TO BE VIGILANT AGAINST UNILATERAL POSITIONS, TO REFUSE SHORTCUTS

We refuse to enter the arena of black-and-white thinking because this conflict is complex:

- Israeli and Palestinian societies are interdependent and live in an intertwined and cramped territory;
- the security of one side goes through the security of the other side.

The extremists on both sides hold the populations hostage, there, but also here. The polarisation of opinions only adds fuel to the fire.

Our approach is to walk the fine line, ever unstable and uncertain. That is our strength and this posture keeps us from the temptation to appear as lesson givers. That is why we are careful not to adopt unilateral positions.

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TO OPPOSE THE POWER OF DIALOGUE TO THE LOGIC OF REJECTING THE OTHER

Our hope is nurtured by the energy of the Israeli and Palestinian groups we receive here. They are brave enough to resist hate. Accused of treachery, sometimes they put their lives in danger. They count on us to support them, and we find in them the strength to continue.

They have been guiding our action for twenty years now.

We are determined to fight resolutely, here in Switzerland and beyond, in favour of dialogue, a foundation of democracy, and against using the Israel Palestinian conflict as a pretext to give free rein to fanaticism and violence.

RESPECT, PLURALITY, JOINT COMMITMENT

Because the association depends on a community of diverse sensitivities, we have been careful to respect all of those involved. Our strength is collective and we are united by a common conviction: hate is not a fatality.

ACTING HERE

Coexistences has received every year, for twenty years, mixed groups of Palestinians and Israelis, accompanied by professionals of dialogue. We have acquired skills which are now recognized. We want to continue developing this action.

Moreover, we pledge to:

- intensify our participation in the life of the « city » and tighten our partnerships with Swiss organisations which are close to us, in order to make known the Israeli-Palestinian NGOs involved in the process of mutual recognition:
- through public cultural events,
- through targeted interventions, for example in schools, universities, other public places and medias.
- develop partnerships in Europe with associations who could receive groups following the example of Coexistences.

The committee:
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