

Sep 11, 2023

Submission of NGO Monitor to the 88th Pre-Sessional Working Group of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) for the Adoption of the List of Issues on Israel

NGO Monitor, a project of the Institute for NGO Research,¹ an organization in Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC since 2013, respectfully submits the following information to the 88th Pre-Sessional Working Group in advance of the consideration of the List of Issues for Israel and its compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We hope that this submission will aid the Committee in its review and in the preparation of its List of Issues.

Introduction

Israel is a vibrant parliamentary democracy facing many internal challenges, having to defend its citizens against armed attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza, the West Bank, and Hezbollah-controlled Southern Lebanon, while simultaneously upholding its obligations under human rights law.

According to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (“CEDAW”), Israel is required to “condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women” (Art. 2); “ensure the full development and advancement of women , for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men” (Art. 3); “suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women” (Art. 6); and “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country” (Art. 7)

Israel is a country filled with diverse citizens from a variety of religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Israel’s population of 9.5 million spans Jewish ultra-orthodox to secular to Bedouin and

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Muslim. The need to respect this diversity, plus the challenging security environment, can come at the expense of women's rights and lead to many negative impacts on women and girls.

NGO Monitor therefore asks the Committee to include the following in its List of Issues to Israel:

- What steps have been taken to guarantee the principle of equality between men and women in the absence of an explicit constitutional right to equality?
- What factors affect employment of women and what steps are being taken to combat discrimination?
- What special measures are in place by political parties to end discrimination directed towards women? What are current initiatives to ensure gender parity in political parties? What steps is the State taking in order to reduce the gaps and remove obstacles in the context of guaranteeing the representation of women at both the parliamentary level and the local governance level?
- What steps are being taken to balance religious freedom with the rights of women and girls? What recourse do women and girls have when faced with religious discrimination?
- What efforts are being taken to train judges on domestic violence against women?
- What procedures are in play to combat sexual exploitation and trafficking and to protect victims?
- What resources will be allocated to narrow the gaps of gender inequality?
- What steps are being taken to protect the rights of women and girls in relation to the challenging security context?