

THE MOSSAWA CENTER

The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens of Israel



The Mossawa Center is excited to take its first steps in re-establishing our presence in the United States. Earlier this fall the Mossawa Center traveled to New York, Washington, D.C., Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco to raise awareness of challenges facing Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel, especially in light of the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law.

Over the course of three weeks, we forged new connections, reactivated past networks, and discovered countless openings for sustained engagement in the United States. The Director of the Mossawa Center, Jafar Farah, will return to New York and Washington, D.C. at the end of November to take full advantage of the opportunities that emerged in September and October.

The Mossawa Center in the United States

- 1 - FRIENDS OF MOSSAWA US**
- 2 - JEWISH NATION-STATE LAW**
- 4 - ARAB AMERICANS**
- 5 - THINK TANKS & PUBLIC EVENTS**
- 5 - TRUMP DE-FUNDING PEACE**
- 6 - MOSSAWA IN BRUSSELS**
- 7 - UPDATE ON DIRECTOR/ARREST**
- 8 - 48 REPRESENTATION IN THE US**
- 9 - CHURCHES FOR PEACE**
- 9 - INTERN WITH MOSSAWA**
- 10 - LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR**
- 11- DONATE TO MOSSAWA**

FRIENDS OF MOSSAWA - USA

The Mossawa Center establishes a sister organization in the United States

During our recent visit to the United States, the Mossawa Center launched Friends of Mossawa, a sister organization that will serve as a network through which proponents of the rights of the Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel can organize at the international level. Friends of Mossawa will fill a gap in the United States, where the voices of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel seldom reach mainstream audiences. Thus, Friends of Mossawa will seek to bring the voices of the Arab minority in Israel to the United States; raise awareness of the work of the Mossawa Center amongst the American public, think tanks, and decision-makers; coordinate events for the Mossawa Center and activists from the Palestinian Arab community in Israel; strengthen the Mossawa Center's network and foster increased cooperation between those advocating for the rights of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel; and encourage the distribution of articles and reports on Arab citizens of Israel in the United States.

The delegation launched Friends of Mossawa on Saturday, September 29, 2018, at a gathering of Arab and Palestinian Americans living in and around Washington, DC at the home of Ibtisam Ibrahim and Aziz Fahmy. Those who attended welcomed the Mossawa Center's decision to reestablish its presence in the United States with enthusiasm and quickly offered their support for the initiative. Over the course of the tour, the Mossawa Center recruited over thirty members to Friends of Mossawa in NY, DC, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The members have remained interested and dedicated to Friends of Mossawa's mission. Both during the trip and afterwards, Friends of Mossawa members connected the Mossawa Center's U.S. Coordinator, Suha Salman Mousa, with countless activists, foundations, civil society organizations, and political figures. Several offered to host fundraising events in New York and Washington, D.C. during the Mossawa Center's upcoming trip to the United States in late November.



If you are interested in supporting our initiative to increase international support for the rights of Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel, please contact Suha Salman Mousa at usa-mossawa@mossawa.org.



Representatives of the Mossawa Center and the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C.



Protesters demand "Full equality and nothing less" at a demonstration against the Jewish Nation-State Law

The Jewish Nation-State Law

Adding Injury to Insult

While visiting the United States this fall, those with whom the delegation met often asked whether the Nation-State Law had practical ramifications beyond its symbolic implications. Many prominent leaders of progressive Jewish groups in Israel and the United States framed the law as redundant, unnecessary, and insulting to Israel's non-Jewish, predominantly Arab Palestinian, minorities. While the law does have symbolic implications, those implications have their own serious ramifications. Moreover, although the law itself does repeat pre-existing laws and reflect current realities, it also obliterates decades of gains made by civil rights activists in Israel.

In 1996, for example, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel filed a case on behalf of the Qadan family, which wished to move to a "Jewish locality" but was denied residency on the basis that the family was not Jewish. In the Qadan case, the High Court ruled against segregation in land administration on the basis that "the principle of equality prohibits the state from distinguishing between its citizens on the basis of religion or nationality." Before the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law, according to this ruling, Arab citizens, such as the residents of Umm al-Hiran

(an unrecognized village that state forces partially demolished in 2017 in order to construct the Jewish-only village of Hiran), had the Qadan case as legal recourse. Since the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law, however, the cooperative association of Hiran's Jewish-only bylaws are perfectly legal.

The law garnered harsh criticism for downgrading the status of the Arabic language, which has held official status since the British Mandate. Although the law claims that the Arabic language, which over twenty percent of Israel's citizens speak, will maintain a "special status in the state," it clearly sends a message to the Arab community and effectively terminates the ability of Palestinian Arabs to pursue legal procedures in defense of their language, as the Mossawa Center and other civil rights organizations have done in the past.

Depending on the settler movement's ability to maintain political power, the law may also have severe repercussions for the future of the region and the prospects for Palestinians to exercise their basic political right to self-determination. The first article of the law explicitly states that "The right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people." The State of Israel, however, has repeatedly refused to define its borders. On the contrary, the idea of a one-state solution and/or the annexation of occupied Palestinian territories has become increasingly prevalent in the discourse of Israeli officials and politicians. With this in mind, the aforementioned provision denying the right to self-determination to non-Jews is particularly alarming. If a single state is established over all of historical Palestine—a reality that is increasingly likely considering the unwillingness of the international community to intervene—the Jewish Nation-State Law paves the way for an apartheid system in which the majority lacks the ability to exercise their basic civil right to self-determination.

The Jewish Nation-State Law also renders constitutional Jerusalem's status as the undivided capital of the state of Israel, further obstructing prospects for regional peace and Palestinian self-determination in East Jerusalem.



Children from Umm al-Hiran salvage what they can from their demolished homes.

The symbolic implications of the Jewish Nation-State Law run deep. As the Director of the Mossawa Center, Jafar Farah, told Senate staffers on Capitol Hill, “Before the passage of this law, Palestinian-Arab citizens still held onto the dream that they might one day be equal. This law kills that dream.” As a result of this, members of the Palestinian-Arab community have renewed calls to boycott the national elections, rendering the settler movement’s attempts to sideline Arab political forces successful. Meanwhile, the Jewish Nation-State Law normalizes and empowers extremist forces within Israel who now feel even more justified in their belief that the state of Israel is a state by and for the Jewish people exclusively, rather than by and for all of its citizens.

As police officers beat Palestinian protesters and tell them “Go to Gaza, terrorist,” as Arab citizens are assaulted on the beaches of Haifa simply for being Arab, and as political parties run campaigns against miscegenation, the symbolic implications of the law extend far beyond mere insult.

In recent years, the Israeli Knesset has passed tens of laws that both directly and indirectly target Arab Palestinian citizens, including a law that allows the state to revoke public funding for institutions that support a boycott of Israeli institutions or illegal settlements, a law to undermine Arab representation in the Knesset, a law that would allow for the expulsion of Arab members of the Knesset, a law targeting human rights organizations which rely on foreign funding, a counter “terrorism” law which defines terrorism so as to

criminalize the activities of Palestinian activists on both sides of the Green Line, and a law which threatens to demolish the homes of tens of thousands Arab citizens of Israel. Will the Jewish Nation-State Law be the tipping point for the international community, or simply another piece of discriminatory legislation in a never-ending series? The international community, in partnership with progressive forces in Israel and Palestine, must resist Israeli apartheid on both sides of the Green Line and actively pursue self-determination, minority rights protections, peace, equality, solidarity, and social justice for all.



Jewish Home's campaign for the municipal elections in Ramle reads: "Hundreds of cases of miscegenation happen in Ramle and nobody cares. Tomorrow this could be your daughter. Only a strong Jewish Home will keep Ramle Jewish."



30,000 gathered to protest the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law on August, 11 in Tel Aviv.

Arab and Palestinian Americans leading the fight for Palestinian rights in the United States

As the United States' election season ends, the Mossawa Center would like to express its solidarity and gratitude for the dedication of Arab Americans to justice. In the face of rising hate crimes and racialized incitement in the US media and in US politics, Arab Americans have refused to surrender. On the contrary, a record number of Arab Americans will be featured on the ballots on November 6th and, for the first time in US history, two Muslim Arab women, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, will serve in Congress. Meanwhile, Arab American student groups constitute some of the most politically active advocates for Palestinian rights and social justice in general, despite persistent efforts to silence them.

As Arabs and as Palestinians, we, the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, face very similar circumstances. Anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry are a staple in Israeli political campaigns. Just the other week one of Israel's political parties, Jewish Home, launched a campaign against Arab-Jewish miscegenation. Meanwhile, as a result of the Citizenship Law, which denies citizenship and residency status to spouses from the occupied Palestinian territories, family reunification remains a pipe-dream for thousands of Palestinian families. If they attend Israeli institutes of higher education at all, Palestinian Arab students cannot so much as



House Congressional staffers at an event organized by the Arab American Institute on Capitol Hill

wave a Palestinian flag, let alone organize for the liberation of their brothers and sisters in Gaza, Jerusalem, and the West Bank.



Nabila Espanioly and Jafar Farah meet Senator Tim Kaine at an event organized by Virginia Arab American Political Forum on September 30, 2018.

The political gains made by the Arab and Palestinian American community in the United State not only inspire us in our own struggle for civil rights and social justice, but it also gives us hope. The passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law marks an incredible setback for Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel, a setback that left many of us wondering if and how Palestinian Arabs citizens of Israel will ever succeed in achieving equality. Ironically, the Mossawa Center's visit to the United States rekindled our hope. Needless to say, this is not the result of the current administration. Rather, we are hopeful because, for the first time in decades, we have noticed a genuine shift in US discourse around Israel and Palestinian rights, a shift that is entirely attributable to the organizing of the Arab Palestinian community in the United States.



The director of the Mossawa Center, Jafar Farah, and President of the Virginia Arab American Political Forum, Saba Shami

Mossawa in the US: Think tanks and public events

During its recent delegation to the United States, the Mossawa Center participated in several meetings and events with prominent think tanks and civil society groups. In Washington, D.C., the Mossawa Center participated in roundtables with the Middle East Institute, the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace & Development at UMD, the Brookings Institute, the Arab American Institute, and the Arab Center. The Director of the Mossawa Center, Jafar Farah, and the Director of Al-Tafula Center, Nabila Espanioly, also participated in an event hosted by the Foundation for Middle East Peace at the Middle East Institute, which was moderated by the Director of Americans for Peace Now, Dr. Debra Shushan. On its last day in Washington, D.C., the Jerusalem Fund hosted the Mossawa Center for an event, as well.

While in Boston, the delegation spoke at an event at the Boston Workmen's Circle, as well as at an event with Harvard student groups hosted by Friends of Mada al-Carmel. In Chicago, Jafar Farah was interviewed by the local National Public Radio station, WBEZ. That evening, the American Friends Service Committee hosted the Mossawa Center for a public event. The next day, Jafar Farah and Nabila Espanioly met with members of the Makom Shalom congregation in Lakeview to discuss how progressive Jewish Americans can join in the efforts of groups like the Mossawa Center to fight international ignorance around Israel-Palestine and pressure their representatives to support human rights and represent all Jewish Americans rather than the most extreme elements therein. The Mossawa Center concluded its tour in California, where Jewish Voice for Peace LA hosted Jafar Farah for a public event on "Israel's Nation-State Law: What it means for Palestinians."

The Mossawa Center will return to the United States at the end of November when it will continue to engage with the public and policy-making circles in order to ensure that voices of the Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel remain a fixture in public debates around Palestine-Israel, as well as in policy-making circles.



The Mossawa Center will not participate in the Trump administration's attempts to force Palestinians to the negotiation table

Over the course of the last two months, the Trump administration has taken unprecedented measures to cut funding to Palestinians, including funding to UNRWA, the UN agency that supports Palestinian refugees in the OPT, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and to Jerusalem hospitals where Palestinians can receive medical care that would otherwise be unavailable to them. In addition to these cuts, USAID told Congress in early September of its decision to transfer funding for cross-border peace-building programming to coexistence programming in Israel.

The Mossawa Center condemns this decision as part of a plot to force Palestinians to enter negotiations that have already shown themselves to be biased in favor of extreme elements within Israeli politics. Although the Mossawa Center did not receive funding from USAID before the announcement of this transfer of funds, we would like to make it clear that we will not accept funds that were meant for Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories. Moreover, we urge the organizations in Israel to reject such funding, as it is entirely counterproductive to regional peace and will not serve to mitigate tensions between Palestinian Arab citizens and the Jewish community. These tensions exist not because Palestinians are not willing to live alongside Jews. Tensions between Jews and Arabs in Israel exist because the state systematically discriminates and incites against the Arab Palestinian minority and refuses to end the occupation of their people.

The Mossawa Center in Brussels

The Mossawa Center's international advocacy department facilitated a delegation to the European Union in early September. Delegation participants included Jafar Farah and seven members of the Joint List in the Knesset, including Yousef Jabareen, Aida Touma-Sliman, Jamal Zahalka, Masud Ghanaim, Ayman Odeh, Ahmad Tibi, and Talab abu Arar.

The Mossawa Center has worked to establish sustainable cooperation with EU institutions for over ten years to increase representation of the Arab Palestinian minority at the international level. In November, 2017, in cooperation with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, the Mossawa Center coordinated the first large-scale delegation of political representatives of the Arab community in Israel to the European Union. During this delegation, Jafar Farah and the participating members of the Knesset alarmed European officials and politicians to the likely passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law and its implications for peace, democracy, and minority rights, garnering responses from the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights in the European Parliament, the S&D Group in the European Parliament, and from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

As a result of these efforts, the European Union has demonstrated unprecedented support for the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. In May, 2017, following a delegation led by the Mossawa Center, the European Parliament passed a resolution emphasizing the importance of involving the Palestinian-Arab minority in the peace process and calling for equal rights for all citizens of Israel. Following Jafar Farah's arrest, HRVP Mogherini's spokesperson directly referred to Jafar Farah and called for an investigation into the police force. More recently, the EU invited members of the Palestinian Arab minority to meet with HRVP Mogherini. MK Ayman Odeh represented the community in the meeting and is pictured above.

In the coming years, especially in light of the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law, the Mossawa Center intends to continue its efforts in the EU, as well as re-establish its presence in the United States.





Jafar Farah. Credit: Rami Chelouche

Policeman Suspected of Assaulting Israeli Arab Leader in Custody to Be Tried

Jafar Farah was arrested following a protest in Haifa in May against Israel's policies in Gaza. He says that while in custody, the cop knocked him to the ground and handcuffed him with force

Josh Breiner, Noa Shpigel
08.10.2018 | 22:39



Israel Police Internal Investigations Unit decides to prosecute the officer who broke Jafar Farah's knee in May, 2018

The Police Department Investigation Unit in the Israeli Ministry of Justice announced its decision to prosecute Lior Hatem on October 8, 2018. Hatem broke Jafar Farah's knee on May 18, 2018 while in police custody after being arrested at a peaceful protest against the Israeli military's killing of sixty Palestinians in Gaza several days earlier.

As evidenced by video recordings and witness testimonies, police and special forces charged the crowd, beating and arresting demonstrators without provocation. When Farah arrived to the police station, he saw his son and other protesters sitting on the floor bleeding. When he asked how they came to be in this condition, he himself was beaten. It was at this point that Hatem kicked him in the leg, breaking his knee. According to Farah and the other detainees, three policemen attacked them in full view of commanders and other police officers. Farah spent the night at Bnei Zion hospital with his hands and feet handcuffed to the bedposts, per the officers' orders. The detainees who remained at the police station remained handcuffed, on the floor for the entire night. Farah and the other detainees were released after two days with no charges.

On October 8, 2018, the Police Internal Investigations Unit in the Israeli Ministry of Justice announced its decision to prosecute Hatem. Although the Mossawa Center welcomes the prosecution of Officer Hatem, we refuse to pretend that this is a victory. On May 18, Israeli police forces violently denied demonstrators their rights to freedom of expression and assembly, at least three police officers beat and humiliated nineteen handcuffed detainees with their commanders' and colleagues' tacit approval, and two police officers threatened medical staff at Bnei Zion Hospital. In the months that followed, representatives of the department and even the Police Chief Roni Alsheich himself lied about the events.

In 2000, state forces killed twelve unarmed Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as a Palestinian from the occupied Palestinian territories. Like those who participated in the protests in Haifa, those who were killed were demanding an end to the slaughter of their brothers and sisters in the occupied Palestinian territories. The state did not indict or prosecute any of the responsible officers. In 2017 two Arab citizens, Yaqoub Abu Al-Qia'an and Muhammed Taha, were killed during demonstrations. The former was killed by a police officer while protesting the demolition of his home and village, Umm al-Hiran. The latter was killed by a security officer while protesting the refusal of local police to protect his Arab village, Kafr Qasem, from organized crime. Neither perpetrator was charged. As such, we welcome Hatem's arrest as an anomaly that we hope signals improvement. However, as our director stated publicly in October, "This is not about one police officer. It is about a system that is rooted in a culture of violence, deceit, and racism."

Pseudo Solidarity: Groups speak on behalf of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel

As the status of Palestinians both in and out historical Palestine deteriorates, Palestinians are in dire need of accessible platforms to make their voices heard at the local and international levels. As evidenced by the Mossawa Center's decision to establish Friends of Mossawa in the United States, Palestinian citizens of Israel are no exception to this. With limited resources and time, the Mossawa Center focused its international efforts to prevent the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law on the European Union and its member states. The Mossawa Center coordinated two delegations during which Jafar Farah and members of the Joint List in the Knesset alarmed European officials and politicians to the contents of the legislation. As a result of the first, the European Union, for the first time in history, passed a resolution emphasizing the importance of involving the Palestinian Arab community in Israel in the peace process and calling for equal rights for all citizens of Israel. The delegations resulted in two parliamentary questions that both elicited responses from the Vice-President/High Representative of the EU, Federica Mogherini.

Despite the existence of groups that claim to advocate for the rights of Arab citizens of Israel in the United States, there did not appear to be any coordinated effort to alert US lawmakers or officials to the Jewish Nation-State Law's passage. On the contrary, most groups only responded after the law's passage. The "Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues" wrote that the "first organized and forceful response from within Arab society came from the Druze community" after the law's passage and suggested that "a unified coordinated response from Arab leadership has taken longer to formulate," attributing this to a potential "initial shock." The Inter-Agency Task Force is "a coalition of North American Jewish organizations, foundations, private philanthropists and international affiliates" which, according to its website, "aims to generate awareness among the North American Jewish and Israeli public to advance

civic equality in Israel, where Israeli Jews and Arabs can contribute, participate and benefit as full citizens."

While the Mossawa Center appreciates efforts to promote civic equality in Israel, we found the Inter-Agency's response to the Jewish Nation-State Law quite alarming. The Arab political leadership was not "shocked" by the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law. On the contrary, the Arab political leadership, alongside the Mossawa Center, were the first to attempt to mobilize international forces against it and were the most active force opposing the law within the Knesset. This lapse in the Inter-Agency's reporting leads one to wonder whether or not this task force for "Israeli Arabs" even so much as listens to them.

Equality and democracy, let alone coexistence, cannot be built on one side's terms. The path to justice is paved by the oppressed and those who work in solidarity with them, not those who systematically exclude those with whom they might disagree. Selective dialogue does not produce accurate representation, but rather it results in the tokenization of minorities to serve political ends and to absolve one's own conscience.

The Mossawa Center is willing to dialogue with any group that seeks to promote democracy, equality, and minority, civil, and human rights. We only ask that those who do advocate for us invite us to speak on our own behalf or, at the very least, consult with us.

Churches in the US: Which Side of History?

At the opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem, Robert Jeffress, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, delivered a prayer thanking God for giving the United States a president who would stand on “the right side of history” by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. During the prayer he praised the “courageous leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu,” who does what it takes to “protect his people, at all costs.” Just sixty miles south-east of the gathering, Israeli forces killed over fifty Gazans during protests against the transfer of the embassy and its implications for their people’s legitimate claims to occupied East Jerusalem.

Although Netanyahu regularly attacks non-Jews for having opinions on the state of Israel and its “internal” affairs, he welcomed the pastor’s involvement. In fact, the following evening he invited a group of pastors to discuss how the Evangelical church could further support his vision for the state of Israel. This reception comes in stark contrast to his approach towards other Christian denominations, including his approach towards Churches located in Jerusalem itself. Just a month ago, in fact, leaders of several of Jerusalem’s churches were forced to pen a letter regarding his Netanyahu’s government’s renewed interest in confiscating Church properties in Jerusalem.

Churches in the United States and around the world are increasingly defying this double-standard. During our time in the United States, the Mossawa Center met with the Archbishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, representatives of Churches for Middle East Peace, and representatives of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, each of whom expressed solidarity with our mission to further equality, minority rights, and democracy in Israel. As the Mossawa Center embarks on another trip to the United States, we look forward to continuing our coordination with Church groups to balance the ill effects of certain American Christian influences in the region.

Intern at the Mossawa Center

The Mossawa Center is currently accepting applications to intern at its headquarters in Haifa. Interns work closely with the international advocacy team, composing project proposals, reporting to donors, and coordinating the Mossawa Center’s international outreach. All internship positions are full time and require a commitment of at least six months. Intern responsibilities include drafting narrative project reports and grant proposals for international donors; composing press releases for international media; updating Mossawa’s contact database with project partners, international donors, and the international press; preparing reports for dissemination to international governmental and nongovernmental bodies, updating the English website and social media accounts; and supporting the organization of conferences and events for international missions. All interns must possess a Bachelor’s degree or its equivalent, as well as high proficiency in English. Preference will be given to candidates with previous international experience and knowledge of Arabic and/or Hebrew. For more information, please contact international@mossawa.org. To apply, please send a resume or CV and a brief cover letter to international@mossawa.org.



The Mossawa Center in Haifa

A Letter from the Director

Senator Bernie Sanders recently wrote an op-ed in the Guardian in which he discussed developing a new strategy to build an international progressive front. This strategy would consist of an international progressive movement with shared values — a movement that would address the substantial global inequalities in political power and in wealth.

As an Arab Palestinian citizen of Israel and the director of an NGO that advocates for minority rights, I recognize the value of this strategy and wholeheartedly endorse it. As Senator Sanders noted, around the world, “we are seeing movements led by demagogues who exploit people’s fears, prejudices, and grievances to achieve and hold on to power.” These demagogues embolden each other, just as the Trump administration emboldened Prime Minister Netanyahu to pass the Jewish Nation-State Law earlier this year. Civil society groups, organizers, and individuals in the United States have amazed me in their tireless efforts to affirm that families belong together, that Black lives matter, and that survivors of sexual violence will not be silenced. Many of them realize that our struggles are the same, that across the sea the same forces are tearing apart families, abusing minority civil rights, and silencing those who protest. They realize we must confront this transnational demagoguery with a transnational movement for justice.

As such, I would like to reach out a hand to those of you in the United States and around the world who share my indignation against President Trump and his international partners in bigotry. With the support of international partners who have similar goals, we as a community will be more capable of preventing escalation, strengthening democracy, mainstreaming equality in Israel, and ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

With unrivaled access physically, psychologically, and linguistically to both Israeli Jewish and Palestinian communities, we the Arab Palestinian minority are in a unique position to promote a just and lasting peace in the region. Constituting over twenty percent of the population of Israel, we have the ability to work towards democracy, equality, and peace from within. In Israel, a state without a constitution and whose Basic Laws make no mention of equality, the state’s attacks on civil and human rights and civil society come as no surprise. Nonetheless, although peace, equality, and democracy are elusive, there is room for transformation.

Public opinion research in the last ten years shows that more than 50% of the Jewish community supports a two-state solution. This support has yet to translate to a political majority in the Knesset. A veritable peace camp is not impossible, however. When I look at my fellow citizens, I do not see people who are different from me. I see Mizrahim who share a common cultural background and face discrimination. I see secular Russian immigrants, one-third of whom are not Jewish, who feel ostracized by the state’s religious character. I see Orthodox Jews who, like my community, face incredible poverty. I see immigrants, as well as asylum seekers from Africa, who face the same violence at the hands of Israeli police that I experienced when a Haifa police officer broke my knee after arresting me for peacefully protesting the killing of protesters in Gaza in May. We must overcome the fear and animosity that Prime Minister Netanyahu and the ruling elite hope will keep us divided to come together as a majority that will not settle for anything less than democracy, equality, and peace.

Regardless of what progressive forces within Israel are able to accomplish, the reality remains that international actors are heavily involved in the region both politically and financially. The Trump administration’s decision to cut funding to UNRWA is only the most recent example of reckless extreme policy-making that may contribute to increased violence in the region. Though we as leaders of the Arab Palestinian community are committed to effecting change in collaboration with partners within Israel wherever possible, we recognize the paramount importance of international solidarity in today’s globalized world. As such, we are searching for new partnerships abroad as well. We believe that we can best achieve our goals with the help of international partners who share our vision. Together, we can build a better future than the one that Netanyahu and his international partners are offering.

Jafar Farah, Director of the Mossawa Center



The Mossawa Center
The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens of Israel

usa-mossawa@mossawa.org
[@MossawaCenter](https://www.instagram.com/MossawaCenter)

To donate to the Mossawa Center via PayPal, please send donations to
mossawa@paypal.com

To donate via check, please make checks payable to Friends of Mossawa, Inc.
and mail to 12 S. Buckhout Street, Irvington, NY 10533