



## The Political and Socio-Economic Situation of the Palestinian Citizens in Israel – Fact Sheet

Many local, regional and international civil society organizations have issued a call for an International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian Citizens of Israel on **January 30<sup>th</sup> 2016**. This is in response to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent incitement against Israel's minority Palestinian population, as well as the longer history of institutionalised racism and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel.

### Tel Aviv Shooting

- 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2016 saw a shooting attack on a Tel Aviv bar by an Israeli-Palestinian man Nashat Melhem
- The attack killed two and injured seven Israelis
- An Arab-Israeli taxi driver was also killed by Melhem as he fled the scene of the shooting

### Response from the Israeli State

- Following the event Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a statement condemning Israel's Palestinian population for its failure to answer to the country's laws
- Netanyahu stated that there were currently two states in Israel, one law-abiding and one lawless, and that he was not "prepared to accept two States of Israel, a state of law for most of its citizens and a state within a state for some of them, in enclaves in which there is no law enforcement and in which there is Islamist incitement, rampant crime and illegal weapons... this era has ended" <sup>1</sup>
- Netanyahu announced that Israel will demand "loyalty to the laws of the state" and that "one cannot say 'I am an Israeli in rights and a Palestinian in obligations'" <sup>2</sup>
- Netanyahu promised to "...dramatically increase law enforcement services in the Arab sector", stating that: "We will open new police stations, recruit more police

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/57819/at-scene-of-terror-attack-netanyahu-vows-to-bring-law-and-order-to-arab-sector-jerusalem/#6ilJARI36PJukmrB.97>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/57819/at-scene-of-terror-attack-netanyahu-vows-to-bring-law-and-order-to-arab-sector-jerusalem/#6ilJARI36PJukmrB.97>

officers, go into all the towns and demand of everyone loyalty to the laws of the state”<sup>3</sup>

- Targeted police raids of Palestinian-Israeli homes (including students) were carried out in the wake of the shooting
- While Israeli police claim these raids were conducted in the search for Milhem, Palestinian-Israeli students have accused the police of carrying out targeted raids to scare Arab students and send “a message that Palestinians aren’t welcome in their own country”<sup>4</sup>

### **Response from the Palestinian Israeli Community**

- The High Follow-Up Committee as the umbrella representative body for Palestinian Israelis condemned the shooting attack as contradictory to the “democratic struggle which the Arab population has chosen”<sup>5</sup>
- The predominately Arab Joint List Party condemned the attack stating that “the Joint List has always been, and remains, against harm to innocents. We denounce and reject this out of hand”<sup>6</sup>
- The local council of Arara, the Arab village hometown of Nashat Melhem condemned the shooting as not representative of the village, offering condolences to the families of the victims<sup>7</sup>

### **Netanyahu accused of incitement against Palestinian citizens of Israel**

- Arab-Israeli political leaders and human rights groups have condemned Netanyahu’s vow to increase police presence in Palestinian communities and accused the Prime Minister of incitement against the Palestinian minority
- Jafar Farah, director of Israeli Human Rights Group, the Mossawa Center, stated that increasing law enforcement in Palestinian towns and villages ignores the root causes of violence – “more law enforcement is not the solution”, Farah said. “The solution is to deal with core issues from occupation to systematic discrimination”. Farah also suggested that “Netanyahu is using the opportunity to attack the whole community, as he has done for years”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/palestinians-israel-accuse-netanyahu-incitement-160103081812222.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/sweeping-police-raids-target-palestinians-israel-160109032131831.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.695274>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/57819/at-scene-of-terror-attack-netanyahu-vows-to-bring-law-and-order-to-arab-sector-jerusalem/#6ilJARI36PJukmrB.97>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/57819/at-scene-of-terror-attack-netanyahu-vows-to-bring-law-and-order-to-arab-sector-jerusalem/#6ilJARI36PJukmrB.97>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/palestinians-israel-accuse-netanyahu-incitement-160103081812222.html>

### **Nashat Melhem shot dead by Israeli police**

- Nashat Melhem was shot and killed by Israeli police on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 during an alleged shootout with Israeli officers in his hometown of Arara
- There were no police casualties
- The Israeli police account of the incident has been challenged by local residents of Arara, who have insisted that Milhem could have been arrested alive<sup>9</sup>

### **Status of Palestinian citizens of Israel:**

- An estimated 1.7 million Palestinians (Muslims, Christians and Druze) hold Israeli citizenship and are subject to discriminatory laws that restrict political expression and access to state resources
- In March 2013 Israeli human rights group Adalah launched the Discriminatory Laws Database, an online resource that collects more than 50 Israeli laws enacted since 1948 that directly or indirectly discriminate against Palestinian citizens of Israel in all areas of life, including their rights to political participation, access to land, education, state budget resources, and criminal procedures<sup>10</sup>
- There is an institutionalised culture of racism against Palestinian citizens among Israel's majority Jewish population. This manifests in institutional politics, personal attitudes, media coverage, education, access to health, immigration rights, housing, social life and legal policies<sup>11</sup>
- Israel is signatory to a number of international conventions, which are violated by its system of discriminatory laws against Palestinian-Israelis
- These include The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Israeli policies of exclusion and discrimination, along with its government's inflammatory statements contribute greatly to the escalation of tensions in the region

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/israeli-police-kill-tel-aviv-assailant-shootout-160109035326476.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7771>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/2011/Adalah\\_The\\_Inequality\\_Report\\_March\\_2011.pdf](http://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/upfiles/2011/Adalah_The_Inequality_Report_March_2011.pdf)