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## Most Jews would refuse to live in a building with Arabs

By [Eli Ashkenazi](#)

"Racism is becoming mainstream. When people talk about transfer or about Arabs as a demographic time bomb, no one raises his voice against such statements. This is a worrisome phenomenon," Bakar Awada, director of the Center Against Racism, said yesterday while presenting the results of a survey on racism against Israeli Arabs.

The center intends to carry out monthly and biannual surveys in the future.

The survey, which was edited by Awada and attorney Ala Haidar, includes a record of racist incidents in Israel in the past year and a public opinion poll on the attitudes of Jewish Israelis toward Palestinians and Arab Israelis.

A total of 225 incidents of racism against Arabs were reported to the center or in the media. Center officials believe this number represents fewer than 20 percent of the actual number.

In 75 percent of the reported incidents the source of racism was institutional and involved government ministries or companies, or elected officials. In one case, an Arab computer professional looking for a job was rejected by a number of high-tech companies until he began submitting his resume under an assumed Jewish name, after which he was called in for an interview. Center officials said this was only one of many experiences that are familiar to Israeli Arabs, and claim that it represents a trend within Israeli Jewish society.

According to the poll, which was conducted by the Geocartography Institute for the Center Against Racism, half of Israel's Jews feels uncomfortable and fearful when they hear people speaking Arabic, and 18 percent feel hate.

The pollsters conducted telephone conversations with 500 respondents aged 18 and over, selected as a representative sampling of the adult population in Jewish communities throughout Israel. The poll was conducted during the third week of December 2005.

The survey revealed that 68 percent of the Jewish public would not agree to live in the same apartment building with Arabs, while 26 percent would agree.

Forty-six percent of Jews said they would refuse to allow an Arab to visit their home, while 50 percent would welcome an Arab visitor.

Forty-one percent of Jews support the segregation of Jews and Arabs in places of recreation, while 52 percent would oppose such a move.

The support for segregation rises as the income level of respondents drops. It rises in direct correlation with the level of religious observance, and is higher among Jews of Middle Eastern origin than Jews of European origin.

Of the respondents, 63 percent agreed with the statement that "Arabs are a security and demographic threat to the state," while 13 percent disagreed. Religious, ultra-Orthodox, new immigrant and low-income respondents were more likely to agree with the statement.

Thirty-four percent agreed that "Arab culture is inferior to Israeli culture," while 57 percent disagreed.

Forty percent agreed that "the state should encourage Arab citizens to emigrate," while 52 percent disagreed.

In response to the findings, MK Rabbi Michael Melchior (Labor), chairman of the Knesset Caucus for Arab-Jewish Coexistence, said that "these harsh figures are not surprising when there are parties such as [Avigdor] Lieberman's that disseminate an atmosphere that delegitimizes the existence of Arabs within the State of Israel and stir up hostility. As in many other countries, here too there is no lack of people trying to hitch a ride on xenophobia. It's a pity that people in the state of the Jewish people feel and think this way."

Haidar, co-director of Sikkuy, the Association for the Advancement of Social Equality, said in response, "Racism is not a new phenomenon, but unfortunately since the events of October 2000 it is taking on worrisome proportions."