

ZU-LAT
Equality and Human Rights

Time to Mend

Legislative Program to Restore Democracy and Eradicate Kahanism

November 2026

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Table of Contents

Introduction 04

Proposed Legislation 07

Cluster 1: Strengthening Safeguards for the Judiciary's Professional Independence 07

Cluster 2: Protecting the Public Service's Independence, Professionalism, and Nonpartisan Character 10

Cluster 3: Strengthening Political Participation and the Status of the Legislative Branch 13

Cluster 4: Reinforcing Legal Protections for Equality and Combating Kahanism . 15

Cluster 5: Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Expression 18

Cluster 6: Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Protest and Preventing Police Violence. 20

Cluster 7: Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Information and Combating Fake News 23

Cluster 8: Strengthening Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights 25

Cluster 9: Protecting the Independence of Civil Society 27

Cluster 10: Strengthening Protections for Journalists 29

Introduction

Upon its establishment, the State of Israel proclaimed its commitment to the fundamental principles of liberty and human rights for all its citizens, and gradually succeeded in building a partial democracy (which applied these principles selectively and discriminatorily to different population groups, particularly Arab citizens). The creation of the country's institutions and the formulation of its political culture were grounded in the recognition that the strength of government derives not from the extent of its power, but rather from its understanding of the limits it must impose upon itself: its willingness to subject its power to the rule of law, uphold the separation of powers, establish independent institutions, and protect human rights.

The degree of democracy in Israel's system of government fluctuated over the years, but these foundations remained intact until the current government took office nearly four years ago. The legislative blitz pursued in recent years, particularly in the period immediately preceding the dissolution of the 25th Knesset three months ago, is not simply a matter of political disagreement but marks a fundamental turning point in the very essence of the State of Israel. The Netanyahu-led government sought to transform the country's constitutional and institutional structure, severely weaken oversight mechanisms over the executive branch, undermine the independence and ability of institutional gatekeepers to fulfill their mandates, and significantly curtail media freedom. All this was made possible by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's close collaboration with the Right and with Kahanism, an anti-democratic movement whose elevation to the political mainstream has normalized and embedded Rabbi Meir Kahane's racist ideology in Israeli public life.

As demonstrated in Zulat's report, these measures have steadily and rapidly eroded, and continue to erode, the safeguards protecting fundamental rights and the principle of equality in all its dimensions. In effect, we are witnessing a process that is dismantling one of democracy's most important strengths: its capacity for self-correction and its ability to restrain those in power. The destruction of these guardrails not only disregards the lessons of history across generations, times, and places, but also betrays the principles of liberty and equality enshrined in the Declaration of Independence.

Everything we have experienced under this government has deliberately undermined our ability to defend the fundamental rights of Israel's citizens. As 2026 draws to a close, after four years of Netanyahu-Ben-Gvir rule, life in Israel is unfolding amid an unrelenting toxic tide of Kahanist persecution, dismantling of democratic institutions, subjugation of institutional watchdogs, and diffusion of poison and hatred through government channels and social media in order to wear away public awareness of the vital role played by the separation of powers as a fundamental condition for securing a safer, fairer, and more equal future. Denying the public access to reliable and incitement-free information is one way of making people forget the state's responsibility to uphold the well-being of its citizens.

In light of all the above, Zulat considers it essential to advance legislative principles and comprehensive bills for the day after the outgoing government. It has therefore compiled an extensive legislative program to strengthen democracy and combat Kahanism, comprising more than eighty fully drafted bills across 10 areas identified as critical to restoring and defending the country's democratic principles and institutions. The Proposed Legislation is intended not only to address the damage caused by the outgoing government, but also to reinforce Israel's democratic foundations, address vital gaps and deficiencies in existing

Israeli legislation, and prevent future attempts to enact anti-democratic laws and trample democratic institutions and professional officials.

Zulat's comprehensive legislative program charts a course toward enshrining the democratic principles of separation of powers and a professional, nonpartisan, state-oriented public service, while combating racism and Kahanism and advancing human rights and equality. This will require, as a first step, repealing all the laws enacted as part of the regime revolution, including legislation politicizing democratic institutions and mechanisms such as the Judicial Selection Committee, media bodies, and Mahash (Israel Police's Internal Investigations Department); statutes weakening institutional gatekeepers, such as the law to split the role of the Attorney General; and anti-democratic, Kahanist laws that severely harm equality and human rights, foremost among them the Death Penalty Law.

This document reviews the bills proposed under Zulat's legislative program, organized into 10 clusters covering the following areas:

1. **Strengthening Safeguards for the Judiciary's Professional Independence:** The bills in this cluster seek to establish a statutory framework governing the appointment of members of the Judicial Selection Committee and the conditions required for its regular operation, as well as to codify long-standing conventions that have yet to be enshrined in law, including the appointment of the President of the Supreme Court on the basis of seniority.

2. **Protecting the Public Service's Independence, Professionalism, and Nonpartisan Character:** This cluster includes legislation to safeguard the country's institutions, foremost among them a bill protecting the institutional independence, nonpartisan character, and professionalism of the Israel Police and clearly defining the Minister of National Security's powers in relation to it. Other key bills in this cluster regulate the role and independent status of legal advisers and professional staff within government ministries, as well as the procedures for appointing senior public-service officials.

3. **Strengthening Political Participation and the Status of the Legislative Branch:** This cluster seeks to safeguard the Knesset's standing and powers. It includes bills restricting the ability to disqualify candidates or remove sitting MKs from office, as well as legislation designed to preserve the integrity of legislative procedures and ensure effective parliamentary oversight of government power.

4. **Reinforcing Legal Protections for Equality and Combating Kahanism:** This cluster of bills seeks to combat discrimination in all its forms, in particular the deeply rooted racism and Kahanism permeating politics, the Knesset, public authorities, the media, and society. To this end, it includes a comprehensive bill to eradicate these phenomena in the public service, as well as a bill to repeal the Nation-State Law. It also includes a bill to enact a Basic Law: Equality, aimed at preventing discrimination on any grounds, including nationality and country of origin, sex, gender and sexual orientation, disability, worldview, and political affiliation, as well as bills promoting gender equality by requiring gender mainstreaming in legislation and ensuring adequate representation of women on the boards of public companies.

5. **Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Expression:** This cluster seeks to ensure freedom of expression and prevent the punishment or persecution of individuals for their speech. It includes a proposed Basic Law: Freedom of Expression, intended to provide comprehensive legal protection for this right, as well as bills aimed at preventing the criminalization of expression and protecting students and faculty members in academia.

6. **Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Protest and Preventing Police Violence:** The bills in this cluster are intended to address fundamental gaps in existing legislation concerning freedom of protest in Israel and to repeal draconian restrictions dating back to the British Mandate that remain on the statute books and contradict judicial rulings on the right to protest. The cluster also includes bills to prevent police violence against demonstrators and combat police practices that harm protesters and suppress their right to demonstrate.

7. **Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Information and Combating Fake News:** This legislative cluster is intended to protect the public's right to know. It includes bills designed to ensure transparency regarding information published by the government, particularly material produced by commissions of inquiry and investigative committees, and to prevent the dissemination of false information.

8. **Strengthening Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights:** This cluster seeks to create a dedicated institutional and operational framework for safeguarding human rights. It includes comprehensive legislation to establish a Human Rights Commission, alongside bills to strengthen the status and rights of human rights defenders and to codify the State Comptroller's authority to audit issues pertaining to the protection of human rights.

9. **Protecting the Independence of Civil Society:** This cluster addresses the repeal of authoritarian legislative amendments designed to restrict the activities of civil society organizations and their freedom of protest and expression. It includes proposals to repeal the amendment to the Associations Law concerning aid received from foreign entities, as well as to abolish the laws commonly known as the "Boycott Law," the "Nakba Law," and the "Breaking the Silence Law."

10. **Strengthening Protections for Journalists:** Intended to strengthen freedom of the press, the bills in this cluster address the protection of journalistic privilege, the public interest in reliable information, and the protection of journalists from physical attacks.

Proposed Legislation

Cluster 1: Strengthening Safeguards for the Judiciary's Professional Independence

As of October 2023, the Supreme Court had no permanent President and was operating with an incomplete bench, as Justice Minister Yariv Levin had long refused to convene the Judicial Selection Committee to elect a President. The Committee convened only following the intervention of the High Court of Justice (HCJ) and, on 26 January 2025, elected Justice Yitzhak Amit. Even after Amit took office, Levin continued to obstruct the completion of the process: he refused to countersign the instrument of appointment, withheld publication of the appointment in the official gazette, and declined to hold working meetings with Amit or cooperate with him in exercising their shared statutory powers. On 7 June 2026, the HCJ granted Zulat's petition, ruling that Amit had been duly elected and appointed and that Levin's stance had no basis in law, and ordering Levin to cooperate with Amit in advancing appointments that had been held up, including those of court presidents and vice presidents, acting judges, the Registrar of the Supreme Court, and members of parole boards. Levin's conduct demonstrated that the judiciary can be undermined not only through legislative changes, but also through the absence of clearly defined statutory duties and deadlines and that in their absence, a single minister can turn those powers into a sustained political veto. The public ultimately bears the cost: vacant judicial positions, growing caseloads, delays in the administration of justice, and diminished access to effective judicial remedies.

An independent judiciary is a fundamental prerequisite for democracy. It restrains the power of the branches of government, protects human rights, and ensures that the law applies to both the government and the political majority. In March 2025, the Knesset extended the campaign to alter the character of the judiciary to two additional areas: Amendment No. 4 to Basic Law: The Judiciary (which is set to take effect upon the inauguration of the 26th Knesset) and Amendment No. 105 to the Courts Law changed the composition of the Judicial Selection Committee and its voting rules, while Amendment No. 6 to the Judiciary Ombudsman Law changed the appointment mechanism. The bills in this cluster seek to turn norms of restraint and nonpartisanship into explicit legal obligations, prevent any single political actor from exercising a veto over the functioning of the judicial system, and uphold professional, transparent, and independent appointment and oversight procedures.

1. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Appointment of President of Supreme Court)

The bill enshrines the seniority system: the longest-serving Supreme Court justice will be appointed President, and in the event of equal seniority, the older of the two. The next most senior justice may be appointed if the senior justice declines or is unable to serve. Under an alternative proposed in the draft, both the appointment and the decision to move to the next most senior justice will require five votes on the Committee.

2. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Setting Criteria for Judicial Selection Committee)

The bill requires the Committee to identify, advance, and select candidates who are qualified, experienced, and suitable for judicial office, taking into account the diversity of Israeli society. These criteria are intended to guide the Committee's merits-based considerations, rather than establish a numerical quota.

3. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Judiciary (Opposition Representative on Judicial Selection Committee)

The bill amends Section 4(b) of Basic Law: The Judiciary, stipulating that of the two MKs serving on the Judicial Selection Committee, one must belong to a coalition faction and the other to an opposition faction, thus elevating the practice of parliamentary minority representation to a constitutional requirement.

4. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Appointment of Presidents and Vice Presidents of District and Magistrates' Courts)

The Minister of Justice will remain in charge of the formal appointment of presidents and vice presidents of District and Magistrates' Courts. However, both the selection of appointees and the length of their terms will be based on the recommendation of the President of the Supreme Court rather than on a mutual agreement between the two.

5. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Judiciary (Abolishing Justice Minister's Authority to Initiate Judge's Removal from Office)

The bill removes the Chair of the Judicial Selection Committee (the Minister of Justice) from the list of officials authorized to initiate a judge's removal from office under Section 7(4) of Basic Law: The Judiciary. This authority will remain with the President of the Supreme Court and the Judiciary Ombudsman, and the removal of a judge will continue to require a special majority.

6. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Convening Judicial Selection Committee)

The bill stipulates that the Judicial Selection Committee must convene within a reasonable timeframe whenever a need to appoint a judge is identified. The Minister of Justice will publish the notice of the meeting in the official gazette but will not be able to decide unilaterally whether the Committee convenes.

7. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Additional Conditions for Convening Judicial Selection Committee)

The bill stipulates that a meeting of the Judicial Selection Committee must be held in the presence of a majority of its members. The Committee may not convene while the Knesset is dissolved unless there is an essential and urgent need.

8. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Preventing Politically Motivated or Biased Judicial Appointments)

The bill prohibits the selection of a candidate for judicial office solely on the basis of their political or party affiliation or identification, or where circumstances give rise to a real concern of bias, thereby distinguishing between social and ideological diversity and appointments based on party loyalty or made in a conflict of interest.

9. Bill to Amend Courts Law (Enhancing Transparency Regarding Candidates Before Judicial Selection Committee)

In addition to publishing a candidate's name 45 days before the Committee's session, the bill requires publication of the candidate's curriculum vitae, assessment-center score, the names of their referees, any family ties to officeholders in the judicial system or elected public officials, and a list of any conflicts of interest requiring recusal. A candidate who refuses to have this information published will not be put to a vote.

10. Bill to Amend Judiciary Ombudsman Law (Repealing Amendment No. 6 and Restoring Status Quo Ante)

The bill repeals Amendment No. 6 and reverts the selection of the Ombudsman to the Judicial Selection Committee, based on a joint nomination by the Minister of Justice and the President of the Supreme Court. It clarifies that a retired Supreme Court justice is eligible for appointment, amends the provisions governing removal from office and suspension, and sets out transitional provisions and provisions preserving the validity of existing arrangements.

Cluster 2: Protecting the Public Service's Independence, Professionalism, and Nonpartisan Character

Politicization of the public service is one of the chief methods employed by competitive authoritarian regimes. Under such a regime, democratic institutions continue to exist formally, but the government undermines their independence, seizes control of appointment mechanisms, and exploits state resources for political purposes. The government's sustained campaign against the "rule of clerks" and the "deep state" is intended to erode public trust in civil servants and institutional watchdogs, and to portray professionalism, legal scrutiny, and adherence to proper administrative procedures as obstacles to implementing government policy or fulfilling the will of the voters.

Since the establishment of the 37th government, the political echelon has sought to expand its control over institutions that are supposed to serve the public professionally and independently. The Israel Police has been subordinated to the Minister of National Security and turned into a politically biased body, in part through the minister's control over appointments. Efforts have also been made to weaken the legal advisory system and dismiss the Attorney General, secure the nomination of a politically affiliated Civil Service Commissioner, and fill sensitive roles (such as head of Shin Bet and positions in government-owned companies) on the basis of political affiliation and personal loyalty. These measures blur the distinction between the government's authority to determine policy and political control over legal advice, law enforcement, appointments, and state resources.

A professional and independent public service is an essential foundation of democracy. It ensures that government policy is implemented in accordance with the law, on the basis of expertise, equality, and the interests of the public as a whole, even when professional officials are required to challenge the minister in charge. The bills in this cluster seek to enshrine professional independence and nonpartisanship, protect institutional gatekeepers, and establish transparent and competitive appointment procedures in order to prevent elected officials from seizing control of state institutions and using public powers to advance partisan or personal interests.

1. Bill to Amend Government Law (Legal Advisers in Government Ministries)

The bill codifies the status and independence of legal advisers in government ministries. These will be appointed by the Attorney General following a competitive selection process, serve seven-year terms, and be professionally subordinate to the law and to the Attorney General's directives. A legal adviser's opinion will be binding on the ministry unless otherwise determined by the Attorney General or a court, and termination will be permitted only on specified grounds and through a defined procedure. The bill also restricts the use of private attorneys to circumvent these legal advisers.

2. Bill to Enact Law on Independence of Professional Echelon in Government Ministries

The bill enshrines in the Government Law the obligation of the professional echelon to act professionally, in a nonpartisan manner, with a commitment to equality and loyalty to the public and the law, and to formulate independent positions supported by alternatives and reasoned explanations. A ministry's director general will be required to safeguard their own independence and mediate disputes with the minister, while any prohibited interference will be reported to the ministry's legal adviser. The bill also strengthens the independence of internal auditors and their oversight of violations of the principles of nonpartisanship, integrity, and political impartiality in the public service.

3. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Safeguarding Police's Independence, Nonpartisanship, and Professionalism)

The bill is intended to protect police independence and regulate the powers of the minister in charge, balancing the involvement of elected officials in matters of general importance against the need to preserve the independence of the Israel Police as a professional state institution. The minister will be authorized to set general policy but will be prohibited from intervening in operations, law enforcement pertaining to protests, or criminal investigations. Responsibility for command and management will shift back to the Police Commissioner, the minister's involvement in hirings and firings will be curtailed, and the professional independence of the legal advisory, investigative, intelligence, and prosecution divisions will be guaranteed.

4. Bill to Amend Civil Service Law (Termination of Attorney General's Tenure)

The bill stipulates that an Attorney General's tenure may be terminated only in accordance with the same procedure governing their appointment. It prohibits termination on the basis of a legal stance, directive, or decision adopted in the exercise of their criminal enforcement powers. This preserves the ability to terminate tenure on substantive grounds while decidedly protecting an Attorney General's professional judgment.

5. Bill to Amend Civil Service Law (Search Committee for Appointment of Civil Service Commissioner)

The bill stipulates that a Civil Service Commissioner will be appointed for a six-year term from among up to three candidates put forward by a professional-public search committee comprising representatives of the legal profession, the Civil Service, the government, and academia. The process will include public calls for applications, publishing the candidates' names for public comment, publishing the justifications for the committee's decision, and the endorsement of four of its members. If the government rejects all the candidates, the matter will be referred back to the committee.

6. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Nomination of Candidates for Police Commissioner by Professional-Public Search Committee)

The government will retain the authority to appoint the Police Commissioner but will choose from among candidates nominated by a professional-public search committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of National Security, the Civil Service, the Attorney General, and the public. The public representatives will have no personal, business, or political ties to the minister, and candidates will be selected from among serving police officers.

7. Bill to Amend Shin Bet Law (Search Committee for Selection of Shin Bet Chief)

The bill replaces the Prime Minister's exclusive authority to recommend a candidate for the position of head of the Shin Bet with a recommendation by a search committee comprising representatives of the legal profession, the Civil Service, the Prime Minister, and the public. The committee will issue a public call for applications, hear public views, and recommend to the government either one or several candidates in order of preference. If the recommendation is rejected, the matter will be referred back to the committee for further consideration.

8. Bill to Amend Government Companies Law (Operating Principles and Adequate Representation of Employees)

The bill requires government-owned companies to operate in a nonpartisan manner and in the public interest, rather than in the service of partisan interests, including in their recruitment procedures. It also expands the requirement for adequate representation of women, persons with disabilities, Arab, Bedouin, Circassian, and ultra-Orthodox communities, and new immigrants, and introduces additional reporting obligations regarding its implementation.

9. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Government (Decision-Making Based on Statutory Authority and Principles of Administrative Law)

The bill enshrines the obligation of the government, the Prime Minister, and every minister, as trustees of the public, to make decisions in accordance with their statutory authority and the principles of administrative law. Its purpose is to set clear limits on the extensive powers vested in the government and its ministers.

10. Bill to Amend Criminal Procedure Law (Independence of Criminal Prosecution)

This bill seeks to explicitly enshrine in the Criminal Procedure Law the principle of prosecutorial independence, the considerations that may legitimately guide the exercise of its powers, and the prohibition against interference by external political actors. Its purpose is to strengthen guardrails against the politicization of the Criminal Prosecution and to protect the rule of law, the rights of citizens and suspects, and the principles of separation of powers and equality.

11. Bill to Amend Civil Service Law (Appointment of Temporary Acting Officeholders)

The bill strengthens the selection process for temporary acting appointments in the public service in order to prevent improper nominations based on political or personal considerations that might subsequently become permanent. Under the proposed bill, the minister will be required to consult not only the Civil Service Commissioner but also the relevant appointment committee, and to assess the candidate's professional qualifications and integrity in light of the requirements of the position and the temporary nature of the appointment.

Cluster 3: Strengthening Political Participation and Standing of the Legislative Branch

On 14 July 2025, the Knesset sought to remove MK Ayman Odeh from office over his political pronouncements. Some 73 MKs voted in favor, but failure to secure the constitutionally required majority of 90 votes prevented his ouster. A year and a half earlier, 85 MKs had supported a similar move against MK Ofer Cassif. Both votes made the continued tenure of elected representatives (and, in effect, representation of their constituents) a matter subject to the decision of political rivals. In parallel, the use of private members' bills became the coalition's preferred modus operandi. The efforts to alter the regime were repeatedly advanced through these methods rather than through government-sponsored legislation, thereby circumventing preparatory work within government ministries, publication of draft laws for public comment, and preliminary professional and legal scrutiny. Instead of strengthening its autonomy vis-à-vis the government, the Knesset became an instrument mobilized by the coalition majority to expedite legislation and weaken oversight of government initiatives. This conduct, along with the efforts to unseat elected representatives, exposed two aspects of the same underlying failure: a coalition majority seeking to exclude voices it finds unacceptable from the political arena, and a Knesset functioning as a fast track for implementing the government's wishes rather than as an independent and critical legislative entity.

Democracy is not confined to the right of the political majority to govern, but also requires a genuine opportunity to compete in elections, retain the mandate conferred by voters, make opposition voices heard in committee proceedings, and subject all legislation to professional, legal, and public scrutiny. In Israel, where the government rests on a Knesset majority and generally controls its agenda, these safeguards are essential to prevent the legislative branch from becoming yet another arm of the executive, and to ensure that the majority cannot change the rules of political participation to the detriment of the minority. The six bills in this cluster collectively establish such a framework: they restrict the politically motivated disqualification of lists and candidates and the removal of sitting MKs; ensure adequate representation for the opposition; strengthen the legal and professional scrutiny of legislation; and restore responsibility for policy decisions to the Knesset rather than allowing the government to circumvent it by means of referendums. They thus protect political participation, minority rights, and the Knesset's ability to oversee the government and curb the concentration of power.

1. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Knesset (Restricting Grounds for Disqualification of Candidates and Electoral Lists)

The bill amends Section 7A of Basic Law: The Knesset and tightens the criteria for disqualifying an electoral list or candidate. Any reason cited for disqualification must be supported by compelling, clear, unequivocal, and cumulative evidence, must constitute a central feature of the list or candidate's activity, and must be seen to be accompanied by action to advance its objective. The bill prohibits disqualification on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, origin, sex, sexual orientation, worldview, age, marital status, or parenthood, and prohibits requiring pledges that do not pertain to the grounds for disqualification stipulated by law.

2. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Knesset and Knesset Law (Repealing 'Impeachment Laws')

The bill repeals Section 42A(c) of Basic Law: The Knesset and Section 8A of the Knesset Law, thereby revoking the Knesset's authority to terminate the tenure of a sitting MK on the grounds for disqualification set out in Section 7A.

3. Bill to Amend Knesset Law (Ensuring Adequate Representation of Opposition Factions in Knesset Committees)

The bill amends Section 3(a) of the Knesset Law and requires that opposition factions be adequately represented in determining the composition of Knesset committees, in accordance with their number of seats.

4. Bill to Amend Knesset Law (Legal Adviser's Role Regarding Implications of Legislation for Human Rights and Democratic Regime)

The bill amends Section 17(b)(2) of the Knesset Law and requires the Legal Adviser to advise the Knesset and its committees on the compatibility of legislation with the legal and constitutional framework, and on its implications for human and civil rights, equality, integrity in public service, the democratic regime, and the rule of law.

5. Bill to Amend Knesset Rules of Procedure (Preparation of Private Members' Bills for First Reading)

The proposal amends Section 79(a) of the Knesset Rules of Procedure, requiring a committee preparing a private member's bill for first reading to publish the draft for public comment, obtain professional and legal opinions from the government and public authorities, and allow a reasonable period for the submission of comments. It requires that a bill's constitutional, budgetary, and international implications, including its impact on human rights and protected populations, be examined prior to approval. In addition, the Deputy Attorney General must determine that there are no legal impediments to its advancement.

6. Bill to Repeal Basic Law: Referendum

The bill repeals Basic Law: Referendum, which requires that any decision or agreement under which Israeli law, jurisdiction, and administration will cease to apply to a particular territory be put to a referendum, unless the decision is approved by 80 MKs. Repealing the law restores the authority to make such a decision to the elected representatives in the Knesset and prevents the government from bypassing the legislature through a voting process that does not grant all permanent residents affected by the decision the right to participate.

Cluster 4: Reinforcing Legal Protections for Equality and Combating Kahanism

On 19 July 2018, the Knesset enacted Basic Law: Israel-The Nation State of the Jewish People. The law established that the exercise of the right to national self-determination in Israel is unique to the Jewish people, granted Arabic a special status rather than recognizing it as an official state language, and declared Jewish settlement a national value, without enshrining equality for all citizens. Given that the right to equality has never been explicitly enshrined in Israel's Basic Laws, its constitutional protection rests primarily on the interpretation of equality as an integral component of human dignity. Neither this situation nor discrimination against minorities in Israel, particularly Arab citizens, is new. However, the 37th government brought Jewish supremacy and racism to the forefront of public discourse and legitimacy through Prime Minister Netanyahu's alliance with the political representatives of Kahanism. As a result, Rabbi Meir Kahane's extreme racist ideology is no longer confined to the margins, but has taken deep root in politics, the Knesset, public authorities, the media, and society. Since October 7, Kahanism in its various forms has entered the mainstream and is no longer confined to the extreme right. In addition, the dominance of a religious and extremist agenda has led to substantial infringements of women's rights.

The 11 bills in this cluster are intended to address racism and discrimination in all their forms. First, they enshrine substantive equality in a Basic Law and propose a comprehensive program to prevent and uproot the entrenchment of racism, particularly the extreme racist ideology of Rabbi Meir Kahane and the Kach and Kahane Chai movements, in politics, society, and public authorities. They also repeal the Nation-State Law, enshrine a constitutional right to due process, define racist conduct as a disciplinary offense in the public service and in state-licensed professions, narrow the grounds on which admission boards of cooperative communities may reject applicants, and prohibit discrimination in the processing of family reunification applications. They call for equality considerations to be integrated throughout the legislative process, particularly by assessing the impact of each legislative measure on gender equality, and strengthen requirements for adequate representation of women on the boards of public companies. Their common purpose is to prevent the political majority and state authorities from using national identity, origin, or gender as grounds for unequal allocation of rights, benefits, or restrictions.

1. Bill to Enact Law to Combat Racism and Kahanism

This bill expands the range of tools available to state authorities to uproot racism and combat the extreme racist ideology of Rabbi Meir Kahane and the Kach and Kahane Chai movements. It is intended to eradicate this ideology and curb its spread in politics, public authorities, society, and public discourse in Israel.

2. Bill to Enact Basic Law: Equality

This bill establishes an independent Basic Law stipulating that all human beings are equal in value and rights before the law and are entitled to equal protection throughout the state's sovereign territory. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of a detailed list of group characteristics, requires the state to promote substantive equality in the allocation of budgets and resources, family life, and the public sphere, and permits affirmative action. All state authorities will be required to respect these rights, which can neither be suspended nor altered through emergency regulations. Any amendment to the Basic Law will require the support of 80 MKs.

3. Bill to Repeal Basic Law: Israel-The Nation State of the Jewish People

This bill repeals Basic Law: Israel-The Nation State of the Jewish People in its entirety. It thereby removes from Israel's constitutional framework the provisions reserving national self-determination in Israel exclusively for the Jewish people, granting the Arabic language only special status, and defining Jewish settlement as a national value.

4. Proposed Amendment to Knesset Rules of Procedure (Addressing Equality in Bills)

This proposal adds Section 93A to the Knesset Rules of Procedure, requiring every government bill, private member's bill, or committee bill to be accompanied by an assessment of its potential impact on equality, identifying the groups that may be affected and the extent of any adverse or beneficial effects. The committee deliberating on the bill will be required to conduct this assessment at every stage of its preparation. Any MK may also ask the Knesset Research and Information Center to prepare an alternative assessment and invite its author to present it at the committee hearing.

5. Bill to Amend Legislation to Combat Racism in Public Service and State-Licensed Professions

This proposal amends 23 laws governing disciplinary matters in the public service and in professions requiring a state-issued license. Each amendment clarifies that conduct unbecoming includes racist behavior or statements involving harassment, threats, humiliation, degradation, discrimination, hatred or hostility, violence, or incitement of discord against an individual or group on the basis of color, race, religion, community, or national or ethnic origin.

6. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Judiciary (Right to Fair Trial)

This bill adds Section 3A to Basic Law: The Judiciary, stipulating that a judge must treat every person as equal to others and adjudicate their case fairly and impartially. It thus explicitly enshrines in the Basic Law an obligation currently recognized primarily through case law and specific procedural provisions.

7. Bill to Amend Cooperative Societies Ordinance (Repealing Sections 6C(a)(5) and 6C(a)(6))

This bill removes two grounds on which an admission board in a cooperative community may reject an applicant on the basis of incompatibility with the community's social and cultural fabric, unique characteristics, or admission criteria approved by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies. The bill does not abolish admission boards or the other grounds for rejection.

8. Bill to Amend Citizenship Law and Entry into Israel Law (Prohibiting Discrimination in Family Reunification)

This bill amends the Citizenship Law and the Entry into Israel Law, prohibiting the Minister of Interior from refusing to process or rejecting an application for legal status for a spouse on the basis of either partner's race, religion, gender, nationality, disability, parenthood, sexual orientation, origin, place of residence, views, or political affiliation. The minister will be required to establish rules governing the submission and review of applications, the grounds for rejection, and processing times. The proposed wording does not explicitly repeal the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Provision), 2022. A further amendment is therefore required to ensure that this prohibition clearly takes precedence over the restrictions imposed by that law for as long as it remains in force.

9. Bill to Enact Law Setting Principles Governing Functioning of Local Government

This bill proposes establishing general principles governing the exercise of all functions and powers of local authorities. It requires them to operate lawfully and in a nonpartisan, fair, and equitable manner, free from bias and conflicts of interest, while upholding integrity, transparency, and proper administration and serving the public interest rather than advancing partisan political interests.

10. Bill to Amend Women's Equal Rights Law (Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives)

This bill seeks to expand the obligation to conduct gender impact assessments of legislation beyond bills whose implications for equality between women and men are evident in advance. Instead, all bills considered by Knesset committees after passing a preliminary reading will be subject to a gender impact assessment, with the aim of identifying their differential effects on women and men in advance and preventing existing disparities from deepening.

11. Bill to Amend Companies Law (Gender Representation Quotas on Boards of Public Companies)

This bill seeks to establish legally binding quotas for the representation of both sexes on the boards of public companies, requiring each sex to account for at least 40% of the directors on larger boards. The Knesset Audit Committee will be responsible for overseeing compliance, and companies will also be required to report regularly on the composition of their boards. Compliance will be a condition for the registration of newly established public companies, and within three years the requirement will apply to all boards of public companies.

Cluster 5: Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Expression

Following the 7 October 2023 attack, State Attorney Amit Aisman authorized the police to open several incitement investigations based on a single, unequivocal statement, even without prior approval from the State Attorney's Office. While this policy shift was intended to apply to clear-cut cases during wartime, it broadened police discretion in relation to offenses for which the very process of investigation and arrest can become a punishment, long before any crime is proven. In December 2024, the Knesset Research and Information Center presented data showing that 92% of the incitement cases examined that year involved Arab citizens, and that all forty-two indictments were filed against Arabs, while cases against Jewish suspects were closed. In November 2025, the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee advanced a proposal to further lower the threshold for criminal prosecution and allow a senior police officer to open an investigation without the approval of the State Attorney's Office. At the same time, ministers and police officers have used defamation lawsuits and warning letters against citizens, protesters, and journalists who criticized the exercise of government power. Defamation suits and strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) brought by those in power against their critics are familiar tools in the arsenal of competitive authoritarian regimes. Their purpose is to intimidate and deter criticism, even when proceedings end without a conviction or in a judgment in favor of the defendant.

Freedom of expression is the foundation of political participation, protest, a free press, and the public's ability to expose wrongdoing and hold the government accountable. Genuine protection must extend to speech that is harsh, offensive, or unpopular, provided it does not cross the line into incitement to violence. In Israel, this right is recognized only through case law and is not explicitly enshrined in a Basic Law. The six proposals in this cluster establish a comprehensive framework of protection. They enshrine freedom of expression in a Basic Law, require prior professional oversight of incitement investigations, abolish the criminal offense of defamation, and provide for the early dismissal of lawsuits brought by those in positions of power in response to criticism of their conduct. The proposed bills neither grant immunity for incitement nor abolish civil-law protections for reputation, but rather ensure that an investigation or lawsuit does not itself become a punishment or serve as a tool for silencing democratic criticism.

1. Bill to Enact Basic Law: Freedom of Expression

This bill enshrines freedom of opinion and expression, as well as freedom of artistic creation and research, in a Basic Law. It requires the authorities to respect these rights, permits restrictions on them only by law, for a proper purpose and to an extent no greater than necessary, prohibits infringement of these freedoms through emergency regulations, and requires a majority of MKs to amend the Basic Law.

2. Bill to Amend Penal Law and Counter-Terrorism Law (Requiring Approval for Investigation of Incitement Offenses)

This bill amends Section 144E of the Penal Law and Section 24(e) of the Counter-Terrorism Law. It requires the approval of the State Attorney, one of their deputies, or an official authorized by the State Attorney's Office before an investigation may be opened into offenses of incitement to violence, racism, or terrorism.

3. Bill to Amend Prohibition of Defamation Law (Abolishing Criminal Offense and Private Criminal Complaints)

This bill abolishes the criminal offense of defamation under Section 6 of the Prohibition of Defamation Law and the possibility of filing a private criminal complaint under Section 8. It also removes the related references to private criminal complaints, ensuring that defamation remains a civil wrong but can no longer serve as grounds for imprisonment or private criminal proceedings.

4. Bill to Amend Prohibition of Defamation Law (Restricting Civil Defamation Lawsuits by Prime Minister and Government Ministers)

This bill adds Section 25B to the Prohibition of Defamation Law. If the defendant argues at the outset of the proceedings that the plaintiff is the Prime Minister or a government minister and that the publication pertains to the plaintiff's official duties or to a matter of public interest, the court must hear the case immediately. The lawsuit will be dismissed if these conditions are met, but the plaintiff may refile it after leaving office. The limitation period will continue to run during the plaintiff's term in office.

5. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Restricting Officers' Civil Defamation Lawsuits)

This bill adds Section 93D to the Police Ordinance. A police officer seeking to file a defamation lawsuit over a publication concerning the exercise of their authority or performance of their duties will be required to obtain the approval of the State Attorney or an official authorized by the State Attorney. The decision will take into account the likelihood of the lawsuit's success, the public interest, and the potential infringement of reputation, freedom of expression, and the public's right to know.

6. Bill to Strengthen Protections for Freedom of Expression of Academic Faculty and Students

This bill stipulates that higher education institutions may regulate the exercise of freedom of expression on equal terms only within their premises, and not beyond them. It also establishes protections for the freedom of expression of academic faculty members, bringing them into line with the protections afforded to students under the amended Student Rights Law.

Cluster 6: Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Protest and Preventing Police Violence

On 28 December 2022, on the eve of the inauguration of the 37th government, the Knesset approved Amendment No. 37 to the Police Ordinance, initiated by then-National Security Minister-designate Itamar Ben-Gvir, which expanded the minister's role in setting police policy and priorities. From the beginning of his tenure, Ben-Gvir sought to translate this authority into influence over the policing of protests against the government. On 5 July 2023, Superintendent Ami Eshed announced his resignation as commander of the Tel Aviv District, citing pressure from Ben-Gvir to forcibly disperse a demonstration in a manner that could have resulted in numerous injuries. The incident illustrated how the police's reliance on the minister's policy had turned the handling of anti-government protests into a test of political loyalty. This was not an isolated incident, but a manifestation of the politicization of the police, reflected in its conduct during protests. When force, detentions, bail conditions, and criminal investigations are used against protesters without full documentation or effective oversight, the very encounter with the police has a chilling effect on political participation.

Freedom of protest is essential to political participation, alternation in power, and public oversight of authorities. Without it, democracy is reduced to the ballot box, leaving the public without any meaningful ability to oppose government policy, expose wrongdoing, or demand accountability between elections. The problem is also structural: freedom of expression and protest has yet to be explicitly enshrined in a Basic Law, while restrictions on this right hinge, among other things, on a Police Ordinance dating back to the British Mandate era, a general mandate to maintain public order, municipal bylaws, and traffic and noise regulations. Court rulings and police procedures have narrowed some of the powers used to restrict protests, but have not eliminated the ability to exercise them selectively against minorities and opponents of the government. This legislative cluster proposes to reverse the underlying premise: lawful protest is not an activity permitted at the government's discretion, but an inherent right that the police are obligated to protect. Restrictions may be imposed only in response to a specific danger or offense. Any use of force must be documented and investigated, and detention, prosecution, and administrative restrictions must not become indirect means of suppressing protest.

1. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Safeguarding Freedom of Expression and Protest in Public Spaces)

This bill abolishes the advance licensing requirements for assemblies and processions under Sections 83-90 of the Police Ordinance. Protests will be permitted without prior approval, and the police may intervene only pursuant to specific statutory powers to prevent an offense or actual harm.

2. Bill to Amend Penal Law (Abolishing Protest-Related Offenses)

This bill repeals Sections 151-158 of the Penal Law, including the offenses of unlawful assembly and disorderly conduct. Specific offenses of violence, bodily harm or property damage, threats, and actual obstruction of law enforcement will remain in force.

3. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Protecting Freedom of Expression in Display of Flags and Symbols)

This bill repeals the authority granted under Section 82 of the Police Ordinance to remove a flag or symbol on the grounds that it may lead to a breach of the peace. Separate offenses of identification with a terrorist organization or incitement to terrorism will remain in force.

4. Bill to Amend Prevention of Nuisances Law (Safeguarding Freedom of Protest Against Noise Restrictions)

The restrictions imposed by the Prevention of Nuisances Law and the Noise Regulations will not apply to noise generated by protests. The police may impose specific restrictions under other statutory powers and in accordance with the constitutional balancing of rights, but may not automatically apply to protests the noise and time limits governing ordinary noise nuisances.

5. Bill to Amend Legislation to Protect Freedom of Protest on Roadways

The complete or partial obstruction of a road for the purpose of holding a protest will not constitute an offense under the traffic laws and provisions specified in the bill. Other offenses, including violence and bodily harm or property damage, will remain in force.

6. Bill to Amend Municipalities Ordinance (Protecting Freedom of Protest Against Municipal Restrictions)

This bill clarifies that municipal powers and bylaws concerning streets, nuisances, assemblies, and processions may not be used to restrict protests. Municipalities will remain responsible for fulfilling their obligations to residents and may refer matters to the police when an offense is committed.

7. Bill to Amend Criminal Procedure Law (Combating Arbitrary Police Detentions)

After any detention, a police officer will be required to document its grounds, location and duration, any use of force or transfer to a police station, and to inform a detainee of the report number and their right to file a complaint. If no proceedings ensue, no personal record of the detention will be retained. In a civil action concerning an unjustified detention, the burden of proof will rest with the state.

8. Bill to Amend Criminal Procedure Law (Prohibiting Release Conditions Aimed at Restricting Right to Protest)

An authorized police officer may not impose conditions for release from detention that restrict participation in protests when the suspicion relates to the person's participation in the protest itself. An exception will be permitted only with the approval of the relevant police district's legal adviser and on special grounds that must be recorded.

9. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Preventing Disproportionate Use of Force at Demonstrations)

This bill stipulates that force used to disperse a demonstration must be proportionate and in accordance with the law, establishes the police's tort liability for violating this obligation, and requires the submission of an annual report to the Knesset on the dispersal of demonstrations. These provisions are intended to strengthen legal certainty both for police officers in the field and for the public, as well as to enable more effective public and parliamentary oversight of the exercise of police powers.

10. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Mandatory Use of Body Cameras at Demonstrations)

A police officer equipped with a body camera will be required to activate it during a demonstration and reasonably document events as they unfold. The footage will be retained by the police, made available to the investigating authority following a complaint of violence, and be accessible to the public subject to privacy protections. Implementation will be regulated through regulations and subject to Knesset oversight.

11. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Opening Criminal Investigations)

This bill requires Mahash to open an investigation upon learning that a police officer has caused injury or harm to a person's health. It also abolishes the requirement to obtain the Attorney General's approval as a precondition for disciplinary action in certain cases involving unlawful use of force.

12. Bill to Amend Penal Law (Restricting Prosecution for Obstructing Police Officer During Protests)

Where suspicion of obstructing a police officer is related to a person's participation in a protest, an indictment under Section 275 of the Penal Law will require the Attorney General's written consent. The bill does not abolish the offense or permit violence or actual obstruction of law enforcement.

13. Bill to Amend Police Ordinance (Mandatory Reporting on Complaints of Sexual Misconduct by Officers)

This bill requires the head of Mahash to submit an annual detailed report to the Knesset's National Security Committee on complaints of sexual misconduct by police officers and how they were dealt with, and to present the report at a committee session. The report will separately address cases associated with demonstrations and protests, given the additional harm that may be caused in such cases to freedom of protest and to women's equal participation in public spaces.

Cluster 7: Strengthening Protections for Freedom of Information and Combating Fake News

In the age of social media, control over information has become a major arena of political power. Government and ministerial committee decisions in Israel have traditionally enjoyed broad confidentiality, while claims of national security and privacy can serve to block access to related information even when its disclosure poses no genuine threat. At the same time, as described in Zulat's January 2026 report, the Prime Minister and his associates made extensive use of fake news and disinformation disseminated through social media, media outlets, and anonymous accounts to set the public agenda, undermine political opponents, and erode trust in democratic institutions. Consequently, reliable information about government activity remains beyond public scrutiny, while the resulting void is filled with political messaging whose origins and credibility are difficult to verify.

Freedom of information and protection against disinformation are essential to the public's ability to formulate opinions, scrutinize the government, and make an educated choice at the ballot box. Without access to decisions, minutes of meetings, and investigative findings, there is no meaningful way to demand accountability. In the absence of safeguards against impersonation and the systematic dissemination of false information, political competition can be distorted, undermining confidence in the democratic process itself. The bills in this cluster pursue two complementary objectives: they narrow blanket confidentiality and expand disclosure of information of public interest, while also extending existing legal tools to address the harmful dissemination of fake news. Since efforts to combat disinformation can themselves become instruments of censorship, they must focus on impersonation, intent to cause harm, and organized dissemination, rather than on errors, criticism, or legitimate political disagreement.

1. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The Government (Transparency of Government and Ministerial Committee Meetings)

This bill reverses the default rule established in Section 35 of Basic Law: The Government. Discussions and decisions concerning state security and foreign relations will remain confidential, but the government may impose confidentiality on any other matter only with the approval of a majority of MKs.

2. Bill to Amend Legislation (Transparency of Commissions of Inquiry and Government Inspection Committees)

This proposal requires a State Commission of Inquiry to publish the minutes of its proceedings no later than the publication of its final report. The Commission may withhold all or part of the material to avert substantial harm to state security, foreign relations, a vital economic interest, a person's safety or privacy, or the classified methods of operation of an investigative body. The same rules will apply to the findings and minutes of Government Inspection Committees.

3. Bill to Amend Legislation (Preventing Cover-Ups in Security-Related Cases and Protecting Public's Right to Know)

This bill restricts publication bans imposed by military courts concerning arrests, indictments, identities, and investigation details in cases involving offenses committed in the course of military operations, except where confidentiality is necessary to prevent harm to state security. It also requires that information classified on security grounds be reviewed to identify and publish details whose disclosure poses no security risk.

4. Bill to Amend Freedom of Information Law (Infringement of Privacy in Matters of Public Interest)

This bill clarifies in Section 9(a)(3) of the Freedom of Information Law that information whose disclosure would infringe upon privacy may be disclosed by virtue of Section 18(3) of the Protection of Privacy Law, when there is a public interest in the infringement that justifies it under the circumstances of the case.

5. Bill to Amend Penal Law (Impersonation for the Purpose of Disseminating Fake News)

This bill expands the offense of disseminating false information to include information intended to harm public health. It also establishes an offense punishable by up to three years' imprisonment for impersonating another person, a deceased person, or a fictitious character in writing, with the intent to disseminate false information of the kind prohibited under the law.

6. Bill to Amend Communications Law (Classifying Fake News as Offensive Content)

This bill adds false information, as defined in Section 159 of the Penal Law, to the definition of offensive content in the Communications Law. Consequently, the obligation imposed on internet providers to notify users of offensive content and offer them filtering services will apply to false information as well.

7. Bill to Amend Combating Criminal Organizations Law (Adding Fake News as Offense)

This bill adds to the First Schedule of the Combating Criminal Organizations Law the offenses of disseminating false information, impersonating another person for the purpose of disseminating such information, and publishing false election results, thus enabling the application of the legal measures and penalties established under the law to the organized dissemination of fake news.

Cluster 8: Strengthening Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights

The 37th government's efforts to advance a regime revolution that sought to weaken the judicial system and institutional gatekeepers, undermine the integrity of the public service, and curtail the Knesset's powers did not only consolidate the regime's power and destabilize the system of checks and balances designed to constrain it, but also substantially weakened the protection of human and civil rights in Israel. With the judicial system and the Supreme Court diminished, and in the absence of a constitution or other effective oversight bodies, the prospects for protecting human rights have become tenuous, if not virtually nonexistent.

Israel's Basic Laws protect certain human rights, but no institutional mechanism exists to investigate allegations of human rights violations in the country. Moreover, the law itself imposes several restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms. Section 10 of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, for example, safeguards legislation enacted before the Basic Law came into force, even where it conflicts with the rights enshrined therein. The Emergency Powers Law (Detentions) allows the Minister of Defense to place a person in administrative detention without indictment or criminal trial, for successive periods and on the basis of confidential information. The State Comptroller and internal auditors are not explicitly required to examine the conduct of public authorities in light of human rights legislation. Human rights defenders, meanwhile, are exposed to arrest, searches, legal proceedings, and substantial financial costs because of their activities. The bills in this cluster seek to remove the constitutional protection afforded to pre-existing legislation, establish an independent Human Rights Commission, place human rights at the center of public and internal oversight, provide legal protection for those who expose violations, and repeal the 1979 Administrative Detention Law. Their common purpose is to abolish abusive powers and establish independent mechanisms capable of obtaining information, investigating violations, intervening in legal proceedings, and holding state authorities accountable for human rights violations.

1. Bill to Amend Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (Repealing Validity Clause)

This bill repeals Section 10 of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which stipulates that the Basic Law does not affect the validity of any law that was in force before it came into effect. Repealing the clause will not automatically invalidate legislation enacted before 1992, but will instead remove the blanket immunity afforded to such legislation and enable an examination of whether it infringes constitutionally protected rights and, if so, whether that infringement meets the requirements of the Limitation Clause.

2. Bill to Enact Human Rights Commission Law

This bill establishes an independent statutory Human Rights Commission, headed by a Chief Commissioner and comprising six additional members appointed by the government on the recommendation of a committee that includes ministers, MKs, and representatives of organizations. The Commission will promote human rights education and policy, publish opinions and recommendations, investigate violations, handle complaints, and be authorized to intervene in legal proceedings or initiate civil actions. It will have the authority to demand information from audited bodies, operate independently of government authorities, and submit an annual report on its activities to the Knesset.

3. Bill to Amend Basic Law: The State Comptroller (Protection of Human Rights)

This bill adds an explicit obligation to Section 2 of Basic Law: The State Comptroller, requiring the State Comptroller to examine how Israeli and international human rights law is implemented by state authorities. It thereby transforms human rights protection from an area the State Comptroller may address into a permanent and central component of constitutional oversight of government conduct.

4. Bill to Amend Internal Audit Law (Reviewing Compliance with Human Rights Standards)

This bill amends Section 4(a)(1) of the Internal Audit Law, requiring internal auditors of public bodies to examine whether their actions, officeholders, and personnel comply with the law, including with regard to the protection of human rights as recognized in Israel and in international conventions ratified by the state.

5. Bill to Enact Human Rights Defenders Law

This bill enshrines the status of individuals and organizations engaged in the peaceful promotion of human rights, as well as their rights to protest, organize, express themselves, access information, conduct research, formulate positions, and intervene in legal proceedings. It restricts arrests, detentions, and searches carried out on account of their activities; makes prosecution for offenses committed in the course of those activities subject to the approval of the Attorney General; provides eligibility for legal counsel and assistance; and repeals the offense of insulting a public servant under Section 288 of the Penal Law.

6. Bill to Amend Emergency Powers Law (Abolishing Administrative Detention)

This bill repeals the Emergency Powers Law (Detentions), 1979, thereby stripping the Minister of Defense of the authority to order administrative detention, without indictment or criminal trial, while a state of emergency is in effect. The repeal applies to the Israeli law enacted in 1979; it does not abolish administrative detention under security legislation in the West Bank or detention under the Incarceration of Unlawful Combatants Law.

Cluster 9: Protecting the Independence of Civil Society

On 19 February 2025, the Knesset plenum approved, in a preliminary reading and by a vote of 47 to 19, a bill proposing an 80% tax on donations from foreign state entities. The measure was intended to effectively dismantle the funding base that enables organizations advocating for human rights, peace, and equality to operate independently of the government whose actions they scrutinize. The bill followed legislation that already labels organizations according to their funding sources, penalizes calls for boycotts of Israel, bars entry into Israel on grounds of speech critical of Israel, and excludes critical voices from educational institutions.

An independent civil society enables citizens to act collectively outside government institutions, represent groups whose voices are underrepresented, provide services, expose failures, and propose alternatives to government policy. In doing so, it broadens democratic participation and creates an oversight mechanism independent of the political majority. The six bills in this cluster seek to ensure that the Registrar of Non-Governmental Organizations performs its duties professionally, impartially, and equally, and to repeal authoritarian legislative amendments enacted over the years by Netanyahu-led governments to silence criticism by civil society organizations and individuals protesting government policy.

1. Bill to Amend NGOs Law (Independence, Impartiality, and Political Neutrality in Exercise of Registrar's Powers)

This bill requires the Registrar of NGOs to exercise all functions and powers independently, impartially, and in a politically neutral and equitable manner, on a professional basis and without bias, and to examine NGOs solely on the basis of their compliance with the law. It further stipulates that the Registrar may not open an investigation, or must discontinue one already underway, if the complaint is vexatious or intended to harass, concerns a trivial matter, does not involve a violation of the NGOs Law, or is more appropriately addressed by the police or another competent authority.

2. Bill to Repeal 'Foreign Funding Law'

This bill repeals the Duty of Disclosure for Groups Supported by Foreign Political Entity Law. It thereby abolishes the requirements to submit quarterly reports identifying the donor and stating the amount and purpose of the donation and any conditions attached to it; to publish this information through the Registrar and on the recipient organization's website; and to comply with enhanced disclosure obligations imposed on NGOs and public-benefit companies whose primary source of funding is foreign state entities.

3. Bill to Repeal 'Boycott Law'

This bill repeals in its entirety the Law for Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel Through Boycott, thereby eliminating the civil cause of action arising from a public and deliberate call for a boycott where there is a reasonable possibility that the call will lead to a boycott. It also removes the possibility of restricting eligibility to bid for public contracts or denying tax benefits, public funding, and other economic benefits to anyone who has called for or undertaken to participate in a boycott.

4. Bill to Amend Entry into Israel Law (Repealing Restrictions for Boycott Supporters)

This bill repeals Sections 2(d) and 2(e) of the Entry into Israel Law, which prohibit the granting of visas and residence permits to individuals who meet the criteria specified in the law, while allowing the Minister of Interior to make exceptions for special reasons. Following the expansion of these provisions in 2025, the proposed repeal will apply not only to calling for a boycott or committing to participate in one, but also to grounds relating to Holocaust denial, denial of the October 7 massacre, and supporting the prosecution of Israelis abroad or in an international court for actions they carried out while serving in the security forces.

5. Bill to Amend Budgetary Principles Law (Repealing 'Nakba Law')

This bill repeals Section 3B of the Budgetary Principles Law, known as the "Nakba Law," which authorizes the Minister of Finance to reduce the budget or public funding allocated to a state-budgeted or state-supported body on any of five grounds: expenditures related to denying Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state; incitement to racism, violence, or terrorism; support for armed struggle or an act of terrorism against the State of Israel; marking Independence Day or the day the State of Israel was founded as a day of mourning; or physically desecrating the national flag or emblem. The repeal removes the minister's authority to reduce funding on any of these grounds.

6. Bill to Amend State Education Law (Repealing 'Breaking the Silence Law' and Strengthening Education for Democratic Values)

This bill replaces Section 2(b) of the State Education Law. It abolishes the Minister of Education's authority to establish rules that effectively bar the operation of an external entity whose activities seriously and substantially contradict the objectives of state education, or of an entity that initiates legal or diplomatic proceedings outside of Israel either against IDF soldiers for actions taken in the course of their duties or against the State of Israel itself. Instead, the Minister is required to publish an annual report on the Ministry's actions to promote respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratic values, the rule of law, peace, and tolerance.

Cluster 10: Strengthening Protections for Journalists

In December 2025, Israel's Public Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) aired an interview with Eliezer Feldstein concerning leaks from the Prime Minister's Office, where he had worked as an aide. The police subsequently requested all the raw footage, including unaired segments, and both the Magistrate's and the District Court ordered the PBC to hand it over. On 20 May 2026, the Supreme Court ruled that the blanket request failed to satisfy the applicable requirements of relevance and necessity. It also recognized that journalistic privilege may protect information provided off the record and raw materials produced within a relationship of trust. The ruling strengthened the protections established by case law and clarified that a journalistic investigation must not become a shortcut for criminal investigations, while also highlighting the absence of a comprehensive legislative framework. Alongside attempts to expose sources and obtain journalistic materials, journalists and their sources face the risk of criminal liability, searches of digital devices, and violence as they cover events. Such threats may deter the gathering and publication of information before the public ever has a chance to see it.

A free press is essential to protecting democracy: it enables the exposure of corruption and government failures, facilitates scrutiny of the actions of public authorities, and provides the public with the information needed for informed political participation. The bills in this cluster seek to protect the journalistic process. They codify journalistic privilege and restrict intrusions into digital devices and access to raw materials; protect public servants who disclose truthful information of public interest, as well as journalists who carry out their work professionally and responsibly; and strengthen protections against physical assault. They thus seek to ensure that investigative and judicial authorities do not expose sources or impose criminal liability for journalistic work without compelling and clearly defined justification, and that violence is not used to silence reporting and criticism.

1. Bill to Amend Penal Law (Protecting Public Servants Who Disclose Truthful Information of Public Interest)

The bill amends Section 117 of the Penal Law and provides a defense for public servants charged with disclosing information obtained in the course of their official duties, if they can prove that the information disclosed is true and its publication is in the public interest. Failure to prove an incidental detail that causes no substantial harm will not deprive them of this defense. The defense will not apply to information concerning state security or foreign relations.

2. Bill to Amend Legislation (Codifying Journalistic Privilege)

The bill adds to the Evidence Ordinance a qualified privilege covering the identity of a source, information, and work materials provided or created within a relationship of journalistic trust, even if the source has been identified, has waived privilege, or some of the information has already been published. A court may order disclosure only in response to a specific request concerning a material issue, where the information is essential to the investigation of a serious crime or to preventing a serious miscarriage of justice, no less intrusive alternative is available, and the benefit of disclosure substantially outweighs the harm to press freedom. The burden of proof rests with the party seeking disclosure, and the court may narrow the scope of disclosure, redact material, and restrict its use. The privilege will also apply to warrants, searches, seizures, computer data, and investigative proceedings, and will remain in force even after the journalist has ceased working in the profession. The bill also amends the Wiretapping Law to extend to privileged journalistic conversations the protective mechanism and stringent exceptions that apply to communications covered by other forms of professional privilege.

3. Bill to Amend Legislation (Protecting Journalists from Criminal Liability in the Line of Duty)

The bill amends the Penal Law to provide a defense for journalists charged with unauthorized collection or possession of classified information, if the court determines that they acted in the line of duty and in accordance with journalistic ethics. An affidavit issued by the Israel Press Council will serve as evidence of the journalist's professional conduct. The bill also amends the Prohibition of Defamation Law to provide journalists with a defense against criminal charges if the disclosure of information occurred in the course of their work, complied with journalistic ethics, and they had taken reasonable steps to verify its accuracy.

4. Bill to Amend Legislation (Protecting Journalistic Privilege in Digital Investigations)

The bill amends the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Arrest and Search) to stipulate that a warrant to search a computer or digital device used by a journalist for professional purposes may be issued only where the journalist is suspected of a serious crime, or where the search is essential to preventing a real and serious threat to human life or a serious miscarriage of justice; the material sought is directly related to the grounds for the warrant; less intrusive means are unavailable; and the warrant is narrowly tailored to specified types of information, time periods, contacts, accounts, or search terms. Material claimed to be privileged will be segregated and withheld from the investigative team until the court has ruled on the matter. The bill also amends the Communications Data Law, clarifying that a journalist entitled to privilege under case law qualifies as a professional to whom the law's special protections apply.

5. Bill to Amend Penal Law (Assaults on Journalists)

The bill amends Section 382A of the Penal Law to extend the offense of aggravated assault in the line of duty to assaults on journalists. The offense carries a penalty of up to three years' imprisonment, or up to five years in the aggravated circumstances specified by law. For this purpose, journalists will be defined by their actual activities in collecting, verifying, editing, or publishing information for the public, including freelance journalists, rather than by possession of a press card, membership in an organization, or form of employment.

Zulat institute works to promote a policy of equality and human rights and to restore the legitimacy of the human rights discourse in Israel.

President | Zehava Galon
Executive Director | Einat Ovadia

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