

## Jerusalem Peace & Security Forum: Current Crisis of Arab Citizens of Israel

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Jerusalem, Israel—The Jerusalem Peace and Security Forum met at Haifa University to discuss the current crisis of the Arab citizens of Israel, on November 4, 2015. October 2015 was a bloody month in Israel due to terrorism and violence. The involvement of some Arab citizens of Israel in terror attacks as well as the violent responses from several Jewish citizens to these attacks has worried people in Israel. Fear has been the main feeling people have expressed during this time of tension.

Col. Moshe Zurich (Reserve), a former Israeli military attaché in the United States and former deputy head of the research division of Israel's Intelligence Corps, began the discussion by raising the question of Israel's responsibility for the current situation of violence coming from its own citizens. He expressed his deep concern over the situation. In his observation, the state of Israel doesn't treat its Arab and Jewish citizens in an equal way. Certain deprivations towards the Arab population have created resentment over the years, which has manifested in the current, tense situation. "To resolve this tension," said Col. Zurich, "the state of Israel should listen to the Arab society and treat it in an equal way"

Mr. Yohanan Zoref, head of the Palestinians and Neighboring Countries Division of Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs, said there is a link between Israel's relations with the Palestinian authority with the situation of the Arab citizens of Israel, who naturally sympathize with their people in Palestine. He sees the current tension with the Arab citizens of Israel a result of more than six years of stagnation of the peace process.

Mr. Moran Levanoni, a doctoral student and scholar of Middle Eastern studies at Tel Aviv University, spoke about citizens' rights. He said that Israel needs to grant state rights unconditionally to Arab citizens as it does for Jewish citizens. This equality of rights would come under the law, and any violation of the law would be treated accordingly.

Ambassador for Peace, Rev. Masoud Abu-Hatoum, pastor of Kana Church in the Arab village of Kana, said the solution to the tension would be for Israel to involve Arab leaders in decisions related to the Arab population.

Prof. Eliezer Glaubach, president of the Jerusalem Peace and Security Forum, who specializes in Israeli political studies, concluded the discussion by explaining the importance of Israel continuing to strive to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinian authority, which would immediately have a positive influence on relations between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel.

