

Mossawa Center Press Release

Mossawa Center criticizes the Israeli Cinema Council, private sector companies and the Ministry of Transportation for their discrimination against Arab media

Lack of local Arab media and media infrastructure provided for the Arab citizens of Israel are the focal point of the Center's media conference taking place in Nazareth on Wednesday

Nazareth, Israel November 28, 2006 — The Mossawa Center has criticized the Israeli Cinema Council, large private companies, the government advertisement office, the Ministry of Transportation and the First and Second Broadcasting Authority for their discrimination against Arab media. This discrimination marginalizes Arab citizens and negatively affects their right to knowledge and their ability to express their needs and present them to the Arab and Jewish public. Insufficient allocation of advertising budgets to written and visual media, Internet, radio, television, cinema and even phone services has proved to be a method of further marginalizing Arab society. The Mossawa Center will present these findings at its media conference taking place this Wednesday, November 29, at the El Sana Cinematheque in Nazareth. Participating speakers include Nurit Davosh, president of the Channel 2 Broadcasting Authority; Dr. Raweida Abu Ras, board member of Channel 2 broadcasting authority; Dr. Khalil Rinawai, member of the Second Broadcasting Authority and Israeli Cinema Council; Elias Karam, Al Jazeera correspondent; Amal Shadi, correspondent for LBC and Al Khalij newspaper; Dr. Ahmed Said, editor of Al Ittihad newspaper; Bassm Jaber, editor and owner of Panorama newspaper and the Pannet website; Hussein Sweiti, editor of Al Sunara newspaper and Udi Leon, director of special programming and multicultural diversity at Keshet Broadcasting.

Following the conference several films produced by media students in local schools and colleges will be screened.

The media conference is dedicated to Arab media students and will address the mechanisms to develop written and visual media for Arab citizens of Israel. The neglect and marginalization of Arab citizens in general is reflected in the scarcity of Arabic media production and is preventing the creation of a market for Arabic production. In fact, more Arab citizens of Israel are employed with international and regional Arab broadcasting companies than employed with local media outlets in Israel. Al Jazeera and other broadcasting channels are replacing local Arabic television production in news in Israel as well. Mossawa has indicated that this situation is leading to the decline of the local Arab perspective in both television and cinema. The conference will also address the case of television taxes — taxes that Arab citizens are required to pay even though Arab programs are being moved from Channel One to Channel 33.

The Mossawa Center has also focused on the lack of infrastructure provided by the cable company HOT to provide television, Internet and telephone services which affects the rights of the Arab citizen. The Mossawa Center has demanded that the Ministry of Transportation interfere and enforce HOT to build competitive infrastructure in the fields of basic service Internet and landlines.

The media conference is part of the second annual Days of Mossawa Festival, a series of events and activities aimed at improving the position and situation of the Arab citizens as a national minority and equal participants in the media.

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