

No peaceful coexistence without reconciliation

The domestic and foreign policy challenges facing German politics will immediately regain visibility after the corona crisis has ended. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its international repercussions is one of these challenges.

Whatever diplomatic solutions are pursued in the future, they will only be sustainable in the context of a reconciliation process between Israelis and Palestinians. Without reconciliation there can be no peaceful coexistence, independently of the diplomatic schema.

During the years of the Trump administration, the prospects for peace worsened as the margins for a two-state solution narrowed. In the event of an annexation of the Jewish settlements on the West Bank and in the Jordan Valley, these prospects would further darken.

Prospects for a comprehensive resolution to the conflict

The future of Europe and Germany, however, is closely tied to the resolution of the Middle East conflict or the achievement of its prospective resolution, both domestically and internationally. The influx of refugees from the Middle East to Europe is a dramatic symptom of the overall crisis situation in the Middle East. For years, the United Nations - including its Secretary General - has stated that Gaza will be uninhabitable by 2020. In the medium term, two million people will leave in search of a new home. Only a comprehensive solution to the conflict, as a prerequisite to the comprehensive economic development of Palestine and Gaza, can prevent this catastrophe.

Germany is already feeling the painful domestic repercussions of the refugee movement in general, and the intensification of the Palestinian conflict in particular: populist and xenophobic movements and parties are dividing and polarizing German society.

And the hatred felt among members (especially younger members) of the population with family roots in the Middle East is a driving force behind the violence against Jews on German streets — violence that is only partially classifiable as “anti-Semitic”.

Germany is particularly called upon to establish a dialogue aimed at long-term reconciliation. No other country has a broader experience in dealing with the past as basis for reconciliation, especially with reference to Israel.

The project

The project presented here seeks to initiate this process of reconciliation. An academic project, it nevertheless extends into the political and social sphere. The university framework is meant to serve as a catalyst for a moderation process aimed at achieving understanding and reconciliation. One of its central aims is to train competent “knowledge ambassadors” who, in their role as mediators, build a bridge between the theoretical reflection on conflict resolution strategies and their real-world implementation. The academic core of the project lies in an interdisciplinary, transnational and multi-religious doctoral program; it identifies truth as well as law as a condition for peace and conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. The project’s international connections to the Wasatia movement (“wasatia” is Arabic for “moderation, balance and temperance”) in Jerusalem, inter-religious dialogue programs at the University of Cambridge, coordinated study programs with several Israeli and Palestinian universities, as well as the Maecenata Foundation, a civil society institution in Berlin and Munich, ensure its social and political relevance. The Wasatia movement brings understanding into civil society in the form of an Israeli-Palestinian educational program. The Maecenata Foundation, a non-university research institution, is dedicated to developing a European civil society under the keyword „Europe Bottom-Up,“ with special attention to the question of relations with the Middle East.

Participating scholars

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- **Prof. Dr. Solveig Chilla**, Professor of Speech and Language Education at the Institute of Special Education, EUF
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- **Dr. Rupert Graf Strachwitz**, Director of the Maecenata Institute for Philanthropy and Civil Society
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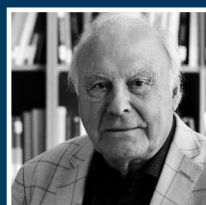
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