



## REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

**JULY-DECEMBER 2014**

### INTRODUCTION

During the current reporting period, The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) 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 current reporting period was marked by the summer's bloody events, which commenced with the kidnapping of the three Israeli youths – Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaer and Eyal Yifrah – and escalated with the kidnapping and murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, the rise in racist incitement and racist incidents against Arabs in Israel, protests in East Jerusalem, and the Israeli military operation in Gaza in response to Hamas rocket fire towards Israel. ACRI's response was swift, agile and comprehensive. ACRI submitted legal petitions, engaged in intensive advocacy vis-à-vis the authorities, collected grassroots testimonies, and conducted public outreach to respond to the unique human rights dilemmas that stemmed from the situation. To confront the summer's events, ACRI acted on several fronts, coping with human rights violations in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with human rights violations in East Jerusalem, and with tensions within Israel, manifested in discrimination by municipalities and by increased incitement to racism and violence. Our reaction to the summer's hostilities continued into the fall, as evident in our emergency campaign to distribute anti-racism educational materials to schools throughout Israel. Simultaneously, throughout this reporting period, we continued to work on a wide variety of issues so as to safeguard and advance human rights and civil liberties in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories under its control. Towards the end of the reporting period, on December 10<sup>th</sup>, coinciding with International Human Rights Day, ACRI published its annual Situation Report, on the state of human rights in Israel and in the territories under its control, in [Hebrew](#), [Arabic](#) and [English](#). The following are highlights of some of our key activities in various fields during the months of July-December 2014.

❖ **Response to Operation Protective Edge – Freedom of Expression and Protest**

**Defending Freedom of Speech and Protest in Face of Attacks by Government Officials:** On July 24, following public statements by several senior government officials attacking anti-war protestors, questioning their loyalty and objecting to demonstrations during wartime (including a declaration by the Minister of Internal Security that he supports prohibiting demonstrations during wartime, and the Foreign Minister calling on his Facebook page upon Israeli citizens to boycott Arab businesses that take part in a general strike in solidarity with the people of Gaza and against the military operation), ACRI Attorney Sharona Eliahu-Chai and ACRI chief legal counsel Dan Yakir sent a [letter](#) to the Attorney General, asking him to remind Israel's elected officials that they are obligated to defend the right to free speech, and must refrain from delegitimizing participation in legal protests. We received no reply.

**Protecting Employees Facing Sanctions due to Views Expressed Online:** In July, after numerous incidents of employers and academic institutions imposing sanctions upon employees or students due to views they expressed online (most notably, anti-war viewpoints), ACRI published a [detailed document](#) regarding freedom of speech on social media sites such as Facebook, stating clearly that employees are forbidden from firing a worker due to his or her views or online remarks. ACRI reminded the public that the Equal Opportunities in the Workplace law prohibits an employer from discriminating against an employee due to a viewpoint unless the comments made affect the employee's professional functioning. ACRI emphasized that if suspicion exists that remarks constitute illegal incitement to racism or violence, a complaint must be submitted to the police. ACRI's Executive Director Sharon Abraham-Weiss noted that "The strength of a democratic state lies in its enabling of free expression. Free speech protections are designed specifically to cover outrageous and frustrating comments, from the left and the right. Employers that fire employees because of comments made on Facebook should be aware that they risk exposure to claims of discrimination."

**Protecting Students Penalized by Universities due to Views Expressed Online:** After a number of universities and colleges sanctioned students for their comments on social media sites and an Arab student who ridiculed wounded Israeli students was expelled, ACRI contacted the Vice-Chair of the Israeli Council of Higher Education, requesting that she instruct the heads of Israel's academic institutions to refrain from penalizing students for comments they have made on social media, no matter how repugnant. In the [letter](#), sent by Attorney Tal Hassin, Director of ACRI's Public Hotline, we made clear that institutions of higher education must not serve as a thought police and it is not their place to monitor student's use of social media, and determine what constitutes an "extreme" or "offensive" expression. Moreover, we pointed out that only Arab students have been punished, even though the social forums are simmering with racist comments by Jewish students, which raises concern as to the universities' motives.

**Information Center for Demonstrators:** In response to hostilities towards anti-war demonstrators by the police, the authorities, and fellow citizens, ACRI distributed information online regarding the right to protest, so as to ensure that demonstrators are fully aware of their rights in planning and participating in public demonstrations.

## ❖ **More on Freedom of Expression and the Right to Protest**

**Indictments of Protestors:** The Ministry of Justice announced in September that indictments for the crime of “prohibited gathering or assembly” would from hereon be handled by the state attorney rather than by the police, after ACRI called on the Ministry of Justice to increase its supervision over indictments of protestors, many of whom are indicted despite the absence of any legal grounds and subsequently suffer during lengthy legal proceedings until they are cleared.

**Police Brutality towards Female Protestors:** Over the years, ACRI has intervened with the police in various instances after receiving reports of police violence directed towards protestors. Police brutality towards women protestors is particularly severe as it involves, in addition to physical violence, also sexual harassment that humiliates the protestor, violates her dignity and aims to convey the message that she should not have dared partake in the protest. Such treatment takes place not only at the demonstrations themselves but also at police stations, where women are searched in a humiliating manner, and often sexually harassed by their interrogators or interrogated by the same policeman who assaulted them during the demonstration. We have found that this affects all women, transcending race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or political stance.

ACRI has launched a joint project with Achoti (Sister, a Mizrahi-feminist organization) to address this phenomenon. Achoti has organized workshops for activists, including lectures by lawyers on protestors’ rights. On December 18<sup>th</sup> we published a public appeal on ACRI’s [Hebrew language Facebook page](#), [Arabic language Facebook page](#), and on [Twitter](#), to help us compile additional testimonies from women who experienced police brutality during protests, such that we could then point to a trend as we request the police to change its policies. We intend to suggest specific operational steps the police could take in order to reduce the phenomenon.

**Free Speech on Campus:** In October ACRI wrote to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem regarding its threat to hold disciplinary proceedings for students who participated in a demonstration without official approval. We had written previously written the Hebrew University President in May after students participating in a demonstration were violently dispersed by university security guards and border police, noting in our letter that freedom of speech is not a privilege but rather a fundamental constitutional right and an integral component of campus life, and that part of a university’s role is to prepare students to actively participate in civil society and its democratic processes.

**Libel and SLAPP Lawsuits:** ACRI continued to protect individuals and social justice organizations from SLAPP suits (strategic lawsuits against public participation), and over the reporting period we advised and assisted various organizations in handling threats of SLAPP libel suits over statements made as part of their activities, thus protecting the freedom of expression of citizens and organizations facing the threat of frivolous legal claims intended to stifle speech. In July we requested to join as an amicus in defending a SLAPP suit brought by an events hall against clients who criticized it on a consumer information website. We argued that it was not the first time that this particular plaintiff sought to silence criticism via a libel suit.

## ❖ **The Right to Political Representation**

In September ACRI, along with Adalah – the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, petitioned the High Court of Justice on behalf of Member of Knesset Haneen Zoabi of Balad, who on July 29th was suspended from the Knesset plenum and its committees for a duration of six months, following the remarks she made in a July interview about the kidnapping of three Israeli teenagers, in which she said that she did not agree with the kidnappers' actions but does not consider them terrorists. In our petition we argued that MK Zoabi's remarks were political in nature and therefore the Knesset Ethics committee does not have the authority to impose sanctions on her for those remarks. On December 9<sup>th</sup> the High Court of Justice held a hearing on our petition, and rejected the petition. We are awaiting the detailed decision and reasoning.

## ❖ **Privacy Rights**

**Confidentiality in Legal Websites:** The Ministry of Justice accepted ACRI's position and instructed courthouse and legal websites to limit exposure of personal information in online publication of verdicts.

**Confidentiality in the Workplace:** In July ACRI and Kav LaOved – Worker's Hotline jointly requested to join as amicus at a hearing in the National Labor Court on a verdict that allowed for a biometric time clock in the Qalansawe municipality. We maintained that this verdict is unprecedented in that it allows the employer to cross without impunity the boundary between the employer and its employees' bodies. We also addressed the gender dimension and noted that most complaints that ACRI and Kav LaOved receive regarding privacy violations in the workplace are from women who feel humiliated, vulnerable and helpless as a result of the exposure and their relative powerlessness at work.

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

**Use of Lethal Force by the Police:** Following the shooting incident in Kafr Kana in November, the Minister of Internal Security Yitzhak Aharonovich declared that "terrorists who harm civilians shall be killed." ACRI Attorney Lila Margalit urgently contacted Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein, requesting in her [letter](#) that he clarify that the minister's comments do not reflect the law, and that lethal use may only be used by police forces as a last resort and when human lives are in danger.

**Forced Feeding of Prisoners on Hunger Strike:** Following publication of the memorandum of the bill on forced feeding of prisoners engaged in a hunger strike, ACRI submitted a position paper to the Knesset Internal Affairs Committee and wrote a [letter](#) to the Minister of Internal Security expressing our opposition to this practice as it violates a person's right to dignity and autonomy over his body. At present the bill is stalled due to widespread objection. We are prepared to engage in policy advocacy efforts against the bill should it be advanced in the Knesset.

**The Counter-Terrorism Bill:** Over the reporting period, ACRI engaged in intensive policy advocacy efforts and our staff members participated in four hearings in the Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee on the proposed counter-terrorism bill. The bill is being considered as part of a government process aimed at cancelling the state of emergency in place since 1948 and replacing various emergency measures with modern anti-terrorism legislation. In practice, however, the bill would normalize, and in some cases exacerbate, draconian emergency provisions and regulations dating back to the British

Mandate. Meanwhile we seem to have achieved some success in effecting change to the definitions that would appear in the bill (for terms such as “act of terror” and “terrorist organization”) and would impact all aspects of the bill. Hearings on this bill in the Knesset committee are expected to continue into 2015.

**The Intelligence Materials Bill:** ACRI submitted an updated position paper to the Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee that is engaged in deliberations on this bill.

## ❖ **Immigration, Residency and Status**

**Victory at the High Court of Justice: Court Overturns New Anti-Infiltration Law:** ACRI, along with several human rights organizations, petitioned the High Court of Justice, seeking to overturn a new version (the fourth amendment) of the Law to Prevent Infiltration, which allows for the indefinite detention of asylum seekers in the Holot “open” detention center. On April 1 2014, the same panel of nine High Court Justices that in September 2013 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.” However, using imprisonment as a tool to “motivate” asylum seekers to repatriate is problematic; international law does not deem repatriation voluntary when a person was imprisoned.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the High Court of Justice, in a 7-2 [ruling](#), overturned the fourth amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law, ordered that the Holot facility must close within 90 days, and ordered that until then those detained within it will have to take part in two daily roll-calls instead of three. In addition, the ruling abrogated the article in the law mandating a one-year detention in Saharonim prison for asylum-seekers who have arrived in Israel since the law took effect in 2013. In its ruling, the Court emphasized yet again that Israeli policy towards asylum seekers cannot be based upon mass detention. This [victory](#) was a very significant achievement for ACRI’s efforts, particularly because it is so rare for the High Court of Justice to overturn the same law twice.

However, in response the Knesset rushed to pass, prior to its dispersal in early December, yet a new version of the Anti-Infiltration Law. ACRI, along with its partner human rights organizations, reacted swiftly and petitioned the High Court of Justice yet again, calling in its [expedited petition](#) for the invalidation of the latest amendment to the law. In response, the High Court of Justice issued a temporary injunction on December 18<sup>th</sup>, preventing implementation of the law, prohibiting the State from sending new asylum seekers to the Holot detention facility, and granting the State until the 28<sup>th</sup> of December to respond.

**Residency Granted to Children of Migrant Workers:** 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 migrant workers who met certain criteria, such as the child’s parent having entered Israel legally, and the child being fluent in Hebrew. After the Israeli Children organization merged with ACRI in July 2013, its leaders continued to assist and support the migrant families through the complex application process and the lengthy

proceedings at the Ministry of Interior. We have now completed assisting over 600 families that submitted residency applications who now have residency status in Israel. Only 30 families have yet to receive a response regarding their pending applications.

**End Child Detention Campaign (together with Hotline for Refugees and Migrants and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel):** Over the reporting period, our staff held successful meetings with staff from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services regarding our proposed alternatives to child detention of children of migrants given the harmful impact of the detention on the children.

**Art Exhibit:** In October we held an opening gala for an art exhibit dedicated to children of migrant workers entitled “Home,” the culmination of a close collaboration between ACRI’s Israeli Children Project and the department of graphic design at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. Throughout the year artists and art students met with children of migrant workers and their families, and those meetings gave rise to a series of artworks whose common theme is “home.” Works of art displayed at the exhibit were sold to raise funds for ACRI’s Israeli Children Project. Over 400 people attended the gala. It also provided an opportunity for direct contact between Israelis and migrant workers, including the women’s leadership group of the migrant community.

**Soccer Team:** This summer ACRI’s Israeli Children Project and parents with whom we work opened an after-school soccer team for children, with the aim of reducing alienation and promoting tolerance and friendship by bringing children from different communities together through sports. The team consists of children of longtime Israeli residents, children of migrant workers and children of refugees. The team was formed under the auspices of the world renowned “Inter Milan” soccer club, which supports such projects in several countries. The team practices weekly, and participates in a monthly tournament against other teams from towns throughout Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Notable Human Rights Defender Award to Rotem Ilan:** In August, Rotem Ilan, Director of ACRI’s Israeli Children Project, was awarded a Notable Human Rights Defenders Award by The Emile Zola Chair for Human Rights at the College of Management. In justifying the selection, the Chair cited several of Ms. Ilan’s contributions to human rights in Israel, among them her vision in establishing the Israeli Children organization to prevent the expulsion of migrant workers and their children who were born and raised in Israel, her success in empowering the community of migrant workers and in managing a public campaign that resulted in the government granting status to thousands of women and children, and her decision to merge Israeli Children with ACRI, to maximize its chance to effect change.

## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS**

### **❖ The Right to Live in Dignity**

#### **Debts of People living in Poverty:**

**Electricity Disconnections:** ACRI submitted a Freedom of Information request to study the issue of individuals and families unable to pay their electric bills and whose electricity has been disconnected due to their debt to the electric company. Our staff met with debtors whose electricity has been disconnected. In July, we wrote to the Electricity Authority and to the Minister of National

Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources demanding that standards and regulations be set so as to regulate and limit disconnections of electricity to debtors unable to pay their bills. Subsequently we met with representatives of the Electricity Authority and of the electric company and presented our position on the topic. We have been attempting to advance the issue in the Knesset and promote it in the media.

**The Right to Water:** ACRI continued to pursue its advocacy efforts and public campaign against water disconnections in instances of vulnerable populations unable to pay their water bills and debts. ACRI has expressed a principled position according to which water disconnections should be completely banned, and a minimum amount of water ought to be supplied to every person regardless of their ability to pay. Over the reporting period, ACRI's staff members met with members of Knesset, wrote and submitted position papers, raised the topic in the media, and participated in Knesset Finance Committee hearings. We also submitted a Freedom of Information request to the Water Authority. In July we wrote to the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Increasing Efficiency in the Water Market, requesting that its recommendations include policy changes necessary to guarantee every resident's right to water. On November 17<sup>th</sup> the Water Authority announced that it adopted new regulations whereby from January 2015 onwards no person would be completely disconnected from the water supply by the water corporations without special permission, and debtors unable to pay would be spared from disconnections. This affects thousands of families that are disconnected monthly from the water supply by the water corporations due to unpaid bills. Attorney Tali Nir, Director of ACRI's Social and Economic Rights Department, praised the Water Authority's decision as a significant step in the right direction, and noted that ACRI will monitor its implementation to ensure that it indeed puts an end to the shameful phenomenon of water disconnections for people without means.

**Due Process within the Welfare System:** In June ACRI participated in a hearing at the Knesset Committee on the Rights of the Child on the topic of removing children to out-of-home institutions, a topic which we had discussed in a February meeting with the Director-General of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services. We raised our concerns regarding the need for transparency and increased supervision over the intervention and evaluation committees that propose treatment options for at-risk children. These committees currently possess broad and unregulated powers to recommend a range of actions to social workers including removal of children from their home, placement in institutions and placement for adoption. We raised the topic again at an October meeting with the Minister of Social Affairs and Social Services Meir Cohen, who assured us an additional meeting with the Ministry's Director-General who is in charge of the issue.

## ❖ **The Right to Housing**

### **Affordable Housing:**

#### **Petitions on Implementation of the National Housing Committees Law:**

In August 2011, the National Housing Committees Law took effect, granting National Housing Committees the authority to zone land for affordable rental housing in development plans that come before them, and to determine rental prices and eligibility for affordable housing. In late 2013, following ACRI's policy advocacy efforts, the law was extended, and was amended such that the Knesset mandates the National Housing Committees to designate, in development plans that come before them, 25% of the apartments for affordable housing which would include smaller apartments, apartments for long-term rental, and apartments for rent at reduced cost for persons found eligible. Additionally, the government committed to formulating, within six months, regulations regarding affordable rental housing and the criteria for eligibility for reduced cost rental housing. Such regulations have yet to be

formulated, and in 2014 we sent letters in that regard to the Minister of the Interior. We recently reminded the Knesset Internal Affairs committee of the need for regulations, and at a hearing in November the government made a commitment to formulate them soon.

Simultaneously, ACRI pursued the two petitions that it had filed in 2012 on behalf of the Coalition for Affordable Housing in the Jerusalem Court for Administrative Affairs concerning two specific National Housing Committees plans in Jerusalem. We argued that the NHC ignored the law and neglected its responsibility to designate land in those plans for affordable housing. We claimed that the law should be interpreted in a manner that mandates affordable housing even in the absence of regulations. Hearings on the cases were held in November, and shortly thereafter the court ruled in our favor, holding that the NHC should include implement the law and include affordable housing units in those plans. This is a very important precedent that will affect all national housing committees across the country and other planning bodies, and obligate the government to take the provisions on affordable housing seriously.

**The “Committee for Planning Preferable Domains for Residences” law** purports to deal with planning large domains on State land which would contain at least 500 residential units. ACRI, and the Coalition for Affordable Housing in which we are a leading member, advocated in favor of including provisions addressing affordable housing in the law. The government objected, and we exerted extensive efforts in order to persuade the members of the Knesset Committee on Internal Affairs that this is a significant issue which ought to be altered in the law. We wrote and submitted position papers, met with members of Knesset and government officials, participated in hearings, and engaged in public outreach. The Internal Affairs Committee’s final version incorporates and reflects some (albeit not all) of the principles we had advanced: The Committee decided that in each “Preferable Domain for Residences” plan, 30% of the apartments would be designated for long-term rental, and of them, half (i.e. 15% of the total) would be for rental at a decreased cost (i.e. 20% less than current market cost), and that the government may make exceptions, but only in rare cases. This is a significant achievement for ACRI’s efforts to advance affordable housing solutions in Israel, as it involves tens of thousands of residential units which would be built in the coming decade. Thus if 150,000 residential units are built, 45,000 would be designated for long-term rental, of which 22,500 would be for rent at decreased cost. We will of course vigilantly monitor the implementation of the law and track individual cases.

### **The Right to Equality in Housing:**

**The 0% V.A.T. Law:** ACRI, along with the Coalition for Affordable Housing, opposed the bill put forth by Minister of Finance Yair Lapid, which would exempt Israelis who purchase a first apartment directly from a contractor from the usual Value Added Tax of 18%. The Ministry of Finance maintains that such an exemption would lower home prices, but ACRI objected because the criteria for the exemption are discriminatory. Military service in the IDF, or national service, would be a threshold condition for receiving the V.A.T. exemption on apartments that cost over 950,000 NIS. We claimed that housing benefits should not be conditioned upon military services, as that discriminates against segments of the population that do not serve in the military: the Ultra-Orthodox, Arab Israelis, people with disabilities, and Israelis who immigrated to Israel at an older age. Also, the bill would benefit a small segment of well-off Israelis able to afford the very large down-payment required to buy a new apartment, rather than middle and lower income Israelis. It would not assist those who purchase an apartment second-hand from a prior owner when in fact purchases from prior owners comprise 75% of all apartment purchases in Israel.



We objected to the bill through a myriad of activities. When the bill memorandum was published, we wrote a lengthy, detailed legal opinion in response. After the bill was published, we worked vis-à-vis the Knesset's legal counsel, who then published a legal opinion that supported our claims. We participated in committee hearings, met with members of the Finance Committee, and worked vigorously vis-à-vis the media to raise public awareness regarding the discriminatory and problematic aspects of the bill. Our efforts were fruitful, and currently there is widespread resistance to the proposed bill, which crosses political divides. The bill's fate is unclear; it may have been one of the contributing factors to the crisis in the governing coalition that led to the Knesset's dispersal and the elections scheduled for March 2015.

### **Public Housing:**

**Decriminalization of Squatting in Public Housing:** In June we filed an amicus brief in the lower court in Be'er Sheva, calling for decriminalization of squatters accused of trespassing for allegedly "invading" an empty public housing apartment. The case involves a family of five living in profound poverty with massive debts and residing in a very small home, whose request for a larger public housing apartment was denied. The family then entered a larger public housing apartment that stood empty. In our amicus brief we maintained that the court ought to take into consideration the unique circumstances of people contending with extreme poverty and struggling to survive, as well as the profound shortage in public housing. We also noted that criminalization was unnecessary as the family could be evicted through civil legal proceedings. On December 1, the State withdrew its indictment against the parents. Additionally, the Ministry of Housing will now provide them with a suitable apartment. This is a significant accomplishment for our efforts.

## **❖ The Right to Healthcare**

**Preserving Public Healthcare:** Following the success of our vigorous campaign to preserve public healthcare, culminating in June when the German Health Committee (so named after then-Minister of Health Yael German) adopted our main recommendations and decided not to provide private medical services at Israel's public hospitals and to expand the budget for public healthcare so as to strengthen it and shorten the waits for medical services, we turned our efforts towards advocacy for regulating private health services at those hospitals where they are already approved, such as Hadassah. We sent a detailed letter to the Ministry of Health noting key problems with private health services as currently practiced at Hadassah, including their provision during hours purportedly designated for public healthcare.

Additionally, ACRI and PHR-IL's joint campaign to preserve public healthcare, that included presenting our suggestions for strengthening equality and accessibility of Israel's healthcare system in lieu of problematic privatization to members of Knesset, to senior officials in the Ministry of Health and to members of the German Health Committee, intensive advocacy efforts, a conference, a demonstration, an extensive social media campaign and traditional media outreach, was awarded second place in the Dror Prize (awarded to successful social justice campaigns) ceremony on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Equity in Healthcare Services:** ACRI, along with PHR-IL and Shatil, has been working with activists in Israel's North and its South on advocacy efforts for reducing the gap in healthcare services between Israel's center and its periphery, emphasizing the need to establish fair standards for provision of medical services, medical equipment and personnel. We continued to participate in roundtable discussions held by the Ministry of Health on the topic of reducing gaps in the healthcare services

between the center and periphery, and appeared on a television show “[The True Face of the Periphery](#)” which dealt with the relationship between poverty, healthcare and the periphery.

**Elder Care and Dental Care:** At present long-term hospitalization or at-home caregiver care for elders are not included among the subsidized public healthcare service, nor is dental care. ACRI has initiated policy advocacy efforts to expand the public healthcare basket to include elder care, as well as dental care for elders, and to include dental care up to age 18. We have nearly completed drafting a position paper on elder care. We have held discussions in the Knesset regarding dental care for elders and youth.

## EQUALITY FOR ARAB CITIZENS

### ❖ **Response to Operation Protective Edge**

The two main spheres in which ACRI operated within Israel in response to Operation Protective Edge were in combating discrimination against Arabs by municipal authorities, and in countering instances of violence and racial incitement by private individuals.

**Portable Bomb Shelters for Unrecognized Bedouin Villages:** On July 16<sup>th</sup>, [ACRI submitted an expedited petition](#) to demand that authorities ensure that portable bomb shelters be provided to unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev as well as to the recognized Bedouin communities that are lacking in sufficient shelters. The Negev Bedouin were particularly exposed to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip due to proximity and absence of shelters. We petitioned on behalf of residents from several villages and several fellow human rights organizations active in the Negev. On July 17th the High Court of Justice held a hearing on our petition. On July 20 the Court unfortunately rejected our demand for immediate provision of portable shelters, but gave the State 30 days to respond regarding a long term solution for the area. Our petition received widespread media coverage and public attention.

**Seeking police intervention in violent riots targeting Arab civilians:** The summer’s events and Operation Protective Edge saw the rise of escalating racism accompanied by a concerning phenomenon: Groups of Jewish extremists were threatening Arabs with violence in the public sphere, include where they work or reside, yelling racist remarks towards them, and at times even directing violence towards them. The police only intervened after actual physical assaults took place. In July ACRI Attorney Avner Pinchuk [sent a letter to Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein](#) calling on him to order the police to restrain groups of Jewish rioters who have been sowing fear among Arabs and attempting to remove them from public spaces. While ACRI usually finds itself contacting the Attorney General to ensure protection of free speech, the type of riots that we witnessed this past summer saw violent thugs abuse this right so as to cast a menacing shadow over a minority group and threaten its freedom of movement and its safety. In October, the Attorney General’s office replied to us, noting that they recognize the severity of this phenomenon, and the importance of increasing the sense of safety in the public sphere, and that due to our intervention, they conveyed to the police the need to properly handle these incidents.

**Free Speech Hotline on Social Media:** In July, after we received numerous reports about Arabs who expressed positions critical of the Israeli government on Facebook and were consequently summoned for official questioning or even faced criminal proceedings, ACRI circulated a Facebook post in Arabic clarifying to social media activists and users that expressing an opinion via social media is a protected

right of free speech, and that anyone summoned for interrogation or arrested due to a status published on Facebook may contact our hotline via a specifically dedicated email address and an [online form](#).

**Closing health clinics in Arab communities:** In July, ACRI Attorney Tal Hassin [sent a letter to the Director of the Ministry of Health](#) regarding the closing of health clinics in the triangle region of Tira, Klansawa and Taibe, after we received information that the ministry had ordered the closing of family health centers in the neighborhoods where anti-war demonstrations were developing. Since sending this letter, which made clear that denying essential health services to entire communities is unacceptable, no new reports have emerged of basic services being denied in response to public demonstrations.

## ❖ **The Right to Equality**

**Response to Ashkelon Mayor's Firing of Arab Employees:** Following reports that the mayor of Ashkelon decided to terminate the employment of Arab workers in construction sites at municipal kindergartens, ACRI sent the mayor an urgent letter requesting that he immediately retract the decision. The [letter](#), sent by ACRI Executive Director Sharon Abraham-Weiss and Attorney Auni Banna, Director of ACRI's Arab Minority Rights Department, emphasized that such a step would be patently illegal as it violates the right to equality and the right to human dignity of those employees, and of Israel's Arab population as a whole. In early December we received a response from the mayor, who claimed that contrary to reports, the Arab employees at the municipal kindergartens were not fired.

**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. On November 23<sup>rd</sup> of this year, the High Court held a hearing on our petition. The State called on us to withdraw our petition because a new security system is now operational, under which if discrimination even still exists, it is proportional. We noted that the new security system is only operational in one airport (Israel's largest) and it may take years till it is operational in the other airports. Under the guise of confidentiality, the State has refused to share with us its regulations regarding the use of the nationality criteria at airport security checks, but has apparently shared them with the High Court justices. The justices seemed to think that the new security system will solve the problem of racial profiling and ensuing violations of the right to dignity, even though we noted that many Arab travelers still experience humiliating security checks at the airports. We are currently awaiting a decision from the High Court of Justice.

**Discriminatory Denial of Country Club Membership:** In August ACRI petitioned the Central District Court of Administrative Affairs against the Kochav Yair local council on behalf of a family from Tira, a couple and their son, that was denied membership to the Kochav Yair country club (fitness center) when attempting to purchase a subscription. Tira, a poor Arab city, does not have a country club, and therefore the family sought to join that of Kochav Yair. But the Kochav Yair country club apparently sells memberships only to residents of Kochav Yair Township, and to those of two neighboring Jewish communities. We maintain that this constitutes unlawful discrimination due to place of residence, and gives rise to grave suspicion of ethnic discrimination. This petition originated from the family's call to ACRI's public hotline.

## ❖ **Planning, Land and Housing**

**Equal Representation for Women and Arabs on Israel Land Authority Council:** At a February 2014 hearing on our 2010 petition (filed jointly with Itach-Maaki), High Court of Justice President Grunis had stated that the lack of representation of Arab citizens and the under-representation of women on the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) Council are unacceptable, and ordered state representatives to present a solution within 45 days. On November 23<sup>rd</sup> a follow up hearing was held at the High Court and the court appeared dissatisfied with the State's response whereby government ministers appoint their ministry's executive director to the ILA Council, and as there are few female or Arab executive directors of government ministries, they are unrepresented or under-represented in the Council. ACRI attorney Rawia Aburabia argued in favor of appropriate representation not only for symbolic reasons but also so that women and Arabs would truly take part in the decision making process and their interests would be represented in the ILA Council. We are currently awaiting the court's decision.

**Arabic Language Booklet on Building Rights:** In September, ACRI and the Arab Center for Alternative Planning published a [booklet in Arabic](#) on the subject of building rights and construction without a permit in Arab communities. The booklet, written in accessible language by Attorney Auni Banna, Director of ACRI's Arab Minority Rights Department, explains how to navigate the complex provisions of the Planning and Building Law, the procedure for obtaining building permits, the difference between a judicial demolition order and an administrative demolition order, and the legal sanctions against building without a permit. The booklet also explains how to legally challenge demolition orders and the different legal proceedings involved therein. In addition, in the booklet the organizations state their position as to what would constitute an appropriate interpretation and a suitable enforcement of the planning laws that would take into consideration a human rights perspective, the institutionalized discrimination against Arab communities in planning and building processes, and the housing shortage in Israel's Arab sector.

**Workshop for Attorneys:** On September 30<sup>th</sup> we held a workshop at the Saint Gabriel hotel in Nazareth for private sectors attorneys on the topic of rights in planning and building. The purpose of the workshop was to expose attorneys who handle planning and building cases in the lower courts to the human rights and constitutional aspects of planning and building laws.

**Promoting Affordable Housing in Israel's Arab Sector:** ACRI is a partner in a new project led by Sikkuy and the Arab Center for Alternative Planning (ACAP) that deals with advancing affordable housing in Israel's Arab sector. After six visits to Arab communities and mixed communities, we prepared a report reflecting the central issues that ought to be addressed. We found that all of the government's programs for advancing affordable housing were not realized in Arab cities and communities, whether because choices were made to issue tenders primarily in Jewish communities, or because the programs were ill-suited to the characteristics of Israel's Arab communities. In June we held a roundtable meeting attended by heads of Arab municipalities and engineers from Arab municipalities, whose purpose was to discuss affordable housing in Israel's Arab sector. We are organizing a second roundtable on the topic, at which we expect attendance by representatives of relevant government Ministries (i.e. the Ministry of Finance, the Director of Planning at the Ministry of Interior, and others) as well as representatives of Arab municipalities and local councils.

## ❖ **Equality in Public Resource Allocation**

**Classrooms and Personnel in the Arab School System:** In June we wrote the Minister of Education regarding the severe shortage of preschools in the Arab sector and called upon him to establish proper preschool educational institutions for children in Israel's Arab sector.

**Mother-Baby Clinics:** In July, ACRI, in conjunction with the Adva Center and PHR-Israel, called on the Ministry of Health to transfer the funds needed to staff and operate the family health clinics in Laqiya, Tel Sheva, and Tirabin al-Sana in the Negev, which have stood unstaffed and inoperable purportedly due to budget shortages.

**Accessibility of Services and Appropriate Representation in Mixed Cities:** Over the reporting period, we sent Freedom of Information requests to the municipalities of Ramleh and Lod, requesting data on the number and percentage of Arab clerks and officials employed by the various departments at the two municipalities. We received partial replies, and sent follow-up requests for further information. Additionally, in July we met with Lod's deputy mayor Aviv Wasserman in order to discuss improving accessibility of Lod's various municipal services, and its welfare services in particular, to its Arab residents.

## ❖ **Rights of Bedouin in the Negev**

**The Prawer-Begin Plan:** During the reporting period, we continued to monitor Minister of Agriculture Shamir's plan for the issues that had been under the purview of the Prawer Plan. On July 13<sup>th</sup> we met with Minister Shamir's Chief of Staff. We have also met with fellow NGOs operating in the Negev (including Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, Shatil, the Unrecognized Villages Council, and The Coalition of Organizations for Equality and Justice for the Bedouin) to plan coordinated action and prepare towards various scenarios.

**Unrecognized Village Challenging Forced Urbanization Plan:** Following our March [petition](#) to the High Court of Justice on behalf of residents from the unrecognized Bedouin village of Wadi al-Na'am against a regional plan to enlarge the township of Segev Shalom and to forcibly transfer to it Wadi al-Na'am's approximately 10,000 residents, the State began advancing a process to recognize the village as an independent community, but in that same location near Segev Shalom, which as we stated in our petition is dangerously close to hazardous facilities including a military industrial area used for burying explosive materials. Over the summer we participated in several regional committee meetings at which we presented our position objecting to the location. In September we submitted a detailed response to the High Court, and a hearing on our petition has been scheduled for April 2015.

**The Ramat Tziporim Plan:** In June we participated in a hearing held at the National Council regarding the Ramat Negev Regional Council plan to establish a new Jewish community, Ramat Tziporim, in the Al-Bakar area of Har HaNegev, where Bedouins currently reside. ACRI and Bimkom submitted joint objections, opposing not the establishment of a new Jewish community per se, but rather the plan to incorporate several Bedouin communities that reside in Har HaNegev into the new Jewish community Ramat Tziporim. Our objections were partly accepted, and the National Council allocated six months for examining alternative solutions for the communities on behalf of whom we submitted our objections.

## ❖ **Conferences and Knesset Hearings**

Over the reporting period, ACRI's staff members participated in several conferences dealing with Israel's Arab minority, including the Yeruham conference on distributive justice in June, and the Mossawa conference on the status of Israel's Arab citizens in September. We also participated in numerous Knesset hearings, including a June hearing on the topic of the legal and constitutional status of Israel's Arab sector, and a sub-committee hearing on employing Arab employees in the public sector.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

### ❖ **Operation Protective Edge in Gaza**

From the onset of Operation Protective Edge, ACRI, along with other human rights organizations, acted as a watchdog and reminded the authorities, via direct communication and through our appearances in the media, of their obligation to adhere to international humanitarian law and to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties. Some of the actions we took are as follows:

**Violations of International Law in Gaza:** On July 21, ten human rights organizations (ACRI, B'Tselem, Gisha, The Public Committee against Torture in Israel, Hamoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual, Yesh Din, Adalah, Machsom Watch, Rabbis for Human Rights and Physicians for Human Rights – Israel) urgently contacted Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein following the release of reports on the nature of attacks within the Gaza Strip and the high rate of civilian casualties that raises concerns about grave violations of International humanitarian law. The organizations called on the Attorney General to instruct the government to refrain from violating the laws of war and to establish an external, independent and effective investigatory mechanism to examine the decision making of the political and operational establishment as required by international law and supported by the rulings of the High Court of Justice. The [joint letter](#) notes that according to [estimates provided by the United Nations](#), of the hundreds killed since the onset of Operation Protective Edge, civilian casualties constitute 70% of the deaths, that insufficient measures have been taken to prevent deaths and injuries among civilians, and that military actions that obscure the distinction between combatants and civilians must be avoided as much as possible so as to minimize civilian casualties. Two weeks later we received an unsatisfactory response from the Attorney General. In October we sent a [follow up letter](#) requesting clarifications as to the measures the IDF took so as to minimize civilian casualties and as to the guidelines for artillery use in heavily populated areas during Operation Protective Edge.

**Bombing Residential Buildings in Gaza:** Earlier in July, ACRI called for an end to the bombing of residential buildings in the Gaza Strip. In [our letter to the authorities](#), ACRI warned that according to the laws of war, armed forces are required to adopt measures to avoid civilian casualties even when attacking legitimate military targets, and certainly when the legitimacy of the target is questionable.

**Protecting Civilians in the Northern Gaza Strip:** On July 14<sup>th</sup>, ACRI, along with a coalition of eight other human rights organizations, [sent a letter](#) to the Minister of Defense, the Chief Military Advocate General and the Attorney General, calling upon them to show restraint and calling on Israel to avoid unnecessary harm to the civilian population of the Northern Gaza Strip. That the IDF called on residents

of North Gaza to evacuate the area raises grave concerns regarding the safety of civilians who do not leave and potential violations of International Humanitarian Law.

**Hannibal Protocol:** Additionally, following multiple reports that the IDF implemented the “Hannibal Protocol” when Second Lieutenant Hadar Goldin was kidnapped, ACRI [wrote](#) to Attorney-General Weinstein calling on him to instruct the government and the IDF that military operations designed to prevent the abduction of a soldier or extricate a soldier from his captors ought not risk the life of the kidnapped soldier and ought not involve military activity in populated areas with high risk of civilian casualties. We demanded that an investigation be launched into the use of the “Hannibal Protocol” during Operation Protective Edge.

**Evacuating the Wounded:** ACRI also joined seven other human rights organizations in [sending a letter](#) to the authorities reminding them of the obligation to enable the evacuation of wounded persons in Gaza, and noting that ambulances cannot evacuate the wounded from areas under bombardment due to continuous and heavy fire in residential areas, nor can civilians evacuate those areas.

### **The West Bank:**

**Opposing Collective Punishment:** In June, after Israel severely restricted the freedom of movement in the West Bank, particularly around Hebron, and worsened conditions for Palestinian prisoners, (measures that were taken following the kidnapping of the three Israeli teens, even before Operation Protective Edge began), we [urgently wrote](#) the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Internal Security on behalf of eleven human rights organizations, calling on them to cease from imposing collective punishment against the civilian population in the West Bank.

### ❖ **Two Systems of Law**

In November ACRI published its “Two Systems of Law” report, a comprehensive report which examines one of the most prominent and disturbing traits of Israeli military rule in the West Bank – the development of two distinct law and court systems operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, one for Jewish citizens of Israel and one for Palestinians residing in the West Bank. The [report](#), entitled “One Rule, Two Legal Systems: Israel’s Regime of Laws in the West Bank,” and published in Hebrew, English and Arabic, outlines the nature of the legal regime currently operating in the West Bank. Two systems of law are applied in a single territory: one – a civilian legal system for Israeli citizens, and a second – a military court system for Palestinian residents.

The ‘[One Rule, Two Legal Systems](#)’ report reviews the prevailing legal situation in the West Bank under Israeli rule, and explains how decades of “temporary” military rule have given rise to two separate and unequal systems of law that discriminate between the two population groups living in the one territory – Israelis and Palestinians. The legal differentiation is not restricted to security or criminal matters, but touches upon almost every aspect of daily life. A series of military decrees, legal rulings and legislative amendments have resulted in a situation whereby Israeli citizens living in the Occupied Territories remain under the jurisdiction of Israeli law and the Israeli court system, with all the benefits that this confers. The High Court of Justice has ruled that the rights enshrined in Israel’s Basic Laws (equivalent to constitutional provisions) apply equally to these citizens, despite the fact that they do not reside in sovereign Israeli territory. A substantial portion of Israeli Law is also applied within the Occupied Territories to “Jews according to the Law of Return” who are not Israeli citizens. By contrast, Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to much stricter military legal law – military orders that have

been issued by IDF Generals since 1967 – in addition to Jordanian Laws that preceded the region’s occupation. Unlike Israeli citizens, Palestinians are tried in military tribunals for every crime from murder to stealing a carton of milk from the grocery store. According to Attorney Tamar Feldman, Director of Human Rights in the Occupied Territories Department, “This report demonstrates that discrimination between Israelis and Palestinians, living under one rule and in the same territory, is not a localized phenomenon, but rather an issue of institutional discrimination, as it is applied to areas entirely unrelated to security matters. It is incumbent upon Israeli society to recognize this reality.”

Over the reporting period, we worked on completing and editing the report. Simultaneously, we held meetings with senior officials and former officials from the Ministry of Justice and the security apparatus, to present to them the report’s findings and learn their positions regarding the issues raised therein. We were invited to speak about the report before 150 employees of the Ministry of Justice. In September, we held a briefing for diplomats to present the report to them. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, we held a launch conference at Tel Aviv University in collaboration with the Minerva Center, with three panels of speakers including high-ranking military officials, senior government officials, legal experts and academics, among them the military attorney general for the West Bank, and a former Supreme Court Justice. Over 200 people attended the conference, which received widespread media coverage. We will continue to utilize the report in our work with the government, the military justice system and the Civil Administration, and to expose wider audiences to its findings.

## ❖ **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 plan to expel some 1,000 Palestinians living in rural villages in the area known as Firing Zone 918. We are engaged in the ongoing mediation process with the State which began in November 2013 when the High Court of Justice appointed a mediator for the case, and the High Court has granted an extension for the mediation to continue through February 2015.

**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 September High Court of Justice hearing the High Court of Justice sent the two sides to continue to negotiate offers to relocate the Palestinians who reside in the area and whom the State seeks to evacuate. Negotiations continued in October, and we met with officials in the Civil Administration’s Planning division to discuss the offers presented by the State.

**Relocation of Separation Wall Route Following the Jayus-Falameh Petitions:** Five years after the High Court decision in favor of our petitions, paving has been completed on the route for the new separation wall, and lands were finally restored to their Palestinian owners. However, problems persist regarding farmers’ access to lands in the seam zone beyond the wall. In October we called upon the military legal advisor for the West Bank to regularize passage to the seam zone, as currently the gates to the seam zone operate in a manner that violates the Palestinian farmers’ right to earn a living in dignity.

**Freedom of Movement:** In September we called on the deputy military legal advisor for the West Bank to cancel new restrictions that were placed on Palestinians residents’ access to route 443, and to change the manner in which soldiers carry out security checks at the checkpoints, which currently violates the privacy and dignity of Palestinian women. On a separate matter, in October and November we sent letters to the West Bank’s military commander calling upon him to remove the blockade at the entrance



to the village Deir Istiya, which violates the residents' rights. Several days after our second letter we learned that the blockade was removed.

### ❖ **The Right to Protest in the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

In July we wrote to the Central Command Chief regarding the use of live fire to disperse demonstrations in the West Bank, following deaths of thirteen Palestinians and hundreds of injuries. In September we received a response stating that the IDF respects the right to protest in the OPT and limits the use of live ammunition to situations where lives are in danger. We intend to continue monitoring the situation and corresponding regarding this issue.

In October we published in three languages "[The Status of the Right to Demonstrate in the Occupied Territories](#)," a position paper asserting legal grounds for the right to protest and demonstrate in the Occupied Palestinian Territories despite the common assumption held by Israelis that the occupier has sweeping authority to restrict freedom of expression and protest of those living under the occupation. The position paper will serve as a basis for dialogue with military judges on their role in suppressing protest in the OPT, and will be utilized in our public outreach work. In September we held a briefing for members of the diplomatic corps on the topic of this paper.

### ❖ **Rights in Criminal Proceedings**

In October we submitted two Freedom of Information requests: one to the IDF Spokesman requesting orders, regulations and guidelines regulating entry (including security checks) of Palestinian to military courts, and another to the Israel police requesting regulations and guidelines regarding entry of Palestinians to police stations throughout the West Bank, in particular to accompany minors to interrogations at police stations. In December we receive replies to both requests, notifying us that such regulations do not exist. Additionally, in July and September our staff participated in tours for diplomats to the Ofer prison, an Israeli incarceration facility in the West Bank holding approximately 1,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

### ❖ **The International Humanitarian Law Project**

In November ACRI commenced a comprehensive training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) for 13 educators, which consists of several full-day sessions in November, December and January, and presentations by a wide variety of lecturers from academia, the military, and human rights organizations. Ahead of the training, we met with educators from different youth groups (such as the scouts) in order to develop a suitable training program for them.

Over the reporting period we also planned and began our IHL Education programs for the 2014-15 school-year for students at pre-military academies throughout Israel. The 10-session workshops that commenced in the fall will be conducted for 13 groups, and will include three pre-military academies where we had not held workshops in the past. The workshops will deal with the wide spectrum of human rights, with combating racism, and with the principles of international humanitarian law. We have already held 6 workshops at pre-military academies this fall, with 200 participants.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST JERUSALEM

The current reporting period saw a significant increase in civil unrest and violence in East Jerusalem: Daily clashes between Israeli security forces and youth throughout all East Jerusalem neighbourhoods were routine, and in West Jerusalem terrorist attacks took place, as did hate crimes and assaults on Palestinian workers and passersby. Over 1,000 Palestinians were arrested. In light of the violent events our main focus was on advocating and placing pressure on the police so as to minimize bodily harm and violation of basic rights by the police. In addition to directly contacting the police and other decision makers, we engaged in extensive media outreach so as to raise public awareness to the police's very problematic conduct in East Jerusalem.

### ❖ **Response to Escalating Violence**

**Police violence against civilians:** ACRI attorney Yusef Karram sent a [letter](#) to Police Commissioner Yohanan Danino on July 16, describing [different instances](#) where police officers have resorted to excessive physical violence against civilians, as well as unlawful use of riot dispersal measures, including the use of rubber bullets that were fired towards the upper body and faces of protesters, and massive use of tear gas in crowded residential neighbourhoods, endangering residents and particularly babies and the elderly. ACRI advocated for immediate change in police conduct. On July 30<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Justice instructed the police to immediately respond to the allegations raised in our letter and provide additional information on incidents detailed therein in order to determine how to proceed.

**Use of skunk water to disperse demonstrators:** In [August](#) and again in November, ACRI wrote the Police Commissioner to demand that the police cease its use of skunk spray in East Jerusalem, which has been causing severe and widespread harm to the area's residents. Since July, large areas of East Jerusalem have been covered in tremendous amounts of skunk spray. This has affected tens of thousands of residents who have experienced difficulties in breathing, eating and sleeping. ACRI Attorney Anne Suciú explained in our [November letter](#) that there is a clearly disproportionate relationship between the skunk spray's intended purpose – dispersing public riots and disturbances – and the way it is being used, which is harming innocent residents' health and causing damage to property. Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem tend to be particularly crowded residential areas. Skunk spray has been used to drench vast areas with the foul-smelling liquid, including narrow, winding streets and alleys. This harms innocent bystanders, and especially children, pregnant women, the elderly, the sick and the disabled. Skunk spray may cause nausea and vomiting in those exposed to the stench, and can cause severe damage to homes, shops and cars.

**Centre for field workers:** Over the reporting period, ACRI's field worker Hussam Abed worked around the clock and under fire to collect testimonies from families, including those who lost children. In July, ACRI established in his East Jerusalem home a temporary "war room" for field workers and press. Hussam, together with the field workers of Ir Amim and B'Tselem, played a central role in documenting the violence that has plagued the city. The testimonies they compiled were invaluable for reporting on the violent police responses to demonstrations, and on assaults on Arabs throughout the city by roving bands of thugs. Hussam was injured lightly three times, his colleague from Ir Amim was beaten by police, and other friends were hurt by police during protests.

## ❖ **Social Services in East Jerusalem**

**Welfare:** In June we learned that following ACRI's longtime extensive advocacy efforts, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services approved an addition of 30 positions for social workers in its offices in East Jerusalem (the largest increase ever in social worker positions in East Jerusalem), as well as a 15 million NIS budget increase for social services. This is a significant and much needed step forward given the area's profound poverty and shortage in welfare services, which hurts the most vulnerable members of society such as at-risk children and victims of domestic violence.

**Education:** In 2011, ruling on [a petition filed by ACRI](#), the High Court of Justice allocated to the Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Education five years to resolve the severe shortage of classrooms in East Jerusalem. In August ACRI sent a letter to the Ministry of Education calling on him to address that and other problems in education in East Jerusalem. In September we wrote the Municipality's Department of Education requesting data on the number of preschools being built in East Jerusalem. In December we sent a [letter](#) to the Municipality and to the Ministry of Education seeking information on the preparations that have taken place to implement the court ruling. Although they have taken measures to reduce the shortage of classrooms in public schools, kindergartens and preschools, the shortage remains large and has even grown as a result of the natural increase in the number of students.

**Healthcare: Ambulance Services:** In October ACRI contacted the Director General of the Ministry of Health and presented him with testimonies of three incidents involving severe delays in the arrival of ambulances, including a case that occurred in broad daylight, while no riots were taking place, and ended in a mother's death. We requested a meeting to discuss problems with provision of emergency ambulance services to East Jerusalem neighborhoods.

**Family Health Centers:** ACRI has been advocating for establishment of addition family health centers in East Jerusalem neighborhoods. In July our staff participated in a Knesset hearing on the family health centers nationwide, and raised the issue of the shortage in East Jerusalem. We were informed that two new clinics will open soon. In October we wrote to the municipality asking when they would open.

## ❖ **Report to the United Nations**

On August 31, ACRI presented [a shadow report](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, ahead of its October session, regarding the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in East Jerusalem. The report outlines recommendations that ACRI has presented to the Israeli government to improve the human rights situation in East Jerusalem, and focuses on two issues with grave implications for human rights: (1) Disproportionate use of force by law enforcement officials throughout East Jerusalem, where police brutality and misconduct are commonplace, and civil disturbances are often dispersed through riot-control measures that harm the population and violate police regulations and (2) The East Jerusalem neighborhoods cut off by the separation barrier, whose residents must travel through a single crowded checkpoint to enter the rest of Jerusalem, and where the authorities have neglected to provide basic social services such as garbage collection, sanitation, water connections, education, road repair, and police, ambulance or fire services.

## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Over the reporting period, ACRI's Human Rights Education Department organized numerous workshops and lectures at educational institutions throughout Israel, continued to develop pedagogical materials, to advise schools and youth movements, to run the Workshop website in Hebrew and in Arabic, and to conduct dialogue on human rights education with policy makers.

### ❖ **Response to Operation Protective Edge and to Summer's Incidents of Racism**

This reporting period was marked by the summer's bloody events which required rethinking and special planning and preparation towards the new school year. We witnessed a dramatic increase in incidents of racism, and racist attitudes and expressions seem to have gained a great deal of social legitimacy. This led us to develop and distribute pedagogical materials in [Hebrew](#) and in [Arabic](#) on anti-racism education to teachers throughout Israel at the onset of the new school year, to help them teach tolerance and democratic values. We published the materials on ACRI's website's human rights education portal The Workshop, and sent the materials to teachers via our newsletter, and through ACRI's campaign on anti-racism education, '[This Siren is for Us.](#)' The pedagogical materials include methodological guidelines for creating a comprehensive program for anti-racism education, ideas and suggestions for lesson plans and activities, methodological guidelines for coping in the classroom with the post-war situation, an article on discrimination in the classroom towards students who are different, and a discussion of racism towards various populations in Israel. Additionally, we sent a [letter](#) to the Minister of Education on the topic of anti-racism education, which focused on the need to address structural problems that prevent the educational system from better coping with the phenomenon of racism. We are also collaborating with other organizations within a coalition working to advance education to co-existence, and are engaging in policy advocacy and media outreach towards that goal.

### ❖ **Pedagogical Materials**

**Text Book on Anti-Racism Education:** In addition to the materials we developed and published following the summer's events, we continued to work on production of a text book on integrating human rights values and anti-racism education into the teaching of various disciplines, including mathematics, languages, science and history. This work involved coordination with several experts and authors, external readers, editing and design. The book is scheduled to be published toward the beginning of 2015. Our staff also completed a pedagogical kit on social photography as a tool for education against racism, seeking to provide ideas for activities to teachers who teach disciplines such as civics and social studies.

**Pedagogical Kits on Rights vis-à-vis the Police:** During this reporting period we continued to develop, completed and published two pedagogical kits on the topic of human rights vis-à-vis the police, a Hebrew language kit entitled "[Protestors' Rights](#)" for educators working with youth in the Jewish sector, and an Arabic language kit entitled "[Freedom of Expression in Friction with the Police](#)," for educators working with youth in the Arab sector.

**Pedagogical Materials for International Human Rights Day:** In collaboration with the Ministry of Education's staff for civic education, and as we have done for several years now, we designed a poster and developed a lesson plan towards international human rights day which is commemorated on December 10<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme is the right to dignity. The poster will be distributed to all public

schools in Israel via the Ministry of Education. This collaboration with the Ministry of Education has become an annual tradition and positions ACRI as a leading organization in human rights education.

## ❖ 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 the pedagogical materials that we developed, posts on human rights issues arising from the war and the summer's events, and updates on various departmental activities. The Arabic language site also 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 1,324 unique visitors, and the Arabic language site had an average of 778 unique visitors. The materials published on the website are the basis for the newsletters that we send to educators on our distribution list. During the current reporting period, in large part due to our public outreach campaign, the reach of our newsletter distribution list expanded to encompass 3,000 educators.

## ❖ Trainings, Workshops and Conferences

**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. These include one-time lectures as well as multi-session workshops. Some examples include: A multi-session workshop on the topic of coping with racism held at a high school in Be'er Sheva, in which 22 teachers from various disciplines participated and gave us very positive feedback; a workshop in Jerusalem on coping with the events of the war and the increase in racist incidents, in which 20 teachers from various Jerusalem high schools participated; A workshop on freedom of expression for teachers at a Haifa junior high school in which 35 teachers participated; a 30-hour workshop on teaching democratic values for 22 teachers at a junior high school in Nahf (an Arab town in northern Israel); a 30-hour training for 20 junior high school civics teachers from various parts of Israel which commenced in late October, and others.

**Teachers Colleges:** We also continue to hold 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. We participated in the Kibbutzim College's start of school year conference, and Sharaf Hassan, Director of our Human Rights Education department, was one of the conference's main speakers. We are currently planning a pedagogical workshop on behavioral didactics in anti-racism education which we will hold during the second semester for first year students studying elementary education. The workshop will include three or four sessions for three groups, and at present we are writing and preparing the workshop's content, and creating tools for assessment and evaluation of the workshop. At Levinsky College we participated in a faculty study day on teaching democratic values.

**Social Photography Project:** This project, which we launched in collaboration with Ben Gurion University's student union, seeks to encourage young people from the periphery who are committed to social activism to study about human rights issues, and equips them with tools they can apply in their activism by utilizing accessible technologies – photography and social network. In 2014 we held sixteen

sessions of the project, which dealt with human rights, social photography, activism, and use of social networks to advance causes. We are currently planning an exhibit to showcase the students' works, and also plan to showcase them on ACRI's website and its human rights education portal.

## **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, and acted swiftly to promote in the media ACRI's positions and responses to the summer's bloody events.

### **❖ 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 officials, on our work within networks and coalitions, and on advocacy to prevent and to halt anti-democratic legislation. We met with members of Knesset and government officials and prepared position papers on various topics.

In the context of anti-democratic legislation, ACRI engaged in extensive advocacy efforts against the proposed Basic Law: the Jewish Nation-State which is currently being advanced in various versions in the Knesset. ACRI's position is that such a law would be discriminatory towards Israel's non-Jewish minority which constitutes over 20% of its population, and would undermine Israel's democratic character. We also vehemently opposed to the proposed bill that would limit the High Court's power and would enable the Knesset to re-legislate laws that have been invalidated by the High Court of Justice. We presented our objections to the bill at an October hearing held by the Ministerial Committee for Legislative Affairs. We also opposed legislation that would undermine the funding or legitimacy of human rights organizations, and are participating in a team of experts convened by the Ministry of Justice to debate new legislation affecting human rights NGOs.

### **❖ Media Outreach**

Over the reporting period, ACRI was mentioned many times and in various contexts in the Hebrew language and Arabic 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. In particular, over the summer, our Hebrew, Arabic and English language spokespersons worked tirelessly to publicize ACRI's reactions to the events that took place in the Gaza Strip, in East Jerusalem and throughout Israel, and in order to disseminate information that ACRI prepared, such as a [bulletin](#) discussing freedom of speech and incitement on the Internet, and a detailed [information sheet](#) for employers and employees regarding freedom of speech online. ACRI staff members were interviewed in the press, on radio and television, and our materials were utilized by journalists covering the summer's events.

## ❖ **Public Campaigns**

The summer's hostilities were accompanied by an outburst of racism on social networks and incidents of racist, violent attacks throughout the country. Thus ACRI's Human Rights Education and Public Outreach departments swiftly recognized the need to create and distribute educational materials to aid educators in coping with racism, towards the school year that would commence in September. At the end of the summer, towards the beginning of the new school year, we conducted an extensive online campaign entitled '[This Siren Is For Us](#),' to distribute to teachers and educators throughout Israel ACRI's Human Rights Education Department's pedagogical materials on anti-racism education and on promoting tolerance and co-existence. Through the campaign we exposed our materials to hundreds of teachers and educators. 800 new educators signed up for the Human Rights Education department's distribution list. Additionally, the campaign's primary success is in positioning our Human Rights Education department as a leader in the field vis-à-vis teachers, teachers' colleges and municipal departments of education.

## ❖ **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. Over the reporting period, ACRI's websites, our Facebook pages (also in all three languages) and email distribution lists served as central tools for disseminating vital information regarding the summer's events. Thus, for instance, when protests began in Jerusalem after the murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, we utilized our Arabic language Facebook page in order to distribute important information about freedom of speech and freedom of protest to the demonstrators. When threats to fire Arab employees increased during Operation Protective Edge, we distributed via Hebrew and Arabic language social networks information we prepared for employers and employees about such terminations.

ACRI's online presence grew during this reporting period. From June through October 2014:

- ACRI's [Hebrew website](#) had an average of 13,630 unique views per month;
- The [English website](#) had an average of 3,223 unique views per month;
- The [Arabic website](#) had an average of 1,341 unique views per month;

Our presence on Facebook and Twitter expanded as well in recent months.

### **Facebook**

- In the reporting period, the number of "likes" on our Hebrew page increased from 9,068 to 10,205.
- The number of "likes" on our English language Facebook page increased from 3,603 to 4,009, and during the summer the pace of "likes" increased fourfold more than average.
- The number of "likes" on our Arabic language Facebook page increased from 3,422 to 4,250.
- 75,000 people were exposed to an informative video clip on freedom of speech and protest in Jerusalem that we posted in July on our Arabic language Facebook page.

- 30,000 people have been exposed to the booklet on planning and building rights that we posted in October on our Arabic language Facebook page.

### **Twitter**

- Our Hebrew Twitter account has over 7,747 followers
- Our English language Twitter account has 2,319 followers

**Electronic Newsletters and Updates:** ACRI's Hebrew monthly newsletter is sent out to approximately 8,500 subscribers and to approximately 640 ACRI members, while English language updates are sent to some 3,626 subscribers. ACRI also sends out a weekly Knesset update (in Hebrew and English) while the Knesset is in session, 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 950 subscribers in Hebrew and 914 additional subscribers in English - and those numbers continue to grow. Our Activism newsletter (in Hebrew) is currently sent to approximately 2,073 subscribers. Updates to the international media are currently sent to 1,419 subscribers.

### ❖ **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 (among them retirees, attorneys and law students) in addition to ACRI's staff members.

Over the reporting period, ACRI has processed 1,100 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. We also refer individuals to legal aid clinics and other rights organizations. 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:

*The Rights of Wards:* ACRI took part in a forum of attorneys and human rights activists that debated proposed legislative amendments to the law dealing with legal guardianship. Approximately 10,000 legal guardians are appointed by the courts annually. Information gathered by organizations dealing with this area, and requests for assistance received by our public hotline, indicate that a disastrous situation exists whereby numerous elderly, ill and disabled wards have guardians who exert control over their bodies and property, often with no consideration to their wishes and needs, and that many legal guardians are given general powers that do not match their wards' needs. We maintain that the amendment being advanced by the Ministry of Justice, which aims to reflect societal changes in attitudes towards the elderly and towards the mentally disabled, and the U.N. convention on the rights of people with disabilities, would still not suffice to address the severe problems in this area.

*Discrimination:* In 2013, after the Be'er Sheva country club refused entry to an Arab man with the excuse that he is not a resident of the city and despite allowing entry to Jews who are not Be'er Sheva residents, ACRI demanded that the Be'er Sheva police conduct a criminal investigation of the incident in accord with the anti-discrimination law. At the time, ACRI sent letters to several senior police officials and to the Attorney General, until eventually we received notice that an investigation was launched. However, this summer we learned that the investigation was closed despite a failure to interview key witnesses and a failure to address photographic evidence documenting the discrimination. In June we



appealed the State Attorney's decision to end the investigation into the Be'er Sheva country club's conduct, and recently we sent a reminder to the State Attorney requesting a decision on our appeal.

*Payments in Public Education:* In October ACRI joined the legal clinic from Haifa University in submitting a petition to the High Court of Justice against the Ministry of Education's policy of mandatory parent payments in the public school system, as reflected in a memorandum the Ministry of Education published in March 2014. The petition was filed on behalf of twelve parents of students who suffered harm as a result of the new instructions, which enable schools to charge parents thousands of Shekels per year, increase the number of weekly lesson hours that can be privately purchased at specialized public schools, and create an official distinction between public schools based on the size of parental payments and thus in effect a differential public education system. Prior to preparing the petition, ACRI took part in hearings in the Knesset Education Committee and in writing position papers.

## **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. Some examples of our activities within coalitions over this reporting period include:

- On June 18<sup>th</sup>, we partook with the National Coalition for Direct Employment in "Direct Employment Day" at the Knesset, and advanced the issue in various Knesset committee debates.
- On July 8<sup>th</sup>, as part of The Forum for the Enforcement of Workers' Rights, we held a conference about hourly workers at the Knesset. We have held meetings with the Ministry of the Economy and engaged in policy advocacy on the topic of hourly workers.
- As part of a Coalition of organizations dealing with education we have worked on the issue of mandatory "parent payments" at public schools. We participated in Knesset hearings on the topic, presented a position paper, and submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice.
- On July 22<sup>nd</sup> the Coalition for Public Housing held "Public Housing Day" at the Knesset and we participated in committee hearings and a conference on the topic.