

Israeli minister supports calls for Jews to arbitrarily open fire on Arabs

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Israeli forces detain protesters

Tel Aviv, June 3 (RHC)-- Last week, Ofer Cassif, a member of Israel's Knesset for the Joint List -- an alliance of Arab political parties -- decried as incitement the call by Amichai Langfeld, with the Lod city council, on Jewish gun owners to 'protect their communities.' The call was made in the presence of Lod Mayor Yair Revivo.

In a letter to Ohana, Cassif warned that "there is an explicit call for armed people to take the law into their own hands and even to use live fire... all of this under the auspices of the Lod mayor, who stood beside the inciter." "Without immediate intervention on your part to stop the blatant incitement from escalating to violence, a horrible tragedy may occur," Cassif added in the letter.

But the Israeli minister defended that call as "legitimate." "I disagree that it is incitement. The call to citizens to defend themselves against their attackers, with the means of firearms for which they have a legal license, among others, is a legitimate call," Ohana wrote in reply. Ohana also said the law allows people "to act in self-defense in their time of need."

Cassif's disputed the minister's remarks, saying, "There is no dispute as to whether someone can defend their lives or those of others. But we are not discussing self-defense, as the inciting words of Mr. Amichai Langfeld are not a call for self-defense, but for organized groups to come to a specific place and walk around there while carrying weapons – that is, to establish illegal militias."

"In addition, the events of the past weeks, as well as journalistic investigations, prove that a large amount of those who heeded the calls are not interested in protection, but rather in attacking Arab civilians, whoever and wherever they may be. That is peaceful citizens with nothing to do with acts of violence," Cassif wrote in reply.

Tensions were high in Jerusalem al-Quds recently amid acts of aggression by Israeli soldiers and settlers, and an imminent forced eviction of Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of the city by Israeli authorities.

It was the trigger for protests in al-Quds and the occupied territories. Then followed the 11-day Israeli bombardment of the besieged Gaza Strip, which began on May 10 and killed more than 250 Palestinians.

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