

# 300 DAYS of Resilience

Confronting the War  
in the Face of Persecution



مركز مساواة  
מרכז מוסאוא  
MOSSAWA CENTER

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## Suppressed But Not Silenced

As we enter the second half of 2024, we reflect on the resilience of our Palestinian community across the region during one of its darkest hours. 9 months of death and destruction in Gaza have been marked by the unspeakable killing of at least 40,000 Palestinians (half of whom are women and children), over 100 journalists, and over 220 humanitarian workers. In the occupied West Bank, Israeli military operations and settler violence have killed almost 500 Palestinians.

Within Israel, Palestinian Arab citizens have not been spared from the violence and persecution. Our community's anti-war protests have been met with violent crackdowns. Systemic discrimination has intensified, manifesting in wrongful expulsion from employment and academic institutions, unjust imprisonment for alleged incitement on private social media accounts and participation in peaceful protests, and a relentless crackdown on freedom of speech.

The state of emergency currently imposed in the country constitutes fertile ground for violations of individual and collective rights - chief among them the right to freedom of expression. These violations extend beyond mere civil and human rights. Less overt but equally susceptible rights violations are taking place on a systemic level, permeating throughout the country's governance structure itself. Politically motivated budget cuts specifically targeting the educational and economic development of the Palestinian Arab community exemplify these systemic infringements.

In the face of the most extreme right-wing government in the country's history, the Palestinian Arab community stands at the forefront of the struggle for peace, justice and equality. The Mossawa Center, through its unwavering advocacy, litigation, economic development initiatives, and solidarity programs, is spearheading efforts to empower the Palestinian Arab community as a distinct and resilient social and political entity. This empowerment is not merely a defensive measure but a proactive strategy to effect meaningful change. The Mossawa Center is laying the groundwork for a more peaceful and equitable future. It is imperative to support and strengthen the Palestinian Arab community as only by doing so can we hope to achieve lasting change and justice in the region.

Our advocacy for a ceasefire, just peace, and equality remains unyielding. The Mossawa Center stands steadfast at the forefront of advocating for Palestinian Arab citizens rights, consistently undertaking initiatives to educate and advocate without faltering.

## A Stubborn Voice for Peace

In response to the escalating crisis, the lack of protection for the Palestinian Arab citizens, and its [impact on Palestinian Arab communities](#), a Mossawa-led coalition established a joint emergency network that continues to address the immediate and emerging needs of the Palestinian-Arab community, especially in mixed cities and unrecognized villages in the Naqab (Negev).

The Mossawa Center continues to engage with the Naqab Emergency Room and Arab Community Emergency Coalition initiatives, which have been established to address the immediate needs of the Palestinian Arab community during the war and facilitate synergies between various CSOs.

Since the beginning of the war, the political and social force in Israel that has fearlessly and relentlessly mobilized, organized, and protested against the war has been the Palestinian Arab community. Despite the ban on the first planned protest in Nazareth at the outset of the war, which included the arrest of numerous leading public figures in Palestinian Arab society and former Knesset Members, Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel have not ceased raising their voices against the war. Over 1,500 people protested in Kafr Kanna in March, with thousands more participating in the annual Land Day March and March of Return.

## Solidarity in Action



One of our standout events so far this year has been the [“Cultural and National Pluralism - Between War :and Elections” conference](#). The key panels were:

- [Higher Education Institutions and Universities: A Space for Dialogue and Influence](#)
- [The Role of Activism in Building Solidarity in Local Authorities](#)
- [National, Social, and Cultural Diversity - Opportunities and Challenges](#)
- [Women's Space: Between Solidarity and Separation](#)

## Palestinian Arab Women in Local Councils



The Mossawa Center arranged [a seminar for female local council members](#), where their needs were assessed and workshops conducted accordingly. 13 elected representatives out of 22 participated in the seminar. At the end of a study day, the Mossawa Center established a network for the female Palestinian Arab local council members as a resource for information and connections.

The Mossawa Center also held a discussion meeting [bringing together educators and employees in the education sector](#) with Arab, Jewish, and Russian-speaking participants as part of Mossawa Center's vision to deepen cultural, national, and linguistic diversity among different groups and within various fields and professions.

## Socio-Economic Rights



In an alarming development that reflects the systematic disregard for the needs of the Palestinian Arab community, the Parliamentary Finance Committee [made reductions and amendments in budgets](#) aimed at financing military operations in Gaza, including a 15% reduction in budgets for Arab society. Meanwhile, there was only a 5% reduction in all other government budgets.

On a more local level, the Mossawa Center proposed action plans amidst the municipal elections in Haifa to enhance the work of several departments including the departments of Planning and Infrastructure, Welfare and Social Affairs, and Culture, in order to more equitably address the needs of the city's Palestinian Arab residents.

## Parliamentary and Legal Advocacy



**The Mossawa Center petitioned Arab employee's unjust dismissal over posts of Quranic verses:** The Mossawa Center filed a petition in the labor court for the demeaning termination of a Palestinian Arab employee over Quranic verses he frequently posts, in a blatant attempt to criminalize his faith. The lower court ruled in favor of the employer, Clalit Health Services (one of the largest healthcare providers in the country), and maintained the decision to dismiss the employee. Encouraged by Mossawa Center's appointed lawyer Dr. Loai Zreik, we submitted a petition to the National Labor Court requesting the cancellation of the dismissal decision, which resulted in the court overturning the previous court's decision in favor of the employee. Following the harassment, the employee decided to quit from the workplace.

**Mossawa demanded full transparency regarding the Palestinian Arab community's allocated budgets:** Following a ruling that mandated the Ministry of Welfare to comply with the Mossawa Center's freedom of information petition, data from



the Ministry showed its failure to implement the government-stipulated budget earmarked for improving welfare services in Palestinian Arab society throughout 2022-2024. It is important to note that half of Palestinian Arab children in Israel live under the poverty line.

**[Mossawa Center Petitioned Ministry of Environmental Protection for Transparency on Budget Discrimination:](#)** Under the Freedom of Information Law, the Mossawa Center filed a petition to ensure governmental accountability and oversight implementation in critical areas, namely, air quality management, waste handling, hazardous materials supervision, and natural resource protection.

## Youth Revitalize Communities in Summer Workshops



The Mossawa Center recently concluded its [annual summer youth workshops](#), engaging 70 participants from 22 Palestinian Arab towns across the Galilee, the Triangle Area, and Naqab. With over 150 people signing up to participate, these were the largest workshops

to date. Over four days, the workshops featured interactive activities focusing on community support, legal awareness, and media advocacy.

Participants engaged in various initiatives, including a program for youth to shadow local council representatives and a *Greener Grass Campaign* emphasizing community involvement and positive town marketing. They visited key institutions such as the Knesset and the Supreme Court and participated in field studies in Acre, Haifa, and Nazareth, learning about their political, social, and cultural landscapes and histories.

The workshops culminated in project presentations and animated marketing videos for Nazareth, Haifa, and Acre. Certificates were distributed to recognize participants' efforts, highlighting the workshops' role in empowering youth and promoting positive community change.

## Youth Empowerment and Rights

The Mossawa Center's youth empowerment initiative within the Community Programs Department has taken on the role of fostering a generation of well-informed young adults capable of evaluating and addressing socio-political issues, equipped with critical thinking skills and peaceful methods to combat discrimination. Key initiatives and events:

- 1) **Series of Legal Training Workshops:** The workshops aimed to provide high school students with practical and theoretical knowledge of human rights, legal counseling, and advocacy techniques. Among the topics discussed throughout the 10 sessions were freedom of expression; economic and social rights; the right to education, culture, land, housing, work; equality and racism; and legal counseling. The program was implemented in cooperation with the Swiss embassy in Nazareth, Jisr al-Zarqa, Kfar Kara, and Haifa.
- 2) **Workshops on Planning and Building Laws:** The workshops focused on planning and construction laws and the right to housing by local and international human rights conventions. The topics discussed included:
  - a) The challenges and obstacles facing Arab society regarding the right to land, planning, and housing.
  - b) The role of planning committees and the relevant judicial processes
  - c) Citizens' rights to participate in the planning process and object to municipal and governmental plans.

- d) Understanding structural maps and detailed maps.
  - e) The expansion of Jewish cities at the expense of the Palestinian Arab towns.
- 3) **Workshop to Develop Higher Education and National Identity:** The workshop aimed to enhance political, cultural, and economic awareness among youth, in addition to educating them about their rights and how to defend them.
- 4) **Higher Education Festival for Haifa High Schools:** The festival drew attention to the importance of higher education and choosing majors that match both the labor market's demands and their own ambitions through practical experience, as well as how it affects the social elevation of the Palestinian Arab community.

## Preserving Palestinian Culture and Identity



The Mossawa Center dedicates significant resources and effort to preserving Palestinian Arab culture and identity. Through its activities, Mossawa Center broadens participants' understanding of key historical events and commemorates individuals who have greatly contributed to the community.

Several events have been held for this purpose:

- **[8th Anniversary of Writer Salman Natour](#)**: In cooperation with the Van Leer organization, Mossawa Center organized a profound and impactful discussion celebrating the spirit of the late Salman Natour, one of the most prominent Palestinian literary figures who wrote extensively on the Palestinian people's collective memory and is a symbol of struggle, hope, and understanding between Palestinians and Israelis. The event was held under the guise of the "Maktob" initiative, which works to translate Arabic literary works to Hebrew, and celebrated the launch of Natour's book "Walking on the Wind" in Hebrew.
- **"Epirogon" Book Launch**: After an aggressive incitement campaign by far-right activists which led to the Haifa Municipality canceling the book launch at Beit Hagefen (The Haifa City Council's Arab-Jewish Cultural Center), the Mossawa Center hosted the event at the Carmel Center. Attended by hundreds, including the mayor, the event showcased the book's exploration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the stories of Rami Elhanan and Bassam Aramin. The event was covered in an [article on Haaretz](#).
- **Cultural Evening and Ramadan Iftar**: A cultural evening for the legal training students and Mossawa Center's volunteers was held to embody the spirit of cooperation and understanding, laying the foundations of communication and mutual understanding between youth from different regions.

## Carmel Center Now Runs on Green Energy



The Mossawa Center and the Committee for Educational Guidance for Arab Students (CEGAS) spearheaded the establishment of the [Carmel Center](#), a venue dedicated to hosting human rights, educational, cultural, and civil society initiatives. Demonstrating a commitment to environmental stewardship, Mossawa Center and CEGAS opted to install solar panels on its roof instead of relying solely on conventional electricity sources. This initiative not only promotes sustainable practices but also reduces the building's carbon footprint. The project was made possible through generous contributions from local donors, reflecting community support for initiatives that blend cultural enrichment with ecological responsibility. The Carmel Center stands as a testament to the Mossawa Center's holistic approach, integrating cultural advancement with sustainable development goals.

## NIS 2.5 Million Raised for Gaza Fundraiser By Palestinian Arab Citizens

Despite months of intense persecution that have severely hampered civil society and human rights organizations in Israel from fundraising and delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza, the Palestinian Arab community has successfully organized a national fundraiser called Think of Gaza, sending vital humanitarian aid to their fellow Palestinians in the besieged strip. So far, over NIS 2.5 million (\$680,000) have been raised through donations from ordinary Palestinian Arab citizens. This effort, coordinated through the Agricultural Relief Committee, has resulted in the distribution of 1,000,000 liters (264,172 US liquid gallons) of clean drinking water to Palestinian civilians in Gaza. This is the first, and so far only, humanitarian fundraising campaign to successfully send aid to Gaza in Israel.

## Mossawa in the Media

### English

- [Why Palestinians in Israel, Like Me, Keep Marching to Protect Our Land - Haaretz](#)
- [Arab students at Israeli universities facing punitive actions for support of Palestine - Jerusalem Post](#)
- [Protests against war grow in Israel - WBUR-FM](#)

### Arabic

- [Mossawa Center initiates a dialogue about the future vision in the wake of the war and elections - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center: "These are the challenges of Land Day on its 48th anniversary" - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center: "National Labor Court overturns district court's decision dismissal case of Arab worker by Clalit" - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center on the state budget proposal: "A danger threatening Arab society" - Panet](#)

- [Mossawa Center sounds the alarm about “the impact of cuts in the 2024 budget on Arab society” - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center holds an awareness workshop on workers’ rights at the Galilee School in Nazareth - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center: “We appeal to local authorities and political parties to address the reduction of budgets for the Arab community” - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center to the Public Prosecution: “We demand that the policemen who killed Murshid Abdel-Hay from Tira be brought to trial” - Panet](#)
- [Mossawa Center demands an investigation be opened and Rabbi Shmueli be held legally accountable - Panet](#)
- [Minister of Interior participates in the inauguration of the Jisr al-Zarqa Council building and declares to Panet: “The local elections will be held on time - the end of next month - Panet](#)
- [Samer Athamneh and lawyer Zakaria Aghbaria talk about the latest security and political developments - Panet](#)

## Hebrew

- [Despite attempts to cancel it, the launch event of a book on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was held in Haifa without riots - Haaretz](#)
- [Despite municipality's ban, launching of 'Epirogon' was held in Haifa, with hundreds attending - ZoHaderekh](#)
- [Launch of 'Epirogon' book take place in a private building in Beit Hagafen after cancellation - 107.5FM](#)
- [Jafar Farah: "Chants of 'death to the Arabs' go unchecked - mynetHaifa](#)
- [Haifa event for 8th anniversary of Salman Natour’s death - ZoHaderekh](#)
- [Einat Kalish participates in an Israeli-Palestinian event after she forbade it to be held at Beit Hagafen - Hadashot Haifa veHakraiot](#)