



Israel Women's Network Mid-Year Report

06/24

We proudly submit the Israel Women's Network Report for January-June 2024, which summarizes **our intensive work for the past six months.**

In this period, the Israel Women's Network (IWN) has been at the forefront of the battle to **shape the future image of the State of Israel.** Promoting gender equality has never been easy, but in the past months, it has been extremely challenging. However, the profound crisis that our country is experiencing has also created a **significant opportunity** to advance toward greater gender justice. There is a growing public awareness of women's significant roles and contribution to the war efforts, in the military and on the home front. There is also growing recognition that democracy cannot exist without genuine equality.

Therefore, our work fills us with energy and hope, and today, more than ever, feels critical and necessary. As we grapple as individuals and a collective with the aftermath of October 7, we firmly believe that from this deep crisis, we will emerge as a stronger, more just, and **reformed society.**

We are grateful for your contributions and support that make it possible for IWN to lead the efforts to achieve gender justice and equality and impact the lives of men and women in Israel.

Sincerely,

Tal Hochman and Elah Alkalay

In the past six months, our focus has been on:

- The Women's Rights Response Center (in memory of Alice Shalvi)
- Legislative amendments and policy solutions to protect women during wartime
- Ongoing legal actions to protect women's rights in the labor market
- Fight for equal representation in the government
- Establishment of the International Department
- Launch of "A Place at the Table," IWN's podcast hosted by Dana Weiss

The Women's Rights Response Center

In January 2024, we launched the Alice Shalvi Women's Rights Response Center. After building the necessary infrastructure to provide assistance to inquiries about women's rights during wartime, we launched a pilot program with minimal publicity. During this period, we set up a dedicated landing page for the Center, recruited volunteers, and conducted a comprehensive in-depth review of women's rights and protections relevant to the emergency period, including a survey of available solutions and resources.

In April, the Response Center officially opened its call center with a widespread media campaign: We launched a commercial to advertise the call center featuring Ilanit Levy, released videos explaining specific rights available to women reservists and soldiers and spouses of reservists and soldiers, and sponsored advertising spots on social media that brought us hundreds of thousands of impressions.

68,000

Facebook impressions

65,464

Instagram impressions

418,041

YouTube impressions

Additionally, we created targeted advertising for specific population group. So far, we have received 300 inquiries, including 25 from Russian speakers.

PERSONAL STORY FROM THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS RESPONSE CENTER:

R, a divorced mother of young children, sought our guidance after having been denied grants from her reservist former husband's Reservist Assistance Fund despite functioning as the sole caregiver of their children during the war. We provided comprehensive guidance to ensure that R had a full grasp of her rights. In her case, we identified that her application process was complicated by the absence of her own bank account details on the application forms, so we emphasized the importance of including the details of her personal bank account to ensure that the grants would be directly transferred to her. Additionally, we proactively contacted the assistance fund on her behalf to resolve the bureaucratic issue of submitting the request without her former husband's email address.

In a follow-up communication, R informed us of the fund's response and its requests for additional documents. We promptly assisted R in obtaining and completing the requisite documents from the National Insurance Institute. The extended correspondence with R illustrates the complexities of the bureaucratic process and the genuine need for assistance and professional guidance to navigate the process.

The Open Lines on Labor Law Issues

In addition to the Women's Rights Response Center, our free legal aid hotlines have continued to operate intensively. Since the beginning of the year, we received 750 inquiries, 42% of which were from ultra-Orthodox women.

In June, we published a summary report on the hotlines' operations in 2022–2023. During that period, 2,765 women contacted our helplines. Almost one third of the inquiries concerned rights related to pregnancy and childbirth, while only a few addressed wage gaps. It is not surprising that our figures indicate that women are primarily concerned with "basic" rights such as pension provisions and layoffs during pregnancy, and with sexual harassment, and that less attention is consequently available to address to potential wage gaps in their workplaces.

Legal Department

CLASS ACTION AGAINST BEIT YAAKOV

Following our class-action lawsuit against the Beit Yaakov educational institutions, filed jointly with the law offices of Reuven and Yaakov Bitton, the education network is required to pay approximately NIS 7.5 million in damages to former kindergarten teachers and aides employed by them in the past seven years as compensation for withheld pension contributions and wage supplements for mothers of young children. Thanks to this successful class action, thousands of ultra-Orthodox women finally received their rightful entitlements. In addition to these awarded amounts, Beit Yaakov has pledged to uphold these rights for future employees. Our commitment to advocating for and assisting women in obtaining their rights continues.

Government Relations Department

PROTECTION AGAINST DISMISSAL FOR SPOUSES OF RESERVISTS

The bill proposed by MKs Ofir Katz and Naor Shiri, which prohibits the dismissal of spouses of reservists, has been approved. The bill includes a crucial and groundbreaking clause that we strongly advocated for—the extension of financial aid and protection against dismissal to divorced women and women in shared parenting arrangements, not just current spouses.

Previously, divorced women were overlooked in legislation and grants despite bearing the full responsibility of managing the household and raising children. With no entitlement to compensation and financial grants to support their families when their employment was terminated, they remained dependent on their former spouses. This new bill grants these women employment protection and an economic safety net in the event that they are placed on unpaid leave.

Government Relations Department (Cont.)

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERVISION LAW

IWN participated in a successful collaborative effort to pass the Electronic Bracelet Law. Since the law was passed in July 2023, we have been working to diligently ensure its implementation, scheduled for August 2024. In response to our request, the Chairman of the Knesset National Security Committee, MK Tzvika Fogel, facilitated a series of discussions on the legislation. As a result, the entities responsible for implementing the law have committed to a firm schedule. We remain actively involved, and will continue to monitor and supporting the law's implementation process to ensure its successful execution.

EXTENSION OF MATERNITY LEAVE PAY FOR SPOUSES OF RESERVISTS

In a series of Knesset Economic Committee discussions, we addressed the critical need for additional financial assistance to women who are forced to remain at home after their maternity leave due to the reserve duty of their spouse or ex-spouse. The discussions led to approval of a one-time grant of NIS 10,700 for any mother who is unable to return to work after their maternity leave and is the spouse or ex-spouse of a reservist who completed at least 45 days of reserve duty under an Order 8 call-up.

MONITOR REPORT - THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN WAR AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

In early April, in partnership with the Citizen Empowerment Center, we issued a monitoring report highlighting the unique challenges faced by women in the context of war. The report uncovers the escalating inequality and difficulties women have experienced since October 7. It also examines the implications of excluding women from decision-making positions, and identifies challenges and inequality in the areas of employment, domestic violence, and post-trauma management. The report presents data that paint a disconcerting picture of the situation of women in Israel. From the rise in the number of cases of women being dismissed or having their job scope reduced, to the growing number of calls to domestic violence prevention centers and the number of women murdered compared to the same period last year, the report highlights the urgent need for attention. Despite these challenges, the government continues to distribute weapons without regulation, further exacerbating the risks of potential violence against women.

[Read the full report >](#)

POLICY MAKERS' BROCHURE "WHAT WOMEN NEED"

On October 7, 2023, and in the difficult days that followed, women nationwide answered the call to duty in various capacities. Although the war has significant ramifications directly impacting women, youth and children, there is an **absence of female representation** in the decision-making forums where the war's repercussions are deliberated and potential solutions are discussed. As a result, policy discussions overlook the distinct needs of women.

To underscore these pressing needs, we seized the occasion of International Women's Day to engage with the Knesset members and distributed a resource that we had prepared specifically for this purpose - a booklet containing practical and urgent policy recommendations tailored to address the concerns of women across the country, whose interests are being overlooked.

[Read the brochure >](#)

International Department

PROTECTION AGAINST DISMISSAL FOR SPOUSES OF RESERVISTS

On October 7, Hamas committed horrific gender-based crimes. While these crimes were indisputable, IWN and Israeli feminist organizations were shocked by the lack of condemnation and the silence of feminist organizations worldwide. In the following weeks, IWN participated in the efforts to learn, collect evidence, and call for a response from the international feminist community and international organizations. We saw how our efforts significantly contributed to campaigns worldwide, encouraged condemnation of the gender-based crimes committed by Hamas, created a shift in public opinion, and pressured the Israeli government to continue negotiations.

In early April, we established the International Department to push for the swift release of all hostages through international pressure, and to build **long-term partnerships** with global feminist movements, and strengthen diplomatic relations to create a strong international network that can be mobilized in future crises. Through these efforts, we aim to contribute to the strength and resilience of broad feminist struggles across borders and nations, leveraging collective action for greater impact. In early June, we drafted and circulated a **letter to the United Nations Secretary-General**, calling for a thorough and impartial investigation into the sexual violence perpetrated on October 7 and the ongoing captivity of Hamas. Eighty organizations signed the letter.

IWN's Podcast: "A Place at the Table"

In our world today, where women are underrepresented in leadership roles, our new podcast "A Place at the Table" aims to amplify the voices of female experts and professionals who deserve a seat at the decision-making table. By exploring how the war would have been different if women had a say in the decision-making process, this podcast challenges listeners to consider the potential impact of equal gender representation in conflict resolution efforts. Would the war have been conducted differently? Would there have been meaningful discussions about the post-war period? Would the negotiations for the release of hostages have been handled differently if 50% of the decision-makers were women?

With four episodes already released and thousands of listeners, this podcast features insightful interviews with prominent women such as Malka Potkovsky, Yael Admi, Judge Nava Ben Or (retired), and Naama Shultz. Through these conversations, "A Place at the Table" sheds light on the importance of gender equality in all aspects of society, including conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

[Listen to the Podcast >](#)

We are incredibly grateful for your partnership and support in the ongoing journey towards gender equality in Israel. Together, we have the power to build a society where every woman's voice is not only heard but truly valued, paving the way for fair and inclusive decision-making.



Our activity is possible thanks to the support and generosity of:



בנק הפועלים



CLORE ISRAEL FOUNDATION



לא מוגנות בעבודה.

93% מהבקשות של מעסיקים לפטר נשים בהריון ותקופות מוגנות

עברייני מין לא יכול להיות גניקולוג

גבר שקיבל רישיון לנשק לפני חודש בלבד הביא אותו לדייט ראשון ותקף מינית אישה תחת איומי נשק

ynet חשד: בעל אקדח ברישיון ביצע עבירות מין באישה באיומי נשק

טל הובחן | מנכ"לית שדולת הנשים

עכשיו גם הורחבו המקלטים, ובשנה האחרונה נוספו עוד.

עליה של 67%

במספר הפניות לרווחה בנוגע לאלימות כלפי נשים ביחס לאותה תקופה בשנה שעברה.

אולי פשוט תקשרו לאלים?

אקו ביזנס

עם דנה ויס

הפודקאסט של שדולת הנשים בישראל

ביחד אנחנו כוח

הגניקולוג שהפך לכוכב רשת יואשם בעבירות מין | נחשף ב-ynet

בעקבות שימוע בפרקליטות החלט שניא רופא יעמוד לדין בגין עבירות מין שביצע לכאורה במסופת של, שאמרה: "הוא אדם רשע שהרשה לעצמו לנצל את הכוח שלו כרופא באופן שקרי וזדוני"

הגיע הזמן!

בנות זוג, גרושות, ונשים בהורות משותפת עם משרת מילואים יהיו זכאיות להגנה תעסוקתית.

הועדה לקידום מעמד האישה ולשוויון מגדרי

19.06.24 | ישיבה לציון היום הבינלאומי למאבק באליומות מינית באזורי סכסוך

אחרי מאבק שלנו - חדשות טובות: השבוע פסל בית הדין לעבודה את המינוי של רשם הפטנטים. אז מה הסיפור, ואיך זה קשור אלייך?

לא נעצור עד שמזכ"ל האו"ם יכניס את חמאס לרשימה השחורה.

15 נשים נרצחו מתחילת השנה

רצח בערד: צעיר חשוד שדקר למוות את אימו

האם אותה ללא רוח חיים בדיה בעיר, צוות מ"א נאלץ לקבוע את מותה במקום. בוג, בשנות ה-20 לחייו, הוטרף את עצמו למסורה. שתבוקש להאריך את מעצרו. הוא גם צפוי להישלח לבדיקה פסיכיאטרית

12 | 12 יוני 2024

לוח לקידום זכויות נשים יוניון בין המינים בישראל מאז 1984

הועדה לביטחון לאומי

14.03.24 | יישום החוק למניעת אלימות במשפחה (תיקון מס' 19)

נלחמות בשבילכן.

7.5 מיליון שקלים יוחזרו ל-2,000 סייעות וגונות מהמגזר החרדי שלא קיבלו את מלוא הזכויות המגיעות להן כחוק.