



**The Mossawa Center:
The Advocacy Center for the Arab
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mossawa Center Releases “Watch List” to the International Community

HAIFA Thursday, May 14, 2009 – The Mossawa Center, the Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel, releases a “Watch List” of indicators for monitoring developments vis-à-vis Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel. This general release comes in advance of Israel’s new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s first meeting with U.S. President Barak Obama since his coming to office, slated for May 18.

"We expect this meeting to set a tone for U.S. policy on Israel and the peace process," states Mossawa Center director, Jafar Farah. "The new government's coalition agreement and state budget give us great cause for concern. We need to make sure that Palestinian Arab citizens are considered in the big picture."

On May 4th, Netanyahu delivered a video address to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) at its annual conference in Washington DC. In that address, Netanyahu claimed Israel would pursue a triple track towards peace between Israel and the Palestinians which would encompass “a political track, a security track [and] an economic track” However, Netanyahu has yet to endorse a two state solution, as well as failed to comment on the demands of a settlement freeze and an end to home demolitions in East Jerusalem. Instead, he called on the Palestinians to recognise Israel as a Jewish state as a preliminary condition to restarting peace negotiations. This stipulation is both irrelevant and redundant given Palestinian recognition of Israel since 1993. Netanyahu also emphasized the “common threat” of a nuclear Iran, which can be exploited to deflect attention away from the need for peace progress with the Palestinians.

Another tactic that Mossawa Center expects from the new government to avoid progress towards peace involves targeting Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, as evidenced in ideas of "transfer," land exchange (of Arab villages inside Israel for illegal settler settlements), and "loyalty oaths." Mossawa Center's public release of the "Watch List" is intended to alert the U.S. administration

as to the possibility of such acts of incitement, so that the U.S. may follow developments and hold the Israeli government accountable.

Mossawa recently sent a delegation to Washington, and distributed the "Watch List" to the State Department and members of Congress, including to Senator John Kerry, D-MA, and Congressman Gary Ackerman, D-NY, Chairs of the Foreign Relations Committees in their respective houses. Mossawa has also highlighted these concerns in recent meetings with foreign ambassadors and diplomats. Mossawa Center's "Watch List: Items to monitor in the Israeli government and society in the coming two years" includes:

1. The Coalition Agreement between the Likud, Israel Beiteinu and National Unity parties, the extreme right party led by Avidor Lieberman, to establish a "loyalty law" and the implications of this legislation.
2. Continued renewal of Israel's "temporary" Citizenship Law, initiated in 2003, which bans married couples from living together in Israel when one partner resides in the West Bank.
3. Continued disproportionately low allocation of the State Development Budget to Arab Local Councils and, in general, the lack of government funding allocated to Arab civic projects and infrastructure.
4. Continued confiscation of Arab lands in the Negev, which adversely affects 160,000 Bedouin residents.
5. Failure of the state to recognize 45 Arab villages in the Negev and Galilee.
6. Budget cuts to local councils. These cuts will have a disproportionately adverse effect on Arab Local Councils.
7. Media and political incitement by members of the Knesset that targets Arab citizens of Israel.
8. Violent community conflict, such as the confrontations that occurred in Umm el-Fahm in March 2009 and Acre in October 2008.
9. Home demolitions in politically sensitive areas such as East Jerusalem, the Negev and Galilee, and also in mixed cities such as Haifa and Jaffa-Tel Aviv.
10. Police violence against civilians, especially at demonstrations.
11. Actions to further erode the freedom of speech such as arrests of demonstrators and control of the media.
12. The killing of Arab citizens by civilians and other forms of civilian violence.
13. The Knesset passing large amounts of illegal legislation that could overburden and undermine the neutrality of the Supreme Court, which already operates without the framework of a constitution.
14. Political acts that delegitimize Arab political leadership, such as the attempt by the Knesset to ban Arab parties from participating in the 2009 election.

The Mossawa Center charts developments in each of these areas. If you require information on any of these topics, please do not hesitate to contact the Mossawa Center.

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The Mossawa Center, the Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel, is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that works to promote equality for the Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel. Established in 1997, the Mossawa Center strives to improve the social, economic and political status of the Arab citizens of Israel, while preserving their national and cultural rights as Palestinians.