



Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE ET D'OBSERVATEUR AUPRES DE LA COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES

International Federation
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

Press Release

Israel

Discriminatory Citizenship Law denounced by the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination (CERD)

25 August 2004 - The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member and partner organizations in Israel, Adalah (The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) and B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories) welcome the decision by the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination (CERD), recalling its August 2003 decision urging the Government of Israel to revoke the Nationality and Entry into Israel Law and reconsider its policy with a view to facilitating family unification on a non-discriminatory basis.

In its decision of 20 August 2004, the CERD recalls that it had already noted with concern that the Suspension Order of May 2002 had affected many families and marriages, and that the law of 31 July 2003 raised serious concerns under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Taking into consideration the renewal of the law for a period of six months until December 2004, the CERD, in accordance with article 9 of the CERD Convention, requests the Government of Israel to send an urgent report, no later than 31 December 2004.

The above-mentioned organizations submitted a complaint to CERD on 3 August 2004, in an urgent and exceptional procedure, with regard to the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) of 2003, following the 18 July 2004 Israeli cabinet requested the Knesset to extend the law by six months.

This law forbids residents of the Occupied Palestinian Territories married to Israeli citizens or Palestinian residents of Israel to live lawfully in Israel with their spouses, and therefore contravenes both the Basic Laws of Israel, granting equality to all its citizens, and to many international human rights instruments ratified by Israel, and in particular article 5 (d) (iv) of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified by Israel in 1979), guaranteeing "the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law in the enjoyment of (...) the right to marriage and the choice of spouse".

The FIDH together with its member organizations in Israel, Adalah and B'Tselem, urges the Israeli authorities to conform to the decision of CERD.

Furthermore, the FIDH, Adalah and B'Tselem call on the Israeli government to revoke the Citizenship and Entry to Israel Law and to respect in all circumstances the right to non-discrimination, as provided for in international human rights instruments to which Israel is a party.