

למאבק בגזענות בישראל
الائتلاف لمناهضة العنصرية في إسرائيل
The Coalition Against Racism in Israel



The Main Findings of the 2012 Racism in Israel Report

Introduction

The annual Racism in Israel Report (“Racism Report”) published by the Coalition Against Racism (“CAR”) in March 2012 documents incidents and expressions of racism against different ethnic and national minority groups in Israel. Racism in Israel is directed towards specific communities, mainly the Palestinian Arab community, as well as Ethiopians, Mizrahim (Jews of Eastern origin), refugees and migrant workers. Racism is expressed in the fields of education, security forces, the judicial system, the government and more. Ethnic groups and the Arab minority are also victims of discriminatory Knesset legislation. For instance, over 35 laws and bills discriminate against national and ethnic minorities in Israel. In addition, these same groups face discrimination in budgetary allocation of state resources.

If we consider the number of different ethnic and national groups in Israel that are facing racism, we find that they compose a majority of the state’s citizens. These groups are segregated and dealt with by the government through “divide and rule” policies based on nationality, race, ethnicity, etc. The silent majority must face this phenomenon and take responsibility before all citizens become victims of racism.

Statistical Data

The 2012 Racism Report documents 510 cases of racism, covering the period from March 15th, 2011 to February 15th, 2012.ⁱ These cases were either covered by the media, or were brought directly to CAR. The report also compares numbers of incidents in previous years as these numbers serve as key indicators to expose the gravity and continuity of racism in Israel. We estimate that tens of other incidents occurred during this period; however, they were not covered by the media, or brought to CAR directly. We theorize that the lack of law enforcement following these cases and the lack of hope for change influences people to see reporting these cases as futile.

1) Total Cases of Racism between 2008 and 2012

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
109	224	287	ⁱⁱ 552	ⁱⁱⁱ 510

2) General Statistical Data on Racism in Israel between 2008 and 2012

Case of Racism	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Harmful Religious Sentiments	8	9	9	26	^{iv} 13
Racism and Discrimination between different Jewish Ethnic Groups	14	14	27	110	30
Discriminatory ^v Legislation	11	12	21	24	35
Assaults Against Refugees and Migrant Workers		10	11	72	62
Incidents of Racism in Sports Stadiums	Not Available	^{vi} 39	^{vii} 65	^{viii} 21	55

3) Racism against the Palestinian Arab Community between 2008 and 2012

Case of Racism	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Incitement by Elected Representatives and Public Leaders	27	29	26	97	26
Incitement and Racism in Russian Language Media	Not available	Not available	Not available	32	12
Infringement on the Basic Freedoms of Arab Political Leadership	27	23	19	73	37
Incidents of Racism in Educational Institutions	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	15
Incidents of Racism in Government Institutions, Private Businesses, and	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	64

Public and Private Organizations					
Incidents of Racism Committed by Jewish Citizens ^{ix}	16	70	91	68	20
Physical Attacks Committed by Security Forces	6	17	15	28	17

4) Racism against Other Ethnic Groups in 2012

	Incitement Against Citizens by Elected Officials and Public Leaders	Incitement of Racism Against Citizens in Educational Institutions	Incitement of Racism in Government Institutions, Private Businesses and Public and Private Organizations	Incidents of Racism Against Citizens Committed by Jewish Citizens	Assaults Against Citizens Committed By Security Forces
Ethiopians	2	14	16	15	26
Mizrahim	8	5	65	0	3
Refugees, and Migrant Workers	23	3	9	15	12

Descriptions of Data

35 pieces of discriminatory legislation submitted to the Knesset:

Discriminatory legislation proposed and enacted throughout the documented period aims to limit the rights and freedoms of many ethnic groups and the Arab minority in Israel. Most of the legislation targets the Palestinian Arab community, while some targets refugees and migrant workers. Although Israel has passed legislation to assist in the eradication of racism, unfortunately, these numbers indicate that law enforcement authorities are not acting sufficiently and effectively to combat racism in Israeli society.

Ex: The Citizenship and Entry in Israel Law

In January 2012, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled to uphold the Citizenship and Entry in Israel Law (Temporary Order). The Citizenship and Entry in Israel Law directly affects the lives of thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel who marry residents from the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and other Arab countries. The law leads to effective separation of families by refusing to grant these spouses citizenship rights or extended rights through citizenship or permanent residency.

60 cases of racism committed by elected representatives and public opinion

leaders:

These incidents were directed at 4 groups: Palestinian Arab citizens (25 cases), Ethiopian citizens (2 cases), Mizrahi citizens (8 cases), and refugees and migrant workers (25 cases). These findings correlate to the lack of enforcement of anti-racism laws. These findings also highlight the reluctance of the Attorney General to open criminal investigations, or prosecute the perpetrators, thereby legitimizing these unlawful acts. Moreover, it allows the perpetrators to take advantage of media exposure, which further strengthens their support among their constituents and communities.

Ex: Mayor Gabo: “Nazareth Elite is a city for Jews only”

Although 16% of the city’s citizens are Palestinian Arabs, Mayor Gabo said that Nazareth Elite is a city of Jews only, during a June 2011 interview with Kol AlArab newspaper. He also added later in the interview the following statement; “If I was there during the October 2000 {Palestinian} uprising, I would have had more people killed.”^x

37 cases of infringement of the basic civil and political freedoms of Palestinian

Arab political leadership:

Palestinian Arab political leaders in Israel have been a target group of various bodies acting to limit their scope of influence as elected representatives of their communities. Repeated investigations, indictments, prohibitions to enter certain institutions, death threats and restrictions on their legitimate political activities in the Knesset are amongst the discriminatory actions facing Palestinian Arab leaders. Although these actions have slightly decreased in the past year, most recorded cases targeted MK Hanin Zoabi and were committed by Ministers and Members of Knesset.

Ex: Right-Wing MKs to Zoabi: “Traitor,” “Killer,” “Terrorist,” “Troy Horse,” “Go to Gaza”

In June 2011, right-wing MKs refused to let MK Zoabi speak during a heated discussion in the Knesset. MKs attacked her with racist statements; MK Eli Aflalo named her a "traitor and killer," MK Julia Shimlov-Berkovitch called her a "terrorist" and MK Yoel Hasson called her the same, adding that she [Zoabi] has to be searched for weapons. MK Miri Regev called her "troy horse" and shouted at her in Arabic "go to Gaza." MK Zoabi was also asked to leave the Knesset floor.^{xi}

13 cases of harmful religious sentiments:

Although there was a recorded decrease in harmful religious sentiment in the last year, there was a recorded increase in the severity of the actions. For example, “price tag” attacks have led to the desecration of cemeteries and the damage of places of worship. Previous cases of harmful religious sentiments were manifested through statements of religious incitement. It is possible that without proper enforcement of the law, these attacks will led to violent confrontations between groups of citizens.

Ex: Tuba Zangaria Mosque Burned and Desecrated in “Price Tag” Attack

In October 2011, a mosque in Tuba Zagaria was destroyed by arson and graffiti which read, “revenge” and “price tag.” The “price tag” ideology seeks revenge on Arabs and government officials in response to government actions that limit settlement activity.^{xii}

155 cases of racism in government institutions, private businesses, and public and private organizations:

This section records the largest number of racist incidents including, *inter alia*, racist actions committed by the state institutions. Housing is the main area in which these actions occurred; house demolitions and evictions were the major instruments used by the state. 22 cases of house demolitions were reported (of which, 15 were in Al-Araqib, an unrecognized village in the Naqab/Negev). This section also includes discriminatory selection procedures by individual businesses such as night-clubs.

Ex: Racial Profiling Against Mizrahim Outside Night-Clubs

In 2011, the Tmura Center recorded 61 complaints by Mizrahim (mostly males), who were refused entry to “exclusive” clubs without justification. Most complaints were recorded in Tel-Aviv. Others cases of discrimination were recorded in Herzilya, Hadera, and Haifa.

50 cases of racism between citizens:

There were 50 cases of racism committed against Arabs (20), Ethiopians (15), and refugees and migrant workers (15) recorded. These incidents include actions such as physical assaults, racist statements and threats. It should be noted that the report indicates a decrease in number of incidents committed by Jewish citizens against Arab citizens. No specific explanation for this decrease is known, however we can suggest that the effective outreach of the CAR’s work amongst the different communities has had influence.

Ex: Right-Wing Activists in HaTikvah Neighborhood Create “Neighborhood Watch” to “Defend” Citizens from African Refugees

In March 2011, residents of a south Tel Aviv neighborhood complained that the African refugees who live in their area are responsible for criminal acts. A right-wing group called the National Union established a volunteer patrol or “neighborhood watch” which aims to “protect” citizens from the refugees by using teargas. A member of this group, Meir Turgeman said, “We don’t want to fight. We just want the refugees to feel hopeless and leave.” Turgeman added, “Twenty of us will knock on doors and simply explain to them that they are not wanted.”^{xiii}

58 cases of the racism committed by Israeli security forces:

Israeli security forces and police officers have historically applied excessive use of force against ethnic groups and the Arab minority in Israel. However, in the 2012 report, a decrease was noted in number of incidents committed against Arab citizens; 17 cases compared to 28 cases recorded in the previous year. The work that organizations, such as the Mossawa Center, do in order to bring perpetrators to justice cannot be ignored in this area. Furthermore, the conviction of police officer Shachar Mizrahi, despite protest from the Chief of Police, may have deterred others. The data on cases against Ethiopian citizens is particularly disturbing, considering their small percentage in the population. It should be noted that the data does not encompass all victims of police racism, such as in the case of the eviction of homeless people in the “Ha-Tikva” neighborhood, in which dozens of people were injured.

Ex: Ethiopians Face Police Harassment in Protest

In January 2012, around 50 Ethiopian citizens participated in a protest in Tel Aviv where they claimed the police used excessive force against them. 18 people were arrested, including the organizer of the protest, Molet Arraro. The spokesperson of the protest said, "They touched and pushed many of the women." The police spokesperson responded by saying, "We will not allow riots."^{xiv}

37 cases of racism in educational institutions:

The education system plays a central role in shaping present and future generations. Thus, each racist incident occurring in the educational system in fact influences a greater number of students than those who are directly affected by the incident. For example, the segregation of Ethiopian children in the kindergarten in Beit Shemesh actually affects hundreds of children in that community. Furthermore, unfair admission practices based on skin-color and the lack of appropriate action by the Ministry of Education have a devastating long-term impact on the development of the children in this community.

Ex: Beit Shemesh Promotes Racial Segregation in Local Kindergarten

In May 2011, the Beit Shemesh municipality encouraged parents of Ethiopian descent to send their children to an ethnically homogenous kindergarten. The municipality provides transportation for Ethiopian families who send their children to this school and they are promised that their kids will receive free education if they attend. It was recorded that kindergarten works without proper insurance coverage.^{xv}

55 cases of racism in sports stadiums:

The report findings indicate an increase in cases of racism in sports stadiums; 55 cases compared to 21 cases in the previous year. The documentation in the report is based on a project entitled "Lets Kick Racism Out of Israeli Football."^{xvi} Racism in sport stadiums, mainly football, targets Arab and black players predominantly. Although the Football Union applies harsh penalties for racism, this has not been sufficient in deterring the crowd from committing acts of racism during sporting events. This situation requires examining the possibility of individual sanctions and appropriate legislation.

Ex: Beitar Jerusalem Fans Chant Racist Slogans

In March 2011, during Week 26 of the football season, around 200 Beitar Jerusalem fans chanted "Death to Arabs," as well as, "Toamee is a Terrorist, I piss on the Koran, I also hate Sahknin." When African player Itzik Obodo Okocha joined the game, they chanted, "Give Okatcha a banana." The same chants continued to be used in games during Week 27 and 28.^{xvii}

12 cases of racism in Russian language media:

"Morashteno," an organization working with Russian citizens, documented 12 cases of racism against the Arab minority in Russian language media. This is a decrease from the previous year, when 32 cases were recorded. Following the publication of the previous Racism Report, CAR, Morashteno and the Lobby against Racism in the

Knesset organized a conference on the issue. It was the first time that the Russian language media was monitored, and it seems that publishing the results may have had a positive effect.

Ex: Phania Shefman, Correspondent, Attacks Palestinian Identity

Phania Shefman, an independent writer who was published in several Russian language news sites, including "We Are Here," and "Journal M3," was quoted as saying, "You can say that the group of people who decided to be called, "Palestinians" (in other words- occupiers) is nothing but the greatest criminal and terrorist entity in the world of today, and is tremendously dangerous for the entire world, not just for Israel."^{xviii}

Conclusion

The 2012 Racism in Israel Report indicates that members of Israeli society continue to live in a reality saturated with racism. The following are the main findings that should be taken away from this report:

- 1) **The monthly average cases of racism remained unchanged.** The previous report, published in March 2011, recorded 558 incidents of racism over a period of 12 months. This report recorded 511 incidents over a period of 11 months.
- 2) **The inclusion of more details of racist incidents facing ethnic Jewish minorities in this report reflects increased cooperation and collaboration between the members of the CAR.** Previous CAR reports focused on the Arab Minority because it was difficult to access information on other ethnic minority groups. However, this year's report stands as a testament to the increased inclusion and cohesion of the CAR. This change became evident after the social-economic protest movement in 2011, when different minority and ethnic groups realized the benefits and productiveness of joint efforts on issues of common interest.
- 3) **The right to housing is the main area where cases of racism were reported.** This is reflected through the increase of house demolitions in the Arab sector, specifically in the Negev, incitement against leasing or selling apartments to Arab and Ethiopian communities, and evictions from abandoned buildings and tents during the socio-economic protests, which were directed mainly towards Mizrahim and communities from periphery.
- 4) **The increase in incidents of racism in educational institutions led us to allocate an entire chapter to document these incidents.** The most extreme incidents dealt with actions and attitudes within certain educational institutions that led to the segregation of Ethiopian children from children of other ethnic backgrounds.
- 5) **Although a decrease in assaults by security forces against Arab citizens was recorded, an increase in assaults committed by security forces against the Ethiopian community was recorded.** This may be related to the increased

political activation of the Ethiopian community after racist incidents such as the school segregation.

- 6) **The increase in the number of racist incidents on sports fields was also alarming. 55 incidents were recorded in this report, whereas 21 incidents were recorded in 2010.**
- 7) **The increase in discriminatory legislation was also extremely concerning. 35 pieces of legislation were recorded in this report, whereas 24 pieces of legislation were recorded in 2010.**

The Coalition Against Racism recommends that the international community pressure the Israeli government to allocate state resources to all groups of citizens equally and equitably, especially in the fields of education and housing. CAR also suggests that international actors condemn the discriminatory legislation that has been passed and is pending in the Israeli legislature. In addition, international actors can show solidarity towards the victims of racially-motivated attacks by calling on the Israeli government to hold perpetrators to account, regardless of whether the perpetrators are police officers, sports players or common citizens.

For more details of individual cases from each section, please do not hesitate to contact the Coalition Against Racism at stopracism.org@gmail.com or visit our website: fightracism.org

This report was written by the Coalition Against Racism, as part of a project coordinated by the Mossawa Center, the Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel. This project is funded by the European Union. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



ⁱ It should be noted that this total number does not encompass all the manifestations of racism in 2011. Last year, the 2011 Racism in Israel report documented 552 cases between May 2010 and March 2011. The 2012 Racism in Israel report recorded incidents over a period of 11 months, whereas the 2011 report covered a period of 12 months.

ⁱⁱ Report covers 12 months

ⁱⁱⁱ Report covers 11 months

^{iv} 9 against Palestinian Arabs (Christians and Muslims) and 4 against Jews

^v The data in this row is cumulative. It is difficult to measure legislation by year due to the long process that each proposal must go through before it is passed. Some bills are introduced and passed in the same year, while others are introduced and tabled to be voted on in the following year.

^{vi} Until the 19th cycle of the league

^{vii} Until the 15th cycle the league

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- viii Number does not include all cycles up to the date that the report was published
- ix Ethnicity of perpetrators was not specified
- x This incident was covered by Jacky Koury on June 5, 2011 for Haaretz newspaper (Hebrew).
- xi This incident was covered by Moran Azulay on August 2, 2011 for YNet newspaper (Hebrew).
- xii This incident was covered by Hassan Shaalan on Oct 3, 2011 for YNet newspaper (Hebrew).
- xiii This incident was covered by Channel 2 News on March 31, 2011 (Hebrew).
- xiv This incident was covered by Brahano Tagania on January 31, 2012 for Channel 2 News (Hebrew).
- xv This incident was covered by Tabeka, the Israeli Union for Ethiopian Decedents, on May 2011.
- xvi This project is run by the New Israel Fund (NIF).
- xvii This incident was covered by the NIF “Let’s Kick Racism Out of Israeli Football” project. For more information: www.nif.org
- xviii This incident was recorded by Morashteno and can be found in the following article: <http://www.newswe.com/PryamayaNEW/pryamaya.htm> (Russian)