

PRESS RELEASE : RIBA SUPPORTS ISRAELI ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATION'S SUSPENSION FROM INTERNATIONAL BODY, the UIA

After a tough and passionate Council debate on 19 March 2014, the pillar of the UK's architects' professional association, the RIBA, passed the motion supporting action that should be taken by the International Union Of Architects' to suspend the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA) from the world body of architects, the UIA. The Motion was passed by 23 votes to 16 with 10 abstentions.

"Since the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA) has paid no regard to the UIA resolution 13 of 2005 and 2009, the RIBA calls on the UIA, as the international guardian of professional and ethical standards in our profession, to suspend the membership of the Israeli Association of United Architects, until it acts to resist these illegal projects, and observes international law, and the UIA Accords and Resolution 13."

The campaign initiated and worked for over seven years by **Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine (APJP)** was brought to fruition by great teamwork and by the courageous action of the RIBA's past President Angela Brady and active Council members George Oldham and Owen O'Carroll who tabled the motion signed by many RIBA members and registered architects including leading lights in the profession that included Charles Jencks, Ted Cullinan, Will Alsop, Peter Ahrends and Neave Brown.

The RIBA was pipped to the post earlier in the week by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) the sister organization which passed a similar resolution also requested by Angela Brady based on the RIBA Motion, a landmark decision.

The building of illegal settlements against Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention which prohibits the transfer of a civilian population into territory occupied by force is considered a serious breach and thus as war crimes in which Israeli architects are closely involved. This settlement expansion has resulted in the forced removal of thousands of Palestinians and expropriation of their homes and land, and the erasure of their culture and history that has been going on since 1967 with impunity despite repeated world wide condemnation.

APJP's persistent prompting of the UIA to take action on these breaches of human rights and the ethical codes of practice in the UIA Accords resulted in 'Resolution 13' being confirmed in 2009 to condemn such illegal projects. This met with complete detachment and refusal to act on or condemn by the Israeli Association of United Architects IAUA who insisted they were only concerned with design and not the political actions of its members. Yet the whole real-estate enterprise is closely tied in with Israel's political and military agenda to grab and hold as much land as possible, denying a fully sovereign Palestinian state.

2013 was record year in new settlement construction, and the 2014 rate is already higher, seeing the construction of 2534 housing projects, with over 550,000 Jewish Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. Meanwhile Palestinian live in tightly controlled enclaves enclosed by the illegal Separation Wall and segregated roads, denied permission to build and instead having their houses taken over or demolished -all reminiscent of Apartheid South Africa.

Not to have acted would have made the RIBA silent and condoning this grave misconduct of their professional associates. By sending a clear message to the IAUA, and UIA, the RIBA and the RIAS strike a blow for the integrity and ethical practice of our profession, and supports the Palestinian civil society call for sanctions against the impunity of Israel.

Abe Hayeem, RIBA
Chair APJP