



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PALESTINIAN CITIZENS OF ISRAEL PROTEST IN TEL AVIV AGAINST NATION-STATE LAW



“We are not second class!” chanted the demonstrators, raising banners in both Arabic and Hebrew demanding the cancellation of the new law - Saturday, 11 August – Tel Aviv – Israel.

Tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel led a march through the centre of Tel Aviv last Saturday night protesting against the abhorrent [apartheid nation-state law](#) passed last month that turns non-Jewish citizens of the country into second-class citizens, further marginalising some 1.8 million Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and other minorities, and decrees that Jews – domestic and foreign – have exclusive national rights.

The mostly Palestinian protesters may have amounted to the largest assembly ever of Arabs in central Tel Aviv, according to the Israeli journalist Meron Rapoport.



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Palestinians from Galilee (in the Northeast of Israel), the Triangle region (in what used to be the Northern part of the 1947-Palestine), Naqab desert (otherwise known as Negev) and other regions of the country were seen among the crowd.

Solidarity in the protests

The thousands of Israeli Jews who joined the protest in solidarity included supporters of anti-occupation group *Peace Now*, members of the anti-racist group *Standing Together*, and Amos Schoken, publisher of the liberal daily newspaper *Haaretz*.

Once the crowd reached the museum district, a series of Palestinian and Jewish speakers blasted the new law, calling for freedom and full equality, regardless of race or religion.

“This is amazing. This is the first time I remember Jews and Palestinians fighting together for something. This is a really big moment for people that believe in democracy and equality,” said an unidentified demonstrator.

“We, a lot of Israelis, believe that they [minorities] are entitled to be equal to us,” protester Dan Meiri said. “The people that live here are entitled to be equal to us across the board in education, in the army, in the universities, in the parliament - all over.”

Institutionalisation of discrimination

The nation-state law does not ignore the rights of the minority, it eliminates them, by enshrining a two-tiered system of rights in a basic law.

Khalil al-Oqbi and his 11-year-old son drove up to Tel Aviv from the Bedouin township of Hura (in the Naqab desert) to attend the protest. “Even without this law, we were discriminated against,” Oqbi said.

“We were here hundreds of years before the establishment of the state of Israel. We were kicked off our land in 1951, and today we live in unrecognised villages without electricity and water,” he said.

Israel has been discriminating against its non-Jewish citizens since the State was founded in 1948, pointing to dozens of Israeli laws that mandate preferential treatment to Jews.



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Israel's Palestinian population comprises mainly the descendants of those who remained on their land since 1948, the time of the establishment of the modern state of Israel.

This week, some Israeli ministers expressed that they intend to use the law to ensure Jews continue to dominate the country demographically, and that the ratio of Jews to Palestinians does not slip on the national level or even regionally.

The law grants an automatic right to Jews, and only to them, to receive Israeli citizenship. The nation-state law, also, prevents non-Jew family reunification.

Suspending Israel from the UN

The “nation-state bill” declares the right to national self-determination is uniquely Jewish. It also establishes Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories as a “national value” that the state must encourage.

During a visit to the Palestinian village of [Khan Al-Ahmar](#) – which Israel has threatened with demolition – PLO Executive Committee Secretary-General Saeb Erekat said: “Israel is a country that is in total violation of the charter of the UN. Does it deserve to be a member of the UN and any of its agencies or not?”

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is expected to submit a question to the [UN legal department](#) to see whether the law complies with the [UN Charter](#), stressing that it reinforces “[racial discrimination](#) and [apartheid](#)”.

The PNA would take further measures, similar to those taken against [South Africa](#) when its membership was suspended over its apartheid regime.

In order to suspend or rescind Israel’s membership, the PNA needs two-thirds of votes of the [UN General Assembly](#) members, including the five permanent [UN Security Council’s members](#); China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Druze protests

Last week, tens of thousands from the Druze minority [protested](#) against the law under the motto, “equal rights for all citizens.”

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The Druze have had special status since the 1950s when they were drafted into the military, unlike Israel's Muslim and Christian populations.

Today, there is not one constitution in the world that does not include in its clauses the right to equality for all of its citizens and residents.

Likewise, there is no constitution in the world that has a clause that makes the State and its purpose the property of one ethnic group, determining that it is exclusively the State of a specific ethnic group.

Israel is a racist State. It's time that the international community recognises understand that solving the conflict is impossible as long as the Palestinian people continue to be excluded.

Apartheid is unacceptable!

ICSFT strongly condemns Israel's apartheid racist nation-state law and calls upon the international community – in particular the UN – to take measures in order to ensure that Israel is not capable to institutionalise apartheid once more in the world.