



PRESS RELEASE

The information contained herein (2 pages) has been authorized for release by:
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The Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem and Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, the Rt. Revd Suheil Dawani has been denied the renewal of his "Temporary Residency Status" in Jerusalem. This action was taken when the A-5 permits held by himself, his wife and youngest daughter were revoked by the government of Israel, effective 24 September 2010.

Bishop Dawani was elected in 2007 as Bishop of the Diocese and was recognized by the State of Israel as the head of the Episcopal Diocese in accordance with the decision by the State of Israel in 1970 which acknowledged the Diocese as one of the thirteen recognized churches in Israel. All Anglican Bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem who have not held Israeli citizenship have been granted residency permits (A5) to allow them to live in Jerusalem where the Bishop's residence, diocesan offices and cathedral are located.

Bishop Dawani, his wife and daughters had successfully renewed this permit, as required, in 2008 and 2009. On 24 August 2010, Bishop Dawani went to renew the permit with the Ministry of the Interior and was informed in writing that permits for himself, his wife and daughter would not be renewed because of allegations pending against the Bishop. The letter, in Hebrew, included the following: "Bishop Suheil acted with the Palestinian Authority in transferring lands owned by Jewish people to the Palestinians and also helped to register lands of Jewish people in the name of the Church." There were further allegations that documents were forged by the Bishop. The letter also stated that Bishop Dawani and his family should leave the country immediately.

Bishop Dawani replied to the Israeli Minister of the Interior denying all accusations and requested the restoration of the residency permits for himself and his family to provide for his ongoing leadership of his Diocese and residence for himself and his family. Bishop Dawani did not receive any response from the office of the Minister of the Interior.

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Bishop Dawani delivered another letter to the Minister of the Interior challenging the allegations and requesting any documents or evidence against him. Israeli authorities have yet to produce any proof of the allegations made against Bishop Dawani.

Bishop Dawani has sought to resolve this issue quietly without resort to any publicity since August of 2010. During this period of time Bishop Dawani sought confidential support through religious and diplomatic channels. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion and church representative of the Queen of England, has been in contact with the office of the Prime Minister of Israel and Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amer to resolve this issue. In addition, Bishop Dawani met personally with the Chief Rabbi, who is a good friend of both Bishop Dawani and the Anglican Church, who took immediate action to try to restore the Bishop's residency rights.

The Archbishop of Canterbury received assurances that the situation would be resolved promptly. Other Anglican leaders, including the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington DC and the Primates of the Anglican Communion representing Anglicans throughout the world, have all used their influence individually and collectively with Israeli authorities without success to date.

Diplomatic efforts through the office of the British Foreign Secretary, the British Ambassador to Israel, the British Consul-General in Jerusalem, the State Department of the United States and the American Consul-General in Jerusalem have provided support for Bishop Dawani and ongoing contact with Israeli authorities but without tangible results in terms of discovering the source of the allegations against Bishop Dawani or the restoration of the residency rights which are crucial to his providing leadership of his Diocese and residency in Jerusalem for himself and his family.

This situation has continued for over six months as Bishop Dawani attempted to resolve this with restraint and without causing the government of Israel any embarrassment. The lack of resolution, despite all the efforts outlined above, required Bishop Dawani to seek legal counsel. Bishop Dawani's legal advisor sent a letter to the Attorney General of Israel seeking an explanation of the allegations against him which have been the basis for the denial of the residency rights for himself and his family. After waiting one month without an explanation of the allegations from the Attorney General and upon the recommendation of legal counsel, Bishop Dawani has chosen to take his case to court seeking redress through the Israeli legal system. Bishop Dawani now awaits a court date to be assigned.

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