



**The Mossawa Center:  
The Advocacy Center for the Arab  
Citizens of Israel**

5 Saint Luke's Street, P.O. Box 4471,  
Haifa 31043, Israel

[www.mossawacenter.org](http://www.mossawacenter.org)

Phone: +972-4-8555901

Fax: +972-4-8552772

[mosawa@rannet.com](mailto:mosawa@rannet.com)

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: JAFAR FARAH

Email: [mosawa@rannet.com](mailto:mosawa@rannet.com)

Office: +972-4-855-5901

### European Commission progress report finds Israel's protection and promotion of Arab minority "unsatisfactory"

Brussels 27 April 2009 — The European Commission released its annual progress reports on European Neighborhood Policy partner countries last week Thursday. The report on Israel states that Israel's progress in promoting democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law remained "limited" during the reporting period of 2008. In particular, the report points out that "the promotion and protection of the Israeli Arab minority remained unsatisfactory." The report highlights the lack of implementation of the Goldberg Commission's recommendations regarding land allocation and the demolition of Bedouin homes in the Negev, the CEC's vote to ban Arab parties prior to the 2009 elections, the arrest of 700 Arab protestors during the Gaza offensive, and the lack of action by the government to support Arab families whose homes were destroyed during the violence in Acre in October 2008.

The report also highlights the socio-economic issues facing the Arab minority, such as the high poverty rates among the elderly (60% among Arab elderly compared to 26% among Jewish elderly), and the high levels unemployment in Arab localities.

The report recommends the government make efforts "to improve the situation of the Arab minority by adopting adequate measures, for instance, in the field of employment, education and public administration." The findings of this and other ENP reports are being discussed by members of the General Affairs and External Relations Committee of the Council of the EU today.

The Mossawa Center, the Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel has requested EU member states develop mechanisms to ensure that ENP partners improve respective human rights situations as outlined in Association Agreements and Action Plans with the EU. The Center has made clear to the EU that any upgrade in EU-Israel relations should include affirmative action for the Arab community and explicit activities to fight racism, hate speech and economic discrimination. The Center calls on the Israeli government to make sure that EU recommendations will be respected.

The US State Department has recently released a report identifying similar violations of human rights in Israel and suggesting actions and measures to be taken by the Israeli government to improve the situation. A delegation from the Arab community currently on tour in the US, including Mossawa Center Director Jafar Farah, will return later this week.

###

*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.*