

Ittijah - Union of Arab Community Based Associations UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status

Press Release

6 June 2005

·Stop the bloody attacks of the police against Palestinian Arab MKs and the Arab community

Ittijah's call to protect Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel and their rights to land and housing

·Stop Haifa municipality brutality against Palestinian Arab community

·Help the Palestinian citizens of Israel to be protected and to defend their existence

More than twenty Arab citizens were detained and many others were savagely hit by the Israeli Special Forces Unit during the demonstration that took place at Boushkar family house, which was demolished earlier yesterday. Arab MKs, who participated in the demonstration, were the police forces first target; six of them were brutally attacked and three others were even taken to hospital as a result of the violent and severe hits by the Israeli forces.

On the eve of the demolition, which was based on Mr. Yona Yahav's administrative order, the Mayor of Haifa celebrated 'coexistence' in the city while his mind was busy with how to demolish the Boushkar family home. The civilians' protest was brutally attacked by the police and the mayor's guards.

The Follow Up Committee for the Arab Citizens in Israel held an urgent meeting last night discussing the outcomes of the Israeli criminal acts of demolishing the house of Boushkar family in Haifa, and violently attacking Arab citizens, MKs and political representatives.

Just before noon, hundreds of Israeli police forces attacked the yard of Boushkar family house and brutally attacked all people demonstrating there who tried to stop the demolition order from being executed.

The Boushkar family house is one of the remainders of the physical evidence to a Palestinian village, which existed before the establishment of Israel.

In the past few weeks, the Arab community leadership as well as the Boushkar family offered the mayor different legal alternatives without the unjustified need to demolish the house. The municipality ignored all voices and willingness to find a peaceful communal solution.

With this act, the Mayor of the city of Haifa, based on his administrative order, expressed the Israeli racist policies against the Palestinian Arab citizens and enforced the plan to evacuate Arabs from their original towns and villages to open the path for further occupation of Arabs Lands.

Under the motto of: 'They destroy and we build', the Palestinian Arab community in Haifa and all around the country expressed their willingness to rebuild the demolished Boushkar house.

Ittijah, being part of the "public committee to protect the Arab home", expresses its position and calls for action based on the following:

1. We condemn this cruel and savagery act and see it as a major threat to the security of the Arab Community and to the Arab existence in Northern Palestine. We call you to send a protest letter to Mr. Yona Yahav, Haifa Mayor, to condemn his position, his act and the use of violence. It is also to hold him responsible for any future consequences related to the Boushkar House demolition order issued by him.

2. 13,000 Palestinian Arab homes are under demolition orders in addition to more than 30,000 homes under proceeding demolition orders.

3. We contradict the municipal and governmental policies, which consider each Arab home as a separate issue and as illegal. We insist that this is a political issue reflecting the gradual Israeli state policies of ethnic cleansing. It is not the issue of being legal but the problem is the Israeli racist laws regarding housing and land issues.

4. The Palestinian community in Israel needs protection. The Israeli law is a resource for threat not for order.

5. Arab houses' demolitions is an Israeli strategy and not an internal Israeli issue, therefore we call for protection.

Haifa 6-6-2005

***The Boushkar family home is located on Bar Yehuda 51, at the eastern entrance to Haifa, coming from Checkpost junction into the city, behind the "HaZera" factory warehouses. For many decades, before the establishment of Israel, several Arab families have been living there, on the land they own. Most of the live in tin shacks, in unbearable conditions, and receive no aid from the Haifa municipality. But five years ago, when one of the families erected brick walls and a tile ! roof, the municipality was quick to issue a demolition order.**

The Boushkar family, in spite of their economic hardships, did not spare expenses and efforts in order to attain a legal status for their home. At one time it was claimed that a road is to be constructed in the place, and therefore a building permit was denied. Since then the plan for the road has been cancelled, and the family is asking for a renewed discussion of a "local building plan" which would enable them to obtain a building permit. The municipality, on the other hand, is insisting on carrying out an administrative demolition order, and so deliberately preventing bringing the matter to the Local Committee for Planning and Building. Many talks took place between Arab political representatives, MKs and the Mayor of Haifa, Yona Yahav, to prevent the demolition order, but all attempts failed.

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