



Canadian Arab Federation
La Fédération Canado-Arabe

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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QuAIA Should Be part of Toronto Pride Parade

The Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) urges Pride Toronto to maintain their strong position and stand for freedom of expression when considering a possible application by the group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) to march in the 2009 Pride Festival. In a recent article in the Jewish Tribune, pro-Israel lobbyists declared their intention to threaten government and corporate sponsorship of the annual Toronto Pride Festival unless the organization banned pro-Palestinian marchers from the parade. While it is becoming a trend in Canadian politics to threaten cuts to funding in order to silence any discussion of Israeli policies (as was the case for CAF), we urge Pride Toronto to put freedom of expression where it truly belongs, in the heart of the LGBT celebration of freedom and equal rights and take pride in, and supporting all members of your community with their diverse identities, history and political affiliations. This type of bullying is now used against a wide range of Canadian groups that dare speak about justice, including Unions, play writers, students, Academics and, now, the gay and lesbian community.

CAF also takes this opportunity to applaud Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) for reminding us all that oppression and injustice are not exclusive, and that the rights of people living under occupation are human rights just as queer rights are human rights. By recently organizing a successful public event on May 23rd titled "Coming Out Against Apartheid". "QuAIA sent a message to all of us that Queer rights are human rights and we should all be passionate about them as much as we are towards the rights of Palestinians living under occupation, and for that we are thankful and proud" said Khaled Mouammar, President of the Canadian Arab Federation.

Mr. Khaki who is also Grand Marshall for Pride this year, has been viciously attacked for speaking at the QuAIA event, though he was not speaking on behalf of Pride or in his capacity as Grand Marshall. Mr. Khaki has an impressive record as a strong advocate of social justice and human rights for all. We commend him for his participation at the QuAIA event as a link and a connection between the LGBT community and the Muslim communities of Canada, and for that, we support his right to be Grand Marshall this year without having to endure harassment from pro-Israel groups.

For more information, please contact:

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Established in 1967, the Canadian Arab Federation is a national, non-partisan, non profit and membership-based organization. CAF represents Canadian Arabs on issues relating to public policy.