



Canadian Arab Federation  
La Fédération Canado-Arabe

EX6.21.31<sup>1</sup>

May 24, 2011

Good afternoon Mayor and Councillors

I am the President of the Canadian Arab Federation which represents 18 Arab Canadian organizations, 7 of them in Toronto.

I have worked for IBM Canada in Markham for 28 years as a Project Manager and have served on the Immigration and Refugee Board for 11 years as a Commissioner.

I was a founding member of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council which represents 34 national ethnocultural organizations in Canada, and I served as its Executive Secretary. I also served on the Board of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations of Toronto.

First I would like to congratulate Pride Toronto for organizing a peaceful and lively parade in Toronto each year that is enjoyed by people of all backgrounds and that generates much-needed revenue for Toronto.

I would also like to applaud Pride Toronto for upholding its principles by allowing its parade to reflect the diversity of people and opinions in Toronto notwithstanding the tremendous pressure and threats that they received over the last two years.

Most of all, as a Christian Palestinian Canadian who was forced out from his ancestral homeland by the State of Israel, I am deeply indebted to Queers Against Israeli Apartheid for courageously standing up for and advocating for the rights of the victimized and downtrodden Palestinian people.

The Palestinian population numbers more than 11 million distributed as follows:

1. 1.3 million Palestinians are second-class citizens of Israel.
2. 4 million Palestinians live in the West Bank and Gaza that have been under an oppressive Israeli occupation since 1967.
3. 6 million Palestinian refugees living in exile in neighbouring Arab countries, Europe and the Americas and have been denied since 1948 their inalienable right to return to their homeland.

As you are aware, the comprehensive study undertaken by Toronto City staff determined that the use of the phrase "Israeli Apartheid" does not promote hatred or discrimination, and does not violate the Criminal Code or the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Apartheid is defined by the United Nations as, "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and in systematically oppressing them."

I have sent you 11 documents and studies produced by authoritative and indisputable South African, Israeli and Palestinian sources.

The reports you received prove irrefutably that the 1.3 million Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel are systematically discriminated against and that the situation of the 4 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza is reminiscent of apartheid in South Africa.

I would like to know if any of you would endorse any of the following 4 policies for Toronto:

1. From now on only Christian newcomers will be allowed to reside in Toronto.
2. Only Christian residents of Toronto are allowed to buy or rent publicly-owned land.
3. Setting up Admission Committees in each city ward composed of Christian residents that assess applicants according to whether they fit into the "social and cultural fabric" of the ward.
4. All non-Christian newcomers granted residency in Toronto must declare an oath of loyalty to Toronto as a "Christian and democratic city."

Replace the word "Christian" with the word "Jewish" and that describes 4 of the 20 discriminatory laws in Israel that grant supremacy to Jewish citizens over other citizens, and this explains why Israel fits the label of an apartheid state.

Criticizing Israel's apartheid system does not in any way target Jewish Israelis or Jewish Canadians. Many prominent Jewish Israelis and Jewish Canadians oppose Israel's apartheid system. **Hence, those who assume that Israel represents and speaks on behalf of all Jews, and that all Jews are somehow responsible for Israel's crimes, are arriving at a plainly racist assumption.**

Some people may feel uncomfortable hearing words like 'apartheid', "rape" and "genocide" or even watching the Pride parade but that does not justify banning the use of such words or cancelling the parade.

**Those who think Israel's very existence depends on it being an apartheid state are either misguided or reactionary. South African apartheid ended but South Africa still exists and the whites still reside there.**

The gay community is known for its activism especially when it comes to human rights so it is natural for them to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. Pride Toronto has a long history as a venue for controversial political expression of many different points of view. Targeting Pride because some people don't like the presence of one organization is an assault on free expression and on the gay community's autonomy.

Your decision creates the absurd situation where parade participants would be free to criticize their own government, the Canadian government, but are banned from criticizing

Israel, a foreign government. The decision will delight dictatorial regimes that don't permit criticism because it will make them look comparatively benevolent.

Apartheid is an international crime. Silence in the face of apartheid is consent. Shielding Israel's actions from scrutiny and criticism makes one complicit. This also emboldens Israel to escalate its discrimination and oppression against the Palestinian people thereby making one an accomplice in the international crime of apartheid.

**The spectrum of diversity is well-represented by those who are speaking today against any action to ban the use of the phrase "Israeli Apartheid" and who are in support of free expression and Palestinian rights. The presenters include Jews, Christians and Muslims from various ethnic and racial backgrounds.**

I urge you then to refrain from taking any action that bans the use of the phrase "Israeli apartheid" since such a decision runs counter to the City of Toronto's stated vision to recognize and accept the diversity of its residents, to respect the differences in all peoples and their right to hold different opinions, to create an environment of equality, to promote the value of human rights, and to oppose racism and discrimination.

I also urge your Council to use this golden opportunity to put into practice the City's vision by passing a motion that calls upon Israel to meet its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and to fully comply with the rules of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of the West Bank and Gaza;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality;
3. Respecting and implementing the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in United Nations resolution 194.

Khaled Mouammar