

**Statement by Mrs. Simona Halperin**  
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**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
**at the Sixth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence**  
**Building Measures in Asia (CICA)**

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Honorable President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, our host, Mr. Qasym Jomart Toqayev, honorable heads of states, distinguished Ministers, Representatives, ladies and gentlemen, Shalom!

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be here, on Behalf of Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of the State of Israel, Mr. Yair Lapid, and to represent my beloved country Israel at this very important international festivity.

Especially so as I grew up in a young child in Saint Petersburg, grandchild of two Jewish soldiers in the Red Army during the second world war. One of them owes his life to a Kazakhstani nanny of Tatar origin, for which I owe a personal debt to our hosts, forever. My parents, Ex-Soviet Jews, could have only dreamed that one day their daughter will be an Ambassador representing Israel here in Astana.

My life story tells the story of Israel: a land of innovation, pluralism and Aliya absorption. A vibrant, free Asian country, inhabited by refugees, dreamers and pioneers who gathered back from all corners of the world. The homeland

of the Jewish People, with vast communities of Arabs and Druze, Jews, Moslems, Christians and many more religions and faiths, making Israel a wonderful bridge between cultures, geography, history and human landscapes.

Gathering around the table to conduct a dialogue on cooperation and confidence building is the very idea which led Kazakhstan, 30 years ago, to create the vision of CICA. We deeply appreciate Kazakhstan for its leading role and for its tremendous efforts to promote CICA as a framework of cooperation, friendship and dialogue between Asian states. To emphasize what unites us, rather than divides us.

Indeed, the most basic fundament of CICA is perhaps the key for its success: the concept of consensus. No decision or act can be taken without it. This basic rule is the “sine qua non” for the prosperity and well- functioning of CICA and towards the aspired transformation into an organization. The concept of consensus is interrelated to another underlying principal of CICA, non-politicization, aiming to prevent internal disputes and endless arguments, leading nowhere.

Honorable President, this distinguished Forum has witnessed too many attempts and maneuvers by some member states to import controversial political issues with a clear aim to single Israel out. We and other Member states expressed our clear opposition to those attempts, and we shall continue to do so. We call upon all member states to respect the good spirit of CICA, and to avoid a discriminating and a biased politization of this important forum.

CICA was created to foster cooperation and confidence building, for broader security and stability. Unfortunately, one member state, Iran, undermines this principle. Iran's pursue of nuclear weapons, while dragging international negotiations as a smoke-screen, poses a serious risk for the region and beyond. Iran supports terror organizations in the Middle East such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It's destabilizing role affects not only Israel, but also countries in the region and beyond, from Bulgaria to Yemen, Iraq and Argentina.

On a positive note, we have recently marked 2 years anniversary to the signing of the Abraham Accords with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, two CICA member states, alongside Morocco and Sudan, adding to the circle of peace agreements in the Middle East that started with Egypt and Jordan. The Palestinians need to decide if they want to become part of this forward-looking global and regional network. In Gaza and the West Bank there is an opportunity for the Palestinians to join the stability, prosperity, and coexistence that the normalization accords are bringing to the Middle East.

Today we also welcome a new member state – Kuwait. Ahalan Wasahalan!

In conclusion, I would like to thank and praise the host, Kazakhstan, for its leading role and contribution, and to express Israel's wish that the gradual process of transformation of the Forum into an Organization will be based on the spirit of CICA, the principle of consensus and non-politicization.

Dear Leaders, honorable Chairman, thank you so much for bringing us here together.

RACHMET, and Shalom.