



Activity Report July-December 2019

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) is a policy driven, non-profit organization protecting the human rights and civil liberties of all people living in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

ACRI upholds the pillars of democracy by demanding that duty bearers change policies and practices that violate basic rights and liberties. ACRI works together with the courts, the Knesset, government agencies and civil society to tackle Israel's most urgent human rights injustices.

This report covers ACRI's work in each of our strategic focus areas: the Arab minority, social and economic rights, civil and political rights, immigration and status, the occupied territories and the public hotline. It also covers ACRI's work in promoting a public discourse about human rights via policy advocacy, public outreach and human rights education.

ACRI's Legal Department

1. Arab Minority Rights in Israel

ACRI, together with a geography teacher, a student in the Arab education system, and the Monitoring Committee for Arab Educational Affairs, [petitioned the Supreme Court](#) demanding that the Ministry of Education **translate the entire online matriculation examination** in geography – including maps, legends, and extensive accompanying text—into Arabic. Following the submission of the petition, the Ministry of Education found alternative solutions for Arab students taking the examination in 2019, promising that in the future the online examination in Arabic would include the full translation of all related documents. The ministry's undertaking was formalized in a Court ruling, and the Court emphasized the obligation to **ensure that all matriculation examinations are also available in Arabic.**

Right to Equality

- In July, the district [court rejected ACRI's petition](#) demanding the opening of an **Arab school in Nazareth Illit**. ACRI submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court in October 2019.
- ACRI wrote to the Ministry of Education, the National Library, and the Center for Educational Technology demanding that their **reading encouragement program** be offered in Arabic and adapted to the needs of Arab students.
- ACRI continues to advance the [petition submitted in December 2018](#) against the “**Nation-State Law.**” In the petition, ACRI argued that the law gravely violates equality, democracy, and the rights of the Arab minority.
- ACRI asked the Ministry of Welfare to establish public, government-subsidized **day care centers** in Arab neighborhoods. At present, only one in every nine children who attends a subsidized public day care center is Arab.
- ACRI demanded that Gilboa Regional Council allocate resources for the **construction of roads and sidewalks** in Tamra, an Arab community within the council's area of jurisdiction.

Planning and Building

- ACRI is helping the residents of the **Syrian villages in the Golan** – Majdal al-Shams, Mas'ade, Buq'ata, and Ein Qiniyye – [in their campaign against a plan](#) to **erect dozens of wind turbines** on their farmland. The plan will have disastrous ramifications for urban planning, health, the

environment, and the socioeconomic condition of the villages. Together with Al-Marsad – Human Rights Center in Golan Heights and Bimkom, ACRI submitted an objection on behalf of some of the residents to the National Infrastructures Committee and met with an investigator for the Committee. The Committee has decided to recommend that the government approve the plan, and ACRI is now considering the legal options.

- ACRI continues to campaign against the outcomes of the “**Kaminitz Law**,” which has led to stricter enforcement against planning and building offenses, and to examine its implementation. The law mainly affects the Arab public in Israel. ACRI published a rights leaflet in Arabic and Hebrew to help civilians cope with the stricter enforcement of orders and fines.

The Right to Personal Security

- ACRI asked the police to provide information about the operation of its “**City without Violence**” program and the establishment of community police stations in Arab communities.
- ACRI wrote to the police after **roadblocks were installed** in the Jawarish neighborhood of Ramle following a spike in violent incidents in the area, clarifying that the disruption of daily routine and the imposition of a closure on the neighborhood does not help solve the problem, but serves only to violate the residents’ rights and exacerbate the situation in the neighborhood.

Rights of the Bedouin-Arab Population in the Negev

- A budgetary dispute between the Ministry of Finance and Al-Kasom Regional Council led to disruptions and irregularities in **educational services for 18,000 children in the unrecognized Bedouin villages**. During the reporting period [ACRI submitted two petitions](#) to the District Court in Be’er Sheva, together with the Monitoring Committee for Arab Educational Affairs and the Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Negev.

In early January 2020, the district court strengthened ACRI’s position during the court hearing, causing the parties to quickly reach a compromise, and **studies resumed shortly after**.

- Following ACRI’s outreach to Al-Kasom Regional Council and the Ministry of Education about the prolonged period taken to fix the structural security issues in previously closed **kindergarten** facilities, the necessary repairs were made and **the kindergartens reopened**.
- ACRI submitted a petition and **successfully restored the water supply**, which was disconnected unlawfully for almost two weeks due to residents’ debts, to some 40 residents of the recognized village of Kuhla.
- After ACRI contacted the Israel Electric Company and the Rahat Municipality, 25 new transformers were installed in neighborhoods that suffering from **power outages**.
- ACRI continues to work with residents of the unrecognized villages, and particularly residents of Wadi al-Na’am and Um Matnan, in their **struggle to gain recognition** and in **planning proceedings**.



ACRI Attys. Sana Ibn Bari and Oded Feller at the Be'er Sheva District Court with the Al-Kasom Regional Council Parent's Committee.

2. Social and Economic Rights

In July, [ACRI petitioned the Supreme Court](#) together with four individuals whose electricity supply was disconnected, the Union of Social Workers, and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel. The petition demanded that the **decision to disconnect or restrict the electricity supply** of a consumer with accumulated debts be made only after a thorough examination of his or her economic situation, health condition, and living circumstances, along with those of the people living in the same household. ACRI demanded that people living in poverty always be provided with the sufficient electricity supply necessary for a dignified existence, and an expansion of the list of vulnerable consumers who are protected from having resources disconnected due to health reasons. The submission of the petition, now pending, was accompanied by a digital campaign.

Right to a Dignified Existence

ACRI contacted the Water Authority and Mekorot Water Company regarding the need for regulations on restricting the **disconnection of the water supply** to locales that have accumulated debts, many of which are Arab local authorities facing huge deficits.

Rights in the Welfare System

ACRI submitted comments on a draft version of the Social Work Ordinance **concerning the provision of services at welfare offices for people with intellectual disabilities**. Also, after ACRI submitted a freedom of information petition, the Welfare Ministry provided ACRI with the results of a survey on attitudes among social workers that had previously been archived. The survey related to the question of the **legal representation of parents** at hearings before committees discussing the treatment of children at risk.

Right to Housing

- In August, the Supreme Court ruled that a company that wins a tender from the Israel Lands Authority and then **markets apartments in a discriminatory manner** may be sued for damages. This [ruling marks the adoption of a position that ACRI](#) has been presenting since 2010. However, the Court refused to rule on the question of whether or not the Prohibition of Discrimination in Products and Services Law applies to the sale of apartments. In November 2019, a proceeding was completed in which ACRI represented Arab couples who faced **discrimination in two housing projects** of a company in Ma'alot-Tarsiha. The couples were awarded tens of thousands of shekels in compensation.
- A hearing was held in September on [ACRI's petition demanding an update](#) of **rent assistance benefits** to reflect the changes in rental costs on the market. In response to criticism by the court, the Housing Ministry and Finance Ministry undertook to examine the updating of the benefits in the next budget.
- After ACRI contacted the Exceptions Committee at the Housing Ministry, the right to **public housing** for a family whose father is a stateless Palestinian was recognized, even though the father is not insured with the National Insurance Institute.

Right to Education

ACRI, together with the Educational Law and Policy Clinic at the University of Haifa, [submitted a request](#), now pending, for a further hearing following the rejection of the first petition against **exorbitant payments demanded from parents by public schools**.

3. Right to Equality

In July, the Be'er Sheva District Court [granted a groundbreaking ruling](#) on a petition against the Be'er Sheva Municipality that ACRI joined as an amicus curiae, fighting the discrimination in funding for the Hapoel **women's soccer team** relative to the support provided for the men's team. The Court accepted many of ACRI's principled arguments regarding the manner in which various criteria served to perpetuate gender discrimination. In August, ACRI submitted a request to join another petition to HCJ as an amicus curiae, challenging the cut in funding for women's soccer teams in the premier league. In October, ACRI participated in a hearing in the case, which is still pending.

- Together with the Israel Women's Network, ACRI submitted a freedom of information petition concerning the policy of the Bnei Brak Municipality regarding **women's images on commercial billboards** in the city.
- ACRI and Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel and the Israel Religious Action Center's Racism Crisis Center [petitioned the Supreme Court](#) to oppose **discriminatory inspections on buses** entering Barzilai Hospital.
- ACRI petitioned the Supreme Court against the police practice of demanding identity cards in the absence of any concrete suspicion – a practice that is usually applied in the context of the [profiling of minority populations](#).
- In May, ACRI submitted [an objection to draft regulations](#) that would allow local authorities to collect payments from non-residents **at the entrance to municipal parks**. In August the interior minister announced that he would not continue the regulation process. In December ACRI asked to join a class suit action submitted against the Afula Municipality after it prevented non-residents from entering the municipal park over the summer.
- ACRI exposed **discrimination against Arabs** in entry to a swimming pool in Hagar. A report on the case was broadcast on Channel Two network.
- ACRI continued its monitoring project concerning the implementation of 16 key recommendations in the **Palmor Committee Report** on the struggle against racism and discrimination. The project is run jointly with the Center for Empowerment of the Civilian and the Public Knowledge Workshop. Among other activities, the project has developed an innovative [digital platform](#) for processing complaints of discrimination and racism; the platform is now in its pilot phase.

4. Civil and Political Rights

Right to Vote: Ahead of national elections in September, ACRI [submitted a position to the Chairperson of the Elections Committee](#) concerning the plan by Likud activists to position cameras in polling stations. ACRI argued that photographing and recording should not be permitted in polling stations, and that it is impossible to ignore the fact that the initiative was intended mainly to intimidate Arab citizens seeking to exercise their democratic right to vote. In accordance with this position and that of peer organizations, the Chairperson of the Elections Committee ruled that **observers for political parties should not be permitted to photograph or record the course of voting in the polling station area**. ACRI subsequently opposed a proposed law that the government attempted to advance before the elections with the goal of permitting such filming. The proposal did not secure a majority in the Knesset.

Relatedly, ACRI [later appealed to the Chairperson of the Elections Committee to have military service taken off the list of requirements](#) in order to work as a polling station monitor – a discriminatory requirement that led, in particular, to the exclusion of the Ultra-Orthodox and Arabs – which was consequently revoked.

Freedom of Expression

- The Administrative Affairs Court in Haifa [accepted ACRI's petition](#) and disqualified a decision by the Mayor of Umm el-Fahm to **cancel a performance** in the city by the rapper Tamer Nafar due to controversial lyrics.
- After ACRI intervened, the Deputy Attorney General clarified that the Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Ma'alot-Tarshiha did not have the authority to **cancel a screening of the film** "Leah Tsemel, Attorney" during the DocAviv festival in the city.
- ACRI helped the organizers of **Pride Parades** in Bat Yam and [Netanya](#) to receive permits and cancel draconian demands presented by the police that threatened the realization of the events.
- As part of [Doco-Rights](#) project, ACRI continued to **assist demonstrators and organizers of protests**, holding training sessions about freedom of expression and protest, gag orders, digital security, and rights during arrest.

Tel Aviv District Court accepted ACRI's complaint against Tel Aviv University on behalf of students who were required to pay for extra security for a conference on campus with speakers from the organization "Breaking the Silence." The University justified its demand by expressing concerns of possible violent incidents given the atmosphere and the incitement against the organization. In the suit, ACRI argued that the University was effectively imposing a **"price tag" on freedom of expression**, and in particular on views that deviate from the consensus, while rewarding bullying and intolerance. The Court accepted ACRI's arguments and emphasized that the commitment to freedom of expression is a cornerstone of academic life. The Court ruled that if the University wished to demand payment from those organizing demonstrations and events, it must establish this clearly in its official protocols, and that in any case, it is not permissible to charge an increased rate for a controversial event.

Digital Rights

- Together with Adalah, ACRI submitted a petition against the Cyber Department in the State Prosecutor's Office, demanding that it cease its practice of **asking internet content providers (Facebook, Google, etc.) to remove content**.
- ACRI submitted requests to review cases in which orders were granted to block access to particular websites. The requests seek to examine the implementation of mechanisms of supervision and public control in the context of the **state's authority to censor the internet**. During the proceedings, ACRI received some of the information requested.

Rights in the Criminal Process

Following a [petition ACRI pursued](#) over a period of about 18 months, the Israel Prison Service (IPS) allowed a transgender prisoner to begin a process of **gender reassignment**. Prior to the petition, the IPS ignored the prisoner's requests to begin the process, and she consequently faced worsening psychological distress. In the petition, ACRI also demanded that the prisoner be moved to the women's prison Neve Tirzah, and under pressure from the court the IPS indeed transferred her in June 2019. This is the first time that a prisoner has begun a process of gender reassignment while in prison.

- ACRI submitted a request for a further hearing following the rejection of its petition demanding that prisoners receive **family visits** on Shabbat. The request for a further hearing was dismissed.
- ACRI petitioned the Supreme Court against the decision by the Police Investigation Department to **close the investigation against an officer** who [pulled the beard of a Haredi](#) man and later filed a false report claiming that the man had assaulted a police officer.
- ACRI was featured prominently in a series of reports on Channel 13 News on police **use of Tasers**.



ACRI Atty. Anne Suci on Channel 13 News, November '19.

5. Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

East Jerusalem

Since June 2019, the police have implemented a harsh policy in the Issawiya neighborhood of East Jerusalem. The policy includes **street patrols, nighttime raids, spurious arrests, road blocks, store closures, and systemic fines** for trivial offenses. ACRI maintains regular contact with the residents, monitoring the events carefully, and intervening when necessary. In July, ACRI wrote to the Commander of the Jerusalem District Police demanding that the police curb their conduct in the neighborhood, arguing that the police policy is intended to deter and intimidate residents; as such, it constitutes collective punishment, and moreover serves only to heighten tension and leads to an escalation in the situation. In November, [ACRI wrote to the Attorney General](#) asking to examine police conduct in Issawiya and to take steps to curb the actions. ACRI also submitted two complaints to the Police Investigation Department following a serious instance of police violence.

- ACRI [petitioned the Jerusalem District Court](#) on behalf of 27 residents of Silwan, challenging the decision by the municipality to **name alleyways in the neighborhood after rabbis**.



ACRI's field worker discussing the naming of streets in Silwan with residents.

- ACRI [contacted the Commander of the Jerusalem District Police](#), after which **school buses transporting children to and from school** were prioritized at Shuafat Refugee Camp checkpoint, particularly during the morning rush hour.
- ACRI continued to [pursue its petition](#) concerning the **water supply** to the neighborhoods beyond the Separation Barrier. During the reporting period a new pump was installed in Ras Khamis, leading to an improvement in the water pressure.

- Together with the Ma'an workers' organization, ACRI contacted the directors of the Israeli Employment Services in [Wadi Joz](#) and in [West Jerusalem](#) regarding problems in the provision of **employment services** to residents of East Jerusalem.
- ACRI continues to pursue its petition demanding that residents of East Jerusalem be able to receive **services from the Population Registry** at any Interior Ministry office, like other residents, and not only at the Jerusalem office.
- ACRI demanded that the Ministry of Transport implement the five-year plan ensuring that by 2020 passengers will be able to use [Rav Kav travel cards](#) on all means of public transportation in East Jerusalem.

West Bank and Gaza Strip

- After reports of an incident in which Israeli soldiers **disguised themselves as humanitarian aid workers** during an intelligence-gathering operation in the Gaza Strip, [ACRI wrote to the Chief Military Advocate](#) asking him to clarify to the military that such actions endanger workers in humanitarian organizations and are liable to lead residents of the Gaza Strip to refrain from requesting assistance when it is needed.
- [ACRI contacted OC Central Command](#) on behalf of several human rights organizations, demanding that Palestinians be given full protection against **injury and damage to their property** by settlers during the olive harvesting season.
- ACRI contacted the Judge Advocate General and demanded that he open an investigation following the **killing of nine members of a family** in an air force raid in the Gaza Strip.
- Together with peer organizations, ACRI published a statement opposing the decision to expel the **human rights activist** Omar Shakir, and later [condemned the army raid](#) on the offices of the **Palestinian organization A-Damir**, which defends prisoners' rights.

6. Immigration and Status

In July, [ACRI filed a petition](#) to the Administrative Affairs Court on behalf of 129 asylum seekers and migrant minors living in Petach Tikva. The petition against the Petach Tikva Municipality and the Ministry of Education was submitted after the municipality refused to register children who are not Israeli citizens or residents to schools in the city. The policy was directed in particular at asylum seekers from Eritrea. ACRI also challenged the policy of establishing segregated kindergartens in the city for the foreign population. Following comments by the court, the municipality announced that it would **open registration to the children of asylum seekers and migrants**, and the petition was dismissed. After the municipality refused to place some of the children in educational institutions, ACRI submitted a request under the Contempt of Court Order. The request was accepted and consequently all of the children were registered at educational institutions.

- ACRI continued to pursue the petition against the **"deposit fund,"** which is intended to encourage asylum seekers to leave Israel by reducing their income.
- ACRI continues to accompany family members in proceedings to **regulate their status**. Cases include the mother of an Israeli minor who was the partner of an Israeli citizen and experienced abuse, and the daughter of a resident of East Jerusalem whose status was revoked because her Palestinian partner lives in the West Bank. ACRI is also supervising proceedings to regulate the status of several stateless individuals.

In September, the District Court in Tel Aviv accepted a [petition ACRI submitted](#) on behalf of an Israeli citizen and her partner, an asylum seeker from Sudan. The court ordered the Population and Migration Authority to continue the proceeding to regulate the partner's status, even if he does not present documents from the Sudanese authorities. In its ruling, the **court recognized the difficulties facing asylum seekers in Israel and the fact that the processing of asylum**

requests has been delayed for years. It was also ruled that the **immigration laws should influence family law and vice versa**, and should include aspects relating to the right to a family life, the right to parenthood, and the good of the child. The state has requested permission to appeal to the Supreme Court and we ACRI is preparing to respond.

- In cooperation with Adalah, ACRI continues to represent an Israeli citizen convicted of involvement in a terror attack in a proceeding instigated by the Interior Minister to **revoke his citizenship**.
- ACRI is working with the authorities regarding several problematic aspects in the work of the **Appeals Tribunal** – an administrative migration tribunal that operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and serves as the first point of appeal concerning decisions on migration and status. Among other issues of note, ACRI repeatedly contacted the Ministry of Justice during the reporting period in an attempt to **prevent political involvement** in the appointment of the justices to the tribunal.

Migrant Workers

- In cooperation with Kav LaOved, ACRI submitted three constitutional petitions on behalf of three migrant workers. ACRI demanded the abolition of the clauses in the Foreign Workers Law under which the Population and Migration Authority **confiscated social rights payments** (pension and termination compensation) accumulated for the workers after they failed to leave the country before the expiry of their visas.

7. Public Hotline

ACRI's public hotline receives an average of 200 requests per month. According to the request, the hotline staff provides information, consultation, or references to other organizations that can better serve the caller's needs. In **354 cases**, the hotline staff aid the caller through handling paperwork with the relevant government bodies or opening and processing legal proceedings.

ACRI assisted a family from central Israel who fled their home after facing death threats due to a blood feud with another family. Despite the tangible threat to their lives, and even after two members of the family were attacked with firearms and injured, the police refused to provide them sufficient protection, claiming that it is not their duty to provide private guarding services. After ACRI's public hotline staff intervened, the members of the family were moved to a temporary shelter. After the family was forced to leave the shelter, ACRI petitioned the High Court of Justice and demanded that the family be given safe and proper shelter. During the hearing, **the justices asked the police to provide an update within two weeks regarding their progress in finding a solution and noted that the case raised a principle problem**, thus instructing the state to submit a plan within three months for assisting individuals threatened due to association with someone that has a criminal background.

- ACRI successfully processed over 20 complaints concerning eligibility for **public housing**, proper living conditions in public housing, and **rental assistance**.
- ACRI processed dozens of complaints from citizens whose **electricity was disconnected due to outstanding debts**, including elderly people, large families, and people with disabilities and illnesses requiring the constant use of electrical medical equipment. In the vast majority of cases, ACRI managed to secure the reconnection of the power supply.
- Following ACRI's intervention, **LGBTQI Pride Parades** were able to take place for the first time in Bat Yam and Netanya (see above under Freedom of Expression and Protest).
- ACRI assisted two Palestinian citizens, who each fled to Israel after facing death threats due to their **sexual orientation**, to receive permits allowing them to remain in Israel.

- ACRI assisted a Haredi mother whose daughter was not accepted by the school she wished to attend because she is of **Mizrahi origin**. Following ACRI's intervention, the school retracted its refusal to register the girl.

Human Rights Education

Ahead of International Human Rights Day, ACRI developed a [lesson plan for teachers](#) and educators in Hebrew and Arabic on the subject of **the right to electricity and water**. The main message in the lesson is that water and electricity are not luxuries, but rather basic rights and public resources that belong to everyone; they are vital for realizing the right to a dignified existence, the right to health, and sometimes the right to life itself. The lesson plan offers various options for learning and discussion through the use of video clips, interactive animation, and [various other materials](#) with the goal of making human rights more relevant to the lives of young people.

1. Training, Workshops, and Courses

- During the report period, ACRI facilitated extensive activities in **schools** and in **teacher training colleges**, running training workshops and lectures on the subject of human rights education and anti-racist education for teaching students and lecturers at Al-Qasemi College, the Kibbutz Seminar, Kaye College in Be'er Sheva, Ruppin College, Oranim College, and Beit Berl College, and Tel Aviv University.
- ACRI ran workshops on **anti-racist education** and coping with racism in the classroom for staff members from Haifa Municipality's Educational Empowerment Unit and initiated a 10-session training course on civil education for teachers from a school in Ramle, with the goal of cultivating a commitment to anti-racist education and providing appropriate pedagogic tools.
- The **academic course** ACRI ran over the past three years at the University of Haifa on **anti-racist education** has entered the integration stage –from here on out the course will be run by a lecturer from the academic faculty at the university.
- As part of ACRI's **international humanitarian law** project, the Human Rights Education Department is running a training program at five **pre-military academies** for approximately 150 participants. The 10-session courses introduce the young participants to human rights principles, encourage them to examine issues relating to human rights and democratic values in the context of the State of Israel and Israeli society, and provide a conceptual, informative, and legal introduction concerning the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories.
- For the fourth year, ACRI ran a **course for young cinematographers** in high schools in cooperation with the Tel Aviv Municipality. One of the films from this reporting period was accepted to [an international youth film festival](#), a significant achievement for the project, confirming the quality of the films and of the process undergone by the students who participate in the course.
- ACRI continued to provide **consultation and supervision** to educators in the development of activities and educational content relating to human rights and the struggle against racism.

2. Conferences and Seminars

- To mark International Human Rights Day, ACRI held a seminar at Kaye Teacher Training College on the subject of **children's rights**, focusing in particular on their basic right to security and protection. Over 250 Jewish and Bedouin education and teaching students participated in the seminar.

- ACRI participated in a “Political Week” at Oranim College, providing a lecture for education-civil leadership students on the subject of **teachers’ freedom of expression** and in a seminar at Ruppin Academic Center on the ramifications of **racism** for Israeli society.



Seminar at Kaye Teacher Training College

3. Pedagogic Content

- ACRI continues its longstanding cooperation with the Civil Education and Coexistence Headquarters in the Ministry of Education. As part of the joint project, which the Center for Educational Technology and the Begin Heritage Center also joined this year, the coalition produced a digital poster on the subject of **social rights** to mark International Human Rights Day. The poster was distributed to all schools in Israel together with an educational kit offering diverse activities relating to different rights.



Poster for International Human Rights Day

- “The Workshop” – the Education Department’s website in [Hebrew](#) and [Arabic](#), includes an extensive database of materials on the subject of education for democracy, human rights, and anti-racism. The website is updated regularly with lesson plans relating to various rights, varying posts about current issues, and information about the department’s projects, conferences, and events in which ACRI participates. ACRI also disseminates newsletters in Hebrew and Arabic to thousands of educators. During the reporting period, the Hebrew website had an average of **1,329 unique visitors** a month, and the Arabic website reached **1,808 unique monthly visitors**.

4. Education-related Policy Advocacy

- The **Human Rights Education Forum**, which ACRI established in April, solidified and expanded its activities during the reporting period. The goal of the Forum is to serve as a platform for learning, sharing, and activism for educators on issues relating to human rights education, educational activism, critical pedagogy, and the anti-racist struggle. Dozens of teachers are members of the Forum's active WhatsApp group. The members of the Forum meet with journalists and educators and initiate the writing of opinion and editorial pieces, position papers, and media statements relating to topical educational issues. To mark International Human Rights Day, ACRI initiated special meetings for the forum with Dr. Hannah Safran and former Member of Knesset Dov Khenin.
- Approximately 100 members of the **Forum of Civics Teachers in Arab Society**, which was co-established by ACRI, met together with the Monitoring Committee on Arab Educational Affairs. The meeting discussed topical issues, including the ramifications of the Nation-State Law for Arab citizens, teaching of the law as part of the Ministry of Education's new curriculum, and the subject of violence in Arab society.



Forum meeting with former MK Dov Khenin in Jerusalem, Dec '19.

Public Outreach

1. Policy Advocacy

Since January 2019, the Knesset has been in recess for recurring elections, and this ACRI adapted its policy advocacy activities to this reality. During the recess, activities have included routine working meetings with Members of Knesset, ministers, and senior civil servants concerning current policy and legislative issues, as well as issues ACRI seeks to promote. ACRI submitted position papers and participated in relevant Knesset committee discussions. During this period, ACRI's policy advocacy emphasis shifted to **contacts with candidates**, with the goal of advancing key ACRI themes and positions that are critical for democracy and human rights.

ACRI distributed dozens of position papers to the candidates on key issues, including on the shrinking democratic space, strengthening the public health system, narrowing educational gaps, workers' rights, living in dignity and overcoming poverty, the abolition of the Nation-State Law, and the advancement of the rights of the Arab minority within Israel as well as of the Palestinians in the West Bank. In meetings with leading candidates and their teams ahead of the elections, ACRI placed particular emphasis on the danger of the **shrinking democratic space**, and especially on the attempts to harm the status of the Supreme Court and the activities of NGO's. Another key issue raised was the "creeping annexation" of the Occupied Territories through direct Knesset legislation. ACRI also uploaded various "FAQ" documents to its website intended to make these issues accessible to the general public (e.g. [the Override Clause](#), [Hourly Workers](#)).

ACRI focused on two specific issues that emerged in connection with the elections – the installation of cameras at polling stations (see above under Civil and Political Rights) and the implementation of the "V15 law." ACRI also continued to promote the implementation of the Palmor Report, engaging in contacts with policy makers in the Ministry of Justice and the Unit for the Struggle against Racism in order to discuss police procedures, body cameras for police officers, and discrimination in various screening examinations (in the welfare and military systems, among others). Other issues addressed

during the reporting period include prisoners' debts, promoting the United Nation's sustainable development objectives, and the participation of a social representative on the planning committees.

ACRI maintained contact with foreign representatives in order to update them on issues concerning the shrinking democratic space and participated in an overseas conference about defending democracy. ACRI also undertook an organizational strategic thinking process on the increasing phenomenon of excluding women in Israeli society, formulating criteria for responding to instances of exclusion.

2. Press and Print Media

During the reporting period, ACRI was mentioned **275 times** in television, radio, newspapers, and websites in Hebrew, Arabic, and English, including news reports on activities and official statements in response to current events. ACRI staff members were interviewed by media outlets from Israel and abroad and published their own opinion articles.

Key media issues in **Hebrew** included: The registration of refugee children at educational institutions in Petah Tikva; equality for women in sports; freedom of expression; disconnection of electricity due to debts; discrimination against Arab citizens; the creeping annexation; and over-policing in Issawiya. Key media issues in **Arabic** included: East Jerusalem, and particularly the street names in Silwan; freedom of artistic expression, and particularly the appearance by Tamer Nafar in Umm al-Fahm; the school strike in Al-Kasom Regional Council; and International Human Rights Day. In **English**, key issues in the media included: discrimination against Palestinians in East Jerusalem and in housing; freedom of expression; forbidding cameras in polling stations; discrimination against Haredi and Arab communities regarding working at polling stations; Israel demolishing unrecognized Bedouin villages; torture of Palestinian suspect by Israeli security forces.

3. Internet and Social Media

On International Human Rights Day (December 10th), ACRI launched the [ACRI Podcast – Because Not All Rights Are Protected](#). The first episode of the podcast focused on the right to a dignified existence. The goal of the podcast is to focus attention on various aspects of human rights from a current perspective. The podcast is disseminated via newsletter and Facebook, and has been uploaded to popular podcast applications.

During the reporting period, ACRI continued to be very active on social media and on various internet platforms, publishing **almost 200 posts** on **Facebook** in [Hebrew](#), as well as dozens of posts on the [Arabic](#) and [English](#) pages.

ACRI's website in Hebrew, Arabic, and English is updated on a daily basis, offering up-to-date information about court hearings, human rights-related work of the Knesset, ACRI's activities, and information about human rights. In addition to regular updates to the website, ACRI also uploaded a series of information sheets and publications in Hebrew, Arabic, and English during the reporting period. These included: [FAQs about the Override Clause](#), the exclusion of women, and the right to electricity; [facts and figures about discrimination against the residents of East Jerusalem](#), and a document marking Human Rights Day – [20 Bills for the New Knesset](#). Alongside the new website, which was launched in October 2018, the old website continues to function as a legal archive.

Social Medium	Midyear 2019	Yearend 2019
Facebook Hebrew	91,790	98,522
Facebook Arabic	25,450	26,021
Facebook English	24,921	31,062

Social Medium	Midyear 2019	Yearend 2019
Twitter Hebrew	20,830	21,000
Twitter English	3,927	3,976
Website Hebrew	11,900 unique monthly visitors	9,387
Website English	1,300 unique monthly visitors	1,231
Website Arabic	1,640 unique monthly visitors	1,859
Newsletter Hebrew	15,010	14,967
Newsletter English	3,243	3,634

4. Campaigns and Events

In July, ACRI launched a public campaign in Hebrew and Arabic under the slogan **Electricity isn't a luxury – it's a human right**. The campaign accompanied the petition ACRI submitted to the Supreme Court against the disconnection of the electric supply of consumers who accumulated debts (see above under Social Rights). The goal of the campaign was to position the right to electricity as a basic human right required for a dignified human existence. The first stage included a video clip uploaded to ACRI's Facebook page, opinion articles in the media, and a FAQ page on the website. The campaign will continue into 2020.

- **Doubling Impact:** [ACRI's annual fundraising campaign](#) ran in Hebrew, Arabic, and English on December 9th-10th. Several video clips were produced for the campaign: a promo clip featuring ACRI staff members; [a main clip featuring ACRI's Executive Director](#); and clips starring the actress, singer, and producer [Mira Awad](#) and [chef Erez Komarovsky](#). The clips were distributed via the newsletter and WhatsApp, were uploaded to the campaign page and Facebook pages, and garnered a high number of views. Ultimately, 1,045,546 shekels were raised during the 48-hour, all-or-nothing matching campaign from over 1,400 donors.



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- **“Round-up for good”:** Over the summer, ACRI produced a mini-campaign that ran on digital platforms to promote this program that allows individuals to make small donations to ACRI every month through rounding up their monthly credit card charges.

Events

- “**Citizens without Addresses**”: In June, ACRI participated in an exhibition of works by the photographer Adi Segal featuring unrecognized Bedouin communities in the Galilee. The exhibition, which was staged in Nazareth, presented the problem of the unrecognized villages in the Galilee and the traditional lifestyle still maintained by the Bedouin, exposing a new side of Bedouin culture. The partners in the project were Dugrinet – the social website for residents of the Galilee, Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, and the Galilee Association.
- “**Open Wounds**”: In August, ACRI held a protest in the plaza in front of Habima Theater in Tel Aviv in regards to the use of dangerous crowd-control weapons used at demonstrations. The event, which was produced by photographer Tali Meyer, featured an exhibition of photographs from around the world of injured demonstrators, accompanied by video clips. Israelis who have been injured by police violence and weapons used to disperse demonstrations presented their personal testimonies. This was an unusual event that created connections between communities that usually remain separate: Haredim, Palestinians, public housing activists, the Israeli-Ethiopian community, photojournalists, and social activists. The exhibition and clips were also displayed at a solidarity festival held at Tel Aviv Cinematheque in December to mark International Human Rights Day.



"Open Wounds" exhibition in front of Habima, portraits by Tali Meyer.

- ACRI held a screening in Nazareth of the film “Leah Tsemel, Attorney,” accompanied by an explanation about ACRI’s work in the field of **freedom of artistic expression**, focusing in particular on the censorship attempts of the Minister of Culture. A report about the event was broadcast on the local channel “Mossawa” in Arabic