

# MOSSAWA CENTER

## YEAR-IN-REVIEW 2021



مركز مساواة لحقوق المواطنين العرب في اسرائيل  
Mossawa Center The Advocacy Center For  
Arab Citizens In Israel

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## COVID-19 and the Israeli Elections

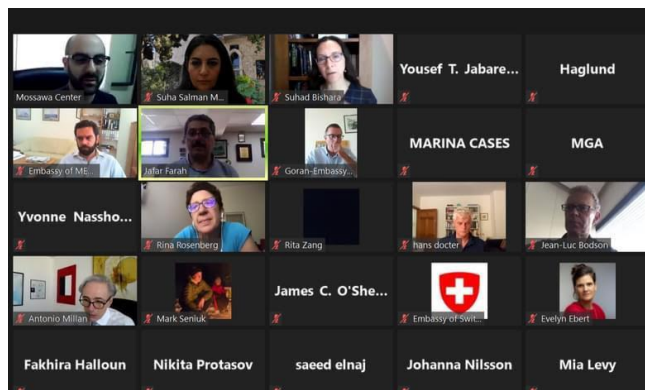
Two years into the pandemic and shadowed by four Israeli elections, the critical role of Palestinian medical professionals in the Israeli healthcare system shined even brighter. Even PM Benjamin Netanyahu could not ignore their footprint and, for the first time since 1997, he set out on a campaign in the Palestinian localities.



After three failed election campaigns to form a government, Netanyahu embarked on an “Abu Yair” campaign in the Palestinian community, six years after his racist campaign in the 2015 election. Throughout the campaign, the Mossawa Center fought against incitement and the misleading message pushed by Netanyahu.

Many feared the campaign would result in Palestinian voters supporting him in the March elections. However, by the time election day came around, Palestinian voters recognized their electoral power in the country and did not support Netanyahu and punished the divided Palestinian parties for the breakup of the Joint List with a lower turnout, dropping from 15 seats to 10 in the Knesset.

The Mossawa Center and Adalah conducted a joint briefing with over 45 foreign diplomats and ambassadors to present evidence and provide information on the ongoing racism and incitement against the Palestinian Arab community inside Israel, as well as provide an analysis for the election results and their implications.



## Resisting Incitement and the War on Gaza



In his bid to stay in power, after his failure in the election, [Netanyahu turned to an old trick in his book](#): inciting against Palestinian citizens of Israel and taking aggressive military action against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Gaza. It started with the forced evictions of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah in occupied East

Jerusalem, followed by a brutal crackdown on peaceful protests by Palestinian citizens of Israel and the [detention of over 2,600 Palestinian citizens through operation "Law and Order."](#) and culminated in a ruthless war on Gaza.

The Mossawa Center was one of the leading organizations that dealt with the wave of violence and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel:

- ❖ We provided a database of contacts for pro bono legal support to detainees, those illegally terminated from their workplaces, and those injured by police during demonstrations.
- ❖ We [sued](#) Israeli supermarket chain Victory for illegally firing multiple Palestinian students.
- ❖ We held an [emergency briefing](#) with representatives of the international community as part of our work to end the civil and police violence that took place.
- ❖ We represented victims of racist and police violence in court, some of whom were left disabled as a result of the attacks.
- ❖ We took an active part in a local and international media campaign to protect Palestinian citizens' rights and called for an immediate ceasefire.

## Police and Racist Violence

The Mossawa Center represented the families of three Palestinian citizens killed as a result of police violence:

- ❖ The late Munir Anabtawi - after the Department of Police Investigations announced the closure of the case, Adv. Albir Nahas, a Mossawa Center Board Member, appealed the decision to the State Attorney's Office.
- ❖ The late Mohammed Kiwan Mahamid - shot in the back while sitting in the back of a car with his friends at the entrance to the city of Umm al-Fahm. Adv. Nahas represented the family in front of the Department of Police Investigations.
- ❖ The late Iyad Abdullah - after the criminal investigation was closed by the Department of Police Investigations, Adv. Ami Hollander filed a civil lawsuit on behalf of Abdullah's family.



The Mossawa Center also worked on legal proceedings in cases where excessive force was used against Palestinian citizens, often resulting in injuries against them:

- ❖ Jafar Farah - as the criminal proceedings against police officer Lior Hatam, who broke the knee of the Director of the Mossawa Center in 2018, are ongoing, Adv. Albir Nahas filed a civil lawsuit against the Police Department and Bnei Zion Hospital, who were complicit with the police in abusing Farah.
- ❖ Shadi Bushkar - lost his eye as a result of police violence during demonstrations in Haifa. Adv. Albir Nahas accompanied him during the investigation carried out by the Police Department.
- ❖ Honorary Spanish Consul Wadi Abu Nassar - the Mossawa Center appealed to the police and the Police Investigations Department to open an investigation into the attack on dozens of Palestinian families in the city of Haifa by racist mobs in May. Among the families affected was that of the consul to the Spanish Embassy, Wadi Abu Nassar.
- ❖ We followed up on 15 cases of police violence and illegal arrests.

## Economic Development and the State Budget

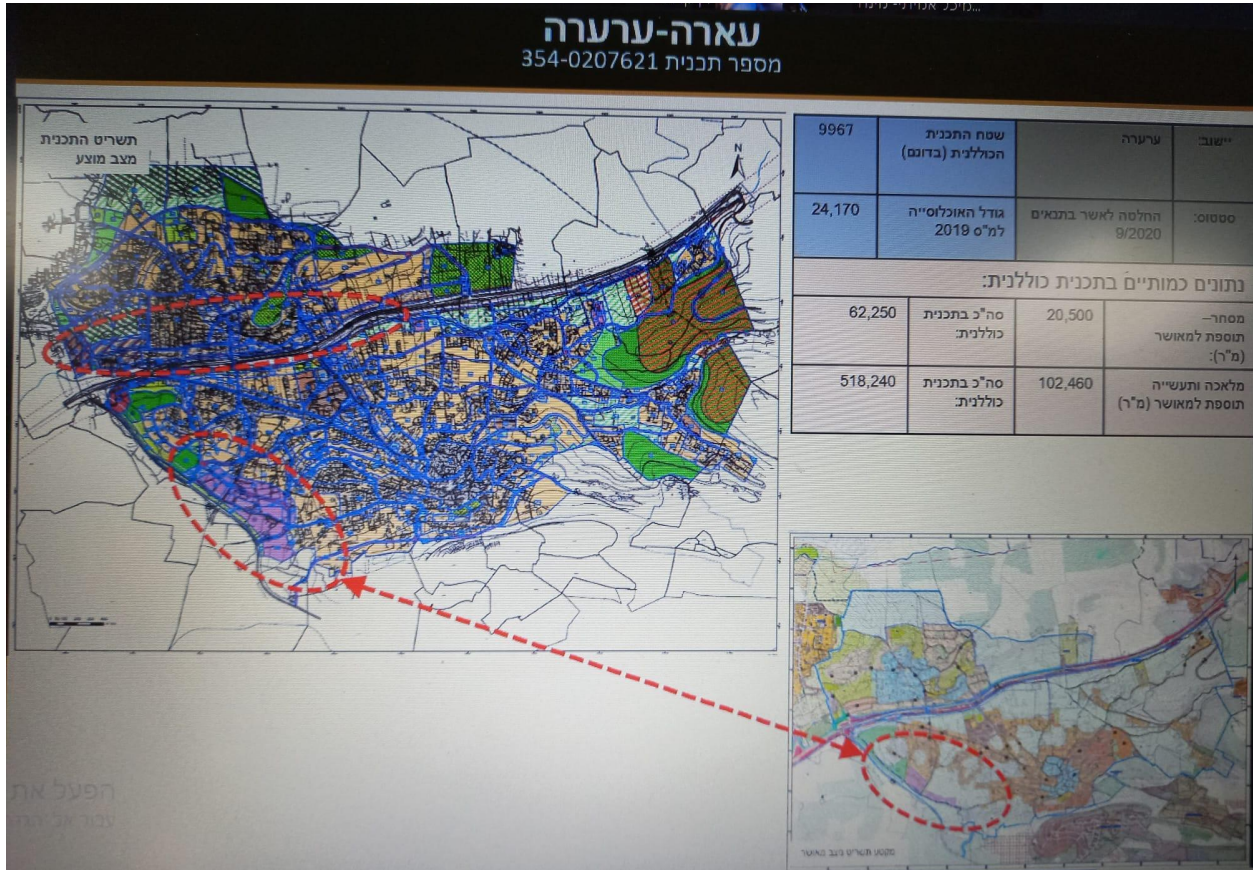
Since 1999, the Mossawa Center has been the only Palestinian Arab organization in Israel to conduct an [annual analysis of the state budget](#) and the needs of the Palestinian community from that budget. It works with Knesset Members, local councils, community leaders, and other organizations to compile a thorough and comprehensive report on the demands of the Palestinian community from every part of the state budget.

### State-budget conference



In August, the Mossawa Center, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, hosted a [workshop to clearly define the Palestinian Arab community's needs from the upcoming State Budget](#) and develop a workplan to effectively advocate for these needs in the Knesset. The workshop was attended by over 70 individuals including Knesset Members, ministry representatives, mayors, NGO representatives, and more.

## Monitoring the implementation of NIS 20 billion (\$6.43B) allocated to the Palestinian community



Throughout the year, the Mossawa Center monitored and followed up with government ministries to ensure that the NIS 20 billion (\$6.43B) allocated for the Palestinian community during for the years 2015 - 2020 were indeed used to finance the construction of schools, the development of residential neighborhoods, and the establishment of public institutions. It is important to note that these funds were collected through taxes from those very same Palestinian localities.

## Of the NIS 64 billion (\$20.5B) we demanded for the Palestinian community, the government approved NIS 29.5 billion (\$9.5B)

The Mossawa Center's analysis showed that the Palestinian community is in need of NIS 63.4 billion (\$20.5B) in funding from the state budget for the next five years in order to



shrink the gap between the Palestinian Arab community and the rest of the population in Israel. After continued procrastination, the government approved a decision to allocate NIS 29.5 billion (\$9.5B) to the Palestinian Arab community in the next five years. However, the Knesset has not approved regulations to implement Government Resolution 550 - a plan for the development of the Palestinian community. [The Mossawa Center will continue to work in 2022](#) on addressing the gaps in the Palestinian community in terms of industrial zoning, welfare, cultural subsidies, housing, and healthcare.



## **Bid published for the establishment of a Palestinian theater**

After former Culture Minister Miri Regev closed down the Arab Theater “Al Midan,” the Mossawa Center continued to promote the cultural rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel. The Ministries of Finance and Culture complied with MK Ahmad Tibi's demand and issued a call for the establishment of a Palestinian theater and allocating NIS 3.7 million (\$1.2M) annually for the project.



## Appointment of a Palestinian as Director of the Governmental Authority for Economic Development in Arab Society

The Mossawa Center prevented, through a petition to the court, an inappropriate political appointment for the head of the Governmental Authority for Economic Development in Arab Society in the Ministry of Social Equality by former Minister Gila Gamliel. Immediately after the formation of the government, the process began to hire a new director, resulting in Mr. Hassan Tawafra being appointed as director of the authority. After his appointment, Tawafra began to rehabilitate the authority and promoted the aforementioned Government Decision 550 for economic development in Arab society.



## Unprecedented development in the village of Jisr AzZarqa



In recent years, the village of Jisr AzZarqa has undergone an unprecedented process of developing infrastructure and launching human capital. The Mossawa Center accompanies the local authority and local organizations in the village. In recent years, as part of an EU civil society funded project, we were able to:

- ❖ Create a positive rebranding of the village that attracts tourism and investment
- ❖ Push for plans and regulations that were approved, allowing hundreds of buildings in the village to finally receive legal permits
- ❖ Assist in postponing the verdict for the demolition of Hamama Jarban's fishing shack.
- ❖ Promote a program for the recognition and development of the fishing village in partnership with the fishing representatives.
- ❖ 15 residents passed their national exams after enrolling in a unique nursing course designed for the needs of the village.
- ❖ Two daycare complexes, which include 7 classrooms, began operating after their construction was completed.



- ❖ The Welfare Department finally moved into a recently built state-of-the-art facility.
- ❖ Prevent the dismissal of dozens of workers from the village during the pandemic
- ❖ Push for grants there were allocated to students in higher education institutions.
- ❖ Help the local council start a process to establish 2 new schools and 7 kindergartens.

## Legislation and Parliamentary Advocacy

### We prevented the extension of the racist Citizenship Law

Since 2003, the Mossawa Center has been working to repeal the Citizenship Law. The Mossawa Center led the struggle of families that have fallen victims to the Citizenship Law. After dozens of meetings and demonstrations, [we managed to prevent the Knesset from extending the law](#). Currently, the Interior Minister is trying to use her authority to continue denying rights to these families from unification.



**We promoted a bill aimed at connecting houses without a permit to the electric grid**



Between 1996 and 2004, the Mossawa Center promoted a temporary order that allowed houses built without a permit to be connected to the electric grid, helping 11,000 homes to finally receive electricity from the grid. The systematic housing and planning discrimination against the Palestinian Arab community prevents more than 100,000 inhabitants from

being connected to the national electricity services.

In recent months, the Knesset has been contemplating a similar bill. We supported and promoted the bill but concluded that its current wording would make it difficult to connect enough houses to the grid.

## Extension of the Law on National Planning and Building Committee for Priority Housing Areas (VATMAL)

After expiring during the election period, the Knesset voted to renew the VATMAL Law which allowed for expedited planning processes for neighborhoods in 31 Palestinian localities in Israel. The VATMAL Law is aimed at increasing the supply of land for large housing projects.



### 120 public buildings were erected in Palestinian localities

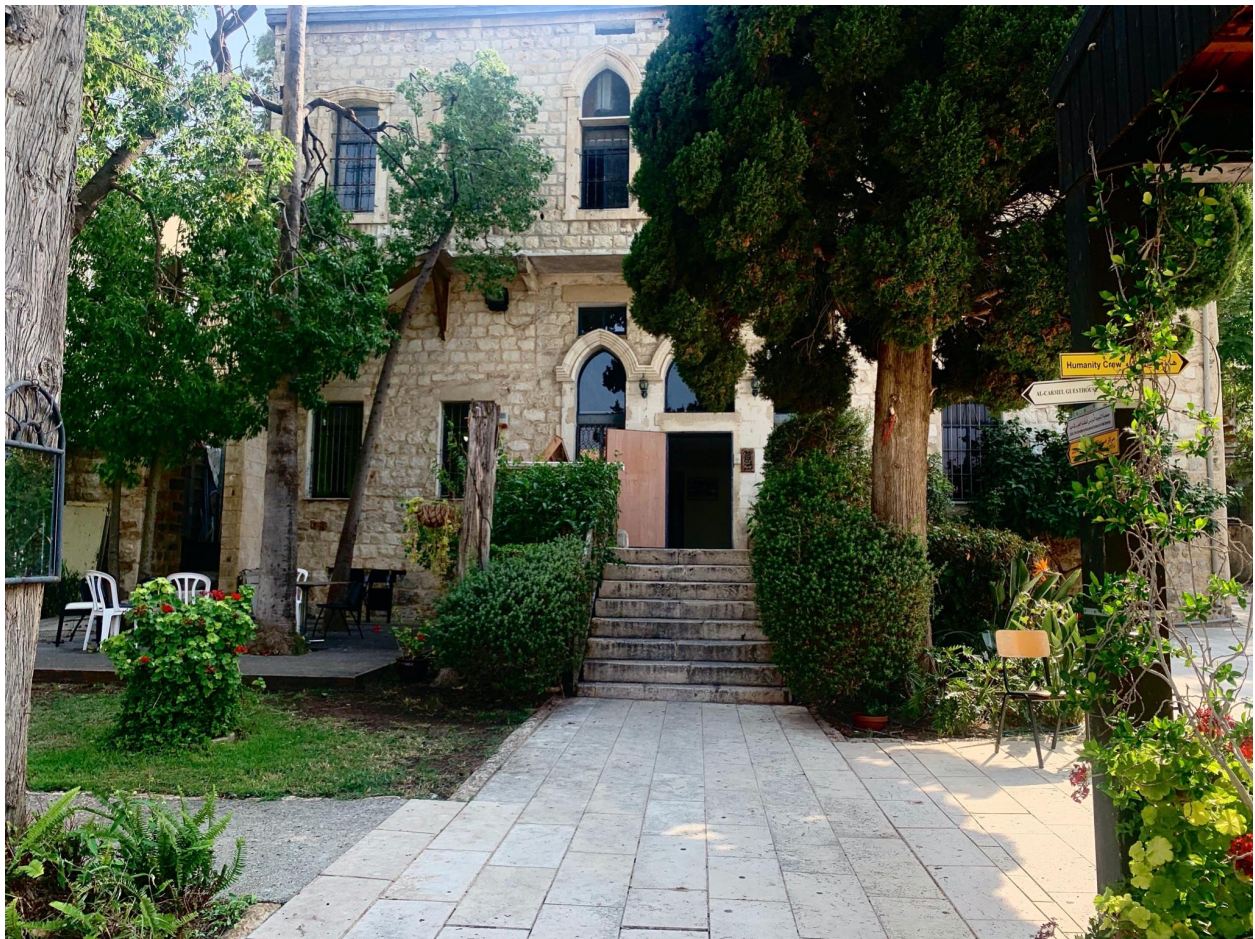
After years of the Ministry of Housing not investing in the establishment of public institutions in Palestinian localities, budgets to the tune of NIS 700 million (\$224M) were allocated over the past six years for the construction of 120 buildings and plots in Palestinian localities. The Mossawa Center monitored the implementation of this plan throughout the years in cooperation with Palestinian local councils and the Arab Center for Alternative Planning.

## International Day for Human Rights Conference in the Knesset

Mossawa Center Executive Director Suha Salman Mousa [talked about the needs of the Palestinian community at the International Day for Human Rights conference](#) held in the Knesset on Dec. 14 in the presence of dozens of Knesset members, ministers, and representatives of civil society organizations.

## Community Organizing and Human Rights Education

### The Carmel Center



The Carmel Center, established by the Mossawa Center in cooperation with the Committee for Educational Guidance for Arab Students (CEGAS), hosted more than 3000 visitors in 2021. In addition to being the home of the Mossawa Center and CEGAS, the Carmel Center

houses Humanity Crew, higher education programs, Majdal Production Group, the Ashraf Fawakhry Gallery, the Salman Natour and Bolus Farah Library, the “Joon” educational program, the “Kav Mashve” high-tech training program for Palestinian Arab youth, the Land Day Archive, student dormitories, and training facilities.

## Mahhali Project promotes Palestinian women into decision-making positions



Together with our partners in Naamat, We Power, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, we trained more than a hundred women ahead of the 2023 municipal elections through our “Mahhali Project.”

In the coming year, we will expand the program to ensure that more Palestinian Arab women run in the upcoming local council elections and take part in decision-making local and national positions.

## Youth program grows to over 2,000 participants



This year we reached more than 2,000 young people and students in lectures and training workshops through our:

- ❖ Youth and students advocacy workshops
- ❖ Press and communications workshops



- ❖ Summer workshop in leadership and advocacy for high school students
- ❖ Lectures in schools in dozens of Palestinian Arab localities

## **Multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural solidarity**

As part of the initiative to create multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural solidarity among minority groups, we, together with a number of partners, promoted diverse programs with a focus on mixed cities:

- ❖ Established a multilingual information and news site in Arabic, Hebrew, English, and Russian.
- ❖ Established a medical staff forum.
- ❖ Established a multilingual communication forum.
- ❖ Initiated a project for a conference of mixed cities in collaboration with the University of Haifa and the Association for Social Progress.



## **1,200 people without status in Israel vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Carmel Center**

At the initiative of the “Ve-ahavata” organization, about 1,200 people without status in Israel, including refugees and Palestinian and foreign workers, were able to receive the

COVID-19 vaccine at the Carmel Center in Haifa - the home of the Mossawa Center.

The Ve-ahavata organization applied to the Haifa Municipality for a space to carry out the vaccination campaign but was denied. We immediately agreed to open our doors and provide the Carmel Center as a space for the campaign. This is a part of our vision for the Carmel Center as a hub for the community in Haifa. We continue to cooperate with associations that provide essential services for people in places where the state refuses to acknowledge responsibility for their welfare.



## International Advocacy

### Meeting with the Canadian Foreign Minister



Mossawa Center directors Jafar Farah and Suha Salman Mousa met with Canadian Foreign Minister Marc Garneau and Canadian Ambassador H.E. Deborah Lyons during his visit to the Middle East. The Foreign Minister announced a plan to increase Canadian involvement in

promoting peace in the Middle East.

### Appeal to the US envoy to the Middle East

During the events of May, the Mossawa met with the US envoy to the Middle East Hady Amer and asked him to intervene to stop the attack on the Palestinian minority in Israel by the police and racist organizations. The Mossawa Center met with him again during a tour initiated by the Mossawa Center.

## Visit to Lydda with French Embassy and Knesset Member Sami Abu Shehadeh

The Mossawa Center organized a visit to the Lydda with the French Embassy and Knesset Member Sami Abu Shehadeh to raise awareness about the violence against Palestinian citizens of Israel in May. Palestinian community leaders and officials spoke about the discrimination against Lydda's Palestinian residents - the very same residents whose homes were attacked by right-wing rioters under the protection of police forces.



Despite representing a third of the population, do not hold any major positions in the municipality, with the number of Palestinian employees in the municipality being very little. Moreover, there are heavy restrictions on the planning and development of the city's Palestinian neighborhoods with some unrecognized neighborhoods having no access to basic services.

## Dutch Ambassador Visited the Mossawa Center



The Ambassador of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Hans Docter, accompanied by the Spanish Honorary Consul, Wadih Abu Nassar, [met with the Mossawa Center](#) to discuss the challenges of the Arab community and ways to deepen cooperation between the Arab community and the Netherlands.

The Mossawa Center discussed the issues behind violence in Palestinian Arab society, including weapons smuggling from the army, drug trafficking, high unemployment rates in Palestinian towns, high school dropout rates, and a weak banking system.

## Meeting with the European Parliament delegation to the Knesset

The director of the Mossawa Center was the only representative of a Palestinian organization who met with a delegation of members of the European Parliament to liaise with the Knesset during their visit to Israel. During the briefing, the Mossawa Center referred to the closure of six Palestinian human rights organizations by the Defense Minister as a severe repression of Palestinian civil society.

## Meeting with dozens of ambassadors and attachés

The Mossawa Center held a number of meetings this year with dozens of ambassadors and attachés as part of its efforts to inform them on the situation of Palestinian citizens of Israel.

## Strengthening Friends of Mossawa in the United States

In October, the Mossawa Center embarked on a tour of the United States, during which it worked to strengthen the Friends of Mossawa network in New York, Virginia, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. [The Mossawa Center called on the Arab-American community to strengthen and expand its political activities](#) to influence American



foreign policy in the Middle East, during a conference held by the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee in Los Angeles. During the tour, the Mossawa met with Senators, congress members, think tanks, and media. Friends of Mossawa in the US is key to supporting the Mossawa Center's local projects.



Leading progressive American journalist Peter Beinart hosted founder and General Director of the Mossawa Center Jafar Farah and Executive Director Suha Salman-Mousa, in an online webinar joined by over 120 participants. [Farah and Salman-Mousa presented a detailed explanation of the status and role of the Palestinians since the Nakba \(the 1948 Palestinian exodus\).](#) They proceeded to talk about the influence of the Nakba and its' impact on the Palestinian community in the country, as well as the legal, economic and social discrimination they face, as well as the strength of the Palestian society in promoting the Palestian cause and defending the Salman rights of their people.



## Mossawa Center in the Media

- [New York Times - For Israel's Palestinian minority, feelings of relief but no rejoicing](#)
- [New York Times - A Historic Moment for Israeli Arabs, but With a Question Mark](#)
- [New York Times - Israel's Parliament Approves New Government, Ousting Netanyahu](#)
- [New York Times - Riots Shatter Veneer of Coexistence in Israel's Mixed Towns](#)
- [Rania Khalek Dispatches - "Everyone is inciting against us!" - Israeli mobs attack Palestinians across the country](#)
- [Mondoweiss - How Netanyahu stands to gain from the escalating violence in Palestine](#)
- [Mondoweiss - How Israel's Citizenship Law collectively punishes its Palestinian citizens](#)
- [Mondoweiss - Israelis feel abroad in Haifa](#)
- [Mondoweiss - The absence of the Arabic language from the public sphere in Israel](#)
- [Middle East Eye - Israel Supreme Court rejects appeal by Palestinians to establish school](#)
- [Al-Monitor - New vaccination campaign targets Arab-Israelis](#)
- [Al-Monitor - Palestinians hesitant to celebrate as family reunification ban fails](#)
- [The Jerusalem Post - Arab-Israeli citizens org. calls to keep business accelerators open](#)
- [The Jerusalem Post - Separated Palestinian families ready for end to Israel Citizenship Law](#)
- [The Jerusalem Post - Arab-Israeli man killed in Haifa, marking the 100th victim this](#)

[year](#)

- [The Times of Israel - Police's conduct probed after 35 injured at Arab Israeli protest](#)
- [Knesset News - Special Committee on Arab Society Affairs discusses wave of arrests of Arab citizens; police official: There are about 8,000-10,000 illegal weapons in Arab society](#)
- [The New Arab - How Israel's mixed cities became a demographic battleground for Jewish extremists](#)
- [MintPress News - Revealed: The American Money Entwined with Israel's Jewish Terrorist Groups](#)
- [CGTN America - The Heat: Political uncertainty in Israel](#)
- [Arab News - Anger over Israeli PM's vote-sharing deal with controversial anti-Arab party](#)
- [Arab News - Jerusalem conflict stokes fears of civil war in Israel](#)
- [Ynet - Police shootout in Arab town kills two, including bystander](#)

## Thank You to Our Staff and Board Members

None of our work this year could have been possible without the incredible effort and diligence shown by our staff. We would also like to thank the support and commitment of our Board of Directors throughout the year.

### Staff



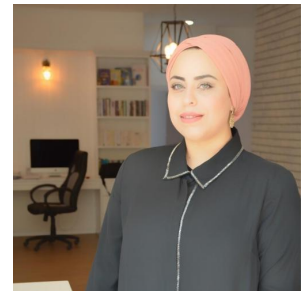
**Jafar Farah**, *Mossawa Center Founder and General Director*



**Suha Salman Mousa**, *Mossawa Center Executive Director*



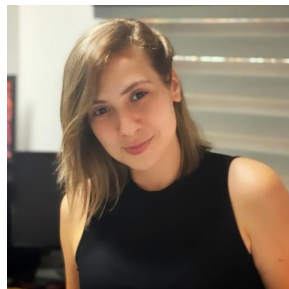
**Wasim Nasser**, *International Advocacy and Resource Development*



**Alya Zoabi**, *Parliamentary and Legal Advocacy Coordinator*



**Aleen Nasra**, *Office Manager*



**Muna Daher**, *Office Manager*



**Ali Ali-Saleh**, *Civil Society Coordinator*



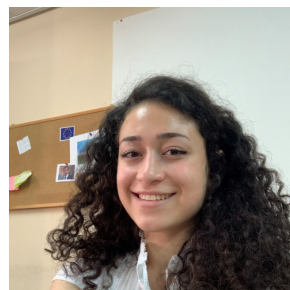
**Sonbla Aledeen**, *Media Coordinator*



**Ward Karakra**, *Media Coordinator*



**Naim Mousa**, *International Media Coordinator*



**Salma Khamaisi**, *International Media Coordinator*

**Simon Gideon**, *Accountant*



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*Attorney*



**Kamel Barghouthi,**  
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Activist*



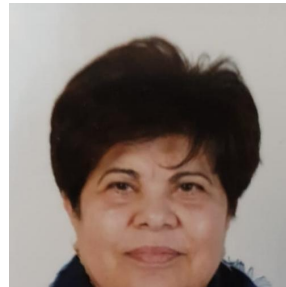
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*Advocate*



**Tawfik Housary,**  
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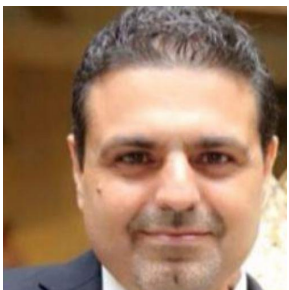
**Maria Jammal,** *Lawyer  
and Social Activist*



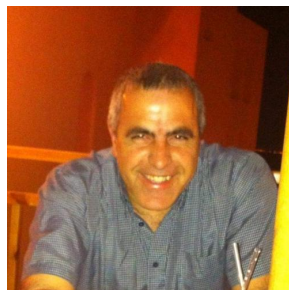
**Hala Espanioly,**  
*Former Lecturer at the  
Academic Arabic  
College in Haifa*



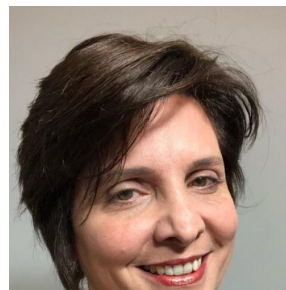
**Hisham Abdu,**  
*Professor of Computer  
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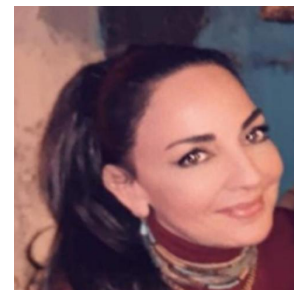
**Nafea Haj Yihya,**  
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**Mahmoud Igbariah,**  
*Engineer and Social  
Activist*



**Marian Abi Nader,**  
*Lawyer*



**Reem Khatib,** *School  
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## Thank You to Our Partners

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to our partners, without whom we could not have done the critical work we continue to do.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation for all our supporters in the United States and Canada who believe in us and our work. We would especially like to thank our Friends of Mossawa network in New York, Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Los Angeles, namely Khaled Saffouri, Shawky Fahel, and the Saeed and Dina Charitable Fund.

