

General Report January – December 2022

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) is Israel's oldest, largest and most influential human rights organization and the only one dealing with the full spectrum of human rights and civil liberties in Israel and areas under its control, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and residency status. ACRI's mandate is to ensure justice, accountability, and respect for human rights by addressing civil liberties violations that occur in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. ACRI employs a unique combination of legal and policy advocacy, litigation, intensive media outreach, educational activities, and partnerships with civil society. In 2022, ACRI celebrated 50 years of activity.

During this reporting period, ACRI's work was directly impacted by the absence of a stable government, the election period, and national and religious holidays during which the Israeli parliament and the High Court of Justice (HCJ) are closed. Nevertheless, in **2022, ACRI continued over 20 legal proceedings and 18 legal petitions.**



*"Even in Darkness, We Struggle for Human Rights"
Billboard Across from HCJ Following 2022 Elections*

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Political and Civil Rights

Surveillance and the Right to Privacy:

- Hawk Eye:** on January 11, 2022, in response to ACRI's petition, **the HCJ issued a conditional order instructing the Israeli Police to justify the use of the “Hawk Eye” tracking system in the absence of appropriate legislation.** The system, which captures and identifies vehicles and drivers passing by cameras scattered throughout the country by License Plates Recognition (LPR), has been operated by the Police for over 8 years without legislation or regulation, an egregious infringement on the basic right to privacy.
On November 2, 2022, a hearing was held on the petition, after which the HCJ decided to give the State another extension to advance the legislative procedures and demanded an updated by March 2, 2023.
- Pegasus Spyware:** On November 8, 2021, ACRI appealed to the Attorney General following publications revealing that **spyware was installed on the phones of Palestinian activists working for human rights organizations in the Occupied Territories.** ACRI called on the Attorney General to investigate whether the Israel Security Agency (ISA) or any government agency is responsible for the hack, and to order immediate cessation of the use of the spyware.

On January 18, 2022, an investigation carried out by Calcalist (an Israeli business news source) revealed that **the Police is using NSO's Pegasus spyware to hack into Israeli citizens' phones, including those of activists.** ACRI promptly appealed to the Attorney General, demanding that Police use of spyware ceases immediately as it constitutes a grave violation of the fundamental rights to privacy, due process, dignity, and freedom of protest, especially that there is no legal basis that permits hacking phones by means of spyware. On August 1, 2022, an investigative report was

published that reaffirmed the illegality of the surveillance program. ACRI and the Tel Aviv University Privacy Clinic immediately appealed to the Attorney General and claimed that the Police should be prohibited from using spyware of any kind.

- General Security Services' Surveillance: In July 2021, ACRI petitioned the HCJ demanding that Section 7(b)(6) of the General Security Service Law be repealed or amended, **as its vague wording has allowed for the development of a powerful, secret surveillance program used against citizens and residents of the State**, a method that has been exposed since the contact-tracing used during the COVID-19 pandemic. This program drastically violates the right to privacy and liberties of civilians.

On October 19, 2022, a hearing was held on the petition after **which the HCJ issued a conditional order instructing the State to justify the unlimited use of section 7(b)(6)**, indicating that it is only invoked in urgent circumstances.

On November 12-13, 2022, [Middle East Monitor](#) and [Haaretz](#) reported that, following ACRI's petition, **the General Security Service admitted that it spied on journalists through a database collected from mobile phone companies**. It also used this database in investigations into criminal incidents, not only in security investigations.

Freedom of Speech and Fighting Police Misconduct:

- On February 27, 2022, in response to **ACRI's appeal to stop the use of chokeholds by police officers as means of arrest, takeover or restraint**, the Police issued a directive clarifying that "the use of strangulation will only be done in cases essential to the takeover and proportionate to the seriousness of the offense."
- Crowd-Dispersal Means: in February 2022, ACRI and the Movement for Freedom of Information in Israel petitioned the Jerusalem District Court **demanding that the Police publish in full their procedures regarding the use of crowd-dispersal measures, specifically water cannons, batons, and stun grenades**.

On October 25, 2022, the District Court accepted our petition and ordered the Police to immediately publish the policies and procedures with full transparency.

Due process: On September 8, 2022, ACRI petitioned the HCJ **to cease the blatant violation of detainees' rights who have been lodged at police stations across the country** in the last year, compelling them to sleep on the floors in disgracefully overcrowded conditions, without regular access to a toilet, a shower, or medical treatment.

Social and Economic Rights

The Right to Electricity – a historic achievement. ACRI's petition to the HCJ, submitted with the Human Rights Clinic at Tel Aviv University, Physicians for Human Rights, and the Israel Union of Social Workers, was accepted in January 2022, **and the ruling established the right to electricity as a constitutional right**. In addition, in November 2022, the Electricity Authority revised the standards for power cuts and **determined that 380,000 households, more than 1.25 million people, will be protected from power disconnections**.



The Right to Health: The State began implementing ACRI's demands regarding rehabilitation services in 2021 following a successful petition to the HCJ. However, the procedures were discontinued due to the pandemic. **ACRI proceeded with submitting an appeal to the Ministry of Health, demanding redress regarding the standards for health services in the country overall and improving rehabilitation services**. The appeal is pending due to the recent **governmental and ministerial changes**. ACRI intends to submit an additional petition in 2023 regarding overall health standards: demanding the setting of standards for all services, including distance, time, and quality standards of health services, aimed at reducing gaps in the delivery of health services in peripheries and providing equal healthcare for all. ACRI is monitoring the issue of the deployment of hospices in the periphery, and several reminders have been sent on the subject.



Arab Society

Fighting Crime in the Arab Society: ACRI continues to **monitor and advise on the government's implementation of the plan to eradicate violence in the Arab community (Government Resolution 549) and shrinking the economic gaps between Israel's majority population and the Arab population (Government Resolution 550).**

- In January 2022, ACRI, along with the Coalition of Women Against Weapons, [appealed](#) to the Minister of Public Security and Minister of Justice **regarding the government's plan to combat crime and violence in the Arab society**, conveying concerns about the overall strategy and the fear of even more egregious violations of the basic rights of Arab civilians.
- In February 2022, **ACRI appealed to the Attorney General regarding discriminatory and racist treatment of Arabs during police operations.** The appeal suggests that the Police offer anti-racism and implicit bias trainings for officers to eliminate discriminatory behaviors.

Civilian Militias

- On March 9, 2022, ACRI appealed to the Commissioner of Police and the Mayor of Lod against the Lod police chief establishing a stand-by-platoon composed of armed Jewish citizens and against other actions that legitimize armed militias.
- On March 16, 2022, ACRI and the Abraham Initiatives appealed against the establishment of armed militias in Beer Sheva. ACRI appealed to the Attorney General and the Minister of Internal Security, **demanding that the police stop their cooperation with such initiatives and prevent their establishment.**

In response to [both appeals](#), in March 2022, **the Police stated that they would refrain from cooperating with the militias in Lod and Beer Sheva.**

Adequate Representation

- On January 7, 2022, ACRI [appealed](#) to the Attorney General and the Legal Adviser in the Prime Minister's Office **regarding the lack of adequate representation of Arab citizens in the Government Naming Committee**, an official body that decides the names of towns, historical sites, nature reserves and more. **On January 23, the Attorney General responded that the government intends to increase the number of committee members from 24 to 30, and that three Arab representatives are expected to serve.**

In February 2022, ACRI filed a petition to the HCJ **demanding that Arab members be appointed to the Public Housing Committee and demand that they make up no less than 20% of the committee.** ACRI also stressed that women should compose at least 50% of the committee and requested an interim order suspending its work until a decision on the petition is reached. About three weeks later, **the Minister of Construction and Housing informed the HCJ that a representative from the Arab and Ethiopian communities have been appointed to the committee.**

In March 2022, ACRI appealed to the Ministry of Health alongside Physicians for Human Rights, the Civil Forum for Health Promotion in the Galilee and the Coalition of Health Organizations in the Negev, **demanding that members of the Arab Society are appointed to the Health Council and make up at least 20% of the members.**

Access to Services in Arabic

- Housing Assistance: On July 20, 2022, ACRI appealed to the Minister of Construction and Housing **regarding the severe lack of housing and rental aid in Arab localities**, which stems from a series of structural barriers perpetuated via government policy over the decades. ACRI's Attorney Reut Shaer claimed that this policy discriminates against the Arab population and violates their constitutional rights to dignity, livelihood, shelter, and equality.
- Accessibility to Governmental Services: The absence of online services and comprehensive information in Arabic restricts Arabic speakers (around 20% of the population) from carrying out basic actions related to their right to health, equality and dignity. On July 19, 2022, ACRI appealed to the CEO and legal advisor of Maccabi Health Services **demanding that all information and services on website and applications are translated into Arabic.** On September 22, 2022, ACRI appealed to the Ministry of Education **demanding that the Health Declaration Online Form, which children in schools and kindergartens are required to fill out, be translated into Arabic.**

The Negev Bedouins and Unrecognized Villages:

- On April 14 2022, ACRI, together with the Negev Coexistence Forum and Bimkom, **appealed to the Attorney General to oppose a proposal to establish five new Jewish settlements at the entrance of Arad in the Negev**, arguing that the government's decision is racist and illegal since its stated purpose is to promote "demographic balance" in the Negev through the establishment of settlements for Jews.
- On June 28, 2022, ACRI appealed to the Director General of the **Israel Land Authority demanding to cancel a discriminatory threshold condition in the tender to compete for the establishment of solar fields in agricultural areas**. This condition states that the project will only be carried out on areas defined as an agricultural slot, which includes only kibbutzim and moshavim, a distinct Jewish settlement pattern.
- On July 31, 2022, the court accepted our petition from June 2021 on the outline plan for Wadi Al-Neam Village on behalf of 32 of its residents and **determined that the residents could appeal the approval of the plan to the National Planning and Construction Council**. The Court severely criticized the authorities' enforcement of building restrictions, stating that they lacked up-to-date data and even contradict the presented. The following month, ACRI appealed again to the Council.



Occupied Palestinian Territory

- Masafer Yatta: Firing Zone 918:** For more than two decades, ACRI has advocated on behalf of the 1,000+ villagers of Masafer Yatta as they fought to protect their land and way of life following the military declaration of the area as an IDF firing zone in 1999. On May 4, 2022 the HCJ abruptly decided to legalize the eviction of those villages by the Israeli military, creating a hazardous precedent dismissing international law, and leaving 1,000 innocent civilians without homes or reparations. In response, [ACRI launched a campaign to raise 100,000 NIS](#) to request an additional hearing with an extended panel of justices. On October 2nd, the HCJ denied the request, ending ACRI's legal battle. **ACRI continues to advocate among decision makers and international routes to preserve Masafer Yatta.**
- Connecting Communities to Water: Left Dry by the Occupation.** In March 2022, Bimkom-Planners for Human Rights and ACRI submitted a [position paper](#) to the Ministry of Defense and the Civil Administration to connect 14 communities in Area C of the Occupied Territories to the water grid. The appeal describes the distress caused by lack of stable water connection, with an emphasis on the universal right to water. The appeal was accompanied by a map showing how the communities could be connected to the water according to the water lines in the vicinity.
- Checkpoint 300:** In 2020, ACRI, along with Kav LaOved, petitioned to the HCJ against the Police and Civil Administration demanding a response to the **severe and hazardous overcrowding at the checkpoint**. On January 3, 2022, while the HCJ dismissed the petition and accepted the State's claims that the congestion was directly related to COVID-19 regulations, the Court sided with ACRI's general arguments and suggested improving policy to avoid overcrowding and examining the checkpoint post-pandemic



East Jerusalem

- Police harassment of protesters waving Palestinian flag:** On February 23, 2022, ACRI petitioned to the HCJ against the Commissioner of Police, the Jerusalem District Commander, and the State Attorney, **demanding that the harassment of demonstrators carrying the Palestinian flag cease**. In the petition, ACRI demands an explicit order to stop the confiscation of Palestinian flags in the Jerusalem district in general and the weekly protest vigil in Sheikh Jarrah in particular, and to investigate police misconduct towards protestors. On November 7, 2022, **the Court rejected the petition and mentioned that the Attorney General permits the Police to take down the flag only if it poses a threat to public safety and security.**

Hazardous Infrastructure



- On January 20, 2022, attorneys Reut Shaar and Tal Hassin **appealed to the Jerusalem Municipality demanding that infrastructural dangers and flooding concerns in numerous East Jerusalem neighborhoods be resolved.**
- On August 14, 2022, ACRI and the Union of Parents of East Jerusalem Students petitioned the Court of Administrative Affairs, demanding that the Jerusalem Municipality be required to repair severe shortcomings in the safety standards around educational institutions in the eastern neighborhoods of the city before the start of the school year. A hearing on the petition was held on November 20, 2022 **in which the parties reached a settlement in which the municipality is required to repair the safety hazards around schools in East Jerusalem.**
- Access to healthcare: In 2021, ACRI petitioned the HCJ regarding the lack of essential mother-child health centers in East Jerusalem. On April 25, 2022 a hearing was held on the petition, **after which the Ministry of Health informed the Court that a plan to establish mother-child clinics in neighborhoods beyond the Wall would be ready within three months.** The Court granted the State an extension per their request and expects an update by January 5, 2022.

Immigration and Status

- Separate is not Equal: In 2021, ACRI, along with peer organizations, petitioned against the Tel Aviv Municipality and the Ministry of Education on behalf of 429 children of asylum seekers, demanding they be immediately integrated into the city's schools alongside Israeli children. Thus far, the Ministry of Education has rejected integration, arguing that it will harm the children's "cultural and family roots." **On May 29, 2022, a final hearing on the petition was held, and on July 26, 2022, the court rejected the petition, ruling that the municipality's policy of placing children in schools based on proximity to their place of residence is legal and there is no proof for ulterior motives. Attorney Tal Hassin from ACRI appealed to the HCJ regarding the verdict on November 20.**
- Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law: ACRI, Hamoked- the Center for the Protection of the Individual, and Physicians for Human Rights petitioned to the HCJ on April 25, 2022 on behalf of a number of victims of the Citizenship Law. **The organizations claim that the law is racist and discriminates between the state's Arab and Jewish citizens regarding their right to family life in Israel, separates spouses and parents from their children, and undermines the values of a democratic state. The petition demands that be repealed.** On December 4, 2022, the Court asked the State to present its position regarding the terms of the current legislation and its willingness to make amendments that would amongst other things, qualify same-sex spouses to apply.



Policy Advocacy

The period leading up to, during, and immediately following the elections greatly stalls policy advocacy. Since the elections, ACRI has been mapping the threats to human rights expected to be put forth from the new government and is working now with peer organizations and diplomatic missions to present human rights concerns to policymakers and to the public. Below is a short list of ongoing policy matters ACRI has been promoting regardless of the government in power.

Due Process:

- On January 12, 2022, together with the Committee against Torture, ACRI appealed to the Danziger Committee, which deals with the prevention of false convictions, regarding the need to expand the obligation to document **investigations by Israeli police.**
- On May 15, 2022, ACRI's attorneys Ann Suci, Dan Yakir and Debbie Gild-Hayo sent comments outlining the main changes that should be made to **the Basic Bill: Rights in Criminal Procedure** to the Constitution Committee.
- On May 19, ACRI appealed to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee regarding **transferring detainees from Israel to detention and interrogation facilities in the West Bank**, as it is prohibited under both constitutional law and international law.

Welfare:

- ACRI is involved in a number of legislative processes that address **poor debtors and standards for the right to live with dignity.**



- On August 1st, ACRI participated in a meeting at the Ministry of Defense on **artificial intelligence** and the impact it has on the right to welfare.
- On August 31st, ACRI participated in a forum held by the Ministry of Welfare on **the planning of welfare structures**, and on October 20th, a position paper was submitted on the issue.
- On September 7th, different legal aid organizations, alongside ACRI, held a forum to discuss **regulations for the right to live with dignity and living allowances for vulnerable communities**.
- On October 24th, ACRI participated in a meeting of organizations on **energy poverty**.
- On October 26th, ACRI held a lecture for employees of the Ministry of Finance about **debtors with disabilities**.

Education for Democracy and Human Rights

- A total of 1,400-1,700 educators, teachers-in-training, faculty, and various education professionals participate in the ACRI's human rights educational programs on an annual basis.
- ACRI's Human Rights Education Forum [appealed to the Minister of Education and the Director General of the Ministry](#) in protest **of the Ministry of Education's ban on hanging maps that show the Green Line in Tel Aviv classrooms**.
- In the wake of the new government, ACRI anticipates a racist and extremist agenda that would extend to the Ministry of Education. In response, [ACRI's Human Rights Education Department](#) is holding free trainings for teachers on anti-racism education and freedom of expression. The Department published a [manifesto \(Hebrew\)](#), in which educators signed on to refuse cooperation with the persecution and silencing of human rights organizations in the education system or programs that contradict democratic values.

Public Hotline

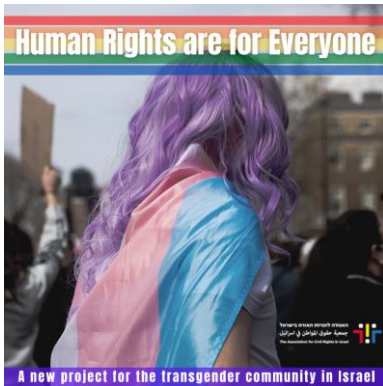
ACRI's public hotline serves the population in Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and English. Approximately seven cases per year that reach the public hotline are taken on as principled cases to the court system and in policy advocacy. During the reporting period, ACRI's Public Hotline received approximately 50 inquiries per week and took on some 80 cases, including letters, formal complaints, and legal actions. Issues include:

- Denial of rights in the National Insurance Institute for those with a Palestinian spouse: ACRI appealed to the National Insurance Institute on behalf of two female residents of the Negev married to Palestinians, whose rights and the rights of their children were denied under the National Insurance law.
- Providing welfare services to the statusless: Following multiple requests, the welfare departments in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv agreed to open registration files and provide care to two statusless, single women and their children who are at risk.
- Racial Profiling: ACRI contacted the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding profiling at checkpoints between Israel and the West Bank and near the settlements, describing seven different cases of abuse of Arab citizens at checkpoints, their delays, humiliation, unnecessary searches, and more—all against the background of racial discrimination.
- Amendment of the rent assistance procedure for women affected by violence: Following a number of inquiries, ACRI appealed to the Ministry of Housing to amend the procedure for providing financial assistance to women affected by violence. The Ministry responded to the request and decided to integrate ACRI's proposal into the new procedure.

Public Outreach

Since September 2021, ACRI has been mentioned in **local and international media 832 times**. This includes 226 mentions in English media, 503 mentions in Hebrew media, 102 mentions in Arabic media, and one more in French media. ACRI is mentioned in mainstream media such as [ABC News](#), [the Times of Israel](#), [NBC](#), and [the New York Times](#).

Examples of public events and media from the reporting period include:



- [ACRI put up "No Human Rights – No Democracy" billboard in central Tel Aviv](#) for all to see on the renowned Abraham Hostel building in Celebrations of International Human Rights Day. Through this campaign, ACRI and the Abraham Group call on the public and the forces that drive the economy (business, tourism, and high-tech) to join the struggle of civil society organizations to fight racist policies and promote equality and democracy.
- [ACRI's executive director, Noa Sattath, spoke at the Jstreet Conference 2022](#) in Washington, DC about Jewish values, the fight for democracy and the threats to human rights and democracy from the new.
- [ACRI's executive director met with U.S Ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides](#), to discuss our shared values of human rights and democracy in the wake of the new government.
- The independence of the judicial arm is at stake under the new government. [ACRI put up "Even in Dark Times, We Struggle for Human Rights" billboard in Jerusalem outside the HCJ](#).
- [Promoting Trans Rights](#): ACRI launched an EU-funded capacity-building project promoting the rights of the transgender community in Israel with grassroots partners Transgenders for Social Justice, Ma'avirim - Israeli Trans Community, as well as the Haifa Legal Clinic for Social Justice. The project aims to develop the organizational capacities of trans-led grassroots organizations, human rights defenders, and activists to best promote trans-related issues made a clear impact from the start; Within the first six months, a coalition of professional and trans-led grassroots organizations held an unprecedented number of meetings with politicians and wrote position papers to promote trans rights and, in particular, health care among policymakers and the general public in Israel.

Plans for the Coming Year

ACRI in an intensive process of mapping the threats to human rights and democracy posed by the new government, which includes engaging the public in human rights-based discourse. ACRI is now putting together a detailed strategy to protect the democratic institutions at risk, mainly the judicial branch.

Policy advocacy will include:

- The fight against the **Override Clause** and its potential consequences
- The struggle against de facto and de jure **annexation**
- Regulating the authority of the **GSS and Police**
- Preserving **democratic and anti-racist educational curricula**

In the courts, ACRI will advocate:

- To limit public and private **digital surveillance**;
- To protect the **Bedouins in the Negev** from discrimination in public services;
- To monitor and document violations of civil and political rights, including **freedom of speech and protest**, and **police misconduct**;
- To increase **adequate representation** of Arab citizens and residents;
- To provide safe and equal environments for **migrants and asylum seekers**;
- To connect Palestinians in the OPT to **water and other State services**.

New programming:

- ACRI is currently concluding a two-year process of learning and strategizing regarding the **intersection of climate change and human rights**. A list of priorities and action items have been identified related to both Israel and the OPT and funding is being sought in order to expand ACRI's work in this field.
- ACRI will launch two new projects from 2023 to 2025 that were accepted for funding by the EU: 1) **Always Watching: Protecting Human Rights in the Digital Age**, aimed at redressing public and private mass surveillance and the violation of the right to privacy; and 2) **Influence: Normalizing Human Rights and Democracy through Popular Culture**, which will promote public discourse on democracy and human rights in Israel.

בלי זכויות אדם - אין דמוקרטיה
 بدون حقوق إنسان - لا توجد ديمقراطية
 NO HUMAN RIGHTS - NO DEMOCRACY



יום זכויות האדם הבינלאומי | اليوم العالمي لحقوق الإنسان
 International Human Rights Day | 10.12