3 April 2014

Stephen Hodder
President
Royal Institute of British Architects

The complicity of Israeli architects in settlement building deserves RIBA’s censure

We are writing to express our support for the recent decision of the RIBA Council to move to suspend the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA) from the world body of architects, the International Union of Architects (UIA). The parallel decision of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland gives this initiative great force.

We are aware of the difficulties liable to be faced by any body which voices public criticism of the Israeli government. The determination of RIBA and RIAS to take a principled stand on this issue is, in this context, particularly worthy of support. We are sure that you will face attacks – but much of it will be from predictable sources which will raise the spectre of antisemitism in response to all criticism of Israeli government policy, especially when such criticism attracts wide attention.

We understand that you have taken this action because members of IAUA have been closely involved in the design and building of illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and also in the construction of the Apartheid Wall that runs deep into the illegally occupied area. Despite previous resolutions passed by UIA on this topic, IAUA has taken no action to discipline its members who have collaborated in these breaches of international law.

Many people, Jewish and non-Jewish, architects and non-architects, will be heartened by this example of a respected body taking up its ethical and professional responsibilities in so resolute a manner.

(signed)

Peter Ahrends RIBA
Yasmin Alibhai-Brown author, journalist
Suad Amiry architect, author
Prof Mona Baker University of Manchester
Sir Patrick Bateson FRS
Dr Robert Boyce London School of Economics
Prof Haim Bresheeth Centre of Media and Film Studies, SOAS

Please reply to: BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London WC1N3XX
email: bricup@bricup.org.uk www.bricup.org.uk
Victoria Brittain  author, journalist
Neave Brown RIBA
David Calder  actor
Prof Michael Chanan  Roehampton University
Julie Christie  actor
Caryl Churchill  playwright
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Prof James Dickens
Prof Laurence Dreyfus FBA
Brian Eno  composer
Jane Frere  artist
Ronan Gallagher  author
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Antony Gormley  sculptor
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Abe Hayeem RIBA  Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine
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Mike Leigh  film & theatre writer director
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Prof David Pegg  University of York
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