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This is not a mistake – it is policy

The situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Israel

December 2025

Executive Summary

Over fifty thousand refugees and asylum seekers have been living in Israel for many years without status, without legal protection, and without equal access to basic services. The asylum system in Israel is not fulfilling its role. This is not oversight, but rather a deliberate policy that has been advanced by successive Israeli governments to avoid ruling regarding asylum applications so as not to grant status to refugees who are entitled to it. Not only does the State refrain from granting any status to asylum seekers but also takes systematic and institutionalized steps to deny them essential services such as health, welfare, education, employment and basic administrative services, with the aim of creating an unbearable reality, to the point where asylum seekers will see “voluntary emigration” as their only option. Under the cover of the war, the scope of anti-democratic measures directed against asylum seekers has expanded and they are creating dangerous precedents for violating the human rights of many other groups. This is the subject of this position paper.

The (non)asylum system

The Population and Immigration Authority, which implements government policy, is deliberately avoiding review of asylum applications. The rate of recognition of refugees in Israel is lower than 0.1%.¹ The Authority operates with a lack of transparency and the data it publishes regarding the number of asylum seekers and refugees in Israel are contradictory and inconsistent. Lack of status, and knowing that they are unlikely to be granted status in the future, leaves asylum seekers without basic rights and without a prospect for a decent and normative life.

Legislation

A wave of draconian legislation that began last year (2024) includes indefinite imprisonment, denial of access to the courts, deportation to dangerous countries, and the complete denial of status to the children of asylum seekers. The proposed laws undermine the foundations of democratic rule, legalize institutionalized persecution, and open the door to the persecution of additional populations, with asylum seekers being used as a convenient "means" for experimenting in perpetrating anti-democratic practices.

Lack of a uniform identification number

The lack of a uniform identification number for asylum seekers creates systemic chaos that harms both asylum seekers and State authorities. Each authority issues a different number, without synchronization, so that the same person may be identified by dozens of different numbers. Minors do not even have an independent number and use their mother's visa number. The result is administrative chaos, which makes access to basic services difficult, burdens the work of the authorities and turns simple actions into complicated and complex procedures.

¹ HAIS, “The Numbers Speak for Themselves”, 2020,
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pjyg6tFs1TgkNkTLfYagNDof5UtWh8A6/view>

Health

Approximately half of the adults and a quarter of the children are not insured with health insurance.² The new regulations, which apply only to Eritreans, Sudanese and Ukrainians, exclude large populations and leave many without access to medical services. Even asylum seekers from eligible countries of origin are not fully insured. The regulations apply only to minors under the age of 18 and adults over the age of 60. People aged 18-60 who can work are entitled to employer insurance, which is partial and incomplete, but those who are unable to work are left without insurance at all. In addition, the arrangement that accorded insurance for all minors regardless of their country of origin was abolished, so that many toddlers and children are now left without access to medical care, both basic and lifesaving.

Education

There is racial segregation in schools, with asylum seeker children being sent to separate schools designated solely for them. The issue is currently being litigated and, unfortunately, has not yet been properly resolved. There are also barriers to admission to higher education: tuition fees for asylum seekers are higher because they are considered "foreigners" and many scholarships are completely unavailable to them. Our appeals to the Council for Higher Education have not been answered and we are considering our future steps concerning this issue.

Early Childhood

The Ministry of Health has decided to stop subsidizing early childhood care for autistic children who are without status, while continuing to subsidize children with status. This is a serious violation of the most vulnerable population in Israel. These children not only come from particularly precarious socioeconomic backgrounds, but are also autistic children who need special care on a regular basis so that they can develop properly. This issue is also the subject of ongoing litigations.

The closure of Unitaf frameworks casts a heavy shadow on the right to a safe life and on the right to bodily health and protection of young children. The Unitaf Association provides frameworks for young children without status, who would otherwise be forced to stay in unsupervised settings, also known as "babysitters," where infant deaths have occurred. The government decision affording the subsidy of Unitaf daycare centers expires at the end of December 2025, and a new government decision allocating a government budget for the next school year has not yet been formulated. The issue is being reviewed by the Knesset's Special Committee on Youth Affairs. If a new government decision is not made, hundreds of toddlers could be pushed into life-threatening settings.

² AASAF and Adva Center, "The Poor That Who Don't Count", May 2025, <https://assaf.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/The-Poor-Who-Dont-Count-en.pdf>

Employment

Most professions that require government licensing are closed to asylum seekers without logical justification. Many asylum seekers are forced into menial jobs, even though they have the skills and ability to engage in professions that would enable them to fulfill their potential. This results in a loss of broad social and economic opportunities, for both asylum seekers and Israeli society. Our dialogue with the Ministry of Labor concerning this issue has reached an impasse and additional courses of action are being considered.

Voluntary Military Service/National Service/Preparatory Schools

The lack of status and the absence of a uniform identification number prevent integration into official voluntary frameworks, thereby erasing key paths to social integration for many young people who aspire to be part of society. Asylum seekers cannot join service frameworks such as the IDF or National Service, which are considered a key path to social mobility and integration into Israeli society. Preparatory schools and a year of service are almost completely closed to young asylum seekers, because the State does not fund participants who are not eligible for conscription, and the preparatory schools themselves are required to obtain dedicated funding for asylum seekers, which is not always possible.

Transportation

Asylum seekers are the only population in the State of Israel that as a group are denied the possibility of receiving a driver's license. This impairs their freedom of movement and, as a result, their freedom of occupation, as public transportation is not always a solution. In addition, they and their children often do not have appropriate means of transportation to reach medical institutions for treatment, if they are entitled to it, and therefore their right to health is also impaired. Furthermore, asylum seekers cannot leave Israel, unless they emigrate permanently, as they will not be able to return. In addition, they do not benefit from discounts on public transportation that are given to residents, while prices are rising.

Banking

Banks refuse to provide bank guarantees, they limit or do not allow credit regardless of the account balance, and they do not allow the use of payment applications due to the lack of an ID number. Opening an account may also be complex and involve burdensome bureaucracy, contrary to banking supervision guidelines.

Sports

Restrictions on registration for teams and associations prevent children and youth from participating in basic community activities. Professional athletes can only be accepted into professional teams as foreign players and are not allowed to represent Israel in official competitions. These restrictions deepen social exclusion and do not allow for integration.

Reduction of UNHCR staff and assistance

A significant reduction in the UN budget has also severely affected the activities of the UNHCR in Israel, which has significantly reduced its staff and the assistance it provides. In a country where asylum seekers are deprived of status and basic rights, these reductions dramatically worsen their situation and harm aid organizations, which are already having difficulty raising sufficient resources.

Key Recommendations

1. **Comprehensive reform of the asylum system:** reviewing asylum applications in accordance with international and domestic law; granting status to those eligible for it and full transparency in the publication and transmission of data concerning this subject.
2. **Essential legislative amendments:** repeal of offensive laws and regulations; stopping imprisonment and deportation in violation of the principle of non-refoulement; removing the Basic Law: Entry, Immigration and Status in Israel in its current form from the legislative agenda.
3. **Ensuring access to basic services:** affording comprehensive health insurance, regardless of country of origin; providing a rehabilitation package for those in need; housing assistance; assistance in receiving mental health care in the community; providing National Insurance benefits; issuing a unique identification number to each asylum seeker until a decision is made on their asylum application; providing full banking services; enabling the issue of a driver's license to those who meet the conditions; integrating professional athletes who do not meet the requirements needed to play as "foreign athletes".
4. **Equality in education:** Abolition of segregation and full implementation of the High Court ruling in this regard; equalization of tuition fees in higher education institutions with tuition fees for citizens; enable registration for scholarships without requiring an ID number as a prerequisite.
5. **Protection of toddlers:** Complete restoration of care for autistic children in designated kindergartens without a time limit; extending UNITAF's budget and establishing a binding multi-year model to ensure its continuance.
6. **Opening gates to employment:** Opening all professions that require licensing to those who meet the conditions without requiring an ID number.
7. **Full community integration:** Opening volunteer programs without requiring an ID number as a condition for registration; enabling asylum seekers to do national and military service, years of civil service, and preparatory courses without making it a prerequisite for receiving status.

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The data in a nutshell

There are about 50,000 refugees living in Israel who are protected from deportation from the country: approximately 25,000 Ukrainians, 13,000 Eritreans, 6,700 Sudanese, 1,200 Ethiopians, and 400 Congolese. In addition, approximately 8,000 children born to these refugees live in Israel. The vast majority of citizens of these countries have submitted individual applications for asylum in Israel. In addition to them, there are approximately 14,500 asylum seekers from other countries who are not protected from deportation as a group but rather individually, as long as their application for asylum has not yet been decided.³ It should be emphasized that the data published by the Population and Immigration Authority in Israel is inconsistent and therefore cannot be relied upon as a single source. The data presented above is a reasonable estimate after cross-referencing information received by aid organizations from the communities themselves and reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, while verifying and correcting the partial data from the Population and Immigration Authority by way of direct inquiries to the Authority or through responses which were received to Freedom of Information requests.

The Failure of the Asylum System – Deceptive Terminology

It is customary to call the conduct of the Israeli asylum system a “continuous failure.” Literally, “failure” means a failure resulting from inaction. However, **in the case of the Israeli asylum system, the inaction does not stem from negligence, lack of resources, or technical deficiencies, but rather it is a deliberate policy, consistently pursued by successive Israeli governments, which, by conscious but intentionally unwritten choice, refrain from reviewing asylum applications.** In this sense, it is not a lack of action, but a purposeful decision not to act, a choice that shapes a reality in which asylum seekers are left unanswered and unprotected.

The asylum system in Israel is dysfunctional. Almost all applications that are reviewed as per the asylum seeker processing procedure are rejected, while applications that are clearly deserving of acceptance remain pending for many years without a response. It is not possible to determine the exact number of refugees recognized to date in Israel by the asylum system, since, as previously mentioned, the Immigration Authority provides different and contradictory data each time a request is submitted to clarify the number of recognized refugees. Human rights organizations estimate that the number of recognized refugees does not exceed a few dozen asylum seekers, most of them Eritrean citizens.

³ UNCHR Israel Factsheet, February 2025, <https://assaf.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Israel-Factsheet-February-2025.pdf>

The refugee recognition rate in Israel is less than 0.06%.⁴ For comparison, the average recognition rate in the European Union was 42% in 2024.⁵ The failure of the asylum system becomes more evident when one considers the countries of origin of the refugees who wait for years in Israel for their applications to be decided: Eritrea, Sudan, Russia, Ethiopia and Ukraine. Refugees who flee these countries and seek asylum in democratic countries are recognized as refugees in very high percentages. The rate of recognition of Eritreans as refugees has been consistently among the highest in the world for many years. In the past year, asylum seekers from Eritrea, Ukraine and Syria are the only ones to have an average recognition rate in Europe that is higher than 80%.⁶ In Israel, only a few Eritreans and not even one Ukrainian have been recognized as refugees. Several thousand Sudanese have been granted temporary residency following lengthy legal proceedings after the Immigration Authority refused to consider their asylum applications for many years.

The situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Israel, regardless of their origins, is dire. Lacking a definitive legal status, deprived of basic social rights, with limited access to health and education services, and living in abject poverty, it seemed that the extent of their harm could not get any worse. However, **under the auspices of the war, which has become a convenient cover for the government to promote anti-democratic measures, refugees and asylum seekers have become easy prey for unprecedented institutional attacks.**

The extensive legislative blitz, which includes predatory provisions such as deportation to countries where there is a tangible danger to human life and indefinite imprisonment, is extraordinary in its scope. These measures seriously violate human rights, undermine the constitutional infrastructure of the State of Israel, and blatantly violate the State of Israel's obligations to international law. To this must be added the discriminatory practices that have been implemented for years towards asylum seekers by State authorities, which are now receiving additional normative anchoring and justification. While among professionals there is sometimes recognition of the difficulties and even a willingness to provide a solution, the political "spirit of command" permeates all administrative levels, and its practical result is widespread systemic harm.

The fact that such extreme measures are being perpetrated primarily upon a vulnerable population is no coincidence. **Asylum seekers and refugees often lack any real ability to defend themselves or protest the measures taken against them. As a result, the government finds it convenient to "use" this population as a means to experiment in implementation of oppressive norms without**

⁴ HAIS, "The Numbers Speak for Themselves", 2020, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pjyg6tFs1TgkNkTLfYagNDof5UtWh8A6/view>

⁵ The European Union Agency for Asylum, "Latest Asylum Trends, 2024". https://www.euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-02/EUAA_Latest_Asylum_Trends_2024.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

resistance, with the aim of expanding these patterns of action to additional groups in society.

However, this harm must not be allowed to pass in silence or be hidden behind the smokescreen of war and the flood of anti-democratic legislation. Refugees and asylum seekers are first and foremost human beings, with universal fundamental rights to freedom, life and human dignity. They are residing in Israel lawfully and the State is obliged under local and international law to review and determine their status and ensure their existence with dignity. Therefore, any attempt to deprive them of these basic rights, directly or indirectly, must be met with firm opposition, not only by human rights organizations, but by every person who sees human rights as a cornerstone of a sound society and who is aware that the violation of minority rights today serves as a warning that the violation of one's own rights is only a matter of time.

In this light, we will review the dismal situation of asylum seekers and refugees living in Israel, divided into key areas of life, while highlighting the normative and institutional aspects of the violation of their rights.

Legislation

As previously mentioned, under the cover of the war, while public and international attention is focused on other arenas and broader existential struggles, the Israeli government continues to unremittingly promote legislative initiatives that are harmful to asylum seekers and refugees.

The legislation presented by elected officials as an attempt to "buttress Israel's immigration policy" in actuality "exploits" the fragile status of asylum seekers and refugees in order to undermine broader fundamental principles, from equality before the law to the obligation to protect human rights as part of the democratic regime.

The initiators of the bills and laws that have already been passed and entered into the legislative statute book seek to shape Israel as a narrow ethno-national state, while seriously violating fundamental rights, including the right to life, liberty, family life, dignity, and access to the courts. Although there is no dispute that a sovereign state has the authority to regulate immigration policy within its territory, the proposed laws and laws that have come into effect deviate from any normative framework accepted in a democratic regime.

The laws presented herewith do not exist in a vacuum, but rather are another layer in a broad process of regime change. At the heart of this process is a systematic attempt to concentrate power in the hands of the executive branch, to weaken the systems of checks and balances, and to undermine the constitutional mechanisms designed to protect human rights. At the heart of the efforts to harm vulnerable populations lies a deeper attempt to reshape the boundaries of legitimacy, critique, and humanitarian values in Israel.

Below is a breakdown of the legislation in question:

A. Basic Law Bill: Entry, Immigration and Status in Israel, 2025,⁷ by MK Rotman of the Religious Zionist Party – as of the publication of this paper, the bill has passed a preliminary reading and is being prepared for first reading in the Constitution Committee.

The Basic Law Bill includes a series of illegal provisions that directly violate basic human rights and undermine the foundations of the constitutional regime in Israel. It proposes a precedent-setting clause that effectively bypasses the constitutional protection enshrined in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, thereby negating the role of the judiciary as a mechanism for checking and balancing government actions. The bypass clause would allow the government to ignore High Court rulings that relate to the implementation of the law, in matters regarding both Israeli citizens and/or non-Jewish populations.

At the same time, **it is proposed to expand the grounds for revoking citizenship beyond those currently existing in the Citizenship Law,** including breach of trust, an act of terrorism, treason or serious espionage,⁸ while adding new grounds that have not yet been revealed to the public and will be determined in the future by the legislature. This is an expansion of governmental authority that may be used to arbitrarily violate civil rights and to revoke citizenship for extraneous reasons. The government's authority to determine policy and the Knesset's authority to enact laws, including amending the Citizenship Law, are not in themselves in dispute. However, the provision in question should not be examined in isolation from its broader constitutional and political context, and one can only speculate as to what grounds for revoking citizenship the government will seek to add to the law. This is another link in a chain of steps that are accumulating to lead to a systematic and profound change in the nature of the regime in Israel.

The bill also includes provisions that undermine the right to access to the courts and limit the possibility of asylum seekers and refugees to apply to the courts. This deprives them of the right to a fair trial and judicial review. In addition to the direct harm to asylum seekers and refugees, this is a slippery slope that opens the door to the exclusion of additional populations from the fundamental right of access to legal courts.

Moreover, according to the bill, the government will be authorized to comprehensively prevent the granting of status to citizens of certain countries, based solely on place of birth. This is a discriminatory and arbitrary provision, which may lead to the collective exclusion of refugees in need of international protection.

The bill also establishes rigid quotas for the regulation of status, which create unreasonable and unequal distinctions between people, not based on their needs but rather according to the year the asylum application was submitted or the

⁷ Basic Law Bill: Entry, Immigration and Status in Israel, 2025, [Hebrew]

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2196908>

⁸ Clause 11 of the Citizenship Law, 1952

administrative queue. In other words, even if a person is entitled to status, he will not be able to begin the process of receiving it since the quota has been exhausted.

It also stipulates that anyone who enters Israel "illegally" will not be able to receive any status. A significant portion of asylum seekers, fleeing murderous regimes in their countries of origin (mainly from African countries) were forced to enter the State of Israel through unregulated borders. A provision according to which anyone who enters the State of Israel illegally will not be able to receive status ignores this population **and contradicts both Israeli and international law.** The Refugee Convention, to which Israel is a signatory and was one of the countries that worked to establish it, prohibits punishing asylum seekers for their entry into the country (Article 31(1) of the UN Refugee Convention),⁹ since fleeing from life threatening danger cannot, in most cases, be done in accordance with regulated procedures. A blanket determination that denies eligibility for status due to irregular entry empties the Convention of its intent and nullifies its purpose.

In addition, **the law permits the indefinite imprisonment of residents who are defined as "illegal residents," contrary to the Supreme Court's ruling¹⁰ and to the right to liberty enshrined in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty.** This relates to the indefinite imprisonment of asylum seekers, adults and children, when there is no intention of granting them status later. It should be noted that asylum seekers reside in Israel legally. They are not residing "illegally." However, Knesset members, even in the first debate on the aforementioned Basic Law, attempted to carry out legislative manipulation so that asylum seekers would also be included in the definition of "illegal residents" so that they could be imprisoned.

Along with this provision, **extensive powers were also established to impose severe restrictions on the freedom of movement and occupation of those without status, directly violating the fundamental rights enshrined in the Basic Laws for freedom of movement and freedom of occupation.**

The bill also violates the property rights of asylum seekers by stipulating that their funds will be held in a forced trust until they leave the country, contrary to the ruling of the High Court of Justice.¹¹ This is accompanied by a provision regarding the sweeping denial of rights, which excludes those without status from the circle of public services, including essential services, and enshrines extensive social and institutional exclusion that violates the fundamental rights of those whose status in Israel has not yet been determined.

At the same time, the bill determines that **this Basic Law will stand above emergency ordinances, and thus will be granted absolute immunity even at times when increased protection of human rights is needed.** Furthermore, **the bill includes a retroactive qualification clause,** which gives legal validity to discriminatory and unreasonable administrative provisions that were made in the

⁹ Article 31 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, paragraph 1 (signed in 1951, ratified in 1954).

¹⁰ HCJ 7146/12 Najit Serge Adam v. Knesset, regarding the legality of Amendment no.3 to the Infiltration Law, at para. 7 of the judgment of Honorable Justice Arbel; HCJ 8425/13 Eitan Israeli Immigration Policy et al. v. Government of Israel, (published in Nevo, September 22, 2024); HCJ 8665/14 Tshoma Naga Desta v. Knesset, (published in Nevo, August 11, 2015).

¹¹ HCJ 2293/17 Esther Tzegei Gersgaher v. Knesset (published in Nevo, April 23, 2020).

past, thus seriously violating the principle of the rule of law and the administrative obligation to act reasonably and proportionately.

These provisions are nothing more than an expression of a policy of institutionalized delegitimization of disadvantaged populations and of undermining the foundations of constitutional democracy in Israel, while turning human rights into a political instrument subject to the whims of the government.

The Basic Law bill is part of a systematic measure to dismantle constitutional protections in Israel. It seeks to entrench oppressive norms, deny basic rights to vulnerable populations, and bypass the mechanisms of judicial review. Its enactment would constitute an abuse of the constituent authority of the Knesset and would lead to fatal damage to Israeli democracy and the isolation of Israel in the international arena.

B. Entry into Israel Law (Amendment No. 41), 2025,¹² proposed jointly by Knesset members from Yisrael Beiteinu, Otzma Yehudit and Likud parties. **It has been entered into the legislative statute book and in recent months attempts have been made to implement it in custody courts.**

This is an amendment to the Entry into Israel Law, which allows for the deportation of asylum seekers in two cases: 1. When a person is classified as a supporter of the government of his country (the reference in the explanatory notes is to the state of Eritrea); 2. After conviction and serving a prison sentence for committing a crime (an offense for which the penalty is three years or more), even if the actual sentence imposed is lighter.

The law serves as a “bypass” of procedures for handling cases relating to asylum seekers, and does not include a distinction between someone who has submitted an asylum application (and in accordance with the law, the procedures of the Population and Immigration Authority and international law, is prohibited from being deported while his application is being examined), and someone whose application has been rejected or who has not submitted an asylum application. The courts have recognized the caution required in examining asylum applications, as “the rights at stake in the examination of a person’s application for asylum are the most fundamental and basic human rights, foremost among them the right to life, the right to bodily integrity, and the right to liberty. Making the wrong decision in this matter can have disastrous consequences – the deportation of a person to a place where he is likely to be persecuted and his life or liberty are in danger.”¹³

We will elaborate on the two cases that allow deportation as per the wording of the law:

¹² Amendment number 41 to the Entry into Israel Law, 2025 [Hebrew].

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawreshumot&lawitemid=2225412>

¹³ Judgement 8675/11 Mespen Mezmor Tadessa v. Asylum Seekers Processing Unit, para. 12 Honorary Judge Fogelman. (published in Nevo, May 14, 2012).

Case 1 – Classification of a person as a "government supporter"

The law grants the Minister of the Interior the authority to determine that a person is a "supporter of the government of his country," in accordance with an opinion from the Population Authority and subject to holding a hearing for said person. **The law does not specify which authorities in the Population and Immigration Authority are responsible for formulating the opinion, what standards the opinion must meet, and what evidentiary threshold is required for such a determination.** If within 30 days of the decision the "defendant" has failed to refute it, the Minister of the Interior is obligated to revoke his residential permit and deport him to his country of origin.

The law defines a "government supporter" as "an infiltrator who has expressed direct or indirect support for the regime of his country, including a public declaration of support for the regime or having substantial ties with representatives of government institutions." This general and vague definition does not reflect the complexity of the right to international protection. For example, an Ivorian citizen who is afraid to return to her country for fear that her family will force her daughters to undergo genital mutilation is entitled to protection regardless of her position (support/opposition) towards the regime in her country.¹⁴

Asylum seekers may have various reasons for seeking protection in Israel, which are not related to the question of their support for the government in their country. For example, the asylum seeker processing unit recognized the persecution of LGBT people and the persecution of wives of deserters who were arrested or imprisoned due to the defection of their partners in Eritrea, and the Supreme Court also recognized the danger posed to girls in countries where it is customary to carry out a procedure to mutilate their genitals.¹⁵ Questions of this type should be examined thoroughly, with the sensitivity and caution established in relation to the asylum procedure outlined in case law and the procedure for processing asylum seekers. This was also the position of the UNHCR, which clarified that the best way to make decisions regarding danger in the country of origin is to examine the asylum application and not to do so on the basis of a new mechanism that bypasses the asylum system.¹⁶

Case 2 – Deportation after committing a criminal offense

This is a legal provision that allows deportation after serving a prison sentence for a felony, i.e. an offense for which the penalty is three years or more, even if the sentence imposed by the court is lighter.

First, a person who has violated the law and served his sentence is a person who has paid his debt to society. His deportation from the country is a double punishment that has no justification.

¹⁴ Authority request 5040/18 unidentified person v. Population and Immigration Authority (published in Nevo, February 9, 2020).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Minutes of meeting 337 of the Interior and Environmental Protection Committee, 25th Knesset, pg. 54 (February 24, 2025).

Secondly, **deportation under the Refugee Convention, to whose provisions the State of Israel is also bound, will be carried out in exceptional and particularly serious cases and not for any criminal offense as prescribed by the aforementioned law.** According to the Refugee Convention, such cases include crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and particularly serious "non-political" crimes.¹⁷ A "serious" crime is a crime punishable by death or another act for which the punishment is extremely severe.¹⁸ Furthermore, sections 32(1) and 32(2) of the Refugee Convention state that even in cases of danger to national security and public order, deportation will not be carried out except "in accordance with due process of law."¹⁹ Due process of law is a proper review of the asylum application and a reaching a decision based upon it. **The law that was passed does not include any mechanism or reference to the identity of the parties responsible for its implementation.**

Moreover, as per the aforementioned law, **deportation will be possible after serving a sentence for any offense that carries a penalty of three years or more, even if the actual sentence is less.** This means that if a person was convicted of a crime of threats, which carries a penalty of three years, but the actual sentence imposed on him is community service, he still falls within the scope of the law and may be deported from the country. It is clear that there is not the slightest resemblance between the arrangement set out in the law and the mandatory standards under the Refugee Convention and under international law. **The law completely ignores the requirements accepted in the world and allows deportation without adequate protection mechanisms, even for offenses that do not fall into the category of particularly serious crimes, thereby placing asylum seekers at real and unprecedented risk.**

Third, the fact that a person has committed a crime is not a justification for deporting him to a place where his life or freedom may be in danger. **The principle of non-refoulement of a person to a place where his life may be in danger applies to any and all governmental authorities concerned with deporting a person from Israel,²⁰ and is part of binding customary international law.²¹** The principle of non-refoulement is also enshrined in the Population and Immigration Authority's "Procedure for Handling Applicants for Political Asylum in Israel," and according to the Supreme Court's ruling, deporting a person to a place where his life or freedom may be in danger constitutes a violation of Israeli and international law (HCJ Al-Tay et al. v. Ministry of the Interior, published in Nevo September 11,1995).

The prohibition on evicting a person to a place where he may be exposed to torture is absolute. This is especially true in relation to Eritrea (the country on which the aforementioned law focuses), where torture is practiced, and where the widespread violation of human rights in the country serves as the basis for the non-

¹⁷ Clauses 6(a) and 32 of the Refugee Convention, (signed in 1951, ratified in 1954).

¹⁸ UNHCR Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status, p. 155 (Reprinted, Geneva 2011). www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/5ddfcdc47.pdf

¹⁹ Clauses 32 – 33 of the Refugee Convention, (signed in 1951, ratified in 1954).

²⁰ HCJ 5190/94 Al Tai et al. v. Minister of the Interior, 1995, para. 7 of HCJ President Barak's judgment.

²¹ HCJ 7146/12 Adam v. Knesset, 2013, para. 8 of Justice Fogelman's judgment.

refoulement policy that has been in place for nearly two decades.²² The law ignores the State's obligations under the principle of non-refoulement, and allows for the removal of people to a country that is indisputably violating basic human rights, in a manner that places the lives and freedoms of those people and their children in real danger. The law also does not include any mechanism for examining those dangers, as required by the Convention, nor was an opinion from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Justice considered in the legislative process, contrary to what is required of procedures relating to a collective non-refoulement policy.

The law is fraught with constitutional difficulties, does not meet the State's obligations under international law, is unreasonable, and violates the most basic rights – life, liberty, and physical integrity. It completely ignores the fact that the Israeli asylum system is not functioning, and the fact that for over two decades asylum applications have very deliberately not been reviewed, and allows the deportation of asylum seekers to places where their lives are in real danger.

Before a planned procedure was formulated by the Population and Immigration Authority regarding the implementation of the law, representatives of the Authority began trying to apply it in the courts for custody when the goal is clear - deportation at any cost. While providing partial and inadequate information to the courts and blatantly violating the Refugee Convention, international law, in contradiction to the group protection that Israel itself established, and while ignoring every basic norm of a democratic regime and the protection of human rights, the Population and Immigration Authority deported an Eritrean man from Israel to Eritrea. At the time of writing, an Eritrean citizen who was living in Israel has become homeless in Uganda (due to Eritrea's refusal to accept him), without protection, without financial assistance and amid efforts by Israeli aid organizations to understand what happened to him.

A reality in which a person "disappears" following the action of a government authority, without follow-up, without accountability and without knowledge of his whereabouts, is not a reality that can be accepted. It is a practice that characterizes dark regimes and not democratic states committed to the rule of law, transparency and the protection of human rights.

Ignoring this serious practice is not an isolated incident of neglect towards one asylum seeker, but rather it is the creation of a dangerous precedent, according to which the violation of the human rights of those whom the state identifies as "weak" today may become a tool to harm each and every one of us tomorrow.

C. The Citizenship Bill (Amendment – Denying Citizenship to a Child of a Person Who Entered Israel Illegally), 2025,²³ by MK Yevgeny Sova of the Yisrael Beiteinu Party, was tabled in the Knesset for an early debate (before the preliminary hearing).

²² U.S. Department of State 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in Eritrea (2024); <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/eritrea>

²³ The Citizenship Bill (Amendment – Denying Citizenship to a Child of a Person Who Entered Israel Illegally), 2025. [Hebrew]

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2227498>

The bill seeks to prevent the granting of status to children whose parents entered Israel illegally. Even though asylum seekers are legally residing in the State of Israel, their entry into the country is still defined as “infiltration,” so that according to the government’s position, it is an illegal entry. In other words, on the one hand, the State recognizes that these are asylum seekers and not “infiltrators,” and therefore issues them residence permits and does not file indictments for infiltration under the Infiltration Prevention Law.²⁴ On the other hand, the authorities insist on classifying the entry of asylum seekers into Israel as “infiltration,” deliberately ignoring the fact that these are people who fled murderous regimes in their countries of origin and ran for their lives to save themselves and the lives of their children.

Even if we ignore the fact that the State unjustly calls asylum seekers “infiltrators,” **this legislation is directly aimed at the children of asylum seekers, who certainly had no control or intention over their parents’ actions. Not granting status to these children, some of whom were born in Israel, is adding insult to injury and reflects the systematic abuse of asylum seekers and their children by public representatives.** The bill is at an early stage, but it should be seen as part of a broader web of bills aimed at denying basic rights to asylum seekers and their children residing in Israel.

D. The Penal Law Bill (Amendment – Lowering the Age of Criminal Responsibility for Children of Infiltrators to Ten Years), 2025,²⁵ by MK Limor Son Har Melech of the Otzma Yehudit Party – was tabled in the Knesset for an early debate (before the preliminary hearing).

The age of criminal responsibility set forth in the Penal Law is 12 years. The aforementioned bill seeks to lower the age of criminal responsibility, solely for children of asylum seekers (referred to in the bill as “children of infiltrators”), to ten years. The bill is fundamentally unfounded. It does not include any supporting research or review, and the explanatory notes do not include any reasoning or justification other than a single sentence that states that “recently we have witnessed the phenomenon of gangs consisting of children of infiltrators in south Tel Aviv, who roam the streets and commit serious acts of violence while terrorizing all of the local residents.”

This is a racist and shameful bill, which seeks to criminalize through generalization an entire group of minors simply because of their origin and the status of their parents. Instead of investing in supportive frameworks such as youth centers, clubs, enrichment programs, and after-school support, **the State chooses to ignore the conditions that it itself has created and only wakes up when it comes to exercising enforcement and punitive powers.** The bill does not offer a solution to the dire situation of asylum seeker children. In any case, it is clear that the Knesset member behind it is not interested in finding a solution, but rather in labeling children

²⁴ The Infiltration Prevention Law (Offences and Judgement), 1954

²⁵ The Penal Law Bill (Amendment – Lowering the Age of Criminal Responsibility for Children of Infiltrators to Ten Years), 2025. [Hebrew]

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2232801>

who were born into a reality of exclusion as "criminals" at a younger age, using their vulnerability as a pretext for incarcerating them.

There is no doubt that asylum-seeking children face a difficult reality full of barriers²⁶: they are excluded from the educational and social system, they are aware of their status and the fact that the State will do everything in its power to deny them status, they are subject to continuous labeling by government ministries, law enforcement authorities, and elected officials, and they live in deep poverty that intensifies extreme risks. These conditions, which are clearly created as a result of long-standing government policy, may lead to marginal behaviors, but the solution is not to lower the age of criminal responsibility and send ten-year-old children to prison. Such a step does not correct the failure, but rather perpetuates it and shifts the responsibility from elected officials who determine policies that harm children to the children themselves.

E. There are additional laws connected to the worrying trend of systematic violations of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Israel, including the draft Non-Governmental Organizations (Amendment – Contribution from a Foreign Political Entity) Law, 2024, which would allow the imposition of sweeping punitive taxation on civil society organizations.²⁷ In this case, the harm is not only to the asylum seekers themselves, but also to those who work to protect them and preserve their rights. The bill, which is being prepared for first reading in the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, is already creating a chilling effect that leads donors to divert their donations to other non-governmental organizations that are likely not to be taxed under this law.

Silence in the face of violations against defenseless groups paves the way for the future use of harmful tools against additional groups in society. Therefore, these moves must be fought as part of the overall struggle against the regime coup, with the understanding that this is a broad process aimed at changing the regime system and not specific steps against refugees alone.

Systematic and institutionalized exclusion from basic rights

Asylum seekers and refugees in Israel are consistently and systematically excluded from the full range of basic rights granted to every person living in the State of Israel. This is a deliberate policy of institutionalized exclusion, designed to burden the lives of asylum seekers and refugees to the point of despair and to encourage their "voluntary" departure from the State of Israel for other countries.²⁸ This policy is implemented both by not granting them status, and instead providing only temporary and unstable protection (only because the State has virtually no choice in the matter), and by systematically denying them access to essential services in the areas of health, welfare, education, employment, and more, as will be detailed hereafter. The declared and hidden purpose of the policies of Israeli governments over the years is to make

²⁶ ASSAF, "Shutting the Door on You", Situation report regarding children of refugees and asylum seekers in Israel. https://assaf.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/assaf_shuttingENdigi.pdf

²⁷ Non-profit Organizations Bill (Amendment – Donation from a Foreign Political Entity), 2024. <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawsuggestionssearch&lawitemid=2224634>

²⁸ "Omri Ephraim "Eli Yishai: I ordered the arrest of Eritreans and Sudanese, I will make their lives miserable" Ynet (August 16, 2012). [Hebrew] <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4269527,00.html>

the lives of asylum seekers in Israel impossible, to the point where they see leaving Israel as the only option available to them.

Lack of a uniform identification number

A. The lack of a uniform identification number for asylum seekers in Israel is a fundamental systemic failure, which serves as the basis for a long list of additional difficulties. It stems from the "capital sin" of not granting status: without status, there is no official document, and in any case, no identification number. **The Population Authority consistently opposes the assignment of a designated identification number, a number that is independent of the granting of any status**, on the grounds that this could create an affinity for asylum seekers with Israel. In practice, asylum seekers live in Israel and need access to health, education, transportation, and other administrative services, and so, in the absence of an official identification number, each government ministry issues them their own internal identification number. Since the authorities are not synchronized among themselves, the same person may hold dozens of separate numbers for each one of the various authorities.

B. Minors up to the age of 18 are in the worst situation of all, as they are not registered in any system with an independent number (except in the Ministry of Education, where they also receive several different numbers over the years) and are forced to use their mother's visa number. In Knesset deliberations, there was full consensus among all government ministries regarding the urgent need for a uniform identification number, but no action was taken to advance the issue because the Population Authority persisted in its opposition. The result is an unreasonable bureaucratic system, **which causes every basic action by asylum seekers to become a complex and unfeasible procedure without any ability to generate a sequence of information or proper treatment, negatively affecting both the asylum seeker and the authority.**

Welfare, Poverty and Food Insecurity

A. This research report by ASSAF – an aid organization for refugees and asylum seekers in Israel, and the Adva Center – a socio-economic research institute for the promotion of equality and social justice, presents findings on the socio-economic situation of refugees and stateless people in Israel who apply to aid organizations. The study, the first of its kind, is based on a survey conducted using questionnaires to which approximately 250 respondents answered, most of whom are refugees from Eritrea, but some also from Ukraine and other countries.²⁹ According to the report's findings, **the level of food insecurity among this population is at a record high of 85% living in food insecurity, with 55% living in severe food insecurity.** In other words, more than half of the refugee population surveyed lives without sufficient economic means or regular access to the basic nutrition required for a balanced and proper existence. For comparison, the percentage of the general population living in food insecurity is 20%. These figures are frequently presented to government

²⁹ Sabag, M., Dishon, Y., and Palombo, G., May 6, 2025, "The Poor Who Don't Count: Poverty, Food Security and Economic Well-Being among Asylum Seekers in Israel. <https://assaf.org.il/en/the-poor-who-dont-count-poverty-food-security-and-economic-well-being-among-asylum-seekers-in-israel/>

ministries and should concern anyone who cares about human rights. **The abject poverty is not a fate decreed, but rather a direct result of government policy towards asylum seekers and refugees living in Israel.** When the policy is to marginalize asylum seekers and make it so difficult for them that they can no longer bear daily life, the implied government message is a kind of modern equivalent to the ancient principle of "force him until he says: I want to." Except here the meaning is "I want to leave Israel." Thus, the hardship becomes a policy tool, and the dire figures are not a side effect but its direct and inevitable result.

B. Refugees and asylum seekers, due to their lack of status, are not entitled to National Insurance benefits, even though they are one of the most disadvantaged communities in Israel. Even if they meet all the eligibility criteria, they do not receive old-age, disability, nursing care, income support, alimony, disabled child benefits, and more. The State deliberately prevents them from receiving status, and due to their lack of status, they are not entitled to benefits.

C. Although the refugee group largely includes people who live in poverty and food insecurity, as detailed above, they are not entitled to the vast majority of welfare and social security services. In recent years, the welfare services provided to refugees have been somewhat expanded, but they only include those provided in out-of-home settings and are afforded only to 3 outlier groups who are at serious and immediate risk: women who are victims of domestic violence, people with disabilities, and street dwellers. In practice, providing the services to these groups is difficult due to various barriers, primarily the lack of health insurance.

D. The community of asylum seekers and refugees in Israel is not entitled to receive a community rehabilitation package for those struggling with mental illness, which is provided to Israeli citizens and residents with 40% or more mental disability. This means that people dealing with severe mental consequences of past traumas from the war in their country of origin, from their escape journey, captivity or torture, from sexual violence, or from trafficking and slavery are left without any community rehabilitation system.

E. Despite the difficult socio-economic situation of the refugee and asylum seeker population and despite the fact that most of them meet the criteria for receiving welfare assistance, receiving food baskets and being included in the National Nutrition Security Initiative, **most municipal welfare offices, which are responsible for providing services to city residents, including refugees and asylum seekers, are under systemic strain and lack information about the few rights that refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to, and therefore either do not treat this population at all, or offer them inadequate care.** There are also municipal welfare offices that refuse to provide services to refugees and asylum seekers, even though they are obligated by law and Ministry of Welfare procedures to assist (for example, in cases of domestic violence or with financial assistance to those suffering from food insecurity). Aid organizations frequently need to mediate between asylum seekers and municipal welfare offices.

F. Beyond direct severe damage to the lives of refugees and asylum seekers, there are of course broad effects. Living in poverty and without food security increases feelings

of despair and frustration, increases the risk of negative effects of social marginalization and even a lapse into crime, and expands State spending on rehabilitation and health.

Refugees and asylum seekers must be allowed full access to welfare rights. They must be included in the national food security initiative in a proactive manner, and those in need of assistance must be identified and the assistance made accessible. In addition, it must be possible to provide essential assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in the areas of social security (national insurance benefits), financial assistance with housing in extreme situations, welfare services, and of course a basic health insurance basket of services.

Health

A. According to "The Poor Who Are Not Counted" Study, **approximately half of the adult refugees and about a quarter of their children are not insured with health insurance. Only 25% of respondents indicated that their health is good, with 44% reporting poor health and 31% reporting severe health. Many respondents reported that they had given up on medical treatment due to their financial situation.** New health regulations allow health insurance only for Eritreans, Sudanese, and Ukrainians. Populations such as Ethiopians and Congolese are excluded from them, and therefore many are not insured with health insurance and their health and mental state is deteriorating, as will be detailed below.

B. National Health Insurance Regulations (Arrangements Regarding Registration with a Health Insurance Fund and Providing Health Services to Those in Israel Who Are Not Insured According to the Law), 2024:

1. In July 2024, National Health Insurance Regulations came into effect, intended for those without status residing in Israel. According to the regulations, adult citizens of Eritrea, Sudan, and Ukraine aged 60+, and their children under 18, are allowed to purchase insurance from the National Health Fund, for a monthly payment of NIS 331 per adult and NIS 145 per child, with the amount increasing each year.

2. Although the move expresses recognition that there are many populations who do not have status in Israel but are legally residing there and need medical insurance, the regulations that were enacted exclude many from the possibility of obtaining insurance. Minors who were not included in the limited eligibility groups, all adult asylum seekers aged 18-60, and those who do not meet the payment conditions, are excluded from public health insurance. The regulations also include provisions that lead even those eligible for the arrangement to leave the system. This reality creates life-threatening situations.

3. The regulations apply only to minors (up to the age of 18) and people over the age of 60. Healthy adults who can work will depend on foreign worker insurance, which provides only a partial solution (it does not cover pre-existing health problems and chronic illnesses), and therefore many are left without adequate medical care. The basic assumption that working-age adults are adequately insured by their employer under the "foreign worker insurance" framework is factually incorrect and even goes against the insurance logic that is

designed to create a network of mutual guarantees among all insured people, and it prevents them from accessing health services when needed. Foreign worker insurance is intended for workers who are invited to Israel for work, after medical examinations, and who are generally supposed to stay in Israel for relatively short periods and then return to their countries. Although it is possible to disagree with some of the provisions, which were established 20 years ago also in relation to licensed labor migrants, it is clear that these insurances were not intended to apply to refugees who have lived in Israel for many years, some of whom are in extremely vulnerable situations. Foreign worker insurance is partial insurance, subject to the control of the employer and the terms of employment and includes provisions such as termination of insurance upon loss of work capacity. They do not protect the insured people in a variety of situations and, as mentioned, do not cover pre-existing health conditions.

4. Adults who cannot work in the jobs available to them, which are usually physical jobs, will not be eligible for medical insurance. Also, there are those whose previous medical condition leads to the insurance company refusing to insure them. In the absence of medical insurance, no employer agrees to hire them. It is a vicious cycle: serious medical condition -> refusal of health insurance companies to insure -> refusal of employment -> worsening economic situation -> worsening medical conditions. Healthy people who worked and were insured but became ill or injured and temporarily lost their ability to work lose their medical insurance precisely when they need it most. Sick people and those who are injured do not report this in order not to lose their jobs and, as a result, their health insurance, and their condition deteriorates. Likewise, young people suffering from chronic illnesses are left without access to healthcare services when they reach the age of 18, as their illness will be excluded as a "pre-existing medical condition," and in these cases, employer insurance will not fund essential treatments that allow them to maintain their health and prevent a dangerous worsening of their condition.

5. The amount of insurance premiums required for those who are eligible is NIS 331 for an adult (over 60+) and NIS 145 for a minor (up to age 18). The family ceiling, which stood at 240 NIS before the regulations were enacted, has been abolished. These are amounts that cannot be met, especially for the segment of the population for which the regulations are intended. **The high costs are already leading to impossible situations for families who are forced to decide which of their children will be insured and which will not, and children are left without health insurance.** There is no need to exaggerate the consequences of the lack of health insurance, certainly for children. Adults who do not work and are not entitled to any pension or financial support are unable to meet the insurance premiums and find themselves in real danger of dying. The new premiums exclude the most vulnerable. Out of approximately 400 Eritrean refugees over the age of 60, only about 30 are insured under the new arrangement. Despite particularly high registration rates after the regulations came into effect, hundreds of families, according to reports from the field, cannot meet the payment conditions and have already been excluded from the arrangement or sentenced to waiting periods that have affected access to services, after they accumulated debts due to the inability to pay the monthly insurance premiums.

6. **The regulations set an exceptionally long qualifying period that also leaves many, adults and children, without access to health services. For those who entered Israel after January 7, 2024, a qualifying period of 27 months was set,** during which it will not be possible to join the insurance arrangement. The provision leaves adults and children without general medical insurance for a long time. Moreover, even after the 27 months, those who apply to join the insurance will be forced to wait another six months during which they will receive only limited health services. In addition, anyone who registered after January 1, 2025, including babies born after this date, will be subject to waiting periods that prevent them from receiving prompt essential care, including all health services beyond basic services at community clinics. These waiting periods have already led to a deterioration in the health of those newly insured, who are forced to pay full insurance premiums while at the same time either paying for treatments in the private market or waiting until a serious deterioration justifies hospitalization. As of the publication of this report, despite the announcement of a draft bill to abolish the waiting period for babies born after January 1, 2025, there has been no change in this dangerous policy.

7. The regulations abolished the "Meuhedet Arrangement" which was designed to ensure health services for minors. This is an arrangement that has existed for over 20 years, and guaranteed State health insurance for undocumented minors up to the age of 18 who reside in Israel, regardless of their country of origin, whether they are under group protection in Israel or not. **The new regulations exclude all children who do not enjoy group protection. Anyone who is not of Eritrean, Sudanese or Ukrainian origin will not be able to be insured with health insurance at all, not even for a fee.** Moreover, even among the eligible group, those who were not previously insured or has one parent who is not a legal resident in Israel will not be able to be insured. This is a step that prevents access to necessary medical treatment, thus endangering the lives of thousands of children residing in Israel. This violates international law and even internal law of the State of Israel, contrary to the State's own statements that were given after prolonged and informed consideration (Horev Commission, Health Minister's declaration that was given in HCJ 1386/19).

8. **These are children who are in Israel not by choice and without any ability to influence the circumstances of their lives. Without health insurance, they cannot receive minimal treatment or get a routine check-up with a doctor, even if they have unique health needs such as autism, developmental delay, epilepsy, diabetes, or even cancer.** Also excluded from the arrangement are children without status who were recognized as victims of trafficking but did not receive group protection, children whose parents are in various stages of status reviewal procedures, children without status who are in foster care, and even children who have one parent that is Israeli but does not acknowledge his parenthood. Moreover, children whose parents lose their residency visa in Israel will be excluded from health insurance, so if the minor is eligible and begins receiving treatment, he may find himself in a situation where the continuity of treatment is interrupted, contrary to the basic principle of protecting the best interests of the child. The State is consciously abandoning the right to health of many minors from one of the most vulnerable populations in Israel, leading to a real and daily risk to their lives.

It is important to clarify: This is not a theoretical situation. This is the reality of the lives of thousands of children without status residing in Israel. Children who were victims of human trafficking do not receive treatment, infants with life-threatening medical problems are not monitored, and children suffering from chronic illnesses do not receive treatment and their condition deteriorates. It is impossible to accept a reality in which the lives of many children are at risk daily through no fault of their own, contrary to every legal and moral principle, domestic and international. The harm is especially severe and painful when it comes to children without status with serious illnesses, developmental delays or disabilities, who are left without access to medical examinations, diagnoses, child development treatments, medications, surgeries and monitoring. This has a harmful and destructive effect on their normal development, which will exact a huge impact on their development and health, now and in the future. This harm has already led to a lack of early diagnosis and treatment, which can prevent the worsening of the condition of children with developmental delays or complex disabilities, thus requiring more complex and expensive treatment later. The elimination of access to early diagnosis and treatment and to health services will also prevent the possibility of improving the children's chances and right to integration into education and community, thus endangering their right to realize their potential.

When there is no insurance, the only option for receiving medical treatment in the public health system, except in situations where the medical condition endangers the public health in Israel, is to go to hospitals in emergencies, or to receive paid medical treatment at the emergency room of the "Bikurofa" clinic in Holon. After emergency medical treatment is received at a hospital, the medical institutions demand huge sums of money for the treatment and hospitalization performed. There is great pressure from hospitals on the young people to cover their debts, as it is clear that they are unable to do so, therefore leaving the medical institutions with bad debts. **Apart from the moral aspect, the lack of health insurance is also not "cost-effective" for the State**³⁰ considering the numerous unpaid debts left in its wake. Data received as part of freedom of information requests, shows that the lost debts to the health system amount to approximately 660,000,000 NIS. The lack of insurance, or an appropriate rehabilitation and assistance package, leaves those affected without essential treatment and support, and leads to conditions such as physical or mental disabilities, addiction, and more, and causes life-threatening extreme situations, including deterioration of life on the streets, working in prostitution, and sexual abuse.

The education system and early childhood frameworks

A. Denial of treatment for autistic children without status who are enrolled in designated kindergartens

1. Children aged 3-7, who have been diagnosed on the autistic spectrum and are in designated frameworks such as communication kindergartens and daycare centers, are entitled, according to the National Health Insurance Law, to a package of

³⁰ ASSAF, Physicians for Human Rights and Adva Institute - Letter to the Director General of the Ministry of Health regarding the draft of national health insurance regulations - a consideration from a health economics perspective. <https://tinyurl.com/ASSAF-letter-health>

preventive health care (PHC). These are complementary services aimed at assisting the development of children, such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, doctors (pediatric neurologist, pediatric psychiatrist, pediatrician), and more. Until November 2024, as was only appropriate, all children referred to communication kindergartens, including refugee children, children of foreign workers, and children of Israelis, were entitled to the package of services provided through associations funded by the Ministry of Health.

2. In November 2024, without prior notice, a draconian change was made to the Ministry of Health guidelines, and it was decided that children of foreign workers and refugee children would no longer receive the required treatment, while their friends, Israeli children, will continue to receive treatments. The routine requests of the organizations that provide the accompaniment and communication services in the designated kindergartens for funding subsidies were rejected, on the grounds that the Legal Bureau of the Ministry of Health no longer approves funding for children without status.

3. Children without status belong to a population that is frequently excluded from the services provided by State institutions. The exclusion of parents from health and welfare services drives many families into severe economic and social distress that places their children at risk. Although the vast majority of the refugee children were born in Israel, many of them, even those who do not deal with an organic disability, suffer from developmental, educational and linguistic gaps, and their starting point is lower, especially when it comes to children on the autism spectrum. The cessation of designated treatments means a certain setback in the children's situation, since parents cannot afford to pay for the expensive treatments privately, which will leave the children with no treatment at all.

4. The Forum of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Organizations in Israel, in cooperation with the organizations that provide services in the kindergartens, has repeatedly contacted the Ministry of Health, detailing the devastating consequences of denying children treatment. Left with no other choice, after the Ministry of Health refused to reverse its order, we were forced to submit a legal petition which is still ongoing. At this stage, the children continue to receive treatment, with repeated statements from the Ministry of Health that this does not constitute a commitment to continue the subsidy in future years.

The already bleak living circumstances of refugee children residing in Israel cannot serve as a basis for further discrimination, and we will fight to ensure that they continue to receive the rights to which they are entitled.

B. Closing of Unitaf Frameworks

1. **The Unitaf Association** operates educational-therapeutic frameworks for early childhood, which provide professional support to approximately 560 at-risk toddlers every day in Tel Aviv, Rehovot and Eilat. Unitaf frameworks are a safe alternative to the unsupervised frameworks where refugee children are forced to stay, sometimes called "children's shelters" or "babysitters". The unsupervised frameworks are run by women who are usually not trained to care for toddlers. The physical, safety and educational conditions in them are often inadequate and the ratio between the

number of children and the number of caregivers does not meet the required standards. However, living without status, without rights, in poverty and on the margins of society, leaves parents no choice but to work long hours and leave their young children in these frameworks at risk.

2. In light of this reality, and in light of the State of Israel's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the State adopted the **UNITAF model** as a systemic solution designed to protect infants, ensure their safety, and allow them a safe and healthy start to life. Government Resolution No. 2487 and Government Resolution No. 796, which continues it, regarding "Strengthening support and care services for infants and toddlers of foreigners without status in Israel," established a designated budget for the establishment of UNITAF frameworks for children without status. The budget is divided between a number of government ministries, including: the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, and the General Trustee. Due to changes in the authorities of the ministries, the Ministry of Economy was replaced, and the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Education became relevant.

The decision will expire at the end of December 2025. Not only has no new government decision been formulated, but the budget for 2025 has not been fully forwarded, and the UNITAF association is struggling to raise funds to guarantee that children will not be thrown out of the frameworks. The Refugee Organizations Forum is working in cooperation with the UNITAF association, with government ministries, with Knesset members, and with representatives of local authorities, to rectify the situation.

After many efforts, with the assistance of MK Naama Lazimi, a deliberation was held in the Special Committee for Youth Affairs over which she presides, in which MK Lazimi demanded that all relevant government ministries fulfill their duty and take responsibility, professionally and budgetarily, for the issue. Apart from the Ministry of Social Affairs, government ministries have withdrawn responsibility and were not willing to take part in the minor but critical funding of UNITAF frameworks, when it is completely clear that the meaning of not extending the decision is the return of young children to pirate frameworks, risking their lives. Led by MK Lazimi, another deliberation was held, in which the Ministry of Social Affairs succeeded in finding a budgetary source to complete the funding for 2025. MK Lazimi also demanded that the ministries hold an internal government dialogue and formulate a new decision by January 2026. The forum, in cooperation with UNITAF, will continue to fight for the safety and security of children and ensure that a new government decision is indeed formulated.

Studies

A. The tuition fees of young asylum seekers in higher education institutions are 25% higher than the tuition fees of students with Israeli citizenship. This is because the 1996 Maltz Committee report, whose recommendations were adopted by the Council for Higher Education, stated that students from abroad would pay 25% more than Israeli students. **There is no reason to treat young people who were born and raised in Israel as foreign students** and to impose higher tuition fees on them, since they are not citizens of another country. After repeated requests to the

Council for Higher Education, we received a response from the Council's legal counsel, according to which those responsible for determining the amount of tuition fees are public committees whose recommendations the Council for Higher Education has adopted in the past. In other words, the public committees are the ones responsible for determining the amount of tuition fees in institutions of higher education funded by the State, and both of them - the Maltz Committee from 1996 and the Winograd Committee from 2001 - no longer exist, and once again we are left without any lead to a possible solution.

B. All professions that require licensing in the State of Israel are not open to asylum seekers because they do not have citizenship or residency status. These are dozens of professions, from auto mechanics and electricians to nurses, lawyers, engineers, and more. Even if young asylum seekers are accepted to an educational institution and successfully complete their studies, they are unable to take the final exam, and therefore some give up from the beginning any idea of studying. Also regarding this issue, the Refugee Organization Forum has been in contact with the Ministry of Labor for years, but the answers we are receiving are laconic and opaque.

C. Also, there are educational institutions that, contrary to the law, do not allow admission to their ranks at all, as they are aware that the young asylum seekers will not be able to take the government exam and receive an employment license at the end of their studies. In certain institutions, after the young people have already been accepted and started studying, they have decided to discontinue their studies in the middle of the school year, due to the (belated) understanding that they will not be able to take the final exam and receive a certificate. Apart from the licensing issue, which has been discussed for years with the Ministry of Labor, it must be made clear to higher education institutions that they cannot refuse to accept a person for studies due to their inability to take the final exam and certainly may not discontinue their studies prematurely.

D. Young people studying in higher education institutions are not only required to pay 125%, but also cannot take part in social scholarships because they are funded by the State, and therefore those who do not have residency are not eligible for them. For example: Ministry of Education scholarships are not open to those who do not have residency and hold a type 2(a)(5) visa. Those who hold a type A/5 visa, which is considered temporary residency, can register. There is no justification for distinguishing between types of visas or between visa holders and citizens in providing scholarships. On the contrary - asylum seekers, most of whom were born into a low socioeconomic status, need these scholarships more than others. In addition, there are scholarships that are open only to those who have served in the army or national service, so they are automatically unavailable to asylum seekers who are unable to serve in the army or national service.

E. The only scholarships open to holders of a 2(a)(5) visa are scholarships specifically designed for them, which are available, for example, in the Tel Aviv Municipality, in specific organizations and institutions, on an inconstant basis. Holders of a type A/5 visa, who receive services in the general welfare system, have more options open to them.

F. The Ministry of Education issues young asylum seekers a fictitious number (since they do not have an identity number) and the visa issued when they reach the age of 18 is given a different number, so that the identification number on the matriculation certificate is different from the identification number that appears on the visa. Also, the name written on the matriculation certificate is in Hebrew, and on the visa it is written in English, so there is no match in either the name or the identification number.

G. There is still segregation in schools in Tel Aviv, with most asylum seekers being referred to schools where only asylum seekers study. This leads to the creation of linguistic and cultural gaps, prevents social integration, and makes it difficult for them to progress to higher education afterwards. After many years of fighting this inappropriate practice, a Supreme Court ruling was recently issued in which the court recognized for the first time that segregation does indeed exist, that this is an unacceptable situation, and that the Tel Aviv Municipality must act to correct it.³¹ However, so far, no steps have been taken by the Tel Aviv Municipality to change the situation, but rather the opposite. On November 19, 2025, about two months after the Supreme Court's decision on the matter, parents of asylum seeker children were invited to a meeting regarding their children entering middle schools. At the meeting, Tel Aviv Municipality representatives informed the parents that they must choose a middle school for their children, when they were advised to choose the middle school where asylum seekers study in segregation. Moreover, no information has been provided on steps intended to implement the ruling or on new plans to integrate children into non-segregated schools. The legal process is ongoing and we will insist that the illegal segregation be stopped.

The Israeli education system advocates the pursuit of excellence and instills a desire for academic success in children, even at a young age. However, asylum seekers do not have the opportunity to realize their potential after graduation, even though they have the ability to do so. These young boys and girls see the impossibility of their older brothers and sisters to enlist, study, or advance in the free market, and this causes them to lose motivation at an early stage and, in more advanced stages, to drop out of educational institutions and give up on integrating into the system. Added to this is the illegal racial segregation and the difficult living circumstances from the start. Full integration of the children of asylum seekers into the education system and the provision of an equal education are not only essential for their development, but are also a paramount social interest that strengthens Israeli society as a whole.

Employment

A. All professions regulated by government ministries are closed to asylum seekers. For example, asylum seeker students cannot register in the Register of Certified Engineers and Technicians, due to the provisions of Section 18(a)(2) of the Certified Engineers and Technicians Law, 2012, according to which anyone who is an Israeli citizen or resident of Israel is entitled to register in the Register. As stated, many asylum seekers were born in Israel and grew up in it, but they are not considered residents, even though the term "resident" is interpreted in various laws in different

³¹ Case No. 7906/22 Yosef Muhammad Brown et al. v. Mayor of Tel Aviv-Yafo (published in Nevo, September 16, 2025).

ways according to the purpose of the law, and therefore they cannot engage in professions that require government licensing.

B. Employers of asylum seekers employ them under a policy of non-enforcement,³² so that those who are staying in Israel can work and live with dignity. So on the one hand they are allowed to work, and on the other hand the main employment open to them is menial work (packaging, cleaning, renovations, etc.). A job that requires academic studies and allows for the expression of personal skills will allow young people to break the cycle of poverty and free them from needing welfare services. This is in line with legislation and case law, and will also benefit Israeli society, which will gain highly capable workers who are interested in studying and contributing to the country, and will not be a burden on its welfare system. These are talented young people who meet the required academic standards and cannot engage in the professions they studied due to an arbitrary barrier. A free market helps promote growth in the Israeli economy. Opening the entire labor market to asylum seekers will benefit both the state and its citizens.

C. There is no effective supervision of employers' obligations towards their asylum seeker employees, both regarding the obligation to make deposits to a trust fund (to ensure their entitlement to social rights and severance pay) and regarding the obligation to insure them with health insurance. Many employers do not make the deposit and do not insure employees with health insurance, and there is no State entity that proactively supervises these violations. In this case, the one charged with the duty of supervision is the Population and Immigration Authority, which does not fulfill its role properly. In the event of a violation, if it is discovered in time, the employee turns to organizations that contact the Ministry of Labor to handle the matter, but an appropriate response is not always provided.

D. There are no tax credit points. Young asylum seekers, who initially come from a low socioeconomic background, bear the full burden of taxes without any relief.

E. Asylum seekers holding a 2(a)(5) visa are unable to open an independent business without an Israeli guarantor. This requirement stems from their arbitrary classification as "foreign residents," which requires them, under Section 60(a) of the Value Added Tax Law,³³ to present an Israeli guarantor who, for the purposes of the law, is legally liable for tax obligations as the asylum seeker himself. However, asylum seekers are not "foreigners": their center of life is in Israel, they are not foreign residents, and the reason they do not have a status that allows them to open a business like an Israeli citizen is the State's decision not to grant them status. This creates a chain of absurdities: first, the person is denied the right to status, from which their classification as a "foreigner" is derived, and later, additional requirements are imposed on them, primarily the need for an Israeli guarantor, which prevents them from opening a business legally in the first place. There is no justification for preventing those who meet the required rules, and who seek to earn a decent living and integrate legally into the Israeli economy, from opening a business.

³² H CJ 6312/10 **Kav LaOved v. Government** (published in Nevo, January 16, 2011).

³³ Section 60(a) of the Value Added Tax Law, 1975.

Furthermore, the requirement for an Israeli guarantor makes opening a business almost impossible, and sometimes even invites exploitation, with Israeli citizens charging a fee for their agreement to serve as guarantors, in a way that makes the business initiative economically unviable. It is important to emphasize that these are people who wish to operate legally, establish a regular business, and pay taxes, but are prevented from doing so due to arbitrary restrictions by the State. Denying them the ability to earn a decent living pushes many into low-wage jobs, deepening frustration, despair, and a sense that they have nothing to lose, conditions known to be fertile ground for exploitation and further deterioration.

F. Some employers require a certificate of no sex offenses as a condition of employment. In January 2025, as a result of the submission of a legal petition on the subject, the Israel Police issued a certificate of no sex offenses, for the first time, to a young asylum seeker.³⁴ But this is not a "broad" decision, but rather a specific case in which the permit was issued. It must be ensured that the police will not create difficulties for future asylum seekers who request the issuance of such a permit.

Volunteering

A. Many youth and young adults are interested in volunteering and contributing to society. In many organizations, such as Magen David Adom [the Israeli equivalent of Red Cross], it is not possible to register as a volunteer without an ID card. There is no justification or logic in preventing the possibility of volunteering.

B. Various institutions that allow volunteering require a certificate of absence of sex offenses issued by the Israel Police. As aforementioned, following a legal petition by the Hotline for Refugees and Immigrants,³⁵ the police undertook in a specific case to issue a certificate of absence of sex offenses to a young asylum seeker, and the certificate was indeed issued. We will monitor this issue to ensure that additional young people will also be able to receive such a certificate, without the need to submit another legal petition to this effect.

Military/National Civil Service, Preparatory Schools and a Year of Service

A. The IDF recruits into its ranks those who hold Israeli citizen status or permanent residency status who are subject to mandatory service in accordance with the Defense Service Law. National civil service is also open to those who hold Israeli citizen status or permanent residency status, and who have been exempted from or not called up for mandatory military service.

B. Young asylum seekers, who hold type 2(a)(5) or A/5 visas, cannot enlist in the IDF or volunteer for national civil service, although many would like to do so.

C. A year of service or preparatory school is possible, but only in organizations that are willing to take on the funding of the young people. Preparatory schools do not receive a budget from the Ministry of Defense for those who are not eligible for conscription, and therefore the preparatory school must raise designated money for young asylum

³⁴ HCJ 25844-11-24 Rubel Adhanom v. Israel Police (published in Nevo, January 20, 2025).

³⁵ Ibid.

seekers, which in many cases is not possible, and therefore there is a minimal allocation in some preparatory schools for these young people. In addition, even if they are accepted into the preparatory school, they are not entitled to scholarships or discounts on public transportation, or other benefits that their peers who volunteer are entitled to, so that attending the preparatory school becomes a considerable financial burden.

Transportation

A. Asylum seekers are the only group in Israel that is not eligible to be issued a driver's license. The prohibition stems from the Ministry of Transportation's interpretation of Regulation 221A of the Traffic Regulations, 1961, taking into account the definition of "resident" in Regulation 170 of the Regulations. Regulation 170 defines "resident of Israel" as someone who is a resident under Section 1(a) of the Population Registry Law, and therefore a type 2(a)(5) visa, which most asylum seekers hold, is not included in it. The interpretation of the term "resident" leads to an absurd reality according to which temporary residents, diplomats, student visa holders, labor migrants and even tourists who come to Israel for a short period and hold a "visiting residence permit" or a "transit residence permit" are permitted to drive in Israel, while those who have lived in Israel for many years are not permitted to do so.

B. This directly harms the freedom of movement of asylum seekers, which is a fundamental right in a democratic state, and in this case also constitutes serious discrimination that is not based on any relevant difference between the asylum seekers and others. In addition, the lack of eligibility for the issuance of a driver's license also constitutes an infringement on the freedom of occupation due to the difficulty of reaching certain places by public transportation. There is no substantive justification for this, but rather, it is an arbitrary interpretation (and it should be noted that the term "resident" is interpreted differently in different laws), which has no logic and its result is an additional burden on those who only want to lead a normative life.

C. Asylum seekers cannot leave Israel, as if they do so they will not be able to return to it. Many young asylum seekers wanted to take part in the trip to Poland as part of Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is held in high schools, but this option was, and still is, closed to them. In addition, many young people want to visit their family members, who arrived as refugees in other countries and are unable to do so. Moreover, there are professions in which flights are part of the job requirement, so that yet another sector of employment is closed to them.

D. Asylum seekers and refugees cannot book bus tickets to Eilat, as the option to book is online only and requires entering an ID number (visa numbers are not accepted). In effect, many are "imprisoned" in the area where they live. They cannot leave the country's borders and return to it, they cannot obtain a driver's license, and they are also denied the opportunity to book bus tickets to remote places. This adds to the many unreasonable restrictions imposed on them and adds to their sense of frustration.

E. Paying reports: Sometimes asylum seekers and refugees receive reports and are told by the inspector or police officer that the report will be sent to them digitally, for

example by email, but the report does not arrive. Because they do not have an identification number, they are unable to locate the report on the relevant websites. As a result, even though they want to pay the report, they are unable to do so. The report accumulates interest and, in many cases, it is not possible to locate it and pay it until the municipality asks the bank to seize the account of the report holder, in which case he is required to pay the report plus interest and deal with a seized bank account. It does not make sense that an action that should be as simple as paying a report will lead people to a situation where their bank account is seized. This also leads to costs being imposed on local authorities, who waste valuable time reporting to banks and attempting to locate the bank account of the person who received the report.

Banking

A. Banks refuse to provide a bank guarantee, which is necessary mainly in the context of rental agreements and therefore has an impact on the housing options of asylum seekers.

B. There are restrictions on credit – either there is no credit at all and the only option is to use a Direct card, or the limit is very low. It should be clarified that this does not depend on the status of the account. Even if the account has a high positive balance and the account holder is managing it properly, the credit will still not be granted.

C. It is not possible to use digital payment applications (such as Bit/Paybox) since it is not possible to enter a visa number, only an ID number.

D. Even two decades after arriving in Israel, asylum seekers and refugees encounter problems opening a bank account, despite explicit instruction from the Supervisor of Banks that allows opening a bank account. Representatives of the Banking Supervision Department are attentive to asylum seekers' inquiries and to problems arising from everyday encounters, and assist as much as possible. However, transmitting instructions regarding this subject to bank officials is a process that is often accompanied by bureaucratic complications and the need for intervention by human rights organizations.

Sports

A. Asylum seeker athletes who participate in athletics competitions cannot represent Israel, because they lack status. If they want to participate in the Olympics, for example, they must represent the UN refugee team even though they want to represent the country. This is not a theoretical scenario. **There are asylum seekers living in Israel who have attained achievements that allowed them to reach the Olympics, and instead of representing the State of Israel, they represented the UN refugee team.**

B. In the fields of basketball and soccer, the standard for asylum seeking players is that of a foreign player, although, as has been stated throughout this document, they are not foreigners, but Israelis who grew up in the country and were educated there. The foreign player standard is usually given to players who come from abroad. If, despite everything, the young people managed to be accepted with the foreign player standard, they cannot integrate into the higher leagues. Many

of them are talented and would like to integrate into professional sports in Israel, but due to their lack of status, they cannot do so.

Religion and Family Life

A. Some asylum seekers want to convert to Judaism because of their deep connection to the State of Israel where they grew up and were educated, and out of recognition of the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. However, conversion in Israel is only possible as per the provisions of Orthodox conversion, and the Orthodox courts are not willing to convert asylum seekers. The refusal is given without any reason. Some have chosen to convert through Reform conversion, but as is well known, this is not recognized for the purpose of marriage in Israel.

B. Couples who have a child born to them in Israel cannot immediately register the names of both parents on their birth certificate. Only the mother is registered, while the father is required to perform a DNA test, paid for privately. In order to perform a DNA test in Israel, a court order is required, and therefore legal representation is necessary in order to file a paternity claim. The costs are, of course, fully borne by the refugees. This is an unacceptable demand that discriminates between the asylum seeker population and any other population residing in Israel, wastes judicial time, unnecessary work for genetic institutes, and intrusions into the privacy of all those involved.

Significant reduction in UNHCR standards in Israel as another destabilizing factor

The harm to asylum seekers and refugees in Israel is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a worrying global trend of retreat in refugee protection and a reduction in resources directed to these populations. As a result, aid organizations working alongside asylum seekers and refugees are also being harmed, whether due to the withdrawal of donations or due to the reduction in staff and scope of activities. One of the most prominent examples of this is the UNHCR, which, following a sharp decline in donations, was forced to reorganize its activities worldwide, including in Israel. As a result, the scope of the office's activities in Israel was significantly reduced, with only a few elements remaining, and the assistance provided both to partner organizations and directly to refugees was dramatically reduced.

However, in Israel, the implications of the described move are particularly serious. Unlike other Western countries, where asylum seekers and refugees "enjoy" a recognized status and access to basic rights, in Israel they are denied these rights and their situation is very difficult. Therefore, any harm to aid organizations is another blow to the most defenseless population, which is completely dependent on external support for the realization of its basic rights. Despite the efforts that were made to prevent the closure of the office in Israel, the damage remains deep and noticeable, and has a direct impact on the well-being and security of the asylum seekers and refugees living alongside us.

Time for practical change

Asylum seekers and refugees living in Israel are not "infiltrators." They are people who fled their countries of origin to save their lives and the lives of their children. They are asking for the obvious: to live in safety, to work, to study, to raise their children, and to contribute to the country that was supposed to provide them with refuge. The policy of exclusion, the denial of status, and the denial of their basic rights is not only illegal but also socially and economically flawed and harms all citizens of the country.

Reviewing and determination of permanent status, providing the opportunity to work in a variety of professions, to acquire an education, to volunteer, and to be part of the community is not only an expression of the compassion and fundamental commitment of the State of Israel **to domestic and international law** and human rights values, but is also a clear public interest. A society that allows all the populations that make it up to integrate into and contribute to it is a stronger, more stable, and safer society. The integration of asylum seekers will make it possible to rescue thousands of families from the cycle of poverty, reduce dependence on welfare systems, and create a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility, instead of despair, alienation, and exclusion.

As a Jewish state, which emerged from the experience of refugees and a deep recognition of the value of human life and the duty to protect the persecuted, the State of Israel has a moral and historical obligation to reach out to those who are in the same situation today as we were in not many years ago. The current situation is not a decree of fate. It can be corrected, and it can be changed.

The barriers and difficulties detailed above can be resolved, and often with relative ease. Despite the difficulties, many of the asylum seekers in Israel, young, old and elderly alike, struggle every day to live a normal life, earn a decent living and play an active part in Israeli society. However, their continued exclusion from almost every public service, such as education, health, welfare and employment, causes severe and ongoing harm to their ability to realize their inherent potential. The harm is particularly severe among young people, who, due to a lack of prospects and opportunities, are pushed into a life of poverty and exclusion and are denied the possibility of social and economic mobility. Many of them grew up and were educated in Israel, speak Hebrew, and feel an integral part of Israeli society. For example, after the October 7 attack, many of them were among the first to volunteer and help the victims and the communities that were affected. And yet, in the eyes of the State, they remain transparent.

The Forum of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Organizations in Israel calls for a thorough reform of the asylum system, which will ensure professional, rapid and transparent review of asylum applications in accordance with Israeli and international law, and will enable the granting of status to those who meet the conditions. Along with this, substantial legislative amendments are required: repealing laws and regulations that violate fundamental rights, curbing imprisonment and deportation in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, and removing the draft of the Basic Law: Entry, Immigration and Status in its current form from the legislative agenda. In regard to essential services, full and

equal access to health, welfare, housing assistance, mental health care and National Insurance benefits must be ensured, and a uniform identification number must be issued to each asylum seeker until their case is decided. In addition, discriminatory barriers must be removed in the banking system, those who meet the requirements must be allowed to obtain a driver's license, and professional athletes should be integrated into the various sports without discriminatory classification.

The education system also requires a fundamental overhaul: the High Court of Justice ruling on segregation must be fully implemented, tuition fees in higher education institutions must be made comparable to fees customary among citizens, and registration for scholarships must be allowed without the need for an identity number as a condition for registration. In the field of early childhood, care for autistic children without status must be immediately restored in designated kindergartens and multi-year funding must be ensured for UNITAF frameworks. In the field of employment, licensing barriers must be removed and professions that require certification must be opened to those who meet the conditions for certification, while creating appropriate training programs for those working towards certification. Finally, full integration into the social fabric must be enabled by opening volunteer programs, national civil and military service, voluntary years of social service, and preparatory courses - not as a condition for receiving any kind of status, but out of recognition of the importance of the involvement and contribution of asylum seekers to Israeli society.

Removing the barriers and including asylum seekers in public systems will benefit not only the asylum seekers themselves, but Israeli society as a whole, which will benefit from community members who have capabilities, motivation, and a deep sense of belonging, and will avoid deepening the circles of exclusion and poverty to the next generation.

Adv. Shahar Mandil

Policy and Government Relations Promoter of the Forum of Refugee and Asylum Seekers Organizations in Israel

<https://assaf.org.il/en/>

+972-54-6928223 | shahar.refugeeforum@assaf.org.il