For Peace in the Middle East
(Statement adopted in 1975; last revised in 1991)

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom reaffirms its belief that a lasting peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through agreements among all parties involved in that conflict. We maintain support for an urge:

1. Recognition by all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to an independent state in the territories occupied by Israel in the June 1967 war;

2. Recognition by all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict of the territorial integrity and security of the State of Israel within the borders based on those before the June 1967 war;

3. Negotiation of agreements to implement 1 and 2 above through an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 38/58/C of December 1983 and with the equal participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people;

4. That the just solution of all other questions be included in the negotiations of the international conference on the Middle East mentioned under 3;

5. An end to arms transfers by all arms suppliers to all countries in the Middle East;

6. The establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

Israel-Palestine

The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom,

Concerned:

A. That lack of progress in on-going negotiation on any substantive issues in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is leading to frustration, hopelessness and to greatly increased violence from all parties. Examples of this are: increased repression of Palestinians, including the enactment of a new policy that allows opening fire on
Palestinians without warning and without criminal responsibility (known as the law of punitive measures); the bombing by Israel of refugee camps in Lebanon; the assassination of Sheik Abbas Musawai and his family; Israel’s arrest of two members of the Palestinian negotiating team and an increase in armed confrontation and attacks on soldiers and civilians in Israel.

B. That Israel continues to build and enlarge settlements in the Occupied Territories (West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza) at an alarming rate. WILPF condemns the Israeli settlement policy because it is a violation of international conventions and is an obstacle to the peace process.

C. That in the 23 months since Iraq invaded Kuwait the arms trade to the Middle East has grown enormously. The US alone, in that period has sold $19 billion worth in arms, $6 billion since Bush’s ‘Middle East arms control initiative’. Most have gone to Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

D. That Iraqis, Palestinians, and other Middle Eastern people are still suffering the effects of the Gulf War, and coping with hunger, economic crisis and social dislocation.

Agrees:
A. To urge governments to support negotiations on substantive issues, including the right of self-determination, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the pre-1967 borders, and the banning of all weapons of mass destruction, as the current Arab-Israeli peace talks.

B. To declare our commitment to peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of UN Security Council resolution 242 and 338 (‘Territories for Peace’) – to states, Israel and Palestine, co-existing peacefully within secure and recognized boundaries.

C. To reiterate its support of Israelis and Palestinians who are continuously working for a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict by:

1. Calling especially for support of WILPF’s own Middle East sections, through solidarity actions material assistance, to encourage the two sections to keep all WILPF members informed of their work and of the support they require. (See background paper below).

2. Co-operating with Israeli peace movements to put a stop to settlements in the Occupied Territories. The US section in particular to work for a freeze on Israeli settlements using foreign aid as a lever for change in policy, including demanding compliance with U.S. law which forbids aid to countries that are in violation of human rights conventions;

3. Supporting the international campaign of the women’s peace movement to reunify Palestinian families in accordance with Article 74 of Protocol 1 of the 1997
addendum to the Fourth Geneva Convention which states: “The Parties to the conflict shall facilitate in every way possible the reunion of families dispersed as a result of armed conflicts.”

4. Supporting cooperative efforts such as the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) where Palestinians and Israelis are seeking innovative and practical solutions and creating models on issues such as economic development, water resources and energy towards the infrastructure of an independent Palestinian State.

5. Supporting activities of both Palestinian and Israeli human rights centers.

D. To press for involvement of the United Nations at all appropriate levels to encourage and strengthen the negotiation.

E. In view of the increased occurrence of violations of human rights against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories (see to WILPF document presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Jan. 30, 1992), to call for United Nations protection for the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, for example, through the creation of multinational United Nations peace tams to be stationed in the Occupied Territories; and to call for the convening of a conference on the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to examine reported Israeli violations in the Occupied Territories and to recommend measures to bring about a change in Israeli policy. Such measures might eventually include economic pressures, sanctions and the withholding of foreign aid.

F. To urge governments to press Israel to sign the Geneva Conventions, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

G. To urge US and other nations to permit Palestinians fleeing from Kuwait and Jews leaving the former Soviet Union, to immigrate to the US, Europe and other countries, and to urge Israel to permit those Palestinians who wish to do so, to return to the Occupied Territories.

H. To urge that our governments investigate and take appropriate measures against reported human rights violations against peoples in Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and other Middle Eastern nations. He human rights of all people in these countries should be safeguarded regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, race of colour. Measures would include economic pressure and strong diplomatic messages to the respective governments.

I. To call for a total embargo on the sale and supply of armaments and spare parts to the whole of the Middle East, so that nations of the region can devote their resources to peaceful and constructive cooperation for the welfare and security of all people of the region. Security for the Middle East demands putting an end to all arms build-ups, the renunciation of all military intervention, and acceleration of the process of disarmament in highly armed countries.
Lebanon
In view of the sufferings of the Lebanese civilians in the south of Lebanon, the effects of which are catastrophic for the whole of Lebanon economically, socially, and politically, leading to a feeling of insecurity,

1. The 25th International Congress of WILPF urges all sections, especially the US, UK and French sections *, to put pressure on their respective governments for the implementation of resolution 425 of the Security Council,

2. Urges that our government put great pressure on Israel to stop its inhuman attacks and invasion of the skies of Lebanon and bombing its civilians by air, sea and land, taking appropriate measures against Israel, including economic pressure, prevention of all kinds of aid and strong diplomatic messages.

3. Urges sections to write to their Members of Congress, Parliament members and/or members of any other legislative bodies and to organize rallies, protests and any other means of pressure for the implementation of points 1 and 2 above.

(*The countries mentioned are permanent members of the Security Council.)

Background Paper

From the Palestinian Section:

(i) Support for Palestinian initiatives in the peace process

(ii) Support for the right of Palestinians in the diaspora to return o their homeland.

(iii) Support and aid to the Palestine Section towards sustaining their work and projects; research projects in the refugee camps and salient aspects of Palestinian life that have been disturbed and distorted as a result of the Israeli military occupation; relief work in the refugee camp with those injured and handicapped in the Intifada.

(iv) Give more attention to the work of the Palestine section due to the extraordinary circumstances and special difficulties under which it works. During the Gulf war, WILPF Palestine continued to work under the most enormous pressure and difficulties such as curfews that lasted the duration of the war. With a few exceptions, the section received very little support from other WILPF sections.

From the Israeli Section:

(i) Publicise and support the sections’ peace and human rights activities; stress the slogan, “Two States – Palestine alongside Israel”; support our recommendations to nominate the humanist peace fighter Abie Nathan for the Nobel Peace Prize; carry
out solidarity actions like Women in Black vigils’ help with material support, i.e. money for publications, tickets for Jewish-Arab delegations for travel abroad, etc.

(ii) Urge WILPF members participating in international conferences not to discriminate, and in relevant cases, condemn attacks on innocent Israeli citizens, same as on other nations’ citizens.

(iii) WILPF Israel has lost several members after the war in the Gulf, because they could not overcome their feelings after the emergency conference in Geneva (2-3 February 1991), at which WILPFs delegates did not support the resolution which called for an unconditional stop to the devastating bombardments of Baghdad, but not the immediate stop to the Iraqi missile bombardment of Israel’s citizens.

(iv) Note that our section members continue their vigils of ‘Women in Black’ (demanding: stop the occupation!) in spite of the bombs, the threats of gas bombs and the hostile reactions of many people. Our members were busy also with carrying bread and milk to the Palestinians under curfew in the Occupied Territories. Some member’s houses were hit by missiles.

(v) WILPF Israel urges sisters for more encouragement in order to strengthen our work for peace.

From the Lebanese Section:

(i) Support the efforts for just, real and everlasting peace made by the Lebanese and Palestinian delegation to the pace talks.

(ii) Work for the nomination of Dr. Hanan Ashrawi for the Nobel Peace Prize.

(iii) Support the Lebanese Section financially to enable it to stress the spirit of WILPF and its efforts for peace especially with regard to the Israel/Arab conflict through publications and travel.

The Kurds

The Gulf War brought renewed awareness of the urgent need for a global solution of all conflicts in the Middle East. Since the end of the war, a peace conference between Israel and the Arab States, including the Palestinians, has been launched. On the other hand, the Kurdish question is not formally on the agenda. There can be no solution to peace in the Middle East unless all concerned parties are involved in the negotiations and reach a settlement of this question.

The international community has to work for the implementation of the human rights of the Kurdish people in accordance with the UN Charter, specifically concerning
The right to life
The elimination of all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment
The right to fair and public trial
The right to respect for private and family life
Freedom of expression
Freedom of movement/residence/from arbitrary arrest and exile
The right to take part in public affairs, equal access to public service
The right to one’s own cultural life; e.g. Language rights, teaching of history and culture.

Iraq

Continued non-military sanctions are resulting in shortages of food and medicines and causing widespread disease and malnutrition in Iraq; sewage systems, power plants and other facilities destroyed in the war cannot be replaced because of lack of spare parts.

Economic sanctions are still enforced by the UN, preventing Iraqis from importing the food and medicine they need to live, and the spare parts and machinery needed to adequately repair installations necessary to the survival of the population. Prices of basic necessities, such as infant formula and cooking oil have risen far beyond the means of most Iraqis. Governments trations cover only a small percentage of a family’s needs and average earnings have fallen to less than 7% of pre-crisis levels. Almost 1 million Iraqi children are suffering from malnutrition. The infant mortality rate has risen about 300%. Iraqi children continue to die at the rate of 500-1000 daily.

The incidence of typhoid, hepatitis, meningitis, and gastroenteritis has become epidemic. Hospitals lack medicine, vaccines, and anesthesia, and cannot treat curable diseases. International relief workers and medical experts have called Iraq a “public health catastrophe”, a country “on the verge of famine”.

The Iraqis have agreed to several formulas for selling oil, with UN monitoring. All that which has been agreeable to the Iraqis has been vetoed by the US, UK, or France. The option offered to Iraq, comparable to the only option offered for withdrawal from Kuwait before the war is one without dignity and fails to assure the level of resources needed.

US citizen cannot determine the policy of the Iraqi government, by they can influence the policies of their own government, and it is the US government that is the force behind the maintaining of UN sanctions against Iraq.

WILPF urges that:

A. The people of Iraq not be held hostage for the political purposes of the US, the UK, or any other governments.
B. Concerned individuals and organizations contact their parliaments, congress people, heads of states and the UN Secretary-General urging them to support the lifting of humanitarian sanctions against Iraq so that it may begin to restore its hospitals, homes, schools and its civilian infrastructure and meet its humanitarian needs.

**The Gulf War and International Law**

Before, during and after the Gulf War, there were and continue to be serious violations of international law.

There are legal and binding international instruments regarding war under which the parties to them are accountable for their actions. These include the Charter of the Nuremberg tribunal, the Geneva and Hague Conventions and Protocols, and also the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Conventions on Civil and Political, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

These instruments contain prohibitions against inflicting harm on civilian populations, prohibitions against acts or threats of violence against civilian populations, against starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, against attacking or destroying installations indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, against attacking installations which have the potential of releasing dangerous substance into the environment, against means of warfare which may cause damage to the natural environment and thereby prejudice the health or survival of the population, and against the use of excessive force.

In addition, there are international laws regarding the protection and basic rights of specific populations. These are stated in the 1974 General Assembly Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflicts and the 1990 Declaration of the World Summit on Children.

WILPF is concerned that the US and ‘allied’ forces have violated all of the above stated prohibitions in the bombing of Iraq. If we hold Iraq accountable for its invitation of Kuwait, the new must also hold the US accountable for its invasion of Panama and Grenada, and for violations of international law in Child, Nicaragua, Angola and other parts of the world.

If we oppose the use of force against a sovereign people, and if we condemn Iraq for the invitation of Kuwait, if we support UN security Council resolutions, and if we oppose occupation, then the same standards should be held to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and Lebanon, its defiance of SC Res. No. 2423 (1967) and SC Res. No. 338 (1973) and its violations of human rights and the Geneva and Hague Conventions. The Israeli government has consistently defied Security Council resolutions, yet continues to receive billions of dollars of US aid every year.
WILPF urges Individuals and organizations to press for:

A. Accountability for the actions of US and allied forces during the Gulf War with regard to violations of international law;

B. Recognition that to continue humanitarian sanctions against Iraq is a violation of the 1974 General Assembly Declaration and the Declaration of the World Summit on Children;

C. The health and survival of Iraqi children not to be linked to the behaviour of its government;

D. The application of a single standard of international law.

**The United Nations and the Gulf War**

The UN sanctioned Gulf War, precipitated by the U.S. Government, will set a precedent for governments to use the UN for their own political means, threatening an already unstable world peace, and enabling the U.S. military to become the police enforcers of the world, within the UN framework, while bypassing the UN Charter and the purpose for which the UN was originally established.

WILPF urges that:

A study be done to critically review the Gulf War and the conduct and role of the United Nations and the United States in that war, and to educate, inform and mobilize citizens, organizations and governments in support of the United Nations Charter and international laws.

**The United Nations**

We affirm our support of the United Nations and its institutions as an essential pillar in the construction of world peace.

To maintain the people’s trust in the United Nations and prevent the undermining of its very essence – multilateral approaches to the resolution of global problems based on equality and in mutual interest of nations – it is essential that all provisions of the Charter be strictly adhered to. We consider the Security Council’s selective enforcement of resolutions as a violation of the Charter and a danger to the existence of the United Nations.

We denounce the pressures often put by certain powerful states on the smaller and poor countries in an effort to eliminate their independent voices in the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council.
We call for a thorough scrutiny of the Charter with a view to developing and strengthening certain of its provisions that would make the Security Council accountable to the General Assembly for its decisions and actions.

In the longer term, we call for changes in the Charter that would provide for a more democratic structure of the Security Council, such as an increase in its numbers on the basis of equality and regional representativity and the abolition of the ‘permanent’ membership.

**Sanctions and Embargos**

United Nations imposed sanctions and embargos against Iraq, Libya and South Africa, and the long-lasting blockade inflicted on Cuba and Vietnam by the US Government, call for clarity and understanding of WILPF’s positions in this regard.

WILPF supports sanctions and embargoes imposed by the UN Security Council in case of aggression of one state against another, and after mediation under Chapter VI fails. Such sanctions and embargoes must be in accordance also with international human rights and humanitarian conventions and agreements, that is, sanctions and embargoes can under no circumstances include food and medicines, medical supplies and equipment.

WILPF supports sanctions against countries that are in gross violation of international human rights instruments and the spirit of the Charter, as in the case of South Africa with its institutional racist policy of apartheid.

1. WILPF opposes and calls for the immediate end to the embargo against Iraq. The continuation of the embargo is in violation of the Charter and the Security Council’s resolution which imposed the embargo in the first place. The embargo on food and medicines and medical supplies was all along, and continues to be, a violation of international humanitarian conventions. It brings untold suffering and deaths to the Iraqi people, particularly the children.

2. WILPF opposes and calls for the immediate end to the threats by the US, UK and France, and the UN imposed embargo against Libya. The embargo is imposed against Libya because of its refusal to extradite two of its citizens to a foreign country which alleges them of having committed a crime. The embargo is in violation of the UN Charter.

3. WILPF opposes and calls for the immediate end of the blockade against Cuba, imposed for many years by the US Government, in order to destabilize the country with a view to destroying its economic and social system. This is in violation of international human rights conventions and the UN Charter.
4. WILPF opposes and calls for the immediate end of the embargo against Vietnam imposed by the US Government for more than 15 years.

5. WILPF calls for the continuation of sanctions against South Africa until the apartheid system is totally dismantled and all the people of South Africa enjoy equal rights in all respects.

Rights of Indigenous Peoples

WILPF supports the basic demands of the world’s indigenous peoples – these are for human rights, land, and the environment. We subscribe to the perspective that Mother Earth is being violated in an exploitative, destructive, non-ecological manner. We respect the desire of the indigenous people to maintain their cultural traditions. We oppose the economic and cultural system that marginalizes indigenous peoples – especially women. We decry the racism inherent in these practices.

WILPF supports:
1. The objectives of the indigenous consultation held in 1992 in Brazil;
2. The 1993 International year of the World’s Indigenous People;
3. The programme of opposition to the effects of 500 years of invasions of the Americas;
4. The indigenous people’s right to self-determination;
5. The objectives of the People’s Movement for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific.

Chemical Weapons Convention

WILPF calls for the early conclusion of the convention banning the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons and hopes that once signed it will quickly come into force.

There is a necessity to counteract moves by major military powers to capitalize on the publicity given to their claim of success in this area, and make the public aware of the inherent dangers of this claim. WILPF affirms that chemical weapons are only a small part of the large arsenals of weapons existing today. Without a serious disarmament effort regarding all other kinds of weaponry the chemical weapons convention will have a limited effect on the ongoing militarization.

Justice for the Bolivian People

With its sisters of LIMPAL Bolivia, WILPF denounces the delay in the sentencing of the former military dictator Luiz Garcia Meza, author of atrocious crimes against the Bolivian people while in power in 1980-1981.
WILPF expresses its solidarity with the Bolivian “Comite Impulsor del Juicio de Responsabilidades” which is struggling to terminate the trial and to speed up the sentencing of Luiz Garcia Meza and his collaborators.