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Equality and Human Rights

DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION OF MINORITY GROUPS IN ISRAELI MEDIA

**Policy Paper Based on Zulat's Advanced Training on
Equality and Human Rights for Media Professionals
Coordinated by Dr. Revital Amiran**

Israel, July 2021

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SUMMARY

The Israeli media continues to neglect the representation of women and minorities, thereby undermining both their presence and their trust in the media. Only one in three TV presenters is a woman, and less than a third are of Mizrahi descent, while in news programs Mizrahim are less than one-fifth. Haredim [ultra-Orthodox] appear in the general media 70% less than their share of the population, and only 2.8% of all speakers in news and current affairs programs in 2020 on Israel's major TV channels are Arabs. This emerges from various studies examining the representation of minority groups on television in recent years, which were presented by the lecturers who participated in Zulat's training courses for editors and other media professionals.

Exclusion has a number of serious side effects. Minority groups appear in the media mainly in negative contexts, as victims or as stereotypes, and are only discussed when extreme circumstances, such as protests or violence, occur. Women and men from minority groups are not mentioned with regard to their profession, but in relation to their reference group. For example, even during a year when health issues topped the agenda, hardly any Arab doctors were interviewed in a professional context.

This biased coverage results in the deepening of stereotypes and growing alienation between minority groups, and between them and the media. To start solving the problem, we offer a number of recommendations to rectify the situation, such as ensuring adequate representation, combating stereotypes, getting acquainted with the narrative of minority groups, making the profession accessible to all population groups in terms of both technicality and content, training media professionals, and increasing government regulation of the media, which has proven crucial to increasing the presence of minority groups in the media.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Caught in the throes of a constitutional crisis, the past decade has been particularly challenging for Israeli democracy. This crisis has been evident in the declining power of the Knesset, the loss of trust in the judiciary under attack by senior politicians seeking to undermine its public legitimacy, the change in the accepted balances between the Knesset and the government, and the weakening of the gatekeepers and professional bodies appointed by the government.

On the social level, the socioeconomic gaps, suspicion, and hostility between different groups in Israeli society have been growing, and Israeli society has increasingly come to be made up of insulated groups developing negative feelings toward each other. This process, which leads to increased stigmatization, sociological tracking of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and the normalization of racist discourse, impedes a constructive discussion about the need to resolve the inequalities suffered by different populations and to promote values of equality and the good of Israeli society as a whole.

These social and cultural processes must also be seen against the backdrop of the criminal charges against Prime Minister Netanyahu, which have created a clear conflict of interest between his personal good and the good of the state, as well as against the corona crisis, which has brought to the fore, and even exacerbated, not only the distress and difficulties but also the unbearable ease with which civil and individual rights in Israel can be violated.

Another major factor contributing to this erosion is the fact that since 1967 Israel has been ruling over occupied territory, applying a violent, oppressive, and apartheid-like military regime on its Palestinian residents. Under this regime, two population groups living in the same area, Palestinians and settlers, are subject to two separate legal systems.

Zulat's goals are to protect human rights, promote equality, and fight the delegitimization of liberal values taking place in Israel. We see Zulat as a bridge between civil society and the government, and dedicate a considerable share of our activity to molding the normative discourse in the country in a more egalitarian and democratic spirit.

Being the fourth branch of government, the media plays an important role in monitoring the authorities and protecting individual rights, and at its best is supposed to serve as the watchdog of democracy. The media also plays a key role in promoting liberal values and democratic codes, which is why we consider it a partner and seek to strengthen it and make it as free and detached from foreign interests as possible. In fact, "free media" is one of Zulat's thematic research divisions.¹

According to former Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, when it comes to elucidating and discussing the problems on the country's agenda, "the mass media play a paramount role. They enable the substantial dissemination of information on all spheres of life, make it public knowledge, and are a key tool for explaining principles and opinions and for an open public debate about them."² In his view, the democratic process actually hinges on the ability to have an open discussion of these problems and a free exchange of views about them.³

In recent years, the Israeli media has been caught in a tug-of-war between the economic interests of tycoons and political interests challenging its independence. Consequently, issues on the Left-Center's agenda have been consistently marginalized and, similarly to the entire camp, subject to a campaign of delegitimization. For example, the debate regarding the occupation and a diplomatic solution has been completely pushed out, and the real consequences

1 Zulat's thematic research divisions.

2 [Supreme Court Ruling 6218/93 Attorney Dr. Shlomo Cohen vs. Israel Bar Association](#), The Seventh Eye, 26 March 1995 (Hebrew).

3 From ACRI's [Human Rights in Israel: Situation Report 1996](#), Association for Civil Rights, 7 January 1997 (Hebrew).

of the alternatives are not discussed or adequately explained.

This, while in the collective view – a distorted view that has been constantly nurtured and promoted by the right-wing government, especially by Netanyahu – the media in Israel is left-wing. Journalists who dare to criticize the government are liable to come under harsh attacks, culminating in real incitement to violence.⁴

All this takes place amid the challenge of fake news, which trickles down from social media into journalism due to the blurring of boundaries between political mouthpieces and journalists, especially following the recent surge in political populism. The competition for ratings amid the eroding status of journalism hinders the latter's ability to fend off false news in real time and to draw a clear distinction between news, opinions, and plain PR. Journalism in the true sense of the word has nowadays become more challenging than ever.

Consequently, one of the main tasks we have undertaken is to sharpen awareness about these erosion processes among media professionals with liberal values who fear for the decline of Israeli democracy. We consider it important that Israeli journalists and media professionals should raise questions about the role of journalism, that they should be protected, and that they should have a platform to discuss the implications of the government's political and diplomatic steps. Just as important to us is that they should discuss such issues as the protection of minority groups, the mediation of their plight, and the fight against their discrimination by the public.

To this end, we initiated the advanced training project for editors and news desk reporters, especially those in charge of phrasing headlines and "push notifications" in news sites. The seminars addressed the various ways in which the rights of members of various groups in Israeli society are violated, discussed freedom of the press in the populist era, the fake news phenomenon, and online incitement, and

⁴ [Netanyahu Calls To Jail Journalist Who Aired Tapes Revealing Ties With Media Tycoon](#), Jonathan Lis, Haaretz.com, 11 June 2020.

assessed the state of Israeli democracy.

Regarding the exclusion of minority groups, It was imported for us to illustrate to the participants the ways in which media coverage might increase hostility, reinforce stereotypes, and encourage incitement, and enhance their knowledge and familiarity with the subject matter and with the factual basis they need in order to formulate egalitarian and tolerant attitudes. In addition, the seminars gave media people with like-minded values an opportunity to meet, discuss their work challenges, and strengthen their sense of professional mission.

Hence, this paper deals with the numerical and substantive underrepresentation of minority groups and marginalized populations. It is based on the lectures presented in the seminars, as well as on the positions of the media people who took part in them.

THE ADVANCED TRAINING AND THE LECTURERS

Zulat held eight meetings with the participation of three groups comprising a wide range of reporters and desk editors from such media outlets as Walla, Ynet, Haaretz, Kan Public Broadcasting Corporation, Kav Itonut, NEWSru in Russian, Maariv, Globes, Aljazeera, Arab48, TRT in Arabic, Channel 13, and Mussawa Channel, as well as journalists, editors, and PR officers from the Haredi and Arab sectors.

The lecturers included media professionals and journalists, academics and researchers, and prominent activists in the fields of politics and the media.

Dr. Meirav Alush Lebron: Cultural researcher at Tel Aviv University's School of Film and Television and one of the leaders of the Mizrahi struggle. Lecture: "Mizrahim in the Media: Representation and Identity - Between Multiculturalism and Deep Diversity."

Aaed Badir: Deputy mayor of Kafr Qassem. Lecture on the underrepresentation of the Arab-Israeli narrative in Israel's mainstream media and the lack of sufficiently professional Arab media outlets.

Alma Biblesh: Feminist, social-political human rights activist, CEO of Human Rights Defenders Fund. Lecture on struggles of marginalized groups.

Prof. Eyal Gross: Professor of law at Tel Aviv University, who combines academic research and public activity in human rights organizations in Israel. Lecture on the disintegration of democracy.

Adi Granot: Coordinator of Zulat's research department and director of research projects dealing primarily with Israel's occupation and control of the Palestinians and the Occupied Territories and with

the shaping of the public debate on these subjects. Lecture on ["The Laundering Report: This Is Not 'Annexation', This Is Apartheid"](#) authored by her and published by Zulat in June 2020.

Dr. Einat Lachover: Associate professor at Sapir College's Department of Communication, researches the nexus between gender and various media fields and one of the founders of college's Feminist Forum. Lecture on the representation of women in the media.

Muhammad Majadallah: Journalist, Radio Nas. Lecture: "Patterns of Media Consumption of Arab Society and Its Representation in the Hebrew Media."

Karin Nahon: President of the Israeli Internet Association and social activist engaged with preserving the Internet free of technological monopolies. Lecture on technology and politics.

Prof. Danny Filc: Lecturer at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev's Department of Politics and Government, whose research focuses on such issues as health policy, health inequality, and the right to health. Lecture on ["The Human Rights of Older Persons in Times of Corona,"](#) Dr. Carmel Shalev's report published by Zulat in October 2020, to which he contributed his expertise.

Ayala Paniewski: PhD student of political media at University of Cambridge. Lecture: "Populism, Fake News, and Trust in the Media in Israel and Worldwide."

Benny Rabinovich: Journalist, Yated Ne'eman. Lecture: "Haredi Society as Reflected in the Media: Prejudice, Fair Coverage, or Spin"?

Dr. Dalia Sheindlin: Strategic consultant, pollster and developer of strategies based on public opinion surveys about such social issues as inter-sectoral relations, democracy, political conflicts

and negotiation processes, and human rights. Author of the [first poll published by Zulat](#). Lecture on public opinion research.

Sharon Shpurer: Journalist, The Hottest Place in Hell website. Lecture: "Journalistic Ethics in the Populist Era: The Pressures on Journalists and How to Deal with Them."

DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION OF MINORITY GROUPS

One of the clearest manifestations of the decline of Israeli democracy is the growing polarization between different groups and sectors. Government instability and the proliferation of election campaigns, along with a wave of anti-democratic and exclusionary legislation, has largely contributed to deepening sectarianism in Israeli society, intensifying hostility and resentment in its midst, and escalating the stigmatization of underprivileged and marginalized groups, their continued sociological tracking, and the normalization of the racist discourse in reference to them.

The corona crisis augmented the inequality between different groups in Israeli society, the tension between them and the government, and mutual polarization and hostility. The high rate of morbidity within the underprivileged-to-start-with Arab and Haredi communities further exacerbated the criticism and stigmatizing attitudes toward them and intensified feelings of persecution and frustration in other quarters.

Recognizing the power of the media in shaping the agenda, and assuming that there is a clear connection between the polarization, stigmatization, and social exclusion and the way in which various groups are represented in the media, it was decided that one of the most prominent issues to be addressed in the seminars would be the Israeli media's treatment of minority groups, such as women, Arabs, Haredim, Mizrahim, Ethiopians, and refugees. To this end, about half of the lectures were devoted to how various minority groups appear in the media or are absent from it, not only numerically but also substantively.

Exclusion of Minority Groups from the Media Forefront

Minority groups in Israel are consistently excluded from the forefront

of the media. A study conducted in 2013 by the Israeli Commercial Television and Radio Authority on the representation of minority groups and women in commercial television showed that only 38% of the figures were Mizrahi, compared to 62% Ashkenazi. Mizrahim were only 15% of presenters in prime time, only 4% of news anchors, and only 7% of presenters of current affairs and investigative programs. The number of Arabs, immigrants, and Haredim was a mere 0.1%.⁵

According to a survey on the representation of minority groups on television throughout 2018, only one in three TV presenters was a woman, less than a third were of Mizrahi descent, while in news programs Mizrahim were less than one-fifth.⁶ Additional studies conducted in recent years show that Haredim appear in the general media 70% less than their share in the population,⁷ and only 2.8% of all speakers in news and current affairs programs on Israel's major TV channels in 2020 were Arabs.⁸ Thus, even if there has been some improvement in the representation and visibility of some minority groups, it is still hard to ignore that the trend has continued in recent years, just as it is hard not to see that this shows a consistent, constant, and cumulative phenomenon of exclusion and underrepresentation.⁹

Groups that suffer from lack of representation, partial representation, or stereotypical representation in the media tend to internalize the stereotypes attributed to them. People who do not see themselves represented in the media tend to resent their own identity and take a smaller part in the democratic debate. The lack of representation harms not only the minorities but also the majority groups, given that adequate representation of minorities in the media reduces stereotypes, suspiciousness, and racism and contributes to fighting prejudice and emotional baggage, thereby enriching and improving

5 [Follow-Up Report: Absentees and Attendees During Prime Time](#), Second Authority for Television and Radio, October 2013 (Hebrew).

6 [This Is What You Truly Saw on Television](#), TVbee desk, Mako, 10 January 2019 (Hebrew).

7 [Harediphobia](#), Yehuda Izicowitz, The Seventh Eye, 21 July 2019 (Hebrew).

8 According to [The Representation Index](#) (The Seventh Eye-Sikkuy-Ifat joint project monitoring the representation of Arab society in news and current affairs programs in Israel's main channels), Oren Persico, The Seventh Eye, 27 January 2021 (Hebrew).

9 From Dr. Meirav Alush Lebron's lecture.

the common social fabric.¹⁰

Symbolic extinction

Symbolic extinction occurs when there is a disproportion between a particular group's share in the population and its visibility or underrepresentation in the media, or when a group is not represented at all. For example, the symbolic extinction of Mizrahim in the Israeli media has a long history, starting with their exclusion from the *Pillar of Fire* documentary series that totally ignored Mizrahi history and narrative, to the present day.¹¹

In addition to quantitative exclusion, minorities also suffer from qualitative symbolic extinction due to the way they are framed and represented in the media. This type of extinction has to do more with a distorted, stereotyped, and at times racist representation than with the representation itself, seeing that in order to take their place among the majority group, men and women from minority groups often have to adapt to the hegemonic codes of the majority (one example is the process of assimilation and adaptation to the mainstream rules of commercial broadcasting that Mizrahi women go through, which is frequently accompanied by the concealment of their Mizrahi traits).¹²

The difference between presence, visibility and representation

The fact that members of minorities are present in the media industry does not always lead to more prominent coverage of these groups. For example, the high number of female anchors in news programs creates the illusion that women are adequately represented in the Israeli media.¹³ On closer look, however, it

¹⁰ From Dr. Meirav Alush Lebron's lecture.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ From Dr. Einat Lachover's lecture.

turns out that male reporters still hold a considerable numerical advantage in the news programs of all television channels. Similarly, although drama series employ an equal number of actors and actresses, most of the lead roles still go to men.¹⁴ MK Aida Touma-Sliman, chairperson of the Knesset's Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, stated in a debate on the underrepresentation of women in the media in July 2016: "The presence of women in media production does not reflect our share of the population. The way women are represented in the media, our primary image, is as victims. For some reason, that's the way they like to present us, rather than as experts and professionals."¹⁵

Moreover, such representation depends mainly on the presence of minorities at the news desk and as editors and producers, and women are still a minority in this area. By the same token, the visibility and representation of Arab society as a whole will increase the moment more Arabs are employed at the managerial level.¹⁶ The same goes for Haredim, given that there are not many Haredi journalists, not to mention editors, in the media in general.¹⁷

Stereotyping of Minority Groups in the Media

Various groups, including women, Haredim, Arabs, and Mizrahim, appear in the media mainly in negative contexts, stereotypical images or as victims. These groups will often feature in reports on social welfare issues, and rarely within an empowering context. In addition, minority groups usually receive coverage only in extreme circumstances (such as demonstrations).¹⁸ For example, Arabs are mostly mentioned in the media in criminal or security-related

14 [This Is What You Truly Saw on Television](#), TVbee desk, Mako, 10 January 2019 (Hebrew).

15 [Session of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality](#), Knesset's website, 19 July 2016 (Hebrew).

16 From Muhammad Majadallah's lecture.

17 From Benny Rabinovich's lecture.

18 From Alma Biblesh's lecture.

contexts; Ethiopians are mentioned in contexts of social welfare and violence; women appear three times more than men in a family or domestic role, and more than twice as much as victims of males; men and women with pronounced guttural Hebrew accents are often portrayed as risible figures; while Haredim mostly feature in negative contexts.¹⁹

Moreover, women and men belonging to a minority group will usually not appear in the media as experts on issues unrelated to their stereotypical affiliation. Such stereotypical representation can manifest both through redundancy (e.g., media coverage of Arabs in a security or criminal context far outweighs their presence in these areas in reality) or absence (e.g., an Arab doctor is very unlikely to be featured speaking as an expert in a report on health issues).²⁰ This contributes to these groups' negative and distorted portrayal, provides "justification" and legitimacy for their continued discrimination, and keeps them on the margins of society. For example, Mizrahim appear in the media primarily in two ways: either in a risible context, when ethnic stereotyping is legitimized in the name of entertainment (e.g., the characters of Liora²¹ and the Tortal family²² in *Eretz Nehederet* (the Israeli equivalent to NSL), or when discussing an issue related to Mizrahim.²³

Among other things, this engenders hostility between the hegemonic media and minority groups. For example, Haredim feel that the media excludes them or portrays them as blackmailers and leeches, whereas the media remains entrenched in its position. This dynamic is often exploited and amplified by other forces seeking to profit from it, such as Netanyahu, who uses it to feed the narrative of Haredi hatred toward the media.²⁴

19 [Harediphobia](#), Yehuda Izicowitz, The Seventh Eye, 21 July 2019 (Hebrew).

20 From Muhammad Majadallah's lecture.

21 [Liora and Shefa Go Back to School](#), from Wonderful Country program, Mako, 6 May 2020 (Hebrew).

22 [The Tortals](#), from Wonderful Country program, Mako (Hebrew).

23 From Meirav Alush Lebron's lecture.

24 From Benny Rabinovich's lecture.

Lack of Knowledge and Understanding of a Minority Group's Foundational Narrative

The foundational narrative of each group consists of both facts and personal experiences that go on to become collective experiences. Solidarity with the struggle of a particular group calls for understanding its foundational narrative, identifying and exposing the mechanism that oppresses it, and acknowledging that groups violate the public order when they feel their contract with the state has been breached. Reporters are often ignorant about the foundational narrative of demonstrators and protesters, which leads to coverage that is biased, stereotypical, and lacks solidarity.²⁵

²⁵ From Alma Biblesh's lecture.

PROFESSIONAL AND SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY JOURNALISTS BELONGING TO MINORITY GROUPS

Along with the inadequate representation in the media, one should consider the difficulties faced by journalists belonging to such minority groups as Haredim, LGBTQ, women, Arabs, Ethiopians, etc. Such media professionals are torn between familiarity/identification with their group and the need to uphold the norms and rules of their profession, and need to achieve a fine balance between the two.

Incompatibility of Journalists from Minority Groups with the Hegemonic Media Establishment

There often is built-in tension between the demands of working in the mainstream media and the ability of journalists from minority groups to integrate. For example, Haredi journalists will find it difficult to join a media outlet that requires work on the Sabbath and on holidays; women will have a hard time working evenings and overnight as required by most media outlets (as long as the division of household chores and childrearing between men and women in Israeli society remains unequal); many Arab journalists and anchors will experience difficulties due to the language barrier or their accent.

Tension Between Group Affiliation and Professional Requirements

On the one hand, journalists covering their own group have many advantages: in-depth familiarity with the subject matter, the ability to provide fair and unprejudiced coverage, and the means and connections to bring scoops and more interesting stories. For example, Arab journalists will find it easier to reach out to Arab victims and their families or to report on violence against women in Arab society

PROFESSIONAL AND SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY

than will Jewish journalists since they are familiar with the group's narrative.²⁶

On the other hand, their communities often perceive such journalists as representing them, rather than as professionals doing their job. The need to criticize their own group or to cover less positive aspects of it presents journalists with a built-in difficulty, exposes them to harassment, pressure, and slander, and catches them in an emotional and professional trap, especially in light of the stereotyping and incitement to which the group is subject in the mainstream media.²⁷

²⁶ From Muhammad Majadallah's lecture.

²⁷ From Muhammad Majadallah and Benny Rabinovich's lectures.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND MEASURES TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WITH REGARD TO MINORITIES

1. There Is No Equality Without Representation

It is very important that Mizrahim, Arabs, Haredim, women, and other minority groups in Israel should have a numerical presence at the forefront of the mainstream media. Just as important, this representation should not contribute to erasing their special character. They should also be employed as desk editors, producers, and the like, seeing that people in these positions largely impact the agenda and wield considerable influence behind the scenes as well.

2. Fighting Stereotypes

Members of minority groups should be invited to the studio not only as interviewees representing their group and its plight, but also as experts in their field. Coverage of minority groups should take place in normal times and not only in times of crisis or when extreme events occur (such as social welfare cases or criminal incidents), and it should focus on their strengths. It is important that members of minority groups who are invited to appear in the media should be articulate and speak clearly.

For example, in 2018, the Anu NGO published a comprehensive online database of experts on current affairs, economics, welfare, culture, art, science, medicine, high tech, etc. from three minority groups in Israel (Ethiopians,²⁸ Haredim,²⁹ and Arabs³⁰) in order to increase their representation in the Israeli media, both numerically and in terms of the manner of their representation.³¹

28 [TOPLIST](#), database of Israeli experts and spokespersons of Ethiopian descent, Anu (Hebrew).

29 [IDEALIST](#), database of Haredi experts and spokespersons in Israel, Anu (Hebrew).

30 [A-LIST](#), database of Arab experts and spokespersons in Israel, Anu.

31 [Maybe Now We'll See More Ethiopians on Television](#), Ynet, 10 May 2018 (Hebrew).

3. Knowledge and In-Depth Understanding of the Minority's Narrative

To provide fair coverage of a particular group, one must understand its foundational narrative, its estrangement from the government and the state at large, and its distrust of the state's mechanisms. Coverage should be done by a fellow member living in the community, especially if the group is geographically distinct, given that journalists from minority groups will often be more aware of nuances, and will be able to bring more interesting stories and provide a credible and unbiased picture of their own group.

4. Providing Content Relevant to Minority Groups

Although Haredim and Arabs consume less Hebrew and secular media, past experience shows that content related to their cultural and ideological world attracts them to consume it more. Such measures would not only crack the wall of suspiciousness of minority groups vis-a-vis the media in general, but would also spark curiosity and enrich all audiences.

5. Accessibility, Training, and Support

Resources should be allocated to make jobs in the media industry accessible to members of minority groups and to allow for diversity of the workforce throughout all job positions, both in front of the cameras and behind the scenes. Achieving this end calls for the assimilation of basic egalitarian principles as well as technical aspects (such as compatible types of employment and working hours), along with mentoring and support for reporters and advanced training about multiculturalism and deep diversity for all employees.

6. Understanding the Role of Market Power

The media industry is driven by economic forces. Consequently, the extent and manner in which minority groups are represented in the media is closely connected to the financial interests of

tycoons, advertisers, etc. When a minority group lacks economic power, it is likely to suffer from media exclusion, and vice versa. For example, media outlets began to integrate women and give them prominence when they became an economic force and acquired purchasing power.³²

7. The Importance of Government Regulation

One of the factors that made a change and cracked the glass ceiling was regulation. A government policy that dictates diversity or otherwise imposes sanctions also contributes to increasing the representation of minority groups in the media. For example, as a result of regulation, second and third generation Mizrahim were able to create a media presence that fights ridiculization and stereotyping (starting with the drama series Bat Yam–New York upon the launching of commercial TV in the 1990s, to recent years with the documentary film The Ancestral Sin on the absorption of immigrants from Islamic countries in the 1950s, etc.).³³

As noted above, the last study on the representation and visibility of minority groups conducted by the Israeli Commercial Television and Radio Authority was published in 2013. Unfortunately, due to a conscious decision not to conduct such studies anymore, the regulator has stopped examining the issue of group representation. Given the realization of their great importance in shaping the nature of broadcasting in Israel, it is imperative to resume such studies, draw conclusions from them, and take action to promote equality in the representation of different groups in society.

³² From Dr. Einat Lachover's lecture.

³³ From Dr. Meirav Alush Lebron's lecture.

CONCLUSION

Minority groups suffer from underrepresentation in the mainstream media, as evidenced not only by their conspicuous absence but also by their symbolic extinction, derision, stereotyping, and lack of knowledge about their foundational narrative. Media men and women from minority groups are often required to adapt themselves and their journalistic worldviews to the majority group, in a way that not only does away with key elements of their identity but also impairs coverage.

This takes place against the backdrop of growing polarization and hostility between the various groups in Israeli society, which is just one of the outcomes of the relentless assault on the mechanisms of democracy in Israel (the courts, the Knesset, the media, etc.), as well as of the criminal charges faced by Prime Minister Netanyahu, the corona pandemic and attendant economic crisis, and a 54-year-long occupation.

To combat the exclusion and discrimination of minority groups in the media and in journalism and to promote values of equality, members of minority groups should be adequately represented, both in front of the cameras and behind it. This representation should not be limited to a high numerical presence, however important this may be, but should also bring to the news desk the opinions, worldviews, and life experience of representatives of various minorities. In addition, constant regulation must be ensured of Israel's journalism and media industry, and a dialogue that is critical but inclusive must be promoted at all times among desk editors, journalists, and media professionals.



In May 2020, we launched Zulat for Equality and Human Rights, a unique institute that combines research and analysis via social media networks and conventional media, and acts as a bridge between the political arena and civil society. Zulat's studies portray the political and public reality, but our work only begins there. As an activist think tank, we fight back by working to set an alternative agenda, change the public discourse, and advance policy and legislation to uphold democracy and human rights. We represent a broad perspective on human rights, that looks at universal rights, civil rights - private as well as collective, and social rights – as a whole. We believe all different types of rights depend and relay on one another.

[Read more about our mission on Zulat website](#)

Zulat for Equality and Human Rights

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