

Women Feature in Jerusalem Bus Ads for 1st Time in Years

By JEREMY SHARON - 08/08/2012

Promoting pluralism, Yerushalmim Movement launch advertising campaign on buses under slogan "because J'lem is for us all."



YERUSHALMIM MOVEMENT Photo: Courtesy Yerushalmim Movement 370

The Yerushalmim Movement, an organization promoting pluralism in the capital, will initiate an advertising campaign on Jerusalem buses featuring women who represent the group, it was announced on Wednesday.

The Yerushalmim Movement petitioned the High Court of Justice court last year against Egged and Cnaan, the company that handles advertising on Egged buses, after the two companies rejected an advertising campaign of Yerushalmim because it featured women.

Sectors of the ultra-Orthodox community object to advertisements bearing images of women for reasons of modesty.

Cnaan and Egged claimed that they would incur financial damage if they used such advertisements and also said that buses displaying them were frequently vandalized.

In response last month to the High Court petition, the State Attorney's Office and the Transportation Ministry said, however, that no reports of vandalism had been made in recent years.

According to Yerushalmim, advertisements with women have not appeared on Egged buses in Jerusalem for at least eight years.

The ministry wrote in response to the petition that public transportation license holders such as Egged would not be allowed to discriminate on the basis of gender or any other factor when providing advertising on buses.

Canaan said in a statement to the media on Wednesday that “despite the concern regarding vandalism, which has been directed in the past toward buses with these kind of advertisements, we decided to accede to Yerushalmim’s request, in the hope that all sides will treat one another with tolerance and sensitivity.”

The company stood by its claim that the “vandalism of extremists in the city” had in the past caused it and its advertisers heavy “financial damage.”

Rabbi Uri Ayalon, director of the Yerushalmim Movement, said that “an atmosphere of equality between men and women is a crucial and basic value” for a democratic state and its capital.

“As a Jerusalem resident with two daughters, I, and everyone who wants a pluralistic Jerusalem, believe that the value of equality is nonnegotiable,” he said.

“For someone to decide that women are merely sexual objects is offensive and I don’t want to raise my daughters in such a city,” he continued.

“Jerusalem is a city with people of all backgrounds and everyone has the right to live as they wish, so it is crucial to fight this phenomenon,” Ayalon said.

Yerushalmim’s new advertising campaign, the same one rejected in 2011 by Canaan and Egged, features women from the organization under the slogan “Yerushalmiyot [women of Jerusalem], nice to meet you – because Jerusalem belongs to all of us.”

The advertisements will go up in the coming days.