



## Joint Statement on the Citizenship and Family Unification Law - 10 June 2017

In light of the Knesset's expected renewal of the Citizenship and Family Unification Law on Monday, we the undersigned would like to publicly express our vehement opposition to this particularly racist law and the anti-democratic, discriminatory principles on which it stands.

In 2003 the Israeli government passed the Citizenship and Family Unification Law as a temporary security measure. Fourteen years after its original implementation, the law has proven neither temporary nor necessary for the preservation of security. The law, which prevents spouses of Israeli citizens from the West Bank/Gaza (as well as several other so-called enemy states) from gaining citizenship and in many cases residency in Israel, denies Arabs in Israel their basic rights as citizens to equality and due process. Moreover, it denies the spouses and children of Israeli citizens and residents of East Jerusalem their inalienable rights to build a family, to equality, and to privacy.

We also stand in opposition to the law as a result of its practical, socio-economic impacts. Affected families suffer disproportionately from poverty, in part because the law prevents spouses who manage to gain entry into Israel or East Jerusalem from working and driving. It also forces families to pay heavy residency fines, in addition to regular payments for basic services that the state would ordinarily provide them if not for their national background. The law has a particularly harsh impact on women and children who generally require more frequent health care services. Children are also negatively impacted insofar as the law forces them to live in divided households.

The undersigned have reason to believe that the true motivation for this law's continuous renewal stems not from security concerns, but from the racist desire to maintain Jewish demographic primacy in Israel and East Jerusalem. The law does this primarily by limiting the number of non-Jews, namely Palestinian Arabs, with Israeli citizenship and by coercing its current Palestinian Arab citizens to leave the country. Thus, through the Citizenship Law, the state once again sacrifices democracy, human rights, and the rights of its Arab Palestinian citizens in favor of its Jewish character.

Therefore, we the undersigned call on all Members of the Knesset to demonstrate that they maintain a semblance of respect for democracy and human rights by voting against this discriminatory, racist law. Moreover, we call on international governing institutions to publicly condemn this law and do that which is in their power to prevent its renewal.

***The Mossawa Center - The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel  
Physicians for Human Rights Israel  
Women Against Violence  
Kayan - Feminist Organization  
The Meezan Center for Human Rights  
The Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA)***