

TO:

Mayor Kay Barnes
Email: mayor@kcmo.org

The Kansas City, Mo, City Council,
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FROM:

Councillor Fayeze Mansour
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RE: Ramle Mayor Yoel Lavi's anti-Arab remarks

Dear Sirs,
Dear Madams,

I have recently become aware that the latest statements made by the Mayor of the City of Ramle have been debated in the Jewish community of Kansas City, having been published in the Kansas City Jewish Chronicle on 29 December 2006. Given that Kansas City Mo has a sister city relationship with the City of Ramle have and is accountable to the Sister City Association of Kansas, and given my position as a Councillor with the Ramle City Council, one of two Arab Councillors elected by the some 15,000 strong Arab community of the City of Ramle as one of their two representatives I wish to convey to you my position regarding the subject above.

There is little doubt that Mayor Yoel Lavi's racist statements against the Arab population of Ramle cause grievous damage and profound hurt to the dignity and the feelings of the Arab citizens of the City. They also caused grievous damage to the good name and to the image of the City both inside Israel and abroad, not to mention that damage caused to the delicate patterns of relationship that obtains between the Hebrew and Arab communities in the City, as well as the patterns of co-existence between the two communities. These need to be strengthened rather than crippled.

Despite repeated requests on various occasions, including my request voiced together with other Councillors at the recent meeting of the Ramle City Council held on 1 January 2007 - Mayor Yoel Lavi adamantly refused to retract his

statements and deliver a public apology for uttering the said statements, nor express regret for having pronounced them. His only comment was to the effect that his statements were uttered off the record, and that they conform to his blunt manner of speech.

Given the above state of affairs, we feel more and more that the said racist statements uttered by Mayor Yoel Lavi reflect his true opinions regarding the Arab population of his City, and we are concerned that this will be reflected in the worsening of his policies towards the Arab citizens resident in the City, which does not enjoy equality of rights (to understate the case).

I therefore, in my capacity as a Councillor with the Ramle City Council, take the liberty to suggest that you apply your influence on Mayor Yoel Lavi with the view to impress upon him the need to issue a public apology and express regret for uttering the racist statements that he had made, as well as incorporate the Arab citizens of the City of Ramle in the projects sponsored by yourselves in the framework of the KC-Ramle Sister City relationship.

In this connection you may or may not be fully aware of the range of civil society organizations involved in the City of Ramle, first and foremost such as aim to empower the Arab population of the City.

Needless to say that I would be happy to assist you with contacting any or all of the said civil society organizations in my City.

With all good wishes

Sincerely

Fayeze Mansour
Councillor
Ramle City Council