

April 28th, 2020

To: MK Aryeh Deri, Minister of Interior (via e-mail)

CCed: Mordechai Cohen, Director General of the Ministry of Interior; Illy Nathan, Director of Shared Cities Project at The Abraham Initiatives

Subject: Assistance Packages for Arab Families in Mixed Cities

Greetings,

We welcome the NIS 55 million aid package, which was recently notified to 73 Arab localities. This amount, while not sufficient to fully meet the needs of all those who require financial assistance, will help authorities deal with the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, especially during Ramadan.

As part of this aid package, NIS 30 million was allocated to aid 60,000 families in need during Ramadan. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that this aid does not reach Arab families living in mixed cities. In the mixed cities of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Lod, Ramle, Ma'alot-Tarshiha and Nof HaGalil, there are Arab families facing the same economic damage as the rest of the Arab population. The current aid package does not include these cities, thereby failing to take into account the needs of their Arab residents.

Among these families, many are entering the month of Ramadan in financially vulnerable situations and need the same support and special attention that has been given to the rest of Arab society. Arab families in mixed cities face challenges with food security due to the severe and worsening economic situation, high unemployment rates, and the closure of small- and medium-sized business. They also want to celebrate Ramadan with their families in dignity and in accordance with the precautions established to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

Given this situation, we request the formulation of a dedicated aid package for Arab families in need in mixed cities. These families face the same challenges as those of the rest of Arab society, but they are not included in the initial relief and support provided to families in Arab localities.

We are happy to provide you with additional information and assistance if needed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thabet Abu Rass & Amnon Be'eri Sulitzeanu
Co-Executive Directors of The Abraham Initiatives