

**Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel ■ ASSAF: Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel ■ Breaking the Silence ■ B'Tselem ■ Coalition of Women for Peace ■ FoEME: Friends of the Earth Middle East ■ Gisha: Legal Center for Freedom of Movement ■ HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual ■ Hotline for Migrant Workers ■ HRA: Arab association for Human Rights ■ Ir Amim ■ Israeli Children ■ Kav LaOved ■ MachsomWatch ■ Physicians for Human Rights-Israel ■ Public Committee against Torture in Israel ■ Rabbis for Human Rights ■ Yesh Din**

**10 November 2011**

Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, the Ministerial Committee on Legislation will vote on two bills that are intended to curtail the work of Israeli civil society organizations by severely restricting their foreign state entity funding.

["The Associations Law \(Amendment - Banning Foreign Diplomatic Entities' Support of Political Associations in Israel\)"](#), tabled by MK Ofir Akunis (Likud): The bill attempts to set monetary limitations on Israeli human rights organizations. According to this bill, an Israeli NGO that seeks to influence state policies would not be allowed to receive donations of more than 20,000 NIS (roughly \$6000 [€4000]) from foreign state entities. This bill enjoys the support of Prime Minister Netanyahu.

["Bill for amendment of the Income Tax Order \(Taxation of public institutions that receive donations from a foreign state entity\) - 2011"](#) tabled by MK Faina Kirshenbaum (Yisrael Beitenu). This bill seeks to amend the Income Tax Order so that funding from foreign state entities to Israeli NGOs will be subject to a 45% taxation rate. This is liable to prevent foreign governments from funding such organizations.

This is not the first time Knesset members target foreign funding as a way to silence civil society and human rights organization. The bills are a part of a calculated policy to silence voices of dissent and criticism and go hand in hand with attempts to restrict Israel's judicial system, media outlets and activists.

A vibrant civil society is an essential part of a healthy democracy. These organizations promote transparency, public debate and accountability regarding government policy, and ensure essential protection of more vulnerable communities. Such activities are a tangible expression of the "shared values" of

democracy and human rights as set out in the EU-Israel Association agreement. In this treaty, both parties agreed to cooperate, including through financial assistance, to promote these values.

We, members of the civil society active in Israel are requesting the international community to:

- Protest against these bills in any dialogue with Israeli authorities;
- Make a public statement protesting the bills. With regards to the EU we request that such statement will be made both by EU member-states and High Representative Catherine Ashton.

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