



 The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)

Executive Director's Message

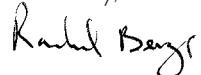
Dear friends,

It is my great pleasure to present this review of ACRI's work and impact during the past year. This period has been a time filled with both triumphs and troubling trends in the field of human rights. Many of the human rights issues we address are directly and indirectly connected to the ongoing conflict in the region. All states are obligated to protect their citizens and residents from bodily injury as well as injury to their property and daily life. At the same time, states are also obligated, especially in times of conflict, to uphold human rights standards. ACRI faces the challenging task of trying to ensure that Israel strikes a balance between the two.

Unfortunately, in the current political climate, pressing social and economic issues are constantly pushed to the sidelines, and many of the weakest members of society are forced to pay the price. Against the backdrop of growing inequalities and privatization, ACRI has prioritized the area of social and economic rights and is working through parallel channels to ensure that all members of society can live their lives in dignity. In an increasingly fractured society, ACRI's work to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights plays a vital role in bridging differences and strengthening democratic principles.

2007 marks thirty-five years since ACRI's inception. During the past three and a half decades, ACRI has been at the forefront of the struggle to protect human rights and civil liberties in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Although we have achieved many landmark successes across the spectrum of human rights issues, the need for our work remains huge. We are indebted to you, our friends and supporters, for your commitment to our goals and activities. On behalf of everyone at ACRI, I would like to thank you for your continued support and interest. Without it, our work would not be possible.

Sincerely,



Rachel Benziman

Executive Director



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Introduction

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) is Israel's oldest and largest human rights organization and the only one that deals with the entire spectrum of human rights and civil liberties issues in Israel and the Occupied Territories. ACRI's work encompasses litigation and legal advocacy, education, and public outreach as the most effective way in which to build toward our long-term vision of a just and democratic society that respects the equal rights of all its members.

As a fledgling democracy without a constitution, and an increasingly segmented and polarized society, Israel needs an organization such as ACRI that is committed to promoting the universality of human rights and defending the rights of all, regardless of religion, nationality, sex, ethnicity, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background. As an independent and non-partisan organization, ACRI fills this vital need by using its multi-pronged strategy to advance the concept of civil and human rights as an integral part of democracy.

Founded in 1972, ACRI has built its reputation by:

- + bringing precedent-setting litigation to the Supreme Court;
- + advocating before decision makers and providing expert opinions before the Knesset;
- + issuing and disseminating high-profile reports on key human rights issues;
- + offering free legal information and advice through our public hotline;
- + running human rights education programs for school teachers;
- + conducting human rights training workshops for the security forces;
- + and mounting public outreach campaigns to place human rights concerns high on the public agenda.

ACRI's 47 Jewish and Arab staff members include attorneys, fieldworkers, public hotline coordinators, public outreach and media professionals, and educators. ACRI also enjoys the crucial support of dozens of highly qualified and dedicated volunteers. In three regional offices located in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, ACRI's staff and volunteers work intensively to foster a culture of human rights in Israel.

Legal Department

ACRI's Legal Department undertakes cases that have the potential to set precedents, raise issues of principle, and effect broad-based policy change. Every year, ACRI argues dozens of precedent-setting cases before the Supreme Court, and also seeks redress before district and labor courts, government ministries, and Knesset committees. ACRI is highly regarded in the Israeli legal community for its professionalism, impartiality and commitment to bringing landmark cases to the Supreme Court. Since its inception 35 years ago, ACRI has achieved major advancements in a wide range of areas such as equality for Arab citizens, freedom of expression, the right to privacy, freedom of and from religion, criminal justice, gay and lesbian rights, women's rights, migrant workers' rights, and human rights in the Occupied Territories. Beyond each individual victory, every case undertaken by ACRI is a springboard for setting legal precedent and catalyzing policy change.

The Right to Equality

The State of Israel, as a democracy, is obligated to treat every person equally, regardless of religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, personal status, age, sexual orientation or disability. However, the right to equality is not yet enshrined in law regarding most aspects of life, and prejudice and discrimination are sadly still common in Israeli society. ACRI conducts a wide range of educational activities to instill the concept of equality and respect for all people, particularly those belonging to minority groups. Concomitantly, ACRI fights relentlessly against every form of discrimination, whether by state agencies or private bodies.

Second-Class Rabbis: Salary Discrimination against Ethiopian Rabbis

Rabbi Reuven Yasu, a resident of Beit Shemesh, has been employed for the past ten years by the Gadera and Beit Shemesh Religious Council as the rabbi of the local Ethiopian community. Rabbi Yasu and his colleagues contacted ACRI on behalf of seventy Ethiopian rabbis and kesim (religious leaders) from various religious councils, to complain of salary discrimination based on their ethnic origin.

ACRI's investigation revealed that there did indeed exist salary discrimination against Ethiopian rabbis, and that it occurred on two levels: their salaries and working conditions were significantly less favorable than those of their non-Ethiopian peers, who are included in collective agreements; and they were not receiving their full salaries because during the transfer of funds by the National Religious Services Authority of the Prime Minister's Office to the local religious councils, thousands of shekels sometimes disappeared.

ACRI handled this case for over a year. Our intervention prompted the Knesset Absorption Committee to conduct several sessions on the matter and the Finance Ministry to amend the budget and provide sufficient funding for religious services to the Ethiopian community. In August 2006, the Religious Services Authority announced that the salaries of Ethiopian rabbis would be calculated in the same way as for all other Israeli rabbis, and that a single scale would be used for calculating the salary of kesim. Despite the announcement, however, these salary arrangements have yet to take effect. ACRI has now transferred the case to a private attorney, but continues to closely monitor developments.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI

No Entry to “Mizrahim” (Jews of eastern descent)

In April 2006, the Court for Administrative Affairs in Jerusalem accepted ACRI's petition demanding the prevention of discrimination against Mizrahi students seeking admission to ultra-orthodox educational institutions in the city. ACRI's petition presented evidence pointing to the existence of a 30% quota for the acceptance of Mizrahi students in three of the prestigious Beit Ya'acov seminaries. The court ruled that the Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem Municipality must wield their authority to prevent this discrimination through the creation of professional and equal criteria to be used by ultra-orthodox educational institutions in their registration and admission of students, and to be used by these authorities in supervising the institutions. Only three months after this ruling, and as a result of a contempt of court motion filed by ACRI, did the Ministry of Education set forth the steps it took to prevent discrimination. In March 2007, the Jerusalem Municipality announced the creation of a uniform examination that would be taken by all female eighth-grade students in ultra-orthodox schools in the city, as part of their admissions process.



Discriminatory Selection Procedures at Public Entertainment Venues

The degrading policy of “selection” is practiced widely at many places of public entertainment, a policy which allows for dividing clientele into groups and forcing some individuals to wait outside for long periods of time while preventing others from entering altogether. The decision whether to eventually allow a person in or deny entry is in the hands of the “selector”, who is stationed at the entrance to the club. This decision is not infrequently based on racist considerations regarding ethnic origin or skin color. In January 2007, ACRI, through the Human Rights Program at the Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law, filed a lawsuit in the Magistrates Court in Tel Aviv-Jaffa on behalf of a student of Ethiopian origin who was denied entry to the “Comfort 13” Club in Tel Aviv. In the suit, the court was asked to award damages in the amount of NIS 100,000 to the plaintiff. In addition, the court was asked to rule that the policy of “selection” is illegal, and to order the club and the party organizers to stop the policy immediately. ACRI also prepared draft legislation that was presented to the Knesset by MK Shelly Yacimovich in May 2007, which established that anyone who does not permit the entry of individuals to a public place in the order in which they arrived is considered to have acted in a discriminatory manner, unless the person delaying or preventing entry can succeed in showing that the decision was based on substantive reasons.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI ■■■■■■

Aren't You Too Old for This? Age Discrimination and the Employment Services Bureau

Vital Weissfelner-Rothman, aged 54, is a single mother of two and a university graduate who visited the Employment Services Bureau for Academics in Tel Aviv during the period in which she was unemployed. Vital has an impressive CV: university degrees in sociology and nutrition, as well as knowledge and experience in information management, and work experience as a group facilitator and administrator. Vital returned to the Bureau once a month. On one such visit she was asked to stop by the desk of the clerk in charge of her file. The clerk checked a computerized database of office job listings, and Vital could clearly see the computer screen. To her surprise, she saw that several of the job notices contained special comments concerning the age of the candidates, with wording such as, “desired age: 25-40.” Aware that such age limitations were discriminatory and unlawful, Vital turned to ACRI.

In response to her complaint and others like it, ACRI contacted the Employment Services to ask for its guidelines or procedures regarding employers' preferences concerning the age, gender, family status, etc. of job candidates. ACRI emphasized that discrimination against job candidates on the basis of age is strictly forbidden by the Equal Opportunities at Work Law and is a criminal offense. By agreeing to accept and consider discriminatory requests by employers, the Employment Service Bureau and its staff are reinforcing discrimination that is already highly prevalent in the Israeli job market. The Bureau's response indicated that the policy continues. In light of this, ACRI submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice in June 2007 demanding that the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labor cease to post discriminatory job postings through its national employment service. The petition also demanded that Ministry clerks rigorously check all the job offers they advertise for prejudicial conditions.

Equal Rights for Arab Citizens

Arab citizens of Israel face entrenched discrimination in all fields of life. In recent years, the prevalent attitude of hostility and mistrust toward Arab citizens has become more pronounced, with large sections of the Israeli public viewing the Arab minority as both a fifth column and a demographic threat. In addition, there exist glaring socioeconomic differences between the Jewish and Arab population groups, particularly with regard to land, urban planning, housing, infrastructure, economic development and education. Over half of the poor families in Israel are Arab families, and Arab municipalities are among the poorest in the country. Against this difficult backdrop, ACRI continues to work tenaciously to promote equal rights for Arab citizens and to foster a culture of human rights, mutual respect, and tolerance within Israeli society.

Access to Education

ACRI and the organization Karama filed two petitions with the Court for Administrative Affairs in Tel Aviv-Jaffa against the Ramle Municipality. Due to a dispute between the municipality and the Lod Valley Local Council over which authority is responsible for providing educational services to the children of the Dahmash neighborhood, the municipality had decided to stop providing transport for the children in Dahmash to schools in the city, and to prohibit the registration of children from this neighborhood in the city's nursery schools and first-grade classes. The court ruled that the Ramle Municipality must register children from the Dahmash neighborhood in nursery schools and first-grade classes for the academic year 2007/8. The petition regarding school transport remains pending, and in the interim, the municipality is continuing to provide transportation services in accordance with an injunction issued by the court.



Equal Access to Public Transportation Services

In September 2006, ACRI, as part of a coalition of social change organizations, filed a petition to the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Administrative Court demanding that the Ramle Municipality and the Ministry of Transport provide bus services to the Arab neighborhoods in Ramle. The petition highlighted the blatant discrimination against Ramle's 15,000 Arab residents regarding public transportation services. ACRI emphasized the fact that the absence of public transportation to and from the Arab neighborhoods violates the Arab residents' rights to mobility, access and equality. In a hearing in November 2006, the Ministry of Transport claimed that due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure, it was impossible to introduce bus lines in the Arab neighborhoods. In response, the Court ordered the Ramle Municipality to work together with the Ministry of Transport, ACRI, and the local residents to develop a solution for providing bus services in the Arab neighborhoods.

Demanding Equitable Distribution of Funds for the Rehabilitation of the North

In March 2007, ACRI appealed to the Chairperson of the Knesset Committee of Internal Affairs and the Environment and to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office concerning the NIS 4 billion that have been allocated for the rehabilitation and development of the North of Israel following the war in Lebanon in 2006. ACRI stressed the importance of the Knesset exercising the necessary oversight of the use of these funds, to ensure that they are allocated equitably and according to clear and transparent criteria. ACRI further stressed that the funds should be distributed in accordance with the principles of affirmative action in order to correct longstanding discrimination against disadvantaged population groups, especially the Arab minority.

Bringing about the Cancellation of a "Jews Only" Tender for Marketing Land in Carmiel

ACRI, together with the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, successfully intervened to ensure that the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) cancel a discriminatory tender for marketing plots of land for independent construction in the Givat Makosh neighborhood of Carmiel. The land, owned by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and managed by the ILA, was being marketed in a manner that targets Jews only. The two NGOs called on the ILA to refrain from leasing or marketing land on the basis of the tender until a court decision is reached on their currently pending petition to the High Court of Justice (HCJ) concerning the same issue.

ACRI continues to work tenaciously to promote equal rights for Arab citizens and to foster a culture of human rights, mutual respect, and tolerance within Israeli society.

Promoting the Rights of the Negev Bedouins

More than half of the approximately 160,000 Negev Bedouins reside in 45 unrecognized villages, the majority of which existed before the founding of the state. For decades, the state has refused to recognize these villages, to place them under municipal jurisdiction, and to provide them with the most basic services and infrastructure. The government uses a variety of discriminatory measures, including the use of house demolitions against so-called illegal construction, to pressure the Bedouins into re-locating to government-planned urban centers. These centers are characterized by acute poverty and high unemployment, and are wholly incompatible with the Bedouins' traditional lifestyle and needs.

ACRI, in partnership with other civil society organizations and representatives of the unrecognized villages, is working to

ensure that the state fulfils its duty to include planning solutions for the Bedouin community in the new outline plan for the Beersheba Metropolis, and is insisting that the state consults with the residents and takes into account their needs. As a result of our ongoing struggle to secure equitable planning for the Negev Bedouins, which began with ACRI's petition to the High Court of Justice in 2000, today's outline plan recognizes almost one-fifth of the villages and creates a mechanism that will enable Bedouin residents to initiate the process for gaining recognition for their villages in the future.

ACRI is also working in the legal and public arenas to demand adequate health and education services for the Bedouin population. ACRI regularly advocates before decision makers, planning officials, Knesset members, and academics, in order to raise awareness and advance the rights of the Bedouin community. In addition, ACRI, together with Physicians for Human Rights and the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages of the Negev, will shortly submit a petition to the HCJ demanding that the existing health clinics in the unrecognized villages (the majority of which were established as a result of an ACRI petition), be connected to the electricity supply.



Alsir, Wail and Asmaa Alafashek, from the traveling project Unrecognized by Tal Adler



Social and Economic Rights

The term “social and economic rights” encompasses a range of rights, including the rights to education, adequate housing, social security and health; the right to work and workers’ rights; and the right to an adequate standard of living. ACRI firmly believes in the indivisibility of human rights and recognizes that the full enjoyment of civil and political rights – itself an essential element of a vibrant democracy – is dependent upon the full realization of social and economic rights. A democracy cannot thrive while large sectors of its society are socially excluded and denied their right to live their lives in dignity.

Protecting the Rights of Subcontracted Workers

The rights of subcontracted workers employed through manpower agencies and service contractors are systematically and severely infringed. ACRI has become a leading defender of these workers, who often belong to disadvantaged groups. ACRI is working to raise awareness among employers, workers and the broader public of the problematic nature of this method of employment.

In 2006, ACRI launched a public campaign calling on employers to take responsibility for the rights of workers they employ through a contractor. ACRI is an active member of the Forum for the Enforcement of Workers’ Rights that works to advance the rights of workers in Israel in general, and the rights of subcontracted workers in particular.

In the past year, ACRI has worked in the legal and public arenas to challenge tenders for the provision of services, in which the lowest bid is accepted despite the clear infringement of workers’ rights inevitably entailed by the competitive terms of the bid. Thanks to the enormous public and media pressure ACRI succeeded in mobilizing, a tender issued by the Ministry of Health for cleaning services for the Flieman Geriatric Rehabilitation Hospital in Haifa was rescinded.

Recent signs indicate that ACRI’s work in this area, together with the work of organizations and other actors in the labor market and general public, has begun to yield significant results. The issue of the infringement of the rights of subcontracted workers frequently makes the headlines, and large institutions, such as the General Health Fund and the Ministry of Education, have recently taken steps to protect the rights of workers they employ through contractors. In addition, more serious measures have been taken against contract agencies that violate labor laws. The Finance

Ministry’s Accountant General recently ordered government ministries to oversee the protection of the rights of workers employed by them through contractors, and to include in tender offers an appendix detailing all of the social benefits that must be paid to these workers.

ACRI has prioritized the issue of the violation of workers’ rights, and is working through parallel channels to place this issue high on the public agenda.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI ■■■■■■

Violation of the Rights of Subcontracted Workers Employed in the State Comptroller's Office



Yoav Loeff, ACRI ■■■■■■

For eighteen months, Roni Gamar worked as a security guard at the State Comptroller's Office in Jerusalem. Although formally Roni was employed by Saar, an employment agency for security and other services, he was, essentially, employed by both Saar and the Comptroller's Office. When he was hired, Roni placed his trust in the Comptroller's Office, believing that as an employee of a public authority his rights would surely be guaranteed. During his employment, however, he discovered that these rights were being regularly infringed. He was given no employment contract nor written information detailing the job and

work conditions when he started working; his wages were routinely paid late; he received no overtime pay, compensation for transportation, sick pay, and annual or holiday vacation pay; and no payments were made toward his pension fund.

After leaving his job, Roni, through ACRI, filed a lawsuit with the Jerusalem Labor Court. ACRI demanded that Saar and the Comptroller's Office pay Roni the full financial value of the rights to which he was entitled as an employee. ACRI stressed that the serious violations of his rights represent a common phenomenon in the field of contract employment: the contractor systematically violates workers' rights, and the actual employer renounces any responsibility for ensuring these rights by claiming that it is receiving a "service." The lawsuit is currently pending.

The Right to Dignity

The right to dignity and the right to freedom imply, that adults must be afforded the possibility of running their lives as they see fit; however, at times a person is prevented from taking care of his or her own affairs due to physical or mental limitation. In these instances, the law defines the person as "protected", and the court is authorized to appoint a guardian on his or her behalf – a person that will manage his or her affairs regarding issues and according to the scope required under the circumstances. Throughout the years ACRI has dealt with a number of cases in which a person has been declared "protected" without receiving any advance notice of that fact and without being summoned to the legal proceeding in which it was decided to restrict his or her rights. As a result of ACRI's appeal to the Office of Court Administration, a new regulation was published that instructs the court secretariats to notify individuals for whom applications have been filed to appoint them a guardian, as well as to summon them for the hearing and to allow them to express their position on the matter.

The Right to Health

In March 2007, ACRI submitted a written intervention to the Prime Minister highlighting the fact that the national health insurance is gradually being supplanted by private health insurance supplements, which are only available to those who can afford it. ACRI further highlighted the fact that a situation has evolved in which not all parents can guarantee adequate health care for their children, and the elderly, who represent a vulnerable and poor population group, cannot afford to treat the various illnesses from which they suffer. ACRI also made clear that it is the government that is responsible for upholding the values enshrined in the National Health Insurance Law, namely the right to life, health and bodily integrity.

Citizenship Status and the Right to Family

A sovereign state has the authority to determine who will enter its gates and who will be entitled to permanent status. However, the state must also take human rights into consideration. States must respect the right to family life, are not entitled to reject refugees, asylum seekers, or individuals who do not hold any citizenship, and must provide help in cases of humanitarian distress. In Israel, the authority to decide who will enter the country, who will be deported, and the status of foreign citizens residing in the country, rests in the hands of the clerks staffing the Population Registry of the Interior Ministry. The Population Registry sees its job as defending at all costs the Jewish character of Israel. This policy gives rise to discrimination and human rights violations, primarily the right to family life, the right to due process, and the right to dignity – of non-Jews, of Israeli citizens choosing to share their lives with citizens of another country, and of their children. ACRI invests many resources in changing Interior Ministry policies, and establishing clear and equal procedures regarding immigration and citizenship status.



Activestills.org ■■■■■

The Citizenship Law - The Battle Continues

For more than five years, Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens have been unable to obtain legal status in Israel. This situation has its origin in a policy of the Interior Minister that was extended by government decision, and since 2003 it has been enshrined in the Law of Citizenship and Entry into Israel. The law was enacted as a temporary order for a limited period, but the period has been extended over and over. The main impact of the law is suffered by members of the Arab minority in Israel, as the community naturally maintaining family and marriage ties with Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In May 2006, the High Court of Justice, in a majority decision of six over five justices, rejected the petitions opposing this law, among them petitions submitted by ACRI and Adalah. At the same time, the court ruled that the law severely infringes the constitutional right of Israeli citizens to family life, and called on the government and the Knesset to refrain from extending the order again. However, the law has been extended three times since then. The state's claim that this is a temporary arrangement does not conform with the continued reality on the ground, which severely infringes the right to family life and equality. In January 2007, ACRI petitioned the High Court of Justice for a second time, demanding the cancellation of the law. In March 2007, an amendment to the law was passed, and the law was extended through July 2008 and expanded to include citizens of "enemy states". In accordance with this change, ACRI submitted an amended petition.

Stateless Persons

Israel has no established policy or procedure regarding the granting of status to people who hold no citizenship and whose center of life is in Israel. It is estimated that there are currently several hundred persons who live in Israel but lack citizenship in Israel or anywhere else. In an important ruling in January 2007, the Tel Aviv Court of Administrative Affairs accepted a petition submitted by ACRI on behalf of three stateless persons, residents of the former Soviet Union who arrived in Israel at the time of the dismantling of the former Soviet Union, and who lost their status in their country of origin. They remained in Israel illegally, although there was no way to deport them since there was no state to which they “belonged”. Their requests for permanent residency licenses in Israel were not granted, and they were therefore forced to live in Israel without any status, work permit, or social rights, and under constant threat of repeated arrests. In response to ACRI's petition, the Tel Aviv Court of Administrative Affairs issued a precedent-setting ruling that during the review of such applications, applicants would be guaranteed at a minimum a permit to live and work in Israel. The court also ordered the Interior Ministry to develop a procedure for addressing the issue of stateless persons residing in Israel.



Niv Kidar, Ha'aretz

The Right to Family

Some 20% of the inquiries ACRI receives through our public hotline involve procedures and policies of the Interior Ministry, mostly concerning applications for status for the foreign-born spouses of Israeli citizens. In some instances, the case is resolved through correspondence with Population Registry clerks. In other cases, ACRI submits petitions to the High Court of Justice. Examples of ACRI's achievements in this field in the past year include: following ACRI's petition to the HCJ, the Interior Ministry agreed to begin the lengthy process of formalizing the status of foreign common-law spouses, even when the Israeli spouse has not yet completed his or her divorce proceedings; obtaining legal status for a woman of Ethiopian origin who lived together with her husband in a caravan for eight years and who was not able to obtain a mortgage because the Interior Ministry did not recognize their marriage; securing temporary status for a Ukrainian citizen married to an Israeli citizen who was denied legal status due to the wide age gap between the spouses; and petitioning the HCJ to demand that in cases in which the application for legal status in Israel for spouses of Israeli citizens is denied for security or criminal reasons, the details of the basis for the refusal be provided.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI

Living Together: Common-Law Spouses of Israeli Citizens

Oren Avner, an Israeli citizen, and Imelda Maniavo, a migrant worker from the Philippines who is employed in Israel as a nursing care provider, met, fell in love, and became a couple. For the past three years, they have been in a common-law relationship and have managed a joint household. Oren and Imelda wanted to marry but needed to wait for an annulment of Imelda's previous marriage in the Philippines. Until that time, they consolidated

their relationship with a partnership agreement, and Oren contacted the Interior Ministry's Population Registry with a request for resident status in Israel for his partner. As a first step in this process, the Interior Ministry demanded that Imelda leave the country, despite a 1999 High Court of Justice ruling that the imposition of this demand on foreign nationals married to Israeli citizens violates their basic right to family. Oren and Imelda appealed to the Tel Aviv Court of Administrative Affairs, which ruled in their favor. The government appealed the ruling, however, with a petition to the High Court, arguing that a distinction must be made between married and common-law spouses.

ACRI represented Oren and Imelda in the appeals process, based on the counter argument that the Interior Ministry's policy violates the right to family and discriminates unjustly against couples in common-law marriages. In 2006, the High Court of Justice accepted ACRI's position and handed down a precedent-setting ruling. The court ruled that the Interior Ministry must begin processing the residency applications of foreign nationals who are partners in common-law marriages to Israeli citizens, without requiring that they leave the country as a precondition for initiating the process.

Victims of Domestic Abuse

Foreign-born women who married Israeli citizens and initiated the graduated process of obtaining legal status, but later separated from their spouses because of violence or abuse, lose their status; the mere suspicion that a foreign woman has left home is enough for the Population Registry to immediately halt the process of obtaining status and demand that the woman leave the country. This policy creates absolute dependence of the foreign spouse on her Israeli husband, and allows him to abuse and exploit her. Recently, as a result of ACRI's activities and the work of other organizations and individuals, the Interior Minister announced that he had formulated a draft procedure regarding these women. According to the procedure, women who have left home due to abuse or violence may submit an application for obtaining legal status on humanitarian grounds, which will be reviewed by a special committee of the Interior Ministry. ACRI will monitor implementation of this procedure, and will assess whether it provides an adequate solution for these women.

The Rights of Migrant Workers

Migrant workers entered Israel initially in the 1990s to replace Palestinian construction workers and agricultural workers. A large number of tourists from West African, South American, and Eastern European countries also arrived in the 1990s, and when their tourist visas expired, many remained and took on cleaning jobs. There is no official record, and not even an official estimate, of the number of migrant workers in Israel today. The current unofficial estimate is 190,000.

Migrant workers represent an extremely vulnerable population group within Israeli society, whose rights are constantly trampled upon by both their employers and the state authorities. While the government works intensively to combat the issue of migrant workers residing illegally in Israel, it consistently fails to enforce the law against criminal employers who violate the basic rights of their migrant workers. In addition, the government views migrant workers as temporary residents who are only in Israel in order to work, and who must at all costs be kept from "taking root" in the country. This approach results in draconian policies toward migrant workers which severely violate their rights.

Revocation of Permits of Employers who Violate the Rights of Migrant Workers

In response to a petition filed by ACRI, together with Kav La Oved and the Hotline for Migrant Workers, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor issued a new regulation concerning the revocation of the permits of employers who violate the legal rights of migrant workers.

Cancelation of the Binding Arrangement

ACRI, together with the Hotline for Migrant Workers, Kav La Oved, and Physicians for Human Rights, successfully brought about the cancellation of the policy of binding migrant workers to one specific employer. In 2006, the High Court of Justice accepted the organizations' petition and ruled that the policy of binding migrant workers to their Israeli employers violates their basic rights and must therefore be rescinded. According to the binding arrangement, the migrant worker's stay permit is bound to a specific employer. If the working relationship expires – irrespective of the reason – the migrant worker not only loses his or her place of work, but also becomes an illegal resident. The court's ruling states that the binding arrangement violates the basic rights of migrant workers, primarily the right to dignity, freedom, and autonomy.

Children of Migrant Workers

For several years, ACRI and the Hotline for Migrant Workers have been working on the issue of the legal status of migrant workers' children who were born in Israel or have lived here from a young age, whose language is Hebrew and culture is Israeli, and whose center of life is in Israel. Our work has begun to yield results in the last two years, and for the first time an arrangement was established that enables the securing of legal status for children and their family members who until now resided in Israel without any legal status. However, the conditions established for granting legal status still leave some children outside the framework, making them candidates for deportation. A petition submitted by the two organizations still remains pending before the HCJ, demanding a cancellation of the condition according to which permanent status in Israel will be granted only to those children whose parents entered the country legally before they were born. The High Court of Justice issued an injunction prohibiting the deportation of families until a ruling is made on this petition. ACRI also appealed to the Director of the Population Registry with a request to apply the established arrangement to children who meet the criteria, yet fall outside the framework because their parents are in the country with temporary status. Among these children are children of asylum seekers and of recognized refugees.



The Right to Parenthood

In April 2007, in response to a petition submitted by ACRI, together with The Hotline for Migrant Workers, Kav La Oved, Physicians for Human Rights, and Na'amat, the High Court of Justice instructed the state to explain within ninety days why it does not intend to cancel its "procedure for the handling of pregnant migrant workers". According to the current procedure, which was introduced by the Interior Ministry, a migrant worker who is six months pregnant or more loses her Israeli work permit. She can obtain a residency permit, which does not entitle her to work, for up until three months following the expected date of childbirth. At the end of that period she and her baby must leave the country immediately. It is hard to exaggerate the draconian nature of this demand, especially considering the fact that Israel has openly decided to base the home care sector – the largest employment sector in Israel for migrant workers – almost entirely on the workforce of young foreign women of childbearing age. This harsh procedure places an impossible choice before the women: either lose their livelihood, after having paid such a high price to work in Israel, or deny themselves the right to bring a child into the world.

Criminal Justice

Even a person who has broken the law is entitled to some basic rights, that cannot be compromised, especially a suspect or person accused of a crime, both of whom still benefit from the presumption of innocence. Furthermore, the human rights of a prisoner do not end at the prison gates. ACRI works to ensure that the broad powers that rest in the hands of the law enforcement authorities will not be used in a way that unjustifiably violates the rights of those held in their custody.

Hotline for Prisoners

ACRI operates a special hotline for the inquiries of prisoners and detainees, in the framework of which we address many appeals relating to prison conditions, and the realization of their rights in prisons or detention facilities. Issues that are in various stages of being addressed include the following: inappropriate behavior of police during the arrest process; holding a detainee who does not use drugs together with drug users or convicted prisoners; placing a detainee who does not smoke together in a cell with a smoker; the right of a disabled person to bring his or her own medical equipment into the jail while visiting a family member held in custody; and the Israel Prison Service's treatment of prisoners with AIDS.

Freedom of Speech

As a result of a petition submitted by ACRI on behalf of a prisoner prevented from publishing his articles in a newspaper, the Prison Commission ordinance that deals with the publication of interviews with prisoners and the publication in the media of articles they have written was revised. ACRI is monitoring the implementation of the revision in order to ensure freedom of speech within the prison walls.

A Bed for Every Prisoner

ACRI and Physicians for Human Rights successfully petitioned the High Court of Justice to demand that every prisoner and detainee be provided with a bed, and that the practice of forcing prisoners to sleep on the floor be prohibited. The court's precedent-setting ruling, issued in February 2007, obligates the state to provide a bed for every prisoner.

Police Violence

Avi Tubol was walking home through the streets of Jerusalem on a winter's night. An unmarked car suddenly pulled up beside him, and inside were three women and a man – all dressed in civilian clothes. One of the passengers presented a police ID and asked Avi to show some form of identification. He gave them his driver's license and they brought it to their car, probably to verify the details it contained. Since this check would take a while and it was a cold night, Avi told them he would go home and pick up the license the next day at the police station. He started walking, but the car quickly caught up with him and the police officers returned his license. Avi asked them, "Are you happy now?". In response to his comment, the car stopped and one of the officers got out, grabbed Avi's shirt, and started shouting at him. He then punched Avi in the head, knocking him down. Avi called the police on his mobile phone to ask for help and an ambulance. When the ambulance arrived, the officers drove away.

Avi claims that since the incident he has suffered from pain and fear. He finds it difficult to work, is afraid to walk the city streets, and becomes anxious at the sight of police officers. The beating he received damaged his hearing, and it appears that he will need to undergo surgery. Avi, who is also a cantor in his synagogue, says he is no longer able to perform this function. He contacted ACRI, which instructed him on how to file a complaint to Mahash (the Department for Investigation of Police Activities). In March 2007, ACRI contacted the head of Mahash with a demand for prompt completion of the investigation into Avi's complaint.

Police violence has been one of ACRI's major concerns over the past year. Our activities are taking place on several planes: providing guidance, information, and other types of assistance to victims of police violence; preparing a rights manual that presents the existing laws and the recourse available to victims; contacting the media to heighten public awareness about the issue; initiating a Knesset Internal Affairs Committee session devoted to the subject; communicating with Mahash; and intervening before policymakers in the Justice Ministry, Internal Security Ministry, and Police Department to demand that they fully implement the State Comptroller's recommendations and government policies regarding the proper functioning of Mahash.



Yoav Loeff. ACRI

The Right to Protest

The right to protest is a basic right. In a democratic society, protest is a central tool for the public to express opinions and positions. As a result of ACRI's successful intervention, the police rescinded its demand that organizers of a demonstration to mark International Workers' Day hire security guards at their own expense as a condition for receiving a license to demonstrate. ACRI stressed that these kinds of demands are liable to create a situation in which only those with the necessary financial means would be able to fully realize their right to demonstrate. ACRI is representing animal-rights activists who were sued by the heads of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Academic College for holding a protest vigil outside of their homes due to the intention of the Academy to establish a laboratory for animal-testing. During the Second Lebanon War, ACRI appealed to the Attorney General concerning the arrest and questioning of civilians who participated in a demonstration against government policy. The protesters were demonstrating with a permit, without disturbing the public order, and were arrested only because of what they were demanding. ACRI also works with policy-makers to promote the proper treatment of demonstrators by the security forces, and to halt the excessive use of force.

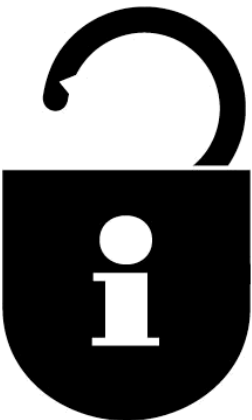
Freedom of Expression

Freedom of the Press

ACRI takes a grave view of a string of incidents in which the government tried to constrain freedom of the press through controlling the granting of press cards. Without this card, it is difficult or impossible for journalists to conduct investigations in many areas. In September 2006, ACRI petitioned the High Court of Justice in the name of an Arab journalist, born in the Golan Heights, for whom the Government Press Office refused to issue a press card because of his political views. The petition remains pending. ACRI also appealed to the Attorney General following the publication of the position of the General Security Services (now named the "Israel Security Agency") stating that it sees itself as entitled to prevent legitimate political activity it considers to be "subversive". ACRI stressed that any activity that does not constitute a crime or criminally prohibited act is permissible.

Proudly Supporting Freedom of Expression

The preparations for the Gay Pride March in Jerusalem in June 2007 were once again marred by fierce opposition and unprecedented incitement. ACRI stood by the Pride community – gays, lesbians, bisexuals and trans-genders – in their battle for freedom of expression and the right to equality. ACRI worked intensively in the public arena to express our support for the march and respond to the vehement opposition that it engendered.



Freedom of Information

The disclosure of public information is critical to facilitating democratic discourse and informed participation regarding issues on the public agenda. ACRI is committed to ensuring freedom of information and guaranteeing government transparency and accountability.

Securing Public Access to All Past Government Decisions

Following ACRI's appeal to the Attorney General, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) introduced a new procedure, according to which the government secretariat will send decisions made by the government prior to January 2004 (and therefore not published on the official Internet site), to each person who requests them without charging a fee. In our appeal, ACRI emphasized that government decisions bear an important legal status and as such necessitate accessible and effective publication to realize the public's right to freedom of information and safeguard government transparency.

Clearing his Name

A person against whom a police investigation was conducted and whose file was closed due to lack of evidence, requested to view the investigation file in order to work to change the reason for closing it, but his request was denied. The High Court of Justice accepted the petition filed by ACRI in his name. In a majority opinion, the justices ruled that in a case such as this, the person under investigation had a right to receive information that he would need to clear his name, a right that supersedes the public interest, which is to ensure the cooperation of the public with the police.

The Right to Privacy

In the digital age, a wide range of information has been collected on citizens in public and private databases. ACRI works in the courts, the Knesset, and with the public administration to reduce the invasion of privacy, and to limit the ability of different actors to collect information and to use it inappropriately.

As a result of a court ruling in an ACRI petition, the Minister of the Interior was required to amend the Population Registry Law, and to enshrine therein the ways in which information could be transferred from the Population Registry to private bodies, such as banks. ACRI also participated in hearings before the Knesset Internal Affairs and Environment Committee on amending the law, and contributed to setting up a legal framework for limiting the scope of information that is transferred and establishing an oversight structure for the use made of this information.

ACRI works intensively to safeguard civil liberties and strengthen democratic principles.

Landmark Ruling Concerning the Registration of Same-Sex Marriages

Yossi Ben-Ari, a set and costume designer, and Loren Shuman, a Hebrew-to-French literary translator, met in 1985 and fell in love. Two years later, they began living together, and over the next twenty years they functioned as a family, jointly managing a household. In 2003, they decided to marry. Since they were unable to do so in Israel, they flew to Canada – which at that time was the only country that granted same-sex marriage licenses to non-citizens. Upon their return to Israel, Yossi and Loren asked ACRI for assistance in changing their personal status in the Population Registry (and, as a result, on their Israeli identity cards) from “single” to “married.” ACRI’s request on their behalf was denied, with the explanation that same-sex marriages are not recognized in Israel.

ACRI subsequently filed a petition to the High Court of Justice on behalf of Yossi and Loren, as well as Sefi Bar Lev and Yaron Lahav, another gay couple who married in Canada.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI



“We felt we were being discriminated against because we are not heterosexual. The country does not recognize our relationship, and it is violating our dignity and our right to family life,” said Yossi.

In a landmark ruling in November 2006, an expanded panel of seven High Court justices accepted ACRI’s petition, as well as three similar petitions that were submitted at a later time. The ruling requires the Population Registry to record same-sex couples as “married” if they have married abroad and present the Israeli authorities with a valid marriage certificate from the country in which it was issued.

Gay and Lesbian (LGBT) Rights

Although in recent years we have witnessed growing recognition in the Israeli public and legal arenas of LGBT rights, gays and lesbians still face various forms of discrimination by government authorities and the private sector, and are often the target of hate speech and actions.

Challenging Discrimination against Same-Sex Couples

ACRI successfully challenged the discriminatory policy of disqualifying same-sex couples from receiving state grants for homes purchased in districts defined as national priority areas. In response to ACRI’s intervention, the Housing and Construction Ministry decided to provide housing and mortgage assistance to common-law couples – including those of the same sex – thereby removing one of the major obstacles to equality for alternative families.

Occupied Territories

June 2007 marked the 40th anniversary of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. During this entire period, Israel has denied some four million Palestinian residents their basic rights and has prevented them from taking part in decisions affecting their fate. The occupation permeates every aspect of the Palestinians' daily lives, with violations of the right to life and bodily integrity, freedom of movement, employment, family life, housing, health, education, and human dignity forming an inescapable part of their reality.

ACRI is a key player in the struggle to ensure the fundamental rights of the Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories. ACRI's efforts are designed to redress the broad range of human rights violations while bringing pressure to bear on the Israeli government to fulfill its obligations under international law to ensure the protection and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under occupation.

Freedom of Movement

Easing Movement Restrictions for Nablus Residents

In September 2006, ACRI submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice demanding the revocation of the IDF's orders that prohibit the movement of tens of thousands of Palestinian residents and effectively imprison them within the area of the city of Nablus. The petition relates to IDF orders, repeatedly issued during the past five years, banning residents of the city who fall within a specific age range from leaving the city's boundaries. The delineated area includes the city of Nablus, three refugee camps, and fifteen adjacent villages, which are home to over 200,000 people. In response to ACRI's submission of the petition, the IDF changed its policy and now only applies the movement restriction whenever there is a concrete warning regarding a terrorist leaving the Nablus area. In recent months there has been a marked improvement vis-à-vis Palestinian freedom of movement in the area, and ACRI continues to closely monitor the situation on the ground.

Freedom of Movement in the Jordan Valley

In response to ACRI's appeal to the Defense Minister, Amir Peretz, demanding the cancellation of the directives banning all Palestinian residents of the West Bank from entering the area of the Jordan Valley (with the exception of those Palestinians whose registered address is in one of the communities in the Valley), the Defense Ministry examined the claims made by ACRI and decided to cancel the movement restrictions by the end of May 2007. However, the current reality on the ground indicates that the movement restrictions are still in place, and ACRI is gathering data in preparation of further legal action that we plan to undertake on this issue.

Petitioning against Movement Restrictions on Road 443

In March 2007, ACRI submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice challenging the sweeping prohibition on Palestinian travel along road 443, a main road in the West Bank. Until the beginning of the second Intifada, this road was used by tens of thousands of Palestinian villagers to connect them to their neighboring villages and to Ramallah. Since the end of 2000, the IDF has prevented Palestinians from using this main highway and rendered it for the exclusive use of Israelis. The petition is pending.

The Separation Barrier

ACRI is continuing its fight against the route of the Separation Barrier. In spite of the significant changes in the route brought about by the work of ACRI, other human rights organizations, and Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories, in many locations the route still poses fundamental injury to the Palestinians' basic rights: freedom of movement, the right to health, the right to pursue a livelihood and the right to live in dignity, the right to family life, the right to education and the right to property.

ACRI submitted a second petition regarding the route of the Barrier in the Alfei Menashe area, demanding implementation of the court decision issued one year previously in response to ACRI's original petition. This court ruling required the state to dismantle the section of the Barrier in that area and move it to an alternate route. In the current pending petition, ACRI claims that the alternative route established by the state does not correct the previous route's flaws, and even creates new problems.

In December 2006, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition submitted by ACRI, Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, and the residents of A-Ram, opposing the wall built around this neighborhood that separates it from East Jerusalem. In April 2007, the HCJ rejected

a petition that ACRI submitted against the route of the Barrier on the lands of the village of Dir Qadis, however this was after the route had been changed significantly merely in response to the filing of the petition, already reducing the infringement of the rights of the Palestinian residents.

ACRI currently has several pending petitions relating to the Separation Barrier, addressing the following issues: the route of the Barrier in various locations; families trapped in enclaves south of Jerusalem and disconnected from their lives in the Occupied Territories; the flawed operation of Barrier crossings that are intended to provide Palestinian residents with access to their lands, their places of employment and their families; and the discriminatory "permit regime" that was established along the "seam zone" (the area that lies between the Barrier and Israel), which prevents freedom of movement and destroys the fabric of life for local Palestinian residents.



Christian Aid / Simon Townsley ■■■■■■

The Secondary Wall in the Southern Hebron Hills

Halil Halila lives in the area of the Southern Hebron Hills in the West Bank. He earns his livelihood growing wheat and olives on his land, which is located on both sides of Route 317. He irrigates the soil with water drawn from a well situated to the north of the road. Early in February 2006, the IDF began constructing an 80-cm-high concrete wall serving as a barrier along 40 km of the road. The wall, as planned, would enclose over 80,000 dunams of land in an enclave, severing 21 Palestinian communities from the urban centers on which they rely for essential services. It would also cut off many farmers, including Halil, from their lands.

ACRI submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice on behalf of Halil and other Palestinian residents from communities that would be negatively affected by the wall. The petition argued that the severe violations of the basic rights of the local residents caused by the wall, and the heavy toll that this would exact on their daily lives and livelihoods, created a real danger that the residents would be forced to abandon the area and move elsewhere. In addition, the petition argued that the damage caused by so low a wall would outweigh its security benefits: while it would prevent the passage of agricultural vehicles, donkeys and carts, and flocks of sheep, it would not prevent a terrorist from crossing and would create a strip of firing positions along the west side of the road.

In December 2006, the court accepted the petition, along with two other petitions challenging the construction of the wall. In a landmark ruling, the court stated that the wall disproportionately infringes upon the rights of the local residents, and ordered the state to dismantle the almost-completed concrete wall within six months. The court permitted the army to construct an alternative barrier that would allow the passage of pedestrians and flocks of sheep. To date, despite repeated intervention by ACRI, the concrete wall still stands. In June 2007, ACRI filed a contempt of court motion and will continue to work for implementation of the court ruling.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI

Human Rights in Hebron

Hebron is the only site in the Occupied Territories in which settlers live in the heart of a densely populated Palestinian city. As a result of the presence of approximately 500 settlers, and the army's actions to ensure their security, the Palestinian residents living in the city center have for many years suffered from grave violations of their most fundamental rights. For the past six years, the state authorities have imposed a policy of segregation in Hebron, prohibiting Palestinians from travelling in their vehicles on major streets in the city center and banning them from opening their shops. In addition, many other harmful actions are conducted by the army towards the Palestinian residents. These include: house searches, military occupation of houses, harassments, and arbitrary delays. As a result, hundreds of Palestinian families have left the area, and many shops and businesses have been abandoned or closed by military orders. These businesses are the primary source of income for thousands of Palestinian families.

For the past few years, ACRI has been working in the public and legal arenas to highlight the shameful human rights situation in Hebron and redress the multiple rights violations suffered by the local Palestinian population. ACRI regularly appeals to senior army and government officials, presents expert testimony before Knesset Committees, handles individual complaints from Palestinian



Yoav Loeff, ACRI



residents, and conducts public outreach activities to raise awareness of this critical issue.

In early 2007, ACRI produced and distributed 1,000 booklets for IDF soldiers, which detail the legal obligations of soldiers serving in Hebron.

In May 2007, ACRI and B'Tselem published a joint report about the dispossession of Palestinian residents from the center of Hebron. The high-profile report was widely distributed to all Knesset members and to the media. In tandem, ACRI and B'Tselem launched a campaign on the internet to further raise awareness of the critical human rights situation in Hebron.

The Right to Harvest

ACRI secured a precedent-setting decision by the High Court of Justice ordering the Israeli security forces to protect Palestinian farmers, and their property, from attacks by violent settlers, and to act immediately and decisively to permanently uproot this phenomenon. The court severely criticized the law enforcement authorities' lax approach vis-à-vis violent settlers, and ruled that the closing of territory to Palestinians, in order to protect them from settlers, is tantamount to awarding the settlers a prize for violence.

ACRI is a key player in the struggle to protect the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories



Christian Aid / Alex Klaushofer



East Jerusalem

Life for Palestinians in East Jerusalem can be described as a continuous cycle of discrimination, poverty, and shortages. In 2005, in light of Israel's continued disregard for the rights of the 240,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, who hold the status of "permanent residents" of Israel, and the urgent need to advance the rights of this disenfranchised and disadvantaged population, ACRI launched our East Jerusalem Project. Through this project, ACRI is working to ensure the basic rights of Palestinian East Jerusalemites.

Challenging Discriminatory Planning Policies

At the root of the problem of the demolition of unlicensed houses in East Jerusalem lie Israel's discriminatory land and planning policies and practices and the manner in which they are enforced. Palestinian East Jerusalemites are caught in a Catch-22 situation. On the one hand, discriminatory planning policies and practices stifle the development of the Palestinian neighborhoods, and render it almost impossible for Palestinian residents to receive building permits. On the other hand, the authorities use house demolitions as an enforcement tool against residents who build without a license. ACRI, in partnership with Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, has been working intensively through the legal, planning, and public outreach channels to challenge these policies. ACRI and Bimkom are currently in the final stages of preparing an unprecedented petition demanding that the authorities



refrain from issuing house demolition orders against residents of the Jabal Al Mukkaber neighborhood accused of building illegally, until a master plan for Jerusalem is approved that addresses the needs of these residents and enables them to build legally.

The Right to Education

There exists a major shortage of classrooms in East Jerusalem. In 2005, East Jerusalem lacked 1,345 classrooms. As a result, many East Jerusalem students are being pushed out of overcrowded schools; the dropout rate for middle and high school students now stands at 50 per cent.

ACRI is an active member of the Coalition for Promoting Education Rights in East Jerusalem. As part of the coalition, ACRI facilitated the establishment of a public hotline service, and provides ongoing legal assistance to parents whose children have been left outside of any educational framework. In November 2006, ACRI successfully petitioned the Jerusalem Administrative Court on behalf of three children who had been forced to stay at home at the start of the academic year due to the lack of available classrooms. The coalition also appealed to the Jerusalem Municipality on behalf of 140 schoolchildren without access to education, and as a result the municipality has set up additional first-grade classes in East Jerusalem.

In May 2007, ACRI appealed to the Minister of Education on behalf of seven elementary school students, whose parents were forced to send them to expensive private schools because of the failure of the Education Ministry and the Jerusalem Municipality to provide them with places in public schools in East Jerusalem. ACRI laid emphasis on the fact that according to the Compulsory Education Law, the state is obliged to provide

the children with free education, and demanded that the state refund the parents the cost of sending their children to private schools.

Access to Postal Services

The postal service in East Jerusalem is in a dire condition: there are only seven post offices in East Jerusalem to serve the local population of 244,000, in contrast to the 50+ post offices located in West Jerusalem that serve 500,000 local residents. Mail distribution in East Jerusalem also operates at a substandard level: in many of the Palestinian neighbourhoods there is no postal delivery service to residents' homes, and most mail sent to these areas does not reach its destination.

ACRI set up the Forum for Improving the Postal Service in East Jerusalem, which comprises a representative from each Palestinian neighborhood which suffers from the poor postal service. ACRI, on behalf of the Forum, appealed to the Israel Postal Company's director, and held a series of meetings and field tours with company officials. As a result of our intervention, the Postal Company issued a tender for the running of two new post offices in East Jerusalem. ACRI and the Forum will continue to fight for improved mail distribution and more post offices.

Improving the Sewage System

The already substandard sewage system in the neighbourhood of Ras Hamis has been further damaged by the construction of the Separation Barrier in that area, and poses health risks to the Palestinian residents. Following many complaints received about this issue, ACRI conducted a field trip for senior staff of the Gihon Company (an independent corporation which is responsible for the water, sewage and drainage system of the Jerusalem Municipality), to expose them to the severe sewage problems facing the local population. In response, the Gihon Company developed a plan for addressing the structural problems in the sewage system, and hired a contractor to implement this plan; since April 2007, the contractor has been working intensively to solve the sewage problems. Reports from the local community indicate that progress is being made, and that the works are having a tangible effect on their quality of life.

Public Outreach

ACRI believes that a public more aware of the complex fields of civil liberties and human rights is better equipped to stand up for its rights, and more prepared to respect the rights of others. Founded in 1995, ACRI's Public Outreach Department publishes high-profile reports and information leaflets; organizes lectures, conferences, film screenings, and other public events covering a wide range of human rights issues; and runs a public hotline for people whose rights have been infringed. The department maintains Israel's largest collection of civil and human rights materials, much of which can be accessed through ACRI's website. ACRI also maintains an effective media presence highlighting our work and the issues we address, and conducts media outreach programs targeting the Arab minority and the Russian-speaking population. ACRI staff and board members are frequently interviewed on the radio and prime-time news, and write opinion pieces published in leading newspapers.

Information Center

ACRI's Information Center – comprising our vast library, website, and public hotline – serves as a clearinghouse for human rights information in Israel. Our website contains information in Hebrew, Arabic, and English about our activities in the legal, education, and public outreach spheres, ranging from press releases to court rulings and education resources. Visitors to our website can also access materials on rights in general and a wide array of articles on human rights law, international treaties, and more. As a leading resource center on human rights and civil liberties, ACRI responds on a daily basis to the many requests for information that we receive from Knesset Members, students, journalists, educators, and human rights organizations. In addition, ACRI's Information Center sends out a monthly electronic newsletter to more than 6,000 subscribers in Israel, and produces an annual report on the state of human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories. ACRI also produces and distributes an in-depth report on a key human rights issue every year.

Media Outreach

An integral element of ACRI's strategy involves mobilizing the media in order to place critical human rights concerns high on the agenda and stimulate public debate and awareness. ACRI's comprehensive media relations program ensures that our work and the issues that we address appear in the media on a daily basis. Our spokesperson maintains close ties with key journalists and editors, and our staff are regularly interviewed in print, broadcast, and electronic media. In the past year, for example, ACRI achieved sustained media coverage of the issue of workers' rights violations, which complemented our work in the legal and policy arenas and led to positive changes concerning the protection of workers' rights. In addition, ACRI employs two public outreach coordinators to target the Arab community and the Russian-speaking population by translating press releases and cultivating contacts with their respective media communities. This targeted approach has enhanced ACRI's visibility in the Russian-language and Arabic-language media, resulting in an increase in inquiries to ACRI and a greater awareness of human rights issues in these two communities.

ACRI believes that a public more aware of the complex fields of civil liberties and human rights is better equipped to stand up for its rights, and more prepared to respect the rights of others.

Public Hotline

An important communication channel between ACRI and the general public is our public hotline, which handles complaints and referrals from more than 5,000 individuals a year.

The hotline, which is accessible in Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and English, is operated by a committed and skilled team of staff and thirty volunteers. In addition to providing callers with the necessary tools and knowledge to realize their fundamental rights, the hotline also enables ACRI to identify human rights trends and potentially precedent-setting cases throughout the country.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI



Human Rights Week 2006

In December 2006, to celebrate International Human Rights Day, ACRI upheld our annual tradition of organizing a week of activities to promote human rights. This year's Human Rights Week received extensive coverage in a broad range of media outlets, and succeeded in placing human rights issues in the spotlight.

Influencing Decision Makers: In order to raise awareness of central human rights concerns among decision makers, ACRI initiated a number of special sessions of various Knesset Committees that focused on issues including the problem of police brutality, workers' rights, Arab women's rights, and migrant workers' rights. ACRI staff provided expert testimony and disseminated reports and position papers on these and other issues before the Internal Affairs and the Environment Committee; the Committee of Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs; the Education, Culture, and Sports Committee; the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee; the Committee on Foreign Workers; the Labor, Welfare and Health Committee; and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Working without Dignity Report: Also during Human Rights Week, ACRI published our report, "Working without Dignity: Workers' Rights and their Violation," which examines the state's failure to enforce labor laws and defend workers' rights, and includes concrete recommendations to ensure that workers' rights are protected. The report, which was distributed to all members of the Knesset, CEOs of large companies, legal advisors in the government offices, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, High Court Justices, Judges of the Labor Courts, journalists, social change organizations, academics, and the general public, succeeded in generating widespread media coverage in the Hebrew-language, Russian-language, and Arabic-language media.

A Loveless State: In addition, ACRI and Kav LaOved co-wrote a high-profile position paper entitled, "A Loveless State: Israel's Denial of Migrant Workers' Right to Family Life". The paper examines government policies and practices which gravely violate migrant workers' rights to marriage, family life, and parenthood. The position paper received widespread media coverage, and was discussed in a specially-convened session of the Knesset Committee on Foreign Workers.

Public Events: Public events organized in the framework of human rights week included: a panel discussion on the role of women in times of armed conflict; the opening of our human rights art exhibition in Um al-Fahem; a film screening and lecture at the Haifa Cinematheque on “The Effect of Globalization on Human Rights”; and the public launch of a new project jointly run by ACRI, the Ashdod Municipality, and Sapir College, in which students are trained to handle inquiries in Russian, Amharic, and Spanish from new immigrants whose social and economic rights have been violated.

Campaign to Mark 40 Years of Occupation

In June 2007, to mark 40 years of occupation, ACRI, as part of a coalition of nine prominent Israeli human rights organizations, held a daylong series of public events. These ranged from short lectures to art exhibits and live performances, and explored the damage that the occupation causes to the human rights of the Palestinian population as well as to Israeli society. The dynamic events, which featured leading Israeli and Palestinian artists, writers, journalists, and academics, attracted more than 1,200 people during the day and generated extensive media coverage. In addition, ACRI produced and disseminated a position paper examining the impact of the prolonged occupation on Israeli democracy.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Project

Through our International Humanitarian Law (IHL) project, ACRI aims to raise public awareness of the harsh implications of harming a civilian population in the course of armed combat, and of the military’s obligations to prevent such injuries. In the framework of our project, ACRI offers educational workshops to social activists, pre-military students, educators, and youth movement counselors to deepen their knowledge of IHL. The workshops are conducted by trainers from a range of backgrounds, all of whom undergo training from ACRI on IHL. Media professionals, social activists and the general public are invited to a spectrum of events throughout the country – seminars, conferences, lectures, films, and artistic activities conducted in Hebrew and Arabic. In the past year ACRI created an updated version of a brochure on IHL, which also appears on our website.



EDUCATION

ACRI's Education Department was founded in the belief that in order to foster a culture of human rights and bring about real and lasting social change in Israel, ACRI has to work in the educational arena in order to advance the key values it promotes in the legal arena. ACRI believes that awareness and appreciation for human and civil rights must be promoted widely and early on and among all sectors of Israeli society. As such, ACRI's education team conduct hundreds of human rights training programs across the country each year, produce high-quality educational curricula in Hebrew and Arabic, and organize conferences and lectures on human rights education. By working with key agents of change – teachers in the Jewish and Arab school systems, security forces personnel, and social and community workers – ACRI aims to influence attitudes and build a more tolerant and just society.

Human Rights Education for the Security Forces

ACRI was the first and remains one of the few human rights organizations to conduct human rights training programs for the Israeli security forces. It is essential that Israel's security forces protect citizens' safety without violating human rights. ACRI runs workshops and seminars for police officers and cadets, the prison authority, the border patrol, and the immigration police. ACRI's workshops seek to enable security personnel to develop a deeper commitment to protecting human rights in the course of their difficult day-to-day work.

Human Rights Training for Immigration Police

In 2007, ACRI initiated a new human rights training program for Immigration Police. The Immigration Police are responsible for the detention of individuals suspected of residing illegally in Israel, and ACRI's training program is designed to strengthen their commitment and sensitivity to the importance of protecting the human rights of migrant workers.

Workshops for Prison Staff

ACRI implemented a highly successful program for the senior command of Beersheba's Eshel prison. This pilot project provided, for the first time, a professional human rights training program for a consolidated unit within the prison during their routine work schedule. The workshop participants were all members of the senior command. The workshops were tailor made to address the specific human rights concerns and dilemmas



Yoav Loeff, ACRI

that challenge the prison staff. Issues covered included: the prisoners' right to privacy; the transfer of confidential medical and other information between members of the senior command, the procedure for accompanying prisoners who undergo medical checks or searches; and the right to family life and conjugal visits. ACRI received excellent feedback, indicating that the participants had taken a time-out to re-evaluate their routine work from a human rights perspective.



Yoav Loeff, ACRI ■■■■■■

In order to foster a culture of human rights and bring about real and lasting social change in Israel, ACRI works in the educational arena to advance the key values we promote in the legal arena.

Human Rights Education in the Formal Education System

Given the enormous impact teachers and school peers have on the development of a student's identity and beliefs, the high school plays a major role in helping to shape values. Our Education Department staff and team of workshop facilitators run courses throughout the country for teachers and school administrators on the subject of human rights – both in the Jewish and Arab school systems. The main goal is to instill these professionals with a deep understanding of human right principles, promote these values in the classroom, and render them – and their students – fluent in the language of human rights. Workshops also provide educators with resources and ideas on how to implement these values into their curricula, and encourage teachers and students to become fluent in the language of human rights.

Workshops for Teachers

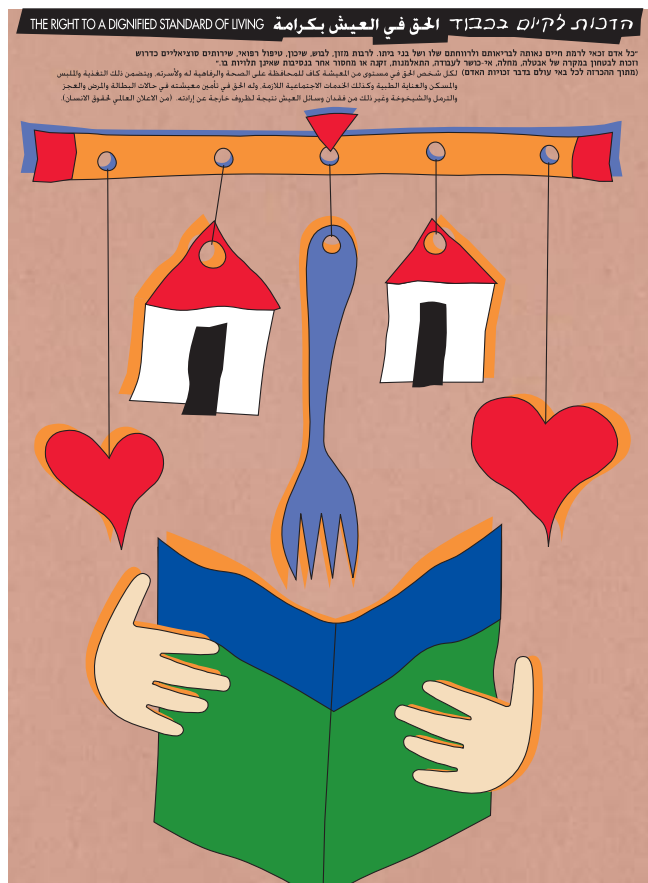
ACRI's educational workshops are in high demand. Some of the specialized courses we have given recently include: an innovative joint workshop for sixteen Jewish and Bedouin principals in the Ministry of Education's Southern District, with an emphasis on human rights in a multicultural society; a program for the Bat Yam Forum of Principals; and a one-week intensive course for teachers from the Center for the Development of Educational Leadership in the North. In addition, ACRI launched a new program designed to enable teachers in the Jewish school system to grapple with the dilemmas arising from Israel as both a Jewish and democratic state. Most recently, a pilot workshop targeted teachers from a variety of fields – not only civics teachers – to enable them to teach their topics of expertise through the perspective of human rights.

Human Rights Art Exhibition

ACRI organized our fifth annual human rights art exhibition, featuring children's creative representations of human rights. Prior to the exhibition, ACRI conducted human rights workshops for teachers in Arab schools, and the teachers then guided their students through the process of exploring human rights through art. The best pieces were selected to appear in the widely attended exhibition in Um al-Fahem.

Human Rights Poster

In December 2006, to mark Human Rights Week, ACRI produced a poster focusing on the right to a dignified standard of living. The poster was sent to all schools in the country via the Education Ministry. Subsequently, ACRI conducted workshops for teachers on how to use the posters as a trigger for discussions on human rights and democracy.



Human Rights Education for Community and Social Workers

Many social service providers – social workers, community workers, welfare staff, neighborhood activists, probation officers, immigrant absorption coordinators, and others – are in daily contact with people whose rights are violated. These workers have considerable influence over people's lives and fates, a responsibility that obliges them to make careful use of the professional power and social mandate they have been given. They must preserve their clients' dignity and respect their right to make decisions about their lives. ACRI's educational activities for social service workers aim to change the perception of clients from "needy" to "entitled".

Over the past year, ACRI conducted workshops for more than 200 social workers on the subject of human rights and social work. The training is designed to enable the participants to develop their understanding of human rights principles so that they can adopt a rights-based approach in their everyday work.

Feedback from Participants in ACRI's Workshops for Social Workers

"I learned about rights in the past, but now I understand how they are relevant on the ground, and how I can implement knowledge of these rights in my work."

"Whatever caused us to be uncomfortable regarding human rights in the past was put on the table right away. Our discussion with ACRI caused us to think profoundly about actually translating these lessons into action."

"We left the workshop with the feeling that we can influence policymakers, that we are committed to effecting change, both in our thoughts and in the way we approach our lives. We don't only feel this way about ourselves, but we feel that we can transmit this sense of commitment to others."

Board and Staff

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Victor Lederfarb – Financial Manager
Ron Ovadia – Maintenance Coordinator (Jerusalem office)
Orit Rozovsky – Secretary (Jerusalem office)
Ofra Talker – Secretary (Tel Aviv office)
Naama Yadgar – Administrative Manager

A Fond Farewell...

At the end of 2006, Roni Tamir, ACRI's Administrative Manager, retired after eighteen and a half years in which she played a central role in our Jerusalem office. Everyone at ACRI – the board, staff, and volunteers (past and present) – would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to Roni for her many years of highly professional work, her invaluable contribution to ACRI, her devotion, and her special presence that was with us in days of joy and days of sadness. Roni, we wish you many years of happiness, fulfillment, and good health.

Financial Report for 2006

The following Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement are a condensed version of ACRI's full financial report for the year ended December 31, 2006. The full report, prepared and audited by Ziv and Haft, CPA (Israel), Jerusalem branch, is available in Hebrew from ACRI.

All amounts are in New Israeli Shekels (NIS).

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,951,778
Securities	6,868,432
Accounts and Grants Receivable	391,753

Total **9,211,963**

Fixed Assets

Furniture and Equipment	456,317
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Total assets **9,668,280**

Liabilities and Fund Balances

Current Liabilities and Net Assets

Checks Payable and Expenses to be paid	174,926
Miscellaneous Creditors	811,467

986,393

Provision for Severance Pay **896,141**

Net Assets (*) **7,077,075**

Net Temporarily Restricted Assets **708,671**

Total **9,668,280**

Income and Expenditure Statement

Income

New Israel Fund (unrestricted)	2,112,408
The Tauber Fund	140,040
Ford Foundation	343,962
Private Foundation	460,300
The Goldman Fund	299,500
EED	768,863
Christian Aid	69,870
Private Canadian Foundation	1,197,769
Naomi and Nehemia Cohen Foundation	221,817
The European Union	437,428
Global Ministries	139,316
The Joint Distribution Committee	63,690
Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation	145,350
The British FCO	190,031
Diakonia	246,587
The Abraham Fund Initiatives	67,500
Miscellaneous Overseas Donations	726,820
Total Overseas Grants and Donations	7,631,251
Membership Dues and Domestic Donations	226,587
Publications, Seminars and Activities	248,263
Income from Investment	754,856
Total Income	8,860,957

Expenditure

Program Staff Salaries	5,097,525
Activities	2,461,872
Administrative Staff Salaries	990,712
Administrative Expenditure	137,658

Total Expenditure **8,687,787**

Excess of Income over Expenditure **173,190**

(*) Includes endowment granted by the Ford Foundation

Thank you

ACRI's many supporters – from within Israel and around the world – play an essential role in the success of our activities. We would especially like to thank the **New Israel Fund** for its continued generosity and dedication to ACRI's mission.

ACRI wishes to thank the following major donors who contributed to our organization in the past year:

The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The British Shalom Salaam Trust

Christian Aid

The Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation

Diakonia

EED

European Union

The Ford Foundation

Global Ministries

The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

The New Israel Fund

Preventive Diplomacy

In addition, ACRI would like to acknowledge the support of several anonymous donors. We are sincerely thankful for your generosity.

A Big Thank You to ACRI's Volunteers

The work of ACRI's staff is greatly supported by our dedicated team of volunteers. Our volunteers staff the public hotline, assist in the information center, conduct community outreach work, and provide pro bono legal assistance, among other activities. We are deeply grateful for their initiative, commitment, and reliability, and would like to thank them for their important contribution to ACRI.

How to Support ACRI

For more information about ACRI's work, please contact:

Gila Orkin

Director of International Relations and Development

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)

P.O. Box 34510, Jerusalem, 91000

Israel

Tel: +972-2-652-1218

Fax: +972-2-652-1219

Email: gila@acri.org.il

Website: www.acri.org.il

To sign up for our bimonthly email newsletter in English, please email Melanie Takefman, International Communication and Development Coordinator, at melanie@acri.org.il

Supporting ACRI

ACRI's vital work is supported by membership dues and donations from individuals and foundations in Israel and abroad. ACRI does not accept funding from the Israeli government or from political parties.

Please support our efforts to protect and promote human rights and civil liberties by making a contribution towards our work.

Direct Donations

To donate to ACRI directly, please send a check made payable to ACRI (please see page 41 for our contact details).

Tax-Exempt Donations

Tax-exempt donations to ACRI may be made via the New Israel Fund (NIF). Please mark your contribution as **donor-advised to ACRI** and send it to the following address:

New Israel Fund
Attention: Zhanna Tatarov
P.O. Box 91588
Washington, DC 20077-7503
USA

Tel: 202-842-0900

Fax: 202-842-0991

Email: info@nif.org

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