



REPORT OF ACTIVITIES JANUARY-JUNE 2014

During the current reporting period, The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) has continued to utilize our unique combination of litigation, advocacy, education and public outreach tools in our efforts to protect and promote human and civil rights in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The following are highlights of some of our key activities in various fields during the months of January-May 2014.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

❖ Immigration, Residency and Status

New Anti-Infiltration Law: ACRI, along with several human rights organizations, petitioned the High Court of Justice seeking to overturn a new version of the Law to Prevent Infiltration, which allows for the indefinite detention of asylum seekers in the Holot “open” detention center. On April 1, the same panel of nine High Court Justices that in September unanimously overturned a prior amendment to the Law to Prevent Infiltration heard arguments on our petition. Some 1,500 asylum seekers are currently being detained indefinitely in Holot. Although they are allowed to leave the facility for a number of hours between morning and afternoon count-off, and between afternoon and evening count-off, because of the facility’s remote location, the asylum-seekers are effectively confined to the Holot grounds. The purpose of the law is to break the asylum seekers’ spirit and to coerce detainees into giving their “consent” to their removal so that the government can boast that it does not deport them, but rather simply assists them to leave “voluntarily.” We are currently awaiting the High Court decision on our petition.

Residency Granted to 221 Children of Migrant Workers: In February Interior Minister Gideon Sa’ar announced that the residency applications of 221 children of migrants would be granted. In 2010, as a result of a multi-year effort led by the Israeli Children organization in cooperation with ACRI and several other human rights organizations, the government decided to grant residency status to children of migrants that met certain criteria, such as the child’s parent having entered into Israel legally and the child being fluent in Hebrew. Some 700 children who met these criteria applied. After the Israeli Children organization merged with ACRI last July, its leaders continued assisting and supporting the migrant families through the long and trying wait for an answer. In February the Interior Minister

decided to accept the 221 applications that were still pending. In the months since this dramatic decision, we have assisted these families with the procedures at the Ministry of Interior on a case by case basis.

End Child Detention Campaign (together with Hotline for Refugees and Migrants and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel): In November 2013, we published the research we conducted on the detention of children of migrants and the impact of the detention on the children. In January 2014 we launched an online campaign concerning the harm in detaining children. The campaign's Facebook page has 20,000 followers. In February we published a comprehensive policy paper and sent it to relevant decision makers. In April we launched an online campaign on alternatives to detention. Throughout the reporting period, we held meetings with Knesset members, government officials and other policy makers. In February, our staff participated in a joint meeting of the Knesset Committee on the Rights of the Child and its Committee on Foreign Workers, and subsequently we met with senior staff at the Ministry of Welfare to discuss alternatives to detention. Simultaneously we worked to specifically address the issue of detention of children in the Yahalom facility at the Ben Gurion airport. In March we intervened with the Attorney General and the Minister of the Interior regarding the conditions at the Yahalom facility. In response, the Minister of the Interior claimed that children are not currently detained there. We are now considering how to proceed.

Services for Asylum Seekers at Ministry of Interior Offices: Since passage of the fourth Amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law, the Ministry of Interior has reduced the office hours for asylum seekers and the number locations which provide them with services. This has placed a great burden on the asylum seeking community, as many asylum seekers have been unable to renew their visas despite desperate attempts to do so. In February we intervened on their behalf with the Executive Director of the Immigration Authority, and were told that they are aware of the problems and are working to alleviate them. Subsequently an office designated specifically for asylum seekers and operating many hours per day opened in Tel Aviv, but the conditions there are insufferable and we are monitoring the treatment given to asylum seekers there and are considering initiating legal proceedings to address the problem.

❖ **Criminal Justice: Rights of Suspects, Detainees and Prisoners**

Living Space for Prisoners: In March ACRI submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice along with Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-IL) and the College of Law and Business in Ramat Gan, regarding the over-crowded conditions in Israeli prisons. In the petition we insisted that the State formulate a plan which would ensure each prisoner an appropriate living space and that each prisoner would at least be ensured a minimum of four square meters so as to avoid cruel, inhumane and humiliating punishment. Our petition received widespread media coverage. A hearing at the High Court has not yet been scheduled.

Detention Periods in the Occupied Territories: In April, the High Court of Justice handed down a partial judgment on two petitions against the excessive and discriminatory detention periods applicable to Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories as opposed to Jewish Israelis who live in the very same areas. The High Court ordered the state to reconsider its position on three issues: detention periods for Palestinian minors, pre-indictment detention periods for adults suspected of offenses that are not defined as security offenses, and the maximum detention periods from indictment until the end of the

trial. The court ordered the state to file its response by September 2014. However, the court rejected the petition with regard to pre-indictment detention periods for Palestinian adults suspected of offences defined as security offences (a term broadly defined in the military legislation to include such offenses as organizing an illegal protest), and ruled those detention periods reasonable and proportionate. This despite the fact that the detention periods are still significantly longer than those that are applicable to Israeli settlers, who are subject to Israeli civil law rather than to military law.

The Counter-Terrorism Bill: In February hearings commenced in the Knesset Constitution Law and Justice Committee on the proposed counter-terrorism bill. The proposed Counter-Terrorism Bill is being considered as part of a government process aimed at cancelling the state of emergency in force since 1948 and replacing various emergency measures with modern anti-terror legislation. While the goal of canceling the state of emergency – prompted by a Supreme Court petition submitted by ACRI over a decade ago – is commendable and long overdue, in practice the bill seeks to normalize, and in some cases to exacerbate, draconian emergency provisions and regulations dating back to the British Mandate. ACRI submitted an updated position paper and ACRI's staff members met with Knesset members and other decision makers regarding the bill. Committee hearings were held in February and in May.

Wiretapping: In May, the Jerusalem District Court denied a freedom of information petition filed by ACRI seeking an order that would compel the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to provide ACRI with the number of warrants issued by the Prime Minister to execute security wiretaps over the past five years, including the number of people – and the number of the Israeli citizens and residents – covered by such warrants. The State maintained, in response, that the information is not even in the Prime Minister's possession. ACRI intends to appeal the District Court's decision to the Supreme Court.

❖ **Freedom of Expression and the Right to Protest**

The Anti-Boycott Law: In February, a nine-justice panel at the High Court of Justice heard arguments on our petition to annul Israel's Boycott Prohibition Law. The Boycott Prohibition Law, which went into effect in 2011, creates a private (civil) right of action against individuals or organizations who call for a boycott of goods from Israeli settlements or of economic ties with Israel generally. The law allows plaintiffs to pursue a civil case without having to prove actual damages. It also permits the Minister of Finance to impose financial penalties, including the removal of tax exceptions, on NGOs that call for a boycott. In our petition we argue that the law violates constitutional freedom of speech, as well as the rights to dignity and equality, and intentionally sows confusion between expression that opposes the government and expression intended to harm the state. The severe sanctions authorized by the law create a chilling effect on speech that deters people from using a boycott to express a political stance. ACRI filed its petition with Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, on behalf of themselves, four other civil rights organizations (the Public Committee Against Torture, HaMoked – Center for the Defense of the Individual, IRAC – Israel Religious Action Center of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and Yesh Din), and three organizations that called for economic boycotts in order to fight the occupation: the Coalition of Women for Peace, The High Committee of Oversight for Arab Issues in Israel, and the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center.

Free Speech on Campus: In March we appealed to the Supreme Court against the decision of the Haifa District Court that dismissed our suit against Haifa University. In our suit and appeal we contend that a section in the University by-laws which grants its president the authority to indefinitely suspend any public activity in the university, a section which the president uses on occasion, is null and void. This appeal aims to protect the freedom of expression in Haifa University, where particularly stringent limits are placed on the freedom of expression of students who are not affiliated with the mainstream, and especially on that of Arab students.

In May, ACRI contacted Hebrew University President as a result of an incident during which students participating in a demonstration were violently dispersed by university security guards and the Border Police. In a letter to the University President, ACRI noted that all requests by students for official approval to hold a demonstration against a new military conscription law were arbitrarily rejected by the university on the basis of a bizarre interpretation of the law. For example, a request to organize a public activity on the subject of the conscription of Druze citizens to the army were rejected on the grounds that such activity constitutes “incitement to break the law,” and the University’s security services reacted disproportionately to protest vigils held without official approval, calling upon the armed border police in response to a peaceful protest, with no reason. In the letter, ACRI remarked that “part of a university’s role is to prepare students to actively participate in civil society and its democratic processes. It is dismaying to see that the Dean of Students has threatened to completely cease the provision of all public activities at the university. Freedom of speech is not a privilege, but a fundamental constitutional right and an integral component of campus life and a justification for its very existence.”

Bill Banning Use of Nazi Symbols: In January ACRI submitted its position to the members of the Ministerial Committee for Legislative Affairs and requested that they oppose the passage of the Bill for the Prohibition on Using Nazi Symbols and Monikers. This bill seeks to implement a sweeping ban on the use of “inappropriate” names and symbols associated with Nazis and the holocaust by imposing prison sentences. ACRI opposes this bill as it would severely restrict public discourse in Israel and damage the constitutional right to free expression. The holocaust is a painful subject that is difficult to bear, and insensitive use of holocaust symbolism can indeed cause pain to many people. However, we posit that the freedom of speech includes the right to say harsh and even offensive things. It includes the right to give expression to crude feelings, thoughts and positions, and the right to use distasteful rhetoric and provocative imagery. Despite our request, the bill was approved by the Ministerial Committee and can now be brought before the Knesset plenum.

❖ Privacy Rights

Privatization of Databases: In a case involving both privatization and privacy issues, ACRI submitted, in July 2013, a petition demanding that the Registrar of Companies terminate its contract with the private companies running its databases. Privatization of the formerly public databases has led to severe abuse of the data by the private companies that were hired to manage it. Our petition points out the failures of oversight when the government privatizes its obligations and privatizes public assets and information. At a February hearing at the Administrative Court in Jerusalem the court dismissed our petition on technical grounds in light of the State’s declaration that it intends to remedy the ills of

privatization through new legislation; we are waiting for the Ministry of Justice to follow through on that declaration.

Medical Confidentiality: In February, in response to a circular published by the Director General of the Ministry of Health ordering that a system for sharing medical information become operational, ACRI warned the Knesset and the Attorney General that such a system would be a backdoor route to launching a national medical registry without appropriate legislation. We maintain that an online system for sharing medical information must be subject to measures that would ensure that the information be used in a manner that is appropriate, limited, and respectful of patients' rights and wishes. As a result of our intervention, the Attorney General stepped in, and implementation of the Ministry of Health's circular was suspended.

Additionally, in February we represented the Israel AIDS Task Force as an amicus in the District Court in Lod in the case of a man living with HIV who filed a discrimination suit and was in danger of his identity being exposed following the publication of rulings in his case. The court accepted our position and forbade the publication of the plaintiff's name, issuing a decision containing significant protections for HIV carriers' privacy and for their ability to realize their legal rights without concern for privacy violations.

Medical Privacy in the Workplace: In January and March ACRI staff members held meetings with various officials in the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Economy, and Kupot Holim (Health Maintenance Organizations) to advocate for advancing laws and regulations which would protect workers' medical privacy.

❖ Privatization Project

ACRI's Privatization Project works across the board to promote policies that would safeguard human rights in privatization processes in the provision of governmental services.

Privatization of Law Enforcement: On International Human Rights Day in December, ACRI held a conference in the Knesset on the increasing privatization of law enforcement in Israel, with the participation of many Members of Knesset, the Commissioner of the Israel Police, and representatives from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Welfare. In October 2013, ACRI had published a comprehensive groundbreaking report on the topic and on the way the growing privatization of law enforcement is detrimental to human rights.

Private Police Forces: In February ACRI requested of the Tel Aviv Municipality that it intervene and stop the phenomenon of private policing in the upscale Tzahala neighborhood, and to remove the cameras which a private security company had installed throughout public spaces. In response we were told that the Mayor objects to such phenomena overall, but there was no commitment to act to cease the operations of the particular private police force in this case. ACRI sent a petition to the State Attorney's office and we are waiting for a response.

In March ACRI wrote to the Minister of Justice and to the Minister of Internal Security about the illegal activities of private police forces in Israel. We described the growing phenomenon of private police units comprised of private security guards and rangers, who are operating in cities and neighborhoods with no legal authority, against the law, and in a manner that violates human rights. We called for strict supervision over the activities of the security guards and companies. We are awaiting a response.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

❖ The Right to Live in Dignity

Poverty Reduction and the Right to Live in Dignity: In early 2014, ACRI published a comprehensive position paper on the Israeli standard for dignity and income support through welfare payments entitled "Dignified Living – There Is No Such Thing." This paper critiques the manner in which the level of income support is currently determined in Israel – an arbitrary administrative process that is liable to cuts depending on prevailing political considerations. In January we presented our position paper before the Alalouf Committee for the Eradication of Poverty. While the committee members expressed support for our positions and considered including them in the committee's final recommendations, it appears that pressure was exerted on the committee to remove the recommendation for the formulation of an index for living in dignity and a new mechanism to establish the level of income support.

Debts of People living in Poverty: In March ACRI initiated a first of its kind meeting for organizations and activists involved in the issue of debts for people living in poverty. Twenty-five organizations were represented at the meeting, along with private attorneys and community activists. Since the meeting, a series of new joint initiatives are being planned. Concurrently, ACRI is continuing to conduct a legal study into the various norms in the field of debt enforcement and collection.

Due Process within the Welfare System: In February ACRI met with the Director-General of the Ministry of Social Services, Mr. Yossi Silman, prior to the release of the Ministry's report entitled 'Removing Children to Out-of-Home Institutions and Visitation Rights'. During the meeting ACRI elaborated on a number of fundamental issues that were insufficiently addressed in the report, and presented our suggestions for improvements. Our suggestions focused primarily on the need for transparency and for increased supervision over the intervention and evaluation committees that propose treatment options for children at risk. These committees possess broad and unregulated powers to recommend a range of actions to social workers – from enrolling children in community care and day centers to removing a child to an out-of-home facility and even adoption.

Additionally, in April, ACRI sent our formal comments to Members of Knesset regarding the explanatory memorandum for the Law on Welfare Services for Persons with Disabilities (2014). This bill seeks to regulate the care provided and services offered for persons on the autism spectrum. Our primary criticism of this memorandum is its mechanism for determining eligibility for various services and the implication that a number of the bill's definitions would have for community placement options.

The Right to Water: ACRI's legal work, advocacy efforts, and successful public campaign against water disconnections have led to a reduction in instances of water disconnection for certain vulnerable population groups. While legal proceedings continue in the High Court of Justice on our petition regarding regulation of water disconnections, ACRI has continued to take an active role in the

deliberations of the Knesset's Finance Committee and the creation of the draft rules on water disconnections that were submitted to the Water Authority for its approval. ACRI has expressed a principled position according to which water disconnections should be completely banned and a minimum amount of water should be supplied to every person irrespective of their circumstances. ACRI was recently informed by the Knesset committee that owing to the public pressure exerted by ACRI and its partners in the Water Forum, the Water Authority is inclined to adopt the draft regulations discussed in the committee, and will submit a new draft that will incorporate the principle that no person will be completely disconnected from the water supply.

❖ **The Right to Housing**

The Right to Affordable Housing: In recent months, ACRI's activities, conducted under the auspices of the Coalition for Affordable Housing, have focused on advancing affordable housing clauses within three key planning bills submitted by the government. Specifically, ACRI has aimed to influence legislation such that it would include provisions requiring planning and building authorities to provide apartments at reduced rates for low to middle income earners. ACRI's position is that affordable housing must be a central component of the residential planning process in order to realize the right to housing, to reduce the burden of the cost of housing on families with low to mid-level incomes, and to increase the range of housing options available in the residential market. Such changes would decrease socio-economic polarization and reduce patterns of residential segregation leading to the marginalization of disadvantaged population groups in geographical pockets of poverty. Over the current reporting period, some key affordable housing clauses were inserted into legislation: one whereby all large residential construction projects must contain a minimum number of apartments designated for affordable housing, and another, empowering local planning authorities to grant additional construction rights to agencies that increase the share of affordable apartments in their projects.

The Right to Equality in Housing: ACRI recently published our unequivocal opposition to a VAT (Value Added Tax) exemption on the purchase of new homes for Israelis who served in the military or who performed national service, on grounds that such an exemption would discriminate against populations that do not usually serve in the IDF, among them Arab Israelis and Ultra-Orthodox. As this legislation progresses during the coming Knesset session, this topic will become a central issue in our efforts to ensure equality in the application of the right to housing.

Rights of Homeless Persons: In March, in response to our appeal, the Supreme Court gave judicial force to a new procedure issued by the Tel Aviv-Yaffo Municipality that drastically limited the ability of municipal inspectors to confiscate the property of homeless persons residing in public places. The court declared that the municipality may not exclude homeless people from public spaces or confiscate their personal property unless there is substantial nuisance or injury. We are hopeful that other municipalities will adopt this policy as well.

❖ **The Right to Healthcare**

The German Committee – Our Campaign to Preserve Public Healthcare: In February, ACRI and PHR-IL sent the joint position paper “No Difference between Rich and Poor” to senior officials in the

Ministry of Health, to Members of Knesset, and to members of the German Health Committee, (so named after the Minister of Health Yael German). We proposed therein [10 steps for saving the public healthcare system](#) to the German Health Committee, which was expected to shortly make a final decision on the makeup of Israel's health system, specifically on the balance between private and public insurance. We called for ceasing all private medical services currently provided at public hospitals. ACRI strongly believes in the value of public services, which are the only way to ensure equal access to health services and the right to health for every Israeli. Our model, designed by experts in the fields of health, public policy and economics, would strengthen the public health system, shorten the queues, allow patients to select their own doctors without additional cost, and increase access to healthcare services.

Since February, ACRI and PHR-IL have been conducting a campaign aimed to influence the German committee's decision. The campaign, proposing our ten comprehensive steps for strengthening equality and accessibility of Israel's healthcare system as an alternative to the problematic private healthcare services model, included extensive coverage in social media, a demonstration in Tel Aviv on March 1st, and publishing and disseminating quotes from senior medical professionals who support public healthcare and object to privatization. Dozens of volunteers and activists participated in our campaign, and our campaign garnered widespread media coverage.

On June 25th, the German Health Committee announced its conclusions and recommendations, which adopted ACRI's core recommendation: Not to provide private medical services at Israel's public hospitals, and to expand the budget for public healthcare so as to shorten the queues and strengthen the public health system. This was a [significant accomplishment](#) for ACRI's intensive advocacy efforts and public campaign. Although some of the Committee's recommendations do preserve elements of privatization and inequity which ACRI opposes and against which ACRI will continue to advocate, we are encouraged by our success, in particular by our success in shifting the public discourse against privatization.

Linguistic Accessibility (Services for Arabic, Amharic and Russian Speakers): Following a lengthy correspondence with the Ministry of Health and a March meeting with its Director General, we have embarked on legal proceedings, focusing especially on the large Kupot Holim (Health Maintenance Organizations) Maccabi and Clalit, which do not appear to be implementing a circular from 2011 regarding linguistic and cultural accessibility in the provision of healthcare services.

EQUALITY FOR ARAB CITIZENS

❖ **Planning, Land and Housing**

Equal Representation for Women and Arabs on Israel Land Authority Council: At a February hearing on a petition filed by ACRI and Itach-Maaki: Women Lawyers for Social Justice, Supreme Court President Grunis stated that the lack of representation for Arab citizens and the under-representation of women on the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) Council are not acceptable, and ordered state representatives to present a solution within 45 days. Justice Grunis also noted that if the state's proposal does not satisfy the justices' concerns, the Court will issue an opinion without an

additional hearing on the petition. The petition, filed in 2010, demands that women and Arabs be appointed as permanent members to the ILA Council at a ratio that ensures fair representation of these populations. The ILA, headed by the council, holds extraordinary executive power as the body responsible for 93% of lands in the country. Of the ten current council members, there is only one woman – the Director General of the Ministry of Justice – and no Arabs.

Police Station in Lod: In February the Subcommittee for Appeals at the National Council for Planning and Building held a hearing on our appeal (submitted by ACRI along with Bimkom and with local residents) of the central region's Regional Committee on Planning and Building decision which dismissed our objections to the plan to build a police station in the Karem A-Tufah neighborhood in Lod. At the hearing, we presented the reasons we object to the construction of a police station in the lot in question, and suggested alternative uses for the lot which would better serve community needs in light of the longtime discrimination against the neighborhood. In April our appeal was rejected and the plan to build the police station was approved. We have decided not to appeal further, but rather to focus our efforts on advancing comprehensive planning solutions for the neighborhood.

❖ **Equality in Public Resource Allocation**

Classrooms and Personnel in the Arab School System: In February we held a roundtable on the topic of the rampant discrimination in allocation of classrooms and staff to the Arab school system, with the Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education. Approximately ten education department chairs from Arab municipalities and education professionals participated. We sent a letter to the chairman of the Committee on Challenges in the Arab School System at the Ministry of Education, presenting the totality of problems in the Arab school system, and later met to discuss the same issue with an aide to the Minister of Education. In addition, we participated in a conference on early childhood education in the Arab sector, and met with education department chairs from Arab municipalities to examine potential legal interventions.

Workshops and lectures on Human Rights for Arab Women Groups: In the first half of 2014, we completed our series of lectures and workshops for empowering women's groups in Arab communities, as part of a joint project with Kayan Feminist Organization. We held lectures in 7 communities, each with approximately 25 women participants. The topics we discussed included human rights education, anti-democratic legislation, the right to healthcare, planning and building rights, and family unification. We received very positive feedback from the participants.

❖ **Rights of Bedouin in the Negev**

Unrecognized Bedouin Village Challenges A Forced Urbanization Plan: In March, ACRI, Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, and residents from the unrecognized Bedouin village Wadi al-Na'am filed [a petition](#) with the High Court of Justice against a regional plan to enlarge the township of Segev Shalom, the primary purpose of which is the forcible transfer of Wadi al-Na'am's 10,000 residents. Wadi al-Na'am, located within the Ramat Hovav region, was established in the 1950s when Bedouin

residents of the Negev were moved there under martial law. Since then the community has been deemed “temporary” and has not been connected to water, electricity, sewage, telephone or roads, and residents suffer from a severe lack of education, health and welfare services. Moreover, over the past decades, several of Israel’s most hazardous facilities have been established in Wadi al-Na’am’s immediate vicinity, including the Ramat Hovav Industrial Area, and the military industrial area of Ramat Beka, now used for, among other things, burying explosive materials. The petition asserts that the regional plan is proposing relocation to an area that is dangerously close to the hazards, and would impose on the Bedouin forced urbanization into crowded neighborhoods in the town of Segev Shalom, thereby threatening their traditional way of life. The petition further asserts that the State is acting in bad faith by knowingly imposing the solution that the residents most vehemently oppose – forced urbanization into crowded neighborhoods in the town of Segev Shalom. Planning authorities’ claims of adhering to a general policy of not establishing new communities in the Negev are belied by actual developments. At least fifteen new Jewish communities are being promoted in the Negev. ACRI argues that this constitutes systematic discrimination in the urban planning policies in the Negev.

❖ **The Right to Equality**

Racial Profiling at Airports – Deployment of New Security System: In November 2013, the High Court of Justice heard our appeal concerning racial profiling at airports, and gave the State an extension until April 2014 to deploy its new security system. In February 2014, in advance of the deployment of the new security system at Ben Gurion airport that would purportedly utilize more equitable and uniform procedures, we renewed the online and social media campaign we had initially launched in 2013, seeking reports from travelers on any changes in security procedures at airports. In April the State announced that the new security system (HBC) became operational in March. The State’s announcement included new details regarding the use of a body scanner. ACRI requested from the State Attorney’s office information regarding the scanner and potential violations of the right to privacy, as well as clarifications regarding the criteria for opening suitcases under the new system. We are currently awaiting the State’s response, based on which we will reply to its call to dismiss our petition.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

❖ **The Rights of Palestinians in Area C: Expulsions and Demolitions**

Firing Zone 918: In January 2013, ACRI filed a petition with the High Court of Justice against the State’s plans to expel some 1,000 Palestinians living in rural villages in the area known as Firing Zone 918 in the South Hebron Hills. In October 2013, the High Court of Justice referred the two sides to mediation and appointed former Justice Zamir to mediate. The mediation commenced in November 2013 and is still proceeding. In January 2014 the sides signed an agreement freezing both evictions and new building for the duration of the mediation, yet both sides have been violating the agreement, and the army has conducted training on the fields in the area. The Court has extended the mediation through July 2014.

Khirbat Zanuta: In 2007, ACRI petitioned the High Court of Justice regarding the intention to demolish the village of Khirbat Zanuta on the South Hebron Hills. At a November 2013 hearing, the Court directed the parties to meet to discuss the State's offer to relocate the entire village to a location on the outskirts of Daharia. We have since held one meeting with the Civil Administration. As we had learned that the area is already populated and the land is privately owned, we suggested more realistic solutions and posed questions. We have not heard back from the Civil Administration yet despite our repeated attempts to contact its representatives. A hearing at the High Court is scheduled for July.

Relocation of Separation Wall Route Following the Jayus-Falameh Petitions: Paving continues on the route for the new separation wall. ACRI maintains ongoing contact with the Civil Administration and the Separation Wall Administration, regarding issues that arise throughout the construction process. ACRI's staff also maintains ongoing contact with the residents and visits the site regularly. Our field worker provides the farmers with assistance in obtaining permits for passage to their lands beyond the wall (in the seam zone) from the head of the regional coordination and liaison administration, as well as assistance in dealing with problems that arise from time to time in coordinating the movement of their merchandise.

❖ **The Rights of Minors in Criminal Proceedings**

ACRI submitted a freedom of information request to the police, seeking information on the guidelines and regulations pertaining to detention, arrest and interrogation of Palestinian minors in the OPT, and in February received in response a document containing very vague and general guidelines. Thus we sent a request for clarifications and additional information. We submitted a similar request also to the IDF and have not yet received a relevant reply. Additionally, during March and April we held several meetings with representatives of UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to discuss the rights of minors in the military criminal justice system.

❖ **The International Humanitarian Law Project**

Over the reporting period ACRI and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conducted a joint comprehensive training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) for 25 legal professionals, including attorneys who work for human rights organizations, attorneys from the private sector and the public sector, from the military prosecutor's office and from academia. We held 6 full-day sessions in Tel Aviv with presentations given by a wide variety of lecturers from academia, the military, and human rights organizations.

Over the reporting period we also held 12 IHL Education programs at pre-military academies, some of which were one-time programs and others were multi-session workshops, including one 9-session workshop. A total of 300 pre-military academy students participated in our programs. Additionally, ACRI held three lectures on International Humanitarian Law for students at Tel Aviv University and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST JERUSALEM

Petition to High Court to Restore Water in East Jerusalem: In March, after some three weeks in which tens of thousands of residents of Jerusalem neighborhoods east of the Separation Barrier had been without running water, ACRI, along with local residents and community leaders, filed [a petition to the High Court of Justice](#). In the petition, ACRI noted that most of the homes in the neighborhoods of Ras Hamis, Ras Shahada, Dahyat a-Salam, and the Shuafat Refugee Camp (all inside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries), with a total of approximately 60,000-80,000 residents, either have no water or at all or have water pressure so weak that it stops periodically. Families have had no choice but to buy bottled water or large containers and limit consumption to absolute minimums. The petition demanded that the responsible authorities – the Israel Water and Sewage Authority, the Ministry of National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources, HaGihon (Jerusalem's water utility), and the Jerusalem Municipality – take all necessary action to ensure that running water be supplied to all of the homes in the area. The right to water is a fundamental right bound with the rights to health and dignity. In April, the High Court of Justice granted the State an additional 60 days to present an update on their progress in dealing with this problem. Our legal intervention was accompanied by media outreach to raise public awareness of the problem (in late March we conducted a tour of the area for 8 prominent Israeli journalists and bloggers), by tours in the area for diplomats, and by an online campaign further raising awareness and encouraging letter-sending to the authorities. The issue was widely covered in the [Israeli](#) and [international press](#).

Three Houses: A Documentary Film: During the first quarter of 2014, ACRI produced a ten-minute documentary film depicting life in the neighborhoods beyond the separation barrier in East Jerusalem by telling the story of 3 Palestinian families that live there and that received demolition orders in late 2013, informing them that the Jerusalem municipality intends to destroy their homes. '[3 Houses](#)' was filmed in Ras Khamis and Ras Shahada, East Jerusalem neighborhoods that were cut off from the rest of the city when the separation barrier was built in 2002. Since then, these neighborhoods and the tens of thousands of people who live there have been utterly neglected by the Jerusalem municipality. In 2013, the situation was further exacerbated when the municipality announced its intent to demolish the homes of thousands of residents. The movie was translated into Arabic and English. On May 25th, towards Jerusalem Day, we shared and distributed the film via social media and posted it on our website. We plan to utilize the film in our advocacy work vis-à-vis the Jerusalem municipality, to organize viewings and discussions in Israel and overseas and to submit the film to documentary film festivals so as to raise awareness of the situation it depicts. In February, ACRI participated in a hearing at the Knesset Public Petitions Committee on the topic of the dismal level of services in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the separation wall.

The Right to Education: The main issue ACRI focuses on in the realm of education is the urgent need for building more schools and kindergartens in East Jerusalem and for implementing the High Court of Justice ruling on the topic. We also raise with the authorities other problems such as busing, the shortage of supervisors and guidance counselors, and the low budgets.

In April, the municipality began providing busing to the thousands of students who reside in the Ras Khamis neighborhood (located beyond the separation wall and containing only one school) and attend schools in other neighborhoods. For many years those students had to independently arrive at the checkpoint located several kilometers from their homes, and board school buses there. As a result of

several interventions by ACRI and by the residents' committee, the municipality finally arranged for busing that picks the children up at their homes in the morning and returns them home in the afternoons.

Postal Services: In February the High Court of Justice held the fourth hearing on our petition regarding the limited access to postal services in East Jerusalem. At the hearing we argued that since the legal proceedings commenced, only minor improvements are felt in the distribution of mail in East Jerusalem: The residents continue to face a shortage of post office branches, a lack of distribution centers with post office boxes, irregular and partial distribution to homes, and distribution to stores instead of to homes. Subsequently the Court asked ACRI to suggest locations for distribution centers in the various neighborhoods in consultation with residents and community leaders. We then held a meeting with representatives of the post office and residents from several neighborhoods, and in late March submitted to the Court a list of suggestions for postal distribution centers in East Jerusalem. Our petition has had a positive impact: In the first months of 2014 the Jerusalem municipality continued naming previously unnamed streets and numbering the homes, and has committed to completing this process in most East Jerusalem neighborhoods in 2014. Naming the streets also enables ambulances to reach precise addresses and arrive more quickly during emergencies.

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The first half of 2014 was a very active period for our Human Rights Education Department. The Department organized over 143 activities (such as multi-session workshops, lectures and conferences) at approximately 38 different educational institutions and organizations throughout Israel, from Be'er Sheva, Shderot and Rahat in the South to Acre, Sakhnin and Kiryat Shmona in the North. The Department continued to develop pedagogical materials, to advise schools and youth movements, to run the Workshop website in Hebrew and in Arabic, to conduct dialogue on human rights education with policy makers, and to collaborate with dozens of human rights and social justice organizations on the "Racism – Not in Our School" campaign. We also participated in a roundtable on inter-sectorial dialogue initiated by the Ministry of Education, which was an excellent opportunity to expose hundreds of senior officials at the Ministry of Education and at various educational organizations to ACRI's work on human rights education.

❖ Pedagogical Materials

ACRI developed and disseminated an educational kit towards the International Day against Racism, to provide teachers of all disciplines the pedagogical tools to tackle the topic. In collaboration with prominent educators and experts, we developed a kit on integrating human rights values and anti-racism education into science teaching, a kit on integrating them into history classes, and a kit on integrating them into English language instruction at schools. These and other kits will be part of a book ACRI is working on about educating against racism. Our staff has also been working on a pedagogical kit on social photography as a tool for education against racism, seeking to provide therein ideas for activities to teachers who teach disciplines such as civics, social studies and homeroom.

❖ Website

The Workshop – an Educational Site for Democracy and Human Rights (operated by ACRI both in [Hebrew](#) and in [Arabic](#)) – renders the educational materials developed by ACRI accessible to educators and to the Israeli public at large. During the current reporting period, we published on the site several pedagogical kits that we developed, posts on human rights issues arising from current events, and updates on various departmental activities. The materials published on the website are the basis for the newsletters that we sent to over 2500 educators on our distribution list. The Arabic language site contains some materials that we developed specifically for the Arab community, to meet its needs and tackle contemporary issues affecting the Arab sector. Over the reporting period, the Hebrew site had an average of 1,740 unique visitors, and the Arabic language site had an average of 1,510 unique visitors.

❖ Campaign: Racism - Not At Our School

ACRI and Shatil led a new media campaign, in conjunction with a group of civil society organizations, towards the International Day against Racism. As part of the campaign we constructed a mini-site in which we presented a wide array of pedagogical materials and articles that educators at from a wide variety of settings could use to educate against racism and to encourage debates on the topic. The campaign also involved social media, where we shared info-graphics depicting the experiences of students suffering from racism, published materials in four languages (Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic and Russian), and promoted it via social networks. A survey conducted by the CSOs as part of the campaign found that the Israeli public is concerned about the growing problem of racism in Israeli society and expects the government and school system to tackle it. The campaign exposed the public to our pedagogical materials, and positioned ACRI as a leader and expert in the field of anti-racism education.

❖ Conferences

Over the reporting period, ACRI organized three successful conferences. We organized a seminar on human rights and its relationship to teaching for students and instructors at Beit Berl College; the seminar included a panel that presented several contemporary human rights issues in Israel, focusing on the right to equality and on the right of different segments of the population to an education. We held a joint conference with the Ministry of Education in March, to mark the International Day against Racism. The conference included a debate on the topic of remedies for discrimination, a play about incidents of racism in the educational system, and a lecture by a representative of the Ministry of Justice on the Ministry's anti-racism campaign. In March we also held a national conference in Jerusalem for the Scouts youth movement, in our advisory role for youth groups and organizations. The conference included workshops on topics such as refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers, women and gender, LGBT rights, and Arab minority rights. In addition, ACRI participated in a multi-college event at the Kibbutzim College entitled "Jews and Arabs between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River" at which students from Jewish and Arab colleges partook in lectures, roundtables and workshops on various issues regarding Jewish-Arab relations.

❖ Trainings and Workshops

Teacher Training: Over the reporting period, our staff held numerous seminars, trainings and workshops for teachers in the Jewish and Arab sector, focusing on teaching democratic values, human rights, the right to equality, and tools for coping with racism and racist incidents at schools. We also

held such trainings for students at Colleges of Education, providing them with pedagogical tools to impart education for democratic values, to cope with incidents of racism in the classroom, and to lead class discussions on controversial topics.

Social Photography Project: From January through April we held eight sessions of the social photography project we launched at the Ben Gurion University in Be'er Sheva in conjunction with the university's student union. This project encourages young people from the periphery who are committed to activism to study about human rights issues, and equips them with tools for social activism that utilizes accessible technologies – photography and social networks. The sessions dealt with human rights, social photography, activism, and use of social networks to advance causes. We also conducted a tour for the students to the unrecognized Bedouin villages, and held a meeting for the students with Activestills photographers.

❖ **Police Project: Human Rights in Interactions with the Police**

Pedagogical Materials for Police Training: ACRI completed the development of materials for a pedagogical kit for internal training that will be conducted by the commander of each police station in Israel. Each station commander will lecture to the station's cadets and officers himself, thereby enhancing the likely receptiveness towards the topic of human rights on part of the members of the police force. The pedagogical materials we wrote critically examine the reasoning behind classification and profiling based on ethnic, racial, religious, sexual and socioeconomic background and other factors.

Kits for Youth on Rights vis-à-vis the Police: In April ACRI began developing a Hebrew language educational kit for youth, on rights vis-à-vis the police. We intend to finalize the kit this spring, to upload it to ACRI's human rights education department website, and to utilize it in our activities and workshops for youth groups in the upcoming months.

Workshops for Arab Youth on Rights vis-à-vis the Police: Over the reporting period, our human rights education department conducted extensive Arabic language activities and workshops on the topic of human rights during interactions with the police. We led several programs (one-time and multi-session) in Arab communities for groups of youths whose ages ranged from 15 to 18, at schools and in other settings, focusing on the freedom of expression, the right to protest, violations of rights and friction with the police – arrests, detention, searches, detainee rights, conditions for legal searches etc.

Workshops for Arab Teachers on Rights vis-à-vis the Police: Over the reporting period ACRI conducted several comprehensive trainings for teachers at Arab schools throughout Israel, on the topic of human rights during interactions with the police, including a training session at a school in the north following a violent incident there. Each training session usually consists of approximately twenty teacher participants.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

ACRI's public outreach department utilizes traditional media, new media, our website, and policy advocacy tools to advance and promote the wide array of issues described above, on which our different departments focus. Over this reporting period our staff worked tirelessly to raise public awareness of significant human rights violations in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

❖ **Policy Advocacy**

During this reporting period, ACRI's policy advocacy efforts focused on ongoing activities to promote our various departments' objectives in the Knesset and vis-à-vis government offices, work within networks and coalitions, advocacy against privatization initiatives and processes in various realms, and advocacy to prevent and to halt anti-democratic legislation. In the context of anti-democratic legislation, the main issue we dealt with these past months was the Governance Law, which includes the section on raising the electoral threshold for the Knesset. Despite our exhaustive efforts and those of the opposition, the law passed. We also dealt with the proposed Basic Law: the Jewish Nation-State which is currently being advanced by the government. Legislative efforts against human rights organizations arose yet again – and ACRI submitted position papers in response – but the bills did not progress.

❖ **Media Outreach**

Between January and June, ACRI was mentioned many times and in various contexts in the Hebrew language media. Those mentions included reports on ACRI's litigation work in the courts, ACRI's reactions to proposed legislation and to prominent issues in the news, op-eds written by ACRI staff members, and coverage of various events that ACRI initiated or in which ACRI participated. Also, ACRI's coverage in the Arabic language media has increased, with the addition of an Arabic language spokesperson to our staff. ACRI also continues to engage with journalists on a long term basis, and provide them with tours and briefings as a means to educate them on human rights issues.

❖ **Public Campaigns**

As aforementioned, during the reporting period we conducted an extensive public campaign regarding the right to healthcare. Its goal was to influence the German Committee such that it would opt to strengthen public healthcare services in Israel. The campaign, conducted jointly with PHR-IL, was mainly online, via social networks. Over 150,000 individuals were exposed to the campaign, in which over 2,000 people actively participated. In addition to the online component, we coordinated a demonstration of approximately 200 activists in Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard. We also participated in outdoor protest vigils during German Committee meetings along with the "Mahnot Ha'Olim" youth movement. We participated in two important conferences at the Knesset, one opposing private healthcare services and another on the topic of complementary health insurance.

In 2014 we also continued our Arabic language campaign "Bayti", which is part of our project on planning and building and the right to housing in the Arab sector. Over the reporting period we published, on our website and on the campaign's Facebook page, relevant posts regarding planning and building, home demolition, housing rights and similar issues.

❖ **Website, Social Media, and Electronic Newsletters**

ACRI's websites -- the Hebrew, English and Arabic versions -- are updated daily with the latest information about court rulings, Knesset decisions and ACRI's public outreach efforts. During the reporting period, we have continued updating our sites as well as distributing printed copies of important publications that are useful to ordinary citizens. All of ACRI's publications are made available online, with our websites widely recognized as a clearinghouse of information about civil liberties and human rights, and about court rulings and policy decisions that affect these rights.

ACRI's online presence grew during this reporting period. From January through May 2014: ACRI's [Hebrew website](#) had an average of 16,600 unique views per month; The [English website](#) had an average of 2,150 unique views per month; The [Arabic website](#) had an average of 2,755 unique views per month.

Our presence on Facebook and Twitter expanded as well in recent months. In the reporting period, the number of "likes" on our Hebrew Facebook page increased to 9,068; Our Arabic language Facebook page has 3,422 "likes"; Our English language Facebook page has 3,603 "likes." Our Hebrew Twitter account has over 7,094 followers, and our English language Twitter account has 1,929 followers

Through a combination of online and offline tools, our public education efforts have provided useful information to Israeli and foreign-based supporters of human rights in Israel.

Electronic Newsletters and Updates: ACRI's Hebrew monthly newsletter is sent out to approximately 6,750 subscribers, while English language updates are sent to some 3,642 subscribers. ACRI also sends out a weekly Knesset update (in Hebrew and English), which focuses on upcoming debates in the Knesset and informs readers about ACRI's position on the issues under consideration. The Knesset update is currently sent to 900 subscribers in Hebrew and 700 additional subscribers in English - and those numbers continue to grow. Our Activism update (in Hebrew) is currently sent to approximately 1,415 subscribers.

❖ **Membership Drive**

ACRI views growing its Israeli membership and donor base as a strategic goal to strengthen our public standing in Israel. Over the reporting period, we have continued our long-term efforts to increase membership in support of our work. As of May 2014, our membership stands at approximately 737 members. In January we held a special event, "Gaga Aguda." Ohad Naharin and the world renowned Bat Sheva dance company initiated and gave a "Gaga" lesson for 500 participants at Hanger 11 at the Tel Aviv port, in which all revenues were donated to ACRI. All expenses surrounding the event – the location, the publicity, the music and the dancers – were donated to ACRI. In addition to raising donations, the event increased ACRI's public visibility.

❖ **Public Hotline**

Our public outreach department also includes ACRI's public hotline, our link to the outside world, to groups and individuals who turn to us for information about human rights and for legal assistance in cases where their rights have been violated. Our public hotline consists of volunteers in addition to ACRI's staff members. The hotline operates with four purposes in mind:

1. Protecting human rights by dealing with individual requests for legal assistance;
2. Positioning ACRI as a central clearinghouse for public questions about human rights and rights violations, from individuals and various groups and segments of the population;
3. Collecting data on human rights violations in Israel, the details and breadth of a violation, the violated population, the violating authority etc.;
4. Mitigating actions and practices that hurt human rights.

Since January 2014, ACRI has processed 900 individual requests for assistance. ACRI's ability to assist in public requests is usually limited to providing detailed information and explaining how best to maximize civil rights when dealing with governmental authorities. However, where the authorities

violate an individual's rights in a particularly egregious manner, we actively intervene by writing letters or filing objections and appeals. Some of the areas in which ACRI has successfully intervened following public requests include Water Disconnections, Citizenship and Equality and Discrimination.

❖ **NETWORKS AND COALITIONS**

ACRI continues to be a member of several civil society organization coalitions and networks, in which our main role is formulating and executing the policy advocacy strategy. These coalitions include: The National Coalition for Direct Employment, The Forum for the Enforcement of Workers' Rights, The Ten-Community Forum, The Coalition of Organizations for Equality and Justice for the Bedouin (coordinated by Shatil), The Forum for Responsible Planning (coordinated by Shatil), The Gun on the Kitchen Table Coalition for improved gun control, The Coalition for Affordable Housing, The Network for the Advancement of Health Equity in Israel, and The Forum to Combat Poverty.