



Friends of Mossawa

# JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER

## Exploring West Bank Annexation Through the Eyes of Palestinian Citizens of Israel

The discourse surrounding Netanyahu's promise to annex parts of the West Bank has been binary - Israeli Jews vs. Palestinians in the West Bank - much in the same way as the discourse regarding the Palestinian struggle as a whole. However, governments, international organizations and bodies, and the public always forget the fact that 21% of citizens in Israel are in fact Palestinian Arabs. This part of the population is a key player in alleviating the suffering and oppression of Palestinian Arabs not just in Israel, but the Occupied Territories and Gaza.

The Mossawa Center hosted a webinar aimed at exploring annexation through the eyes and experiences of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel. Moderated by Diana Buttu, a lawyer and former legal advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team, panelists Jafar Farah, Founder and Head of the Mossawa Center - The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel, and Dr. Hanna Swaid, former Knesset Member of the Hadash party and Head of the Arab Center for Alternative Planning.

Farah and Dr. Swaid make it clear that Netanyahu's annexation plan has one purpose: to bring about the establishment of a One-State solution. Moreover, both panelists made it clear that the international community must work to oppose annexation in a meaningful way, with the purpose of preventing it - not just verbally condemn it as it has done regarding the occupation for decades. If you would like to find out more about what was discussed, you can find the full webinar [here](#) (link can be accessed through PDF version).

**ANNEXATION:  
WHAT DOES IT  
REALLY MEAN?**  
A LOOK THROUGH  
THE EYES OF THE  
PALESTINIAN  
MINORITY IN ISRAEL.

With Mossawa Center  
Founder **Jafar Farah**  
and Former Knesset MK  
**Dr. Hanna Swaid**.

Moderated by **Diana Buttu**, journalist and former legal advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team.



Wednesday, June 17  
12pm EST / 7pm Jerusalem Time



## International Advocacy and Fundraising Training Session

In cooperation with Al-Qasemi Academy, Mossawa Center staff participated in a training session about international advocacy and fundraising, led by Rania Laham Ghayeb and Alex Meir. The course focused on fundraising for civil society organizations and initiatives in the Arab community in Israel.



## Meetings with Joint List MKs to Discuss Needs of Palestinian Arab Community

Mossawa Center staff met with the various members of the Joint List through several meetings to discuss the needs of the Palestinian Arab community in Israel, ranging from economic development and industrial zones in Palestinian Arab localities, to the Mossawa Center's state budget analysis.





## Court issues Temporary Freeze Order to Demolition of Fishermen's Village

Lawyer Rana Jarban's request to prevent the demolition of the sports and fishing building in Jisr al-Zarqa, owned by the only fisherwoman in the village Hamama Jarban, has been approved by the court in Hadera. The court issued a temporary freeze order to prevent demolition until the case is heard before the court.

Rana Jarban, the first female lawyer in the village of Jisr Al-Zarqa, submitted the request to freeze the demolition order in the name of the Mossawa Center and in cooperation with the Fishermen Committee and a member of the local council, Mohamed Lotfi, with the aim of pressuring the nature authority and solving the fishermen problem.

The village of Jisr al-Zarqa, the poorest locality in Israel, suffers from a policy of impoverishment and suffocation, with most of its residents living off work outside the village. Fishing is the main source of livelihood for a limited number of families who have remained in the fishermen's village, despite ongoing persecution. All fishermen in the area suffer from instability and anxiety for the future because of the constant threat to their livelihood. As in the case of Hamama, fishing, swimming, and diving are a source of livelihood for her family of 10.

## In Case You Missed It

Mass protests across Israel have disrupted Netanyahu's efforts to carry out his agenda, including annexation. Numerous protests erupted in various cities, with protesters expressing their anger and opposition towards various issues. Hundreds of people rallied in protest against Netanyahu's proposed annexation plan, with Palestinian Arab and Jewish activists alike expressing their opposition to the move. Moreover, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, hundreds of protesters gathered in various cities seeking justice for the killing of black teen of Ethiopian origin, Solomon Teka, at the hands of an Israeli police officer. They held a ceremony commemorating the one-year anniversary of his death.

According to reports, Netanyahu has indicated to his cabinet and close circles that what he meant by his July 1 deadline for annexation is that he will begin strategizing and developing a plan starting then. This comes as heavy opposition to annexation has been seen not just by left wing forces, but also from within Netanyahu's own far-right camp. Therefore, it is unlikely that annexation will take place immediately.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a heavy economic toll in Israel, particularly on Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel as nearly half of them already live below the poverty line. The number of unemployed people in the country has reached one million, roughly 12% of the entire population. Moreover, almost half of those that are unemployed are under the age of 34.

Israel has seen a significant spike in its number of coronavirus cases, with the number of daily new cases increasing from a couple dozen to a few hundred in just one month. Netanyahu opened the country back up far too early - Israel reached the peak of the wave when restrictions were removed - with the opening of schools contributing significantly to the increase in cases. Israel has now recorded over 25,000 cases, with 320 people losing their lives to the illness. Despite reinstating guidelines, the premature relaxation of measures proved to be a fatal mistake, with many officials stating that a second wave could be on the horizon.

## Facing a Second Wave of Coronavirus

As the spread of COVID-19 rages on in Israel, with the number of daily new cases increasing dramatically, the Mossawa Center held an emergency meeting with religious leaders from the Palestinian Arab community. In it, Suha Salman Mousa, Mossawa Center Executive Director, and Jafar Farah, Founder and Head of the Mossawa Center, discussed with the religious leaders on how their respective institutions should act in order to mitigate the spread of the virus now, and later on should a second wave hit Israel.



The meeting centered on the need for cooperation between religious, educational, and civil society institutions in Haifa to confront the possible second wave of coronavirus. It was agreed upon that forming a consistent coordination framework between religious civil, educational and political institutions at the city level is crucial to effectively combat the spread of the virus. Moreover, they reaffirmed their commitment to adhere to the guidelines of the Health Ministry and take necessary preventive measures, as well as wearing masks during religious ceremonies, at work, and whenever maintaining social distancing is not possible.

In addition to discussing the steps and procedures that religious, educational, and civil society institutions could take to combat the pandemic, the meeting also affirmed several demands that must be made to local authorities and the government that have not been met yet. These include demanding the prohibition of large gatherings in prayers and events in churches, mosques, and educational or cultural events, as well as demanding local municipalities to deploy inspectors to ensure guidelines are being followed, and conduct awareness raising campaigns on the family level by all institutions. Among the participants in the meeting were Sheikh Mohamed Sharif (representing Ahmadiyah Community), Father Agabios Abi Saada (Catholic Church in Haifa), Pastor Hatem Shahdah (Protestant Church in Haifa), Father Yusuf Jacob (Maronite Church in Haifa), and Dr. Zahi Saeed (Assistant Director General of the Patient Fund).



Following the meeting with religious leaders, the Mossawa Center held a panel discussion to raise awareness to local leaders and activists about what should be done in the case of a second wave of coronavirus. The panel featured Raghda Dawood (Director of the Italian Carmelite School), Sheikh Rashad Abu Haija, and Professor Emad Qassis, and was moderated by Hayat Saleh (Chairman of the Parents' Committee of the Karma School). The discussion was also later opened up to the attendees who voiced their concerns and ideas on how to mitigate the spread of the virus.