



Dear Friend,

The year begins with reason for optimism. **Prime Minister Yair Lapid's declaration at the United Nations, of his belief in the idea of two states and the need for equal rights for all citizens of the country - was an important moment.**

Of course, words are not enough and we must make sure that they will turn into actions. Ahead of the Jewish New Year, I would like to share with you what we in Zulat have been up to in recent months:

Road Map for Free Elections

Israel is once again going to elections on November 1st, the fifth round in the last two years. This governmental instability and the attendant political climate raise concerns about upholding the principle of free elections, which is essential for supporters of equality and human rights. Therefore, **Zulat has formulated a road map based on the major challenges posed by the upcoming elections and their ability to reflect the people's will.** The road map consists of three main parts: reinforcing freedom of protest, curtailing fake news, and protecting the privacy of voters.

[Click here for the Road Map](#)

We sent the road map to several decisionmakers, foremost among them **Prime Minister Yair Lapid**. In our letter to the Prime Minister, we emphasized the importance of promoting preemptive actions against fake news, which is spread by anti-democratic forces that aim to distort the election results and reduce the voting in Arab society. At the same time, we beseeched the Central Elections Committee to hold an urgent debate on the issue.

Unfortunately, especially when it comes to freedom of protest, we have only seen the situation deteriorating. The renewed protests on road bridges against opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu have encountered severe cases of violence by political opponents, which we believe the police did not do enough to stop. We sent a letter to Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai demanding that he order officers to protect the demonstrators, and Meretz MK Ali Salalha subsequently did the same.

The answer we received was that the Israel Police were well aware of their duty to uphold freedom of protest, but as we did not feel this at all, we also appealed to Public Security Minister Omer Bar-Lev. We will continue to act on the issue in the run-up to the elections and also after the next Knesset is sworn in to make sure that these rights are anchored in legislation.

Human Rights Index - September 2022

The magazine **Liberal** this week published **Zulat's fourth survey of the Human Rights Index conducted in collaboration with Reichman University's Institute for Freedom and Responsibility**. Asked to rate the rights that matter to them, the survey found that the most important to Israelis is the right to earn a dignified living, followed by the right to health services, the right to equality before the law, and the right to equality between all citizens.



* The respondents' ranking of rights according to their importance, on a scale from 1 to 5

What is particularly interesting is that the answers were very similar in all the population groups surveyed. Jews and Arabs, rightists and leftists, women and men - they all rated the four rights that are most important to them in the same way.

There are many gaps in Israeli society, but at the end of the day everybody worries about the needs that are not adequately provided by the state: earning a living and health. It's about time we also heard politicians address these issues during election campaigns!

[**Click here for the findings of September Human Rights Index**](#)

Will Israel Join the Istanbul Convention?

After Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked tried to torpedo Israel's accession to the Istanbul Convention on fighting gender violence, a breakthrough appears to have occurred as Prime Minister Yair Lapid voiced his willingness to promote such a move. We will continue to monitor the situation to see if this materializes and will do everything in our power to advance the signing of this treaty.

[**Click here for Zulat's position paper on the Istanbul Convention**](#)

We Need You

We would not be here without your help. Upon the start of new Hebrew year, we would be grateful if you opened your hearts and wallets and helped us continue. We exist mainly with the help of donations, so any amount will be appreciated.

[**make a donation**](#)

I would like to wish you and your families a happy and sweet holiday. Shana Tova!

**Einat Ovadia
Executive Director
Zulat for Equality and Human Rights**

