

Special Report Released by the Mossawa Center

Racism in Israel 2004: Thousands of Arab Citizens Suffer from Racism, Xenophobia, Incitement and Violence

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Thousands of Arab citizens suffer from xenophobia, incitement, racial discrimination, racial violence and hate speech. These findings were included in the special report published today by the Mossawa Center. The report was prepared by advocate Fuad Azar and a team of field and legal staff. The Mossawa Center demand immediate action to be taken by the Jewish public, the government and the civil society to fight racism, xenophobia and violence against Arab citizens.

The authors of this report, while compiling it, defined racism and violence according to the international definitions including the European anti-Semitism report and according to the definitions valid in the Israeli law. In the second chapter they examined hundreds of incidents which were dealt with by the Mossawa Center during the last three years. This report includes repeated incidents, similarly identified as phenomenon, which were documented and dealt with by the center.

The report does not pretend to document all the incidents, but presents mainly incidents which were examined and required direct involvement from the different authorities involved.

This report surveys incidents which took place almost 4 years ago, mainly relevant incidents which needed continuous involvement during 2003 until the publication of this report.

The main findings of the report reveals:

Institutional violence causing loss of life – 29 incidents

The report surveys 29 incidents in which Arab citizens were shot and killed by security forces since October 2000 events, while the focus is on the 16 incidents which occurred after the October 2000 events. Only in two incidents indictments were charged against two security officers shooting and killing Arab citizens.

Although 4 years passed since live bullets and rubber bullets were used in the October 2000 demonstrations, and six months since the Or commission published its recommendations concerning the events in which 13 Arab citizens were killed, hundreds were injured, yet the government did not begin to implement these recommendations.

As stated the police and the security forces, since the abovementioned events, killed 16 additional Arab citizens.

The attorney's office and the department for policemen investigations in the Ministry of Justice continued to support the security forces policy of easy shooting. Ten days after the publication of the Or commission report, and against its recommendations, security forces shoot live fire towards Arab citizens in Kfar Kasem, injuring one of the residents seriously.

Violence and attack by citizens:

The report surveys 17 acts of violence and incidents of physical attack of Arab citizens by Jewish citizens, likely to cause loss of life. The racist violence against the Arab citizens has increased in the last year.

The police showed helplessness/ powerlessness in investigating the physical attacks of Arab citizens by Jewish citizens. Known suspects, whom their identity is known by the police, continued to walk freely.

Some suspects were involved in putting bombs in mosques, and even beneath an MK's car and in Arab citizens' houses. People involved in the Haifa cell were treated sensitively. They were arrested only after putting bombs in Jewish citizens' houses. Lately, a campaign has been conducted to prevent their trial. The report does not survey tens of additional incidents where their investigation has not finished.

Verbal attack, racist incitement and the systemic silence:

The report surveys 15 racist acts of inciting and verbal violence incidents against Arabs by prominent public personalities, hundreds of incidents of calling and writing "kill Arabs".. In addition, the report surveys dozens on incidents of calling "kill Arabs" in football fields.

Political religious leaders increased their racist expressions against the Arab citizens, something that brought the discussion to the Israeli mainstream. The attorney's office and police and the prime minister's advisor were showing non-understandable forgiveness and helplessness and mostly avoided using their authority to order on the investigation and put on trial racists and inciters, something that was surely interpreted by racists as giving the green light. Political leaders in Israel competed in between them for inciting and racist expressions against the Arab citizens. On the opposing side, Arab MKs and Arab leaders who attacked the governmental policy and supported the Palestinian struggle for ending the occupation received different treatment. Arab public personalities were investigated, the files / records were considered more closely than Jewish cases and

in some of them they were put on trial. Their expressions received criticism from the public and media.

Discrimination & violence in public places, employment, and studies:

The report surveys 9 cases through which the entrance of hundreds of Arab citizens to public places was prevented. They were discriminated in acceptance for work, studies and entering public places.

For others, local or regional policy was implemented, a policy meant to discriminate them from acceptance to housing or studies.

The authorities responsible to hold back this phenomenon avoided to do so. The universities even refused to go back from their acceptance policy which was designed to discriminate Arab students from getting accepted for studies.

As to employment reality indicates that many employers discriminate Arab citizens while acceptance to work, and in work relations generally, oppositionally to the law which clearly forbids discrimination. The department for preventing discrimination in employment, in the Ministry of Industry & Employment shows useless and avoids, in most cases, to implement its duty by enforcement including enforcing restrictions upon racist employers.

Despite the fact that the Mossawa Center has asked this department to implement the law, they have not acted.

Revocation of legitimacy of the political leadership:

The elected political leadership of the Arab community was put, during the last years, under massive unprecedented attack. Almost all the political leadership was attacked – even physically – investigated, and accused with false accusation by the Hebrew media. In addition actions were taken in order to limit / restrict the freedom of speech & movement of those leaders including the recruited media.

Discrimination under the law

The report surveys 10 initiatives of legal discrimination against the Arab citizens through legal methods, and governmental policy. Law suggestions, governmental policy, operating control system to births and marriage through using demographic racist claims. Through 5 of them, they use legal and police methods to move Arab citizens from their lands and gain control over them. The prominent and severe of the above mentioned

initiatives is the "Citizenship Law" which harms the lives of 21,000 couples, plus thousands of children and couples planning to establish a joint house together.

Legal methods to stop racism:

In the latest years special legislation was legislated which aims to fight incitement for racism and violence. Methods were developed including legal methods, to deal with the negative phenomenon called "racism". Unfortunately, the mentioned methods are not practical, or partially and selectively practical. The legal system expands its use of consideration and criticism of the freedom of speech, while it talked about inciting for racism against the Arab citizens. On the other hand, the system doesn't hesitate to put for trial Arab leaders, citizens and even journalists that digressed with their expressions from the "sufferable threshold" of the general attorney's office and the legal advisor of the government.

Supporting racism, Kahanism and transfer among the Jewish community

The polls and the research over the past few years indicate an increase in public support for racism. The support for racism, Kahanism and transfer among the Jewish community is becoming more prominent. According to the polls, 70 percent of the Jewish public assume that the Arab citizens pose a threat upon the state security. Almost 34% accuse the Arab citizens of taking over their work places and causing the bad economic situation, and almost 22.4 % see Rabbi Meir Kahana as a leader and if the Kach Party was running for election they would have voted for it. Needless to say, the Kach Party was declared illegal by the government in 1988 and declared a terrorist organization.