

Elections 2009

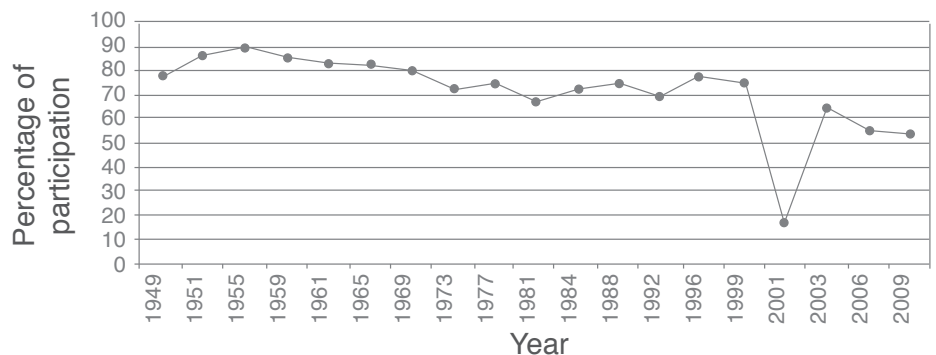
Mossawa's 2009 Election Analysis

Incorporating data and analysis from the 2009 elections, Mossawa Center updated its paper on Arab political participation. Throughout the election, Mossawa carefully monitored campaigns, voting trends and results. It found that Arab voting has steadily declined since 1999. Instead, some in the Arab community use political boycott to express their discontent and to protest the legitimacy of the Israeli government, given the de facto exclusion of Arab parties in all government coalitions. Just 54% of the Arab community participated in the 2009 elections, representing a 2% drop from 2006.

Despite this 2% fall in overall Arab

Party	1999	2003	2006	2009
Hadash	3	3	3	4
United Arab List	5	2	4	4
Balad	2	3	3	3
Labor	2	0	3	0
Meretz	1	0	0	0
Kadima	--	--	1	1
Likud	1	2	0	1
Israel Beiteinu	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	14	11	14	14

Knesset members representing the Arab community by political party



The Participation of Arab Voters in National Elections, 1949-2009

participation since the 2006 elections, the number of Arab MKs elected to the Knesset from Arab or joint Arab-Jewish parties, who directly represented the community's interest, increased by 1 mandate from 10 MK in 2006 to 11 MKs. The total number of Arab MKs including from Zionist parties remained the same at 14, as three Arab MKs were elected on Zionist party lists (Kadima, Likud and Israel Beiteinu).

Given the Arab community totals 18% of the total population, and they are approximately 14% of the voters, there remains a clear representation which

gets translated into Knesset mandates. 83% of Arab citizens who voted selected one of three Arab or Arab-Jewish parties, while 17% of these citizens supported Zionist parties.

With the formation of Israel's extreme rightwing government, Mossawa Center predicts that the upcoming two to three years will be very challenging for the region and Israel's Arab citizens. It expects further confrontations in mixed cities such as the Acre riots in October 2008. Mossawa is also deeply concerned about rising trends in socioeconomic and legal discrimination.

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Public and Private Cooperation and Economic Development

Cooperation between the public and private sectors is essential to boosting the Arab community's socioeconomic status. In addition to the government, the private sector must also play a strategic role in resolving the socioeconomic gaps between Jews and Arabs. The Mossawa Center's Socioeconomic Unit has identified the following strategies for the local, regional and international communities.

State Budget and Infrastructure

Arab citizens receive 944 million NIS of the state budget, which is only 7.6% of the total development budget of 12.4 billion NIS. The government and private sector need to invest more in Arab infrastructure planning. Priority projects include transportation, industrial zones, housing projects and schools.

Employment

Public and private sectors need to employ a higher percentage of Arab workers, especially female. Target industries include high-tech, government, research and tourism. In these industries, Arab citizens can apply their unique trilingual ability -- Arabic, Hebrew and English -- to their work.

Trade and Export

The food and trade industries in Israel are predominantly staffed by Arabs. Consequently, the public sector needs to increase institutional support so that Arab exports can reach the Middle Eastern region and to international economies.

Media

Currently, it is difficult for Arab citizens to gain access to Middle Eastern and Israeli Hebrew media. Print, film and television are important forums for sociocultural and political dialogue. The private sector needs to help increase Arab vis-



Businessmen with Dr. Khoulod Deibes, the Palestinian Authority's Minister of Tourism

ibility in, and accessibility to, the media.

Regional Cooperation

The instability within Israel and the oPT has negatively impacted the region's economy. While there is preliminary cooperation in trade investment, tourism, and labor, there is great potential for further cooperation in education through cultural exchange.

Arab Women

Half of the Arab student population is female, however only 23% of the Arab workforce is female. By comparison, 56% of Jewish women and 59% of Arab men are employed. According to analysis by the Mossawa Center, 6.2

billion NIS is lost per year due to the unemployment of Arab women. Furthermore, 80% of the Arab female workforce is concentrated in three industries: education, health services and welfare. Other minority groups have been able to access a wider range of industries. Mossawa recommends that the government support programs which assist Arab women in accessing diverse educational and professional resources.

Research and Human Resources

Education resources are not distributed proportionally between Jews and Arabs. A far lower percentage of Arab students completing degrees in higher education are employed in professional industries. There are currently 36,000 unskilled Arab workers in the labor market. It is important to bridge this significant education and workforce gap.

For further information, please see Mossawa Center's paper "The Economic Status of the Arab Community: An Overview" available at www.mossawa.org



Workshop on education and human resources in the Arab community

Mossawa holds 2nd Annual Economic Conference

On December 4, 2008, Mossawa Center hosted its annual Economic Development and Business Initiatives Conference in Nazareth. With the international financial crisis as a background, the conference was highly anticipated. The conference covered three main topics: the economic potential of the Arab minority in Israel, integration of the Arab minority into the national economy, and integration into the international economy.

There were four panels entitled, "Export, Traditional Industries, and the International Economic Crisis"; "Education and Human Resources"; "Financing Resources and Infrastructure"; and "Employment Possibilities."

Notable participants included Ramez Jaraisy, the Mayor of Nazareth, Mazen Ghanaim, the Mayor of Sakhnin Dr. Khoulod Deibes, the Palestinian Authority Minister of Tourism and Dr. Hassan Abu Libdi, consultant

for Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. Additionally, the conference also included representatives from the Ministry of Treasury and Industry, international economic experts, local business leaders and NGOs.

If you would like to be involved or receive information on the Third Annual Economic Conference to take place in October 2009, please contact: mosawa@rannet.com.

UK Local Government Association Cooperating With Arab Local Authorities

Arab and British Local Councils have taken the first steps towards long-term cooperation, facilitated by the Mossawa Center, Injaz and the Committee of Arab Mayors. The cooperation between the local organizations and the UK Local Government Association (LGA) began with the vision and support of Sir Jeremy Beecham, first chairman of the LGA and currently the LGA Vice-Chairman.

LGA experts held a two-day training for the heads of Arab local councils on March 25 and 26, 2009. The principal aim of the training was to enhance the performance of Arab local authorities and to facilitate cooperation among them with the UK and EU. The training focused on generating resources for Arab local councils, especially through public-private sector partnerships. It also addressed the impact that Israeli government policies and the international financial crisis will have on local councils.

The training consisted of a series of lectures and workshops conducted by experts recruited by the LGA. They included Judi Billing from Learning for Leadership, Martin Lipson, program director at 4ps and Rachel Litherland, National Adviser on Partnerships for the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).



(L-r) Mayor Nader Sarsur of Tira, Mayor Khaled Hamdan of Umm al-Fahm, James Beadle

Keynote speakers at the event included Shawki Khatib, chairman of Injaz and former chairman of the Committee of Heads of Arab Local Authorities, the newly appointed chairman of the Committee of Heads of Arab Local Authorities, engineer Ramez Jaraisy, James Beadle, representative of the LGA, Dean Hurlock, representative of the British Embassy, and Jafar Farah, director of the Mossawa Center.

Mossawa Center economist Amin Fares also spoke at the event, addressing the economic crisis and the

state budget. Ghaida Rinawi Zoabi, executive director of Injaz presented survey findings on Arab Local Councils. Professor Rasem Khamaysi spoke on the theme of regional cooperation and MK Dr. Hanna Sweid discussed local leadership. As a follow-up to the training, Mossawa is looking to send a delegation of Arab mayors to the UK.

The two day training was conducted with the support of the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the Trusthouse Foundation with the initiative of Sir Jeremy Beecham.

Acre

City on the Front

On the eve of the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, October 2008, Taufiq Jamal, an Arab resident of the northern city of Acre, drove his car into a mixed Arab and Jewish neighborhood to pick up his daughter from her fiancé's home. Angered that Jamal was disrupting the observances of Yom Kippur, Jewish youth attacked his car and the home of his daughter's fiancé. They threw stones and chanted, "Death to Arabs."

Rumors spread among the Arab residents in Acre's Old City that Jamal had been killed. Groups of Arab youth took to the streets. The violent confrontations lasted for the next several days, leaving more than one hundred Arab and Jewish homes and other properties were damaged. Four people were hospitalized and fourteen Arab families, seventy-two people in total, were forced to evacuate their homes. Three Arab homes were completely burned down.

Throughout the riots and their aftermath, the Mossawa Center was present in Acre to document the violence and assist the family that were victims. For several Arab families, the Yom Kippur violence was only one in a series of acts of anti-Arab aggression. One family had been attacked four times since 2000.

As the Mossawa Center's report states, "No conflict begins on the day the first person throws a stone but is part of a wider network of inter-linked events." The conflict in Acre is no exception and is another example of the breadth of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

In October 2000, Israeli police killed thirteen Arab citizens during demonstrations following the start of the Second Intifada. The Israeli government subsequently established the Or Commission to investigate the incident. It found that the State of Israel "must work to wipe out the stain of discrimination against its Arab citizens, in its various forms and expressions." Unfortunately, few of the Or Commission's recommendations have been implemented. The extreme Right in Acre even undertook measures to "Judaize" the city, by leading a two-year boycott of the Old City, the economic hub of the Arab community in Acre. The October 2008 conflict in Acre only reveals how little progress



has been made in ending discrimination.

The conflict in Acre has several consequences not only for Arab citizens in Israel but also for national and regional stability. The slow and reluctant response of local authorities, including the police and the city council, galvanizes feelings of frustration and insecurity among the Arab community. It damages the already fragile relations between Jewish and Arab citizens. Furthermore, the portrayal of Arab violence in Acre is fueling anti-Arab sentiment across the country. It could lead to further violence and confrontations in mixed cities such as Haifa, Jaffa, Nazareth Illit, Carmiel, Beer-Sheva, Lod and Ramleh.

If there is internal tension between Jews and Arab citizens, it will further aggravate the tension between Israel and the oPT.

The October 2008 riots have also fueled political extremism, as evidenced by the recent elections. Israel Beitenu, led by Avigdor Lieberman, and the National Union, which includes Ariel Eldad, have openly advocated for the transfer of the Arab population.

In light of the deteriorating situation, Mossawa Center recommends that civil society, the international community and the media promote peaceful coexistence and a resolution to internal strife. It recommends that the Or Commission's findings be implemented immediately.

Response of the Mossawa Center

The Mossawa Center has been actively responding to the Acre events through various strategies.

Community response

The Mossawa Center helped families in Acre, when the local authorities failed to respond promptly. Mossawa met with families daily; donated beds and furniture to the families; activated local civil society groups to intervene; provided short-term financial assistance; coordinated with Mobadara, the Arab Emergency Center, to host a community therapy day in Nazareth which took place on October 24, 2008.

Legal advocacy

The Mossawa Center's legal adviser advocated for the Minister of Finance to declare the events in Acre a political confrontation and to compensate all the families accordingly. Mossawa launched a successful legal case ensuring that this compensation be realized. Following Mossawa's intervention and that of other organizations, the Ministry of Finance compensated most victims. Additionally, Mossawa Center provided damage assessment. Mossawa's legal unit carefully monitored the police investigation as well

as submitted official complaints against websites calling for violence against Arabs.

Media advocacy

The Mossawa Center visited damaged homes, recorded families' testimonies, and took photos and videos of the riots and the damage they caused. Photographs and press releases detailing these events are available on the Mossawa Center website. Mossawa also alerted and updated local and international media.

International advocacy

The Mossawa Center kept the international community up-to-date about the events in Acre. Member of the European Parliament, David Hammerstein-Mintz, came to speak out against anti-Arab violence in Acre, and met with the Acre mayor and MK David Azolay. Mossawa's desk in Brussels composed a policy paper on the situation and presented the issues to relevant European bodies. Mossawa also distributed information to all foreign embassies in Israel. Several embassies used Mossawa's reports for their own assessments of the Acre events, which they forwarded to their respective governments.

Towards a Civil Agreement

The formal legal status of the Arab citizens in Israel has always been undermined, in large part due to the dual definition of the state as both Jewish and democratic. Although one in every five Israeli citizens is a Palestinian Arab, the Israeli government has yet to recognize this group as a national minority. Instead, the government refers to the Arab minority as “non-Jews,” or generally as “minorities.” Despite the electoral system of proportional representation, the Arab minority in Israel has never gained full and equal citizenship, and a genuine democracy requires equal rights for all of its citizens.

As Israel does not have a formal constitution, there is no legal guarantee for equality in civil rights. The most commonly quoted section, in demonstration of Israel's genuine democratic character, is the Procla-

mation of Independence, which states that the State of Israel “will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.” However, the Proclamation of Independence is not considered a constitutional document, so these elegant sentiments have no legal effect.

In the Knesset, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee has been submitting constitutional proposals for a vote over the last several years. Unfortunately, these proposals largely ignore the rights of the Arab community and other ethnic groups. Recognizing the need for immediate

advocacy, Mossawa is spearheading a coalition of civil society organizations that is serving as a counter-force to the Knesset's proposals. For several years, Mossawa has been working with this coalition on drafting an Equal Constitution.

As a preliminary step in drafting a constitution, Mossawa has been facilitating activities towards the creation of a civil agreement. These have included meetings on multiculturalism in Israel, strategy building for advocacy in the Knesset, a media action plan, and drafting position papers on the institutional and social changes that need to accompany a constitution's ratification.

For more information about Mossawa's Legal Status work, please see “An Equal Constitution for All?: on a Constitution and Collective Rights for Arab Citizens in Israel”, available on www.mossawa.org

Mossawa Records A Dramatic Rise In Racist Incidents In 2008

Mossawa Center has recorded a one-hundred fifty and percent rise in racist activity in Israel since the previous year. Mossawa analyzed these findings in its' 2009 Racism Report officially released on March 21, 2009, coinciding with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The report documents 271 racist incidents that occurred inside Israel over the past year. Mossawa Center first distributed the report at its Anti-Racism Conference in Acre (see page 5), a city in northern Israel where violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs took place in October 2008.

Mossawa reports a 1000% rise in racially motivated civilian violence against Arabs in 2008 as compared with 2007. There has also

been a 300% rise in police violence.

The Arab Local Councils' Elections in November 2008, the Gaza crisis in January 2009 and National Elections in February 2009 have exacerbated tensions.

The report includes testimonies from targeted individuals and families. The Ibrahim family of Acre, for example, reports being attacked repeatedly by Jewish extremists. Their home was vandalized and their car torched in early 2009. While CCTV footage recorded perpetrators igniting their car, the police has yet to sufficiently respond.

For more information about Mossawa's racism findings, please see “2009 Racism Report”, available on www.mossawa.org

Mossawa's main findings, as summarized in the report, include the following findings for 2008:

- **29** events of racial incitement
- **17** cases of police attacks on Arab citizens
- **70** incidents of racist violence perpetrated by Jewish citizens against Arabs
- **39** racist incidents during football games
- **15** incidents of racial profiling and discrimination in access to services
- **12** discriminatory legislative bills passed
- **23** cases of delegitimization of Arab political leaders
- **10** incidents of religious discrimination
- **14** incidents of racism against Jews committed by other Jews.
- **42** Arab citizens killed in racially motivated attacks since 2000

Community outreach

Youth Comprise Half the Arab Population in Israel

Half of the Arab population in Israel is under eighteen years old. These youth have the potential to contribute significantly to community building. Consequently, it is important to create a safe context for these youth. Through its community and youth-oriented initiatives, Mossawa is helping with peacebuilding on the grassroots level, working with lawyers, youth, local councils, NGOs, media and businessmen. Current projects include Advocacy for Equality in Housing and Planning, Media advocacy, Campaign Against Racism, the International Humanitarian Law project (IHL), Arab-European Dialogue (AED) and the Leap of Faith Together project (LOFT).

Leap of Faith Together (LoFT)

“Leap of Faith Together” or LoFT is a project sponsored by the British Council and implemented by the Mossawa Center. It organizes Jewish and Arab youth into a volunteer corps, with the belief that teamwork breaks down ethnic, religious, and political barriers.

Since October 2008, the LoFT team has met weekly. Originally, the team designed a project in which Jewish and Arab youth in Haifa would visit one another’s neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the war in Gaza prevented the project from being fully realized. With the hopes of extracting a positive lesson from negative circumstances, the LoFT team created a documentary about its project and the obstacles it faced. The LoFT team’s doc-



umentary will be available on the Mossawa Center’s website in the near future.

A second component of the LoFT project was exchange among LoFT teams. The LoFT team from Ar-

menia visited Israel, while the team from Israel visited Azerbaijan. These meetings were crucial for exchanging strategies and expertise on building intercultural relations on the ground in conflict areas.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Project

The Mossawa Center has been running a training and education program on International Humanitarian Law. The project has two overriding goals:

- 1) To raise awareness of IHL in the Arab community in Israel;
- 2) To establish Mossawa as a center for IHL education.

Mossawa has provided training at high schools and universities, and to journalists, advocates, and the general public. Following training, participants have continued to use Mossawa as an IHL resource. To expand the project’s outreach, Mossawa has disseminated



materials online and published IHL advertisements in print. Currently, the IHL project is working on publishing an ex-

panded guide to IHL in Arabic. This project is supported by the Swedish organisation Diakonia.



Arab-European Dialogue (AED)

“Did you know that nearly every Dutch citizen owns a bicycle, and there is twice as many bicycles than cars? And did you know that you can see Arab cultural influence in Andalusia in Spain?”

With these and other provocative cultural questions, Mossawa Center launched its Arab-European Dialogue project (AED). The project targeted a group of fifteen to seventeen-year-old local Arab students. Led by two European trainers, AED educated students on European culture and politics with the aim of encouraging participants to become more active citizens. Towards the end of AED, students designed their own community outreach projects and presented them at the final exhibition on April 15, 2009.

When the project began in January 2009, students were designated as “ambassadors” of EU countries and researched the culture, politics and lan-

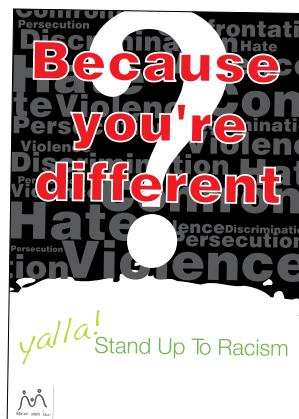


guage of their respective countries. Students simulated the cultural norms of living in a European country, ambassadorial visits between countries, and cultural games. These simulations provided students with a way to think critically about building intercultural relations.

Towards the conclusion of these sessions, students designed their own projects to address socio-economic and human rights topics in their communities. Issues included rac-

ism, child abuse and women’s rights. They produced leaflets, flyers, a documentary, and gave presentations at local schools.

Their efforts culminated in an exhibition on April 15, with special guest EU Ambassador Ramiro Cibirian-Uzal addressing the youth and their families. During the exhibit, the students presented posters, photographs, presentations, and the documentary video “Look Into My Eyes.”



Local Actors, Acting Globally

International advocacy is a key component of Mossawa Center's work. In 2005, two major events took place: Mossawa organized a hearing in the European Parliament on the Arab minority. It also monitored the EU-Israel Action Plan, which led to a call for minority rights protection in Israel. Following these two successes, Mossawa opened its Brussels desk in 2007. Mossawa is the first organization to advocate on behalf of the Arab citizens in Israel in the EU.

Mossawa's Brussels Desk, in April 2008, organized an event called "The Palestinian Arab Citizens of Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Building Peace or Complicating the Conflict?". The event brought together Palestinian and Jewish civil society leaders and policymakers from the EU. In June 2008, Mossawa closely monitored the

EU's project to upgrade bilateral relations with Israel within the context of the European Neighborhood Policy.

This upgrade will replace the current EU-Israel Action plan, which is based on the EU-Israel Association Agreement. The agreement contains provisions on human rights and the principle of equality. Mossawa is advocating for these provisions to be strengthened and implemented.

The Mossawa Center has developed a comprehensive policy paper on the EU upgrade, which analyzes how Israel has not adhered to the Association Agreement's provision. Consistent with other European Neighborhood Policy agreements, the Mossawa Center recommends that the EU enforce human rights benchmarks in Israel in order to monitor its progress.

A summary of Mossawa's recommendations, as taken from its policy paper:

- Peace based on UN decisions must be promoted as part of the EU policy and instruments in the region.
- Provisions ensuring the equal participation of the Palestinian Arab minority must be included in the upgraded status instrument.
- Protection of equal rights for the Palestinian Arab minority must be ensured.
- Human rights benchmarks must be established. A Subcommittee on Human Rights must be created
- The socio-economic status of the Palestinian Arab minority must be addressed and improved.
- A monitoring and enforcement mechanism must be established.
- The EU-Israel relationship must be based on conditionality.
- The culture and history of the Palestinian Arab minority must be recognized and protected as part of EU-Israel cooperation.

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In a policy brief released in December 2008, the Mossawa Center called on the European Parliament to ensure the full participation of the Arab citizens in Community Programs. These include employment of Arab researchers, experts, and technical staff in the Seventh Framework Programme and an increase of information flow to Arab researchers and institutes.

In light of new sociopolitical realities following the US and Israeli elections, Mossawa Center will be undertaking an advocacy tour to the United States. The tour aims to raise awareness about Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel, their status, and the community's role in promoting human rights and peace in the region.

In tandem with this tour, Mossawa also refocused its international advocacy efforts. The Center has been meeting with ambassadors and international diplomats at embassies in Tel Aviv and at Mossawa's office in Haifa.

Mossawa outreached to newer EU member states and met with both the Czech Ambassador to Israel, whose country currently holds the EU presidency, and the Swedish ambas-



The Japanese Embassy Delegation with the Mayor of Kfar Kare and Mossawa staff

sador, whose country will take over the presidency in June. At these meetings, Mossawa discussed how the EU-Israel upgrade will affect the Arab community.

Additionally, Mossawa coordinated a tour for the Japanese Embas-

sy to the Triangle area in central Israel, where Arab businesses, factories and local councils are located. The Japanese Embassy is highly interested in investing in the Palestinian economic infrastructure on both sides of the Green Line.

Palestine Youth Orchestra Performs for First Time in Haifa

The isolation of the Palestinian minority in Israel has created a crisis in cultural exchange. Local Palestinians have few opportunities for artistic collaboration with residents in the oPT, Middle East and international community.

In July 2008, Mossawa Center, in cooperation with Beit-Almusica and the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, hosted the Palestine Youth Orchestra and the Collegium Musicum Orchestra of the University of Bonn, Germany. The event was part of the concert series "My Song is Jerusalem," which toured in Ramallah, Amman and Damascus, under the leadership of Conductor Walter Mik.

The Palestine Youth Orchestra, established Ramallah in 2004, is the flagship orchestra of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music. It is a unique ensemble that brings together young Palestinian musicians from the oPT and the Diaspora. Today the PYO is made up of fifty-five Palestinian youth between the ages of 14 and 25, hailing from the oPT, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Europe. The youth are trained by Arab and international teachers. The concert was the first time the PYO performed in Haifa.



The first half of the concert featured a performance of Aram Katchadurian's "Gayane Ballet Suite No. 2." The second half consisted of six songs celebrating Jerusalem, with original pieces composed by the Rahbani brothers, Suhail Khoury, Issa

Bulos, Rima Tarazi, Reem Banna and Stephen Adams. It also included performances by vocalists Reem Banna, Rima Talhami, Dima Bawab and Abdel Raheem AlQam. The concert was a great success, attracting over five hundred spectators and press.



Arab Leaders Sound Alarm on New Government

The Mossawa Center hosted a roundtable entitled "The 2009 Israeli Elections: Implications for the Arab Community, the Crisis in Gaza, and the Peace Process" in which Arab leaders sounded an alarm about the incoming government. The event took place at the Journalist's Union in Tel Aviv.

Arab political and civil society leaders gathered before forty foreign ambassadors to raise awareness of discrimination, racism and incitement in anticipation of the national elections. They cited events—the crisis in Gaza, the Acre confrontations in October 2008, and the Central Elections Committee's ban on Arab party participation—as signs of Arab citizens' deteriorating situation.

Mossawa Center's director, Jafar Farah, highlighted how the extreme right-wing is complicating the Middle East peace process. Foreign Minister Lieberman has been quoted describing Arab citizens of Israel "an enemy within." The right-wing also uses a rhetoric of civil war to justify unlawful settlements in the West Bank, arguing that to remove settlers would create internal strife among Jewish Israelis.



(L-R) Rania Laham-Grayeb, Jafar Farah, Ibrahim Sarsur, Ramzi Suleiman, Ahmad Tibi at roundtable

MK Ibrahim Sarsur, the Head of the Islamic Movement and the United Arab List, took on a holistic view by urging the audience to "save the Jewish and Arab peoples of the region." He highlighted how Arab Islamic countries are willing to coexist peacefully with Israel, as established in the Saudi Peace Initiative in 2002.

MK Ahmad Tibi argued, that Lieberman's rise marks the deep polarization of the Israeli electorate. Tibi stated that he and other leaders were working avidly to increase Arab MK representation and to strengthen the

Left though electoral participation.

Professor Ramzi Suleiman, former Chair of Psychology at the University of Haifa, commented, "The lack of progress [towards peace] stems from the fact that no real process of reconciliation and forgiveness is taking place in the public debate in Israel."

Aida Touma, Director of Women Against Violence and the fifth candidate on the Hadash Party list, closed the session with how proud she is to be a member of "an alternative Jewish-Arab party fighting fascism in Israel."

2009 Anti-Racism Conference in Acre

On March 21, 2009, over twenty organizations, including the Mossawa Center and a representative from the Embassy of South Africa, convened at Al Laz theatre in Acre for an Anti-Racism Conference. The event was held on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In October 2008, Acre experienced some of the worst violence in Israel since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000.

Abir Kopty, Mossawa project coordinator, opened the conference and the First Secretary of the South African Embassy, Tsholo Tsheole, discussed the importance of building mechanisms to combat racism. Tsheole explained how in post-apartheid South Africa, linguistic and cultural differences are fueling segregation.

Workshops facilitated by activists and professionals took place concurrently with lectures and panels.

In the first panel, entitled "The Different Faces of Racism," the definition and sources of racism were discussed. The second panel, entitled "Racism in mixed cities: the case of Acre," analyzed the violence which rocked the city last year. Some of the Arab families evacuated from their homes, who were in attendance, expressed fear and frustration. Their experiences sounded alarms for potential outbreaks in other mixed cities such as Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Carmiel, Nazareth Illit and Haifa.

Meanwhile, during the first workshop "Planning Actions to Fight Racism," over thirty people shared ideas on cooperative projects on which Jews and Arabs could work together. The second workshop "Communication as a Tool to Combat Racism: Talk-back-ism as Activism" addressed methods to combat racism through media, such as 'talkback' responses to online articles. At the conclusion of the workshop,

participants agreed to establish a team that would organize talkback projects.

After these activities, the South African film "Between Joyce and Remembrance" was screened.

The active participation of the public indicates that there is a real belief in change. The conference marks the beginning of a plan of action by a Coalition against racism, which Mossawa and other organizations are forming.

The following organizations participated in the Conference: Sikkuy, Women's Coalition for Peace, Isha L'Isha, Revolution, Women Against Violence, Kav LaOved (Worker's Hotline), The Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education, Arab Center for Alternative Planning, The Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow, Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), Agenda, Sakada-Reut, Aliater, Almuntada Altakadumi, Altufula, Mobadara, The Negev Coexistence Forum, Recognition forum-Naqab and other organizations.

Media Outreach

Mossawa Raises Awareness of Racial Incitement

Media has a special role in promoting human rights, as it can intensify or defuse conflicts by showcasing alternative perspectives, information and analysis. Jewish citizens often develop their opinions of Arab citizens based on negative stereotypes in the Hebrew media.

To date, Hebrew-language media has treated the Arab citizens of Israel as the "other." Reports on the Arab community more often cover topics such as violence or government dissent. Minimal attention is paid to the internal affairs of the Arab minority, such as economic development or cultural life.

The Mossawa Center developed and implemented a media

strategy for the Hebrew, Arabic and international press. Projects included monitoring the local and international media, providing findings and data to news sources, and issuing press releases. The campaign was met with great praise. It attracted hundreds of Jewish supporters, who are now advocating to the government against discriminatory legislation and hate crimes. They are also active participants in events hosted by the Mossawa Center.

As a continuation of this successful strategy, during the recent State election period, Mossawa Center implemented a campaign to raise awareness of racial incitement. The campaign involved publishing ads in the local press

in Arabic, Hebrew, Russian and English. They exclaimed, "A rise of 1000% in the number of Arab citizens attacked by Jewish citizens," and they went on to call out, "The government's complicity in and support of racial violence is complicating the Middle East reality."

Finally, internal Arab community tensions are another issue on which Mossawa's media outreach is focused. Through its media strategy, Mossawa raised awareness of community fragmentation and intercommunity violence prior to the last local council's elections.

Haaretz

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1071925.html>

Jordan Times

<http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=15260>





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- New Israel Fund
- Open Society Institute
- The United Nations Democracy Fund

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We, at the Mossawa Center, are aware that individuals like you – believers in equality – are the foundation of sustainable efforts towards positive change. We invite you to support our ongoing efforts towards equality for the Arab citizens of Israel. Please complete the form below (or online) to receive news updates, publications or to make a contribution and mail directly to:

Mossawa Center. P.O. Box 4471. Haifa 31043. Israel

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