

National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolutions 5/1 and 16/211

State of Israel

¹ This National Report was prepared in accordance with the guidance provided in Human Rights Council Resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, in HRC Decision 17/119, as well as in the “4th Cycle UPR National Report - Guidance Note” published by the OHCHR.

I. Introduction, methodology and consultation process

1. Israel welcomes its review under the 4th cycle of the UPR, and stands ready to engage in an open dialogue with States, to learn from and contribute to the international community in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Israel is a democratic state, where the rule of law and the respect for human rights are fundamental. This commitment is reflected, among others, in Israel's serious and constructive engagement with international human rights mechanisms², including the UPR.³
2. The State of Israel is honored to present this National Report, prepared by the MFA⁴, in collaboration with the MOJ⁵ and all relevant Ministries⁶, following the relevant resolutions and guidance⁷, and giving due attention to the recommendations received during the 3rd UPR.
3. The Government maintains an open and direct dialogue with civil society and academia, particularly around UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies and UPR reporting processes. As reported in the previous UPR⁸, since 2012, the MFA and MOJ, together with the Minerva Center for Human Rights at the HUJI⁹, have convened a joint forum of state authorities with representatives of civil society and academia, where draft reports to the Treaty Bodies are circulated to the relevant NGOs for their comments prior to their submission and follow-up discussions are held following the publication of the concluding observations. This unique platform enables direct and informal discussions on current human rights issues.¹⁰ Prior to submitting this report, five roundtable sessions took place, addressing the following issues: safe use of the internet by children; the rights to dignity, identity and privacy of LGBTIQ+ children; addressing sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, including economic violence; violence against women in the Arab community; the response of law enforcement authorities to violence against women.¹¹

² See in detail at paragraphs 7-20.

³ See: recommendation 118.31 from the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Israel, 2018, UN Doc A/HRC/38/15 (henceforth: Israel's 3rd UPR).

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵ Ministry of Justice.

⁶ This report is based on information supplied by around twenty governmental ministries, authorities or bodies, obtained through a specific consultation process for the UPR.

⁷ See footnote 1 above.

⁸ Last National Report (A/HRC/WG.6/29/ISR/1), para. 3.

⁹ The Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

¹⁰ One of the aims of this project is to allow grassroots organizations, which may lack the resources to submit alternative/shadow reports to the treaty bodies and UPR process, to participate in the UN HR reporting mechanism.

¹¹ See: recommendations 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99 and 118.100 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

II. Human rights infrastructure

A. International human rights framework

1. International instruments

4. Israel recognizes the critical role of international mechanisms in the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level. In that context, Israel is party to seven of the nine UN human rights core treaties, and constantly works to ensure that its legislation, regulations, case law and policies give effect to the rights recognized within them.
5. In addition, on October 11, 2018, Israel ratified the 2014 Protocol to the ILO¹² Forced Labor Convention of 1930, as part of its continuous commitment to combat and eradicate all forms of modern slavery, including forced labor.¹³
6. Furthermore, in 2021, Israel joined the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings – making Israel the first country outside of Europe who is not a member of the CoE¹⁴, to do so. Israel's joining the convention solidifies its strong commitment to fighting this phenomenon, and adds important tools to that end.¹⁵

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2. Engagement and cooperation with the United Nations, international human rights mechanisms and other multilateral agencies and bodies¹⁷

7. Since its last UPR, Israel has appeared before the following Treaty Bodies: CESCR¹⁸ (October 2019), CERD¹⁹ (December 2019) and the Human Rights Committee (March 2022).
8. In addition, Israel submitted the following reports to the TBs: Response to the List of Issues of the CRPD²⁰ (May 2022); Follow-up to the oral presentation by the State of

¹² International Labor Organization

¹³ The Protocol entered into force for Israel on October 11, 2019.

¹⁴ Council of Europe

¹⁵ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 5.2 and 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA Resolution A/RES/70/1).

¹⁶ See: recommendations 118.103, 118.104 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁷ See: recommendation 118.35 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁸ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

¹⁹ Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

²⁰ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Israel before the CESCR²¹ concerning the implementation of the ICESCR²² (March 2022); the second Update of Israel's Core Document (January 2021); Follow-up to the oral presentation before the CEDAW²³ (January 2020); the sixth periodic report concerning the implementation of the CAT²⁴ (December 2020); the fifth periodic report concerning the implementation of the ICCPR²⁵ (October 2019); the third periodic report concerning implementation of the CRC²⁶ and its Additional Protocols (October 2019).

9. Despite the notorious and ongoing discriminatory treatment to which Israel is subjected in multiple international human rights fora, it remains committed to engaging with international human rights mechanisms as part of its unwavering support for the promotion and protection of human rights, both domestically and globally. Therefore, this institutional bias must be addressed, not only in order to correct the continuing distortion of Israel's human rights record for political ends, but first and foremost to uphold the very credibility and authority of the international human rights system itself.
10. This institutional bias has been manifested, for example, in Israel being the only country in the world with a dedicated HRC²⁷ agenda item; a disproportionate number of condemnatory resolutions and special sessions, about a third of all those issued by the Council; and the only country subjected to a permanent COI²⁸ with an effectively unlimited mandate.
11. As stated, the singling out of Israel in such a manner does not, and will not, prevent its continued engagement with the UPR and other non-politicized human rights mechanisms, nor its ongoing relations with a variety of other international human rights and humanitarian bodies. However, this does not diminish the fact that the unfair treatment of Israel by UN human rights mechanisms, writ large, remains a stain on their reputation and authority and Israel takes this opportunity to place on record the urgent need for its discriminatory treatment in these bodies to be brought to an end.
12. Since 2018, Israel has hosted several senior officials for such engagement, including, *inter alia*, the Special Representative of the UNSG²⁹ for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, in December 2022; the Assistant SG for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator at OCHA³⁰, Ursula Mueller, in January 2020;

²¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

²² International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

²³ Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

²⁴ International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

²⁵ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

²⁶ Convention on the Rights of the Child

²⁷ United Nations Human Rights Council.

²⁸ "The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel", established by HRC Resolution A/HRC/RES/S-30/1.

²⁹ United Nations Secretary-General.

³⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UNSG for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UNDRR³¹, in January 2023.³²

13. Moreover, Israel engages in dialogue and consultations with Special Procedures and TBs. It has made submissions to discussions convened by TBs in the preparation of General Comments/Recommendations and routinely responds to questionnaires from mandate holders on topics such as rights of persons with disabilities, older persons, right to health, privacy, freedom of religion, violence and discrimination against women and girls, or based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), among others.³³

3. Leadership in the international arena

14. Israel has been at the forefront of many issues relating to human rights at the multilateral level.
15. Firstly, it has promoted the rights of persons with disabilities, pushing for mainstreaming their inclusion and accessibility, as well as the rights and agency of children, the rights of older persons and the fight against ageism, advocating for women and girls' rights and the promotion of substantive gender equality, among others.³⁴
16. Moreover, Israel is fully engaged in combating and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment through all UN organizations, agencies and programs.³⁵ It is a founding member and co-chair of the Group of Friends to Eliminate Sexual Harassment (GoFESH) in NY. Since March 2021, upon Israel's initiative, the group is also active in most Geneva-based organizations, having expanded its scope and been renamed to Group of Friends to Eliminate Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse. It works to raise awareness to the issue and push for reforms, by raising it as a matter of priority in all *fora*.³⁶
17. In 2021, Israel chaired the core group of its first resolution at the WHO³⁷ on “The highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities”³⁸, which was guided by a human rights-based approach and promoted the adoption of the social model of disability regarding health. Additionally, this year, Israel has led a resolution on “Strengthening rehabilitations in health systems”³⁹, guided by gender- age- disability-

³¹ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

³² See: recommendations 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

³³ See: recommendation 118.15 from Israel's 3rd UPR..

³⁴ See: recommendations 118.105, 118.106, 118.107, 118.108, 118.109, 118.110, 118.111, 118.118, 118.119 and 118.126 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

³⁵ In furtherance of the implementation of target 5.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

³⁶ See: recommendations 118.106, 118.113, 118.114, 118.116 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

³⁷ World Health Organization.

³⁸ Resolution WHA74.8, adopted by the World Health Assembly on May 31, 2021.

³⁹ Resolution EB152/CONF./1, adopted by the WHO Executive Board on January 30, 2023.

sensitive perspectives, and focusing on rehabilitation as a basic component of Universal Health Coverage.⁴⁰

18. In September 2022, Israel hosted the WHO European Region's meeting, convening hundreds of experts and over 30 health ministers. In this context, and following the Geneva resolution, Israel led negotiations on a European Framework for Action for health of persons with disabilities.
19. In 2022, Israel presented its first ever resolution at the HRC, together with Germany, Greece and Argentina, on "Countering cyberbullying"⁴¹, which was adopted by consensus. This resolution calls for a panel on cyberbullying against children, and requests the OHCHR to prepare a report on cyberbullying against persons with disabilities - providing for the participation of children and persons with disabilities, respectively.⁴²
20. Finally, two highly qualified Israelis were elected as members in the TBs - in 2020, Ms. Odelia Fitoussi, an activist and civil society leader, was elected to the CRPD, and in 2022, Prof. Daphna Hacker was elected to the CEDAW.

B. The protection and promotion of human rights at the national level

1. Domestic framework and institutions for promotion and protection of human rights⁴³

21. Israel, following its longstanding commitment to ensuring the protection of human rights at the domestic level, has affirmed the validity of human rights in its internal law, through a plethora of legislation - first and foremost the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty and Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation, as well as through binding Supreme Court decisions covering all fields of human rights.⁴⁴
22. Several national institutions are tasked with promoting human rights and monitoring the implementation and respect of the State's human rights obligations. In recent years, the State Comptroller and Ombudsman has addressed Israel's adherence to the various human rights treaties, and conducted auditing activities in these regards. For example, this office has published audits on the government's policies in the following areas: rights of children in the online arena; rights of Holocaust victims to compensation; non-exhaustion of social rights; operation of medical committees of the National Insurance Institute; prevention of domestic violence; technological applications for contact

⁴⁰ In furtherance of the implementation of target 3.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Also, see: recommendations 118.49 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁴¹ HRC Resolution A/HRC/RES/51/10, adopted on October 11, 2022.

⁴² See: recommendations 118.118, 118.119 and 118.126 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁴³ See: recommendations 118.33 and 118.34 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁴⁴ See: recommendations 118.32, 118.47, 118.48, 118.49, 118.50, 118.51 and 118.200 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Ombudsman also receives and examines complaints concerning violation of human rights in the public service and monitors the rectification of the violations found, thus contributing to protecting the rights of individuals who file complaints, and also leading to changes that promote human rights on a broader scale.

23. Additional national institutions that work to promote and protect human rights within their scope are the Unit for the Coordination of the Fight Against Racism⁴⁵ (“UCFAR”), the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (“AASW”)⁴⁶, the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities (“CERPWD”)⁴⁷, NATU⁴⁸, and the Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities (“CEEEO”)⁴⁹.
24. In this reporting period additional institutions were established, dedicated to the rights of children and youth, as detailed below at Section II(B(4)).
25. Furthermore, an inter-ministerial team, headed by the MOJ’s Deputy Attorney-General (International Law), works to review and implement concluding observations of TBs, leading to significant legislative and policy changes.

2. Equality and non-discrimination⁵⁰

26. The values of equality and non-discrimination are cornerstones of Israel’s policies and principles, and as such, have been promoted in every field through a plethora of measures.

(a) General policies promoting equality

27. Public policy in Israel is evidence-based. For this reason, the detailed data on Israel’s society collected and analyzed by the Central Bureau of Statistics (“CBS”) is a valuable tool for revealing the needs of persons belonging to different groups and localities, thus promoting the reduction of social gaps. The CBS has developed expertise in collecting disaggregated data by gender, age, religion, nationality, disability, as well as data on SOGI issues and domestic violence. Since 2019, the CBS has been developing a

⁴⁵ For more information on the activities of the Unit for the Coordination of the Fight Against Racism, see below at paragraph 56.

⁴⁶ For more information on the activities of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women, see below at paragraphs 35, 37.

⁴⁷ For more information on the activities of the Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities, see below at paragraphs 72-74.

⁴⁸ For more information on the activities of the National Anti-Trafficking Unit (NATU), see below at paragraphs 114-118.

⁴⁹ For more information on the activities of the Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities, see below at paragraph 28.

⁵⁰ See: recommendations 118.47, 118.48, 118.49, 118.50, 118.51, 118.127, 118.128, 118.129, 118.130, 118.131, 118.133, 118.134 and 118.200 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

‘Diversity Index’ - which provides a simple, centralized database for policy-planning in regards to promoting equality and fixing gaps.

28. The CEEO⁵¹ operates to eliminate discrimination and implement the values of equality and diversity in the Israeli labor market.⁵² It focuses on five population groups that suffer from employment inequality: Arabs, ultra-Orthodox Jews, persons of Ethiopian descent, women, and persons over the age of 45. Among its main activities: since 2022, editing a voluntary index of diversity in businesses, collecting data and conducting research in order to allow for comparison and identification of trends. Since 2017, the CEEO also grants a Badge of Diversity in Employment to businesses that employ women, with emphasis on women in vulnerable situations (such as Arab or ultra-Orthodox women, women with disabilities, single mothers, immigrant women or women above the age of 45).⁵³
29. In October 2019, the Israel Police established a Unit for Gender Equality and Cultural Diversity, with the aim of coordinating all aspects of gender equality and cultural diversity within the Police.⁵⁴ This Unit, which relies on focal points in each district, is responsible for advising the Police Commissioner on these issues, collecting information and promoting awareness about them. It is also responsible for promoting the representation of all groups of Israel’s populations within the Police in all ranks and positions, by identifying and removing barriers to diversity. In addition, the unit operates to prevent sexual harassment and discriminatory behavior by, *inter alia*, providing information and making it accessible to all, drafting and/or updating relevant procedures, setting persons in charge of handling sexual harassment complaints, and facilitating the filing of complaints.⁵⁵
30. The Government has made efforts to provide equal health services to all without discrimination. In 2022, the Ministry of Health (MOH) reiterated⁵⁶ the principle of equality, provided training programs to eliminate discrimination in health institutions, and appointed a Commissioner for Prevention of Health Inequality.⁵⁷ The Government also prioritizes the appropriate allocation of resources through the "National Priority" budgetary mechanisms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, representatives of minority communities were embedded in the national emergency operations center to guide

⁵¹ Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities.

⁵² In furtherance of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 9 and 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁵³ See: recommendation 118.126 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

⁵⁴ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 5.1, 5.c, and 10.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁵⁵ For paragraphs 27-28 see: recommendations 118.102 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

⁵⁶ Through a Ministry of Health Director General Circular.

⁵⁷ In furtherance of the implementation of target 3.8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

communication with these populations and ensure adequate access to medical care and vaccines.^{58 59}

31. In order to promote integration of the ultra-Orthodox population in higher education institutions, the Council for Higher Education (“CHE”) offers specialized gender-separated study tracks⁶⁰. On July 12, 2021, the High Court of Justice addressed the gender separation in academic studies, and in a majority ruling, upheld⁶¹ the CHE's authority to permit gender-separated study tracks, in order to improve the integration of this population. However, the Court clarified that the prohibition of gender separation in public spaces of *campi* must be enforced, and emphasized that policies that exclude female lecturers in male-only tracks is unlawful discrimination that must be halted immediately.⁶²

(b) Gender equality and advancement of women

32. Israel has been committed to gender-based equality throughout its existence, reaching back to the enactment of the Equal Rights for Women Law, 5711-1951 just three years after the establishment of the State of Israel.

*Gender parity and representation*⁶³

33. In recent years, Israel has made great strides in advancing equality in women's participation in the public sphere.⁶⁴ Recent governments consisted of considerable percentages of women, including, at one point, 50% of all ministerial roles. There has also been a significant increase in female representation in the judicial system. As of December 2021, out of 825 Judges in total, 439 (53.2%) were women. In the Supreme Court, 6 out of 14 justices are women, including the President of the Supreme Court, Justice Esther Hayut. Furthermore, three out of the last four Presidents of the Supreme Court were women, as well as the current Attorney-General and Military Advocate-General.

⁵⁸ See more on the policies towards migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, at paragraph 134 below. See also: recommendations 118.49 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁵⁹ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 3.8 and 3.d of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

⁶⁰ According to the Knesset Research and Information Center, out of 13,390 ultra-Orthodox students who studied in academic institutions (In the academic year 2019-2020), only 5,573 studied in the separate tracks. Within these specialized tracks, 75% of the ultra-Orthodox students were women and 25% were men. In all the fields of study, ultra-Orthodox women were the majority.

⁶¹ H.C.J. 8010/16 *Malka Na'ama Barzon et al. v. The State of Israel et al.* (12.7.21).

⁶² See: recommendations 118.48, 118.49 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁶³ See: recommendations 118.48, 118.52, 118.105, 118.106, 118.107, 118.108, 118.109, 118.110 and 118.111 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁶⁴ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 5.5 and 5.c of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

34. On January 10, 2019, the High Court of Justice (“HCJ”) ordered⁶⁵ the 'Agudat Israel' political party⁶⁶ to remove from its by-laws the rule that only men could represent the party in election processes.
35. Government Resolution No. 454, from October 2020⁶⁷, noted that despite efforts to employ women in 50% of senior positions in the Civil Service, only 44% of senior positions were held by women. On that occasion, the Government adopted further procedures to achieve this initial goal. For example, the AASW created a database of highly qualified women, which assists the Civil Service in hiring relevant candidates. As of December 2022, there were 2,127 women in the database, and 45 ministries and governmental authorities had requested recommendations for candidates for 54 positions⁶⁸, and 11 women had been hired as directors of governmental companies. Also pursuant to said resolution, the Government reviews the representation levels of women regularly. Following the measures described above, in 2021, the rate of women in senior positions in the Civil Service increased to 45%⁶⁹. The rate of women has increased to 54% of intermediate senior positions, and 62% of all employees in the Civil Service.
36. Additionally, in September 2021, the CSC published a commissioner circular instructing all Government Ministries to designate senior positions for women in order to increase their rate. Since August 2020, Amendment 6 to *Male and Female Workers (Equal Pay) Law, 5756-1996* mandates any public or private body employing over 518 people, or other organizations detailed in the law, to issue two annual reports signaling the pay gap between men and women, and to notify the employees about the pay gaps in the group they belong to.
37. In November 2021, the AASW established an inter-ministerial team dedicated to drafting a National Action Plan pursuant to UNSC Resolution No. 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
38. The Government enhanced the enforcement of the prohibition of polygamy, and continues to provide legal aid to women and children in this context. A dedicated program addresses polygamy in the Bedouin community.⁷⁰

Elimination of violence against women and girls⁷¹

39. The phenomenon of sexual and gender-based violence is an urgent challenge in modern society, which Israel is fully committed to tackle domestically and internationally

⁶⁵ H.C.J. 1823/15 *Tamar Ben-Porat v. The Party Registrar* (10.01.2019).

⁶⁶ This is a Hasidic (Jewish ultra-Orthodox) political party.

⁶⁷ Entitled "Promoting the representation of women in the Civil Service".

⁶⁸ Out of those, 73% for senior positions.

⁶⁹ An increase from the 40% noted in Israel's last National Report (paragraph 16), and from the 32.6% reported in Israel's second UPR (A/HRC/WG.6/17/ISR/1, at paragraph 23; hereinafter: "second UPR").

⁷⁰ See: recommendation 118.102 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁷¹ See: recommendations 118.106, 118.107, 118.113, 118.114 and 118.116 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

through continuously developing policies that address all stages of the problem.⁷² Among the measures adopted and executed during the reporting period are:

40. In March 2018, legislation was passed⁷³ authorizing the police to block a publicized telephone number, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that it is used for the commission of crime, including by the internet or other technological means. This further enables the blocking of telephone numbers publishing prostitution services, including that of minors.
41. On December 31, 2018, the Knesset legislated⁷⁴ the prohibition of consuming sexual services, following the so-called “Nordic Model”. According to the Law, the consumption of prostitution services is an administrative offense that includes also the presumption that presence in a location used for prostitution implies the purpose of consumption of such services. The Law also authorizes the State Attorney's Office to criminally indict an offender, which subjects them to a fine of up to 75,300 NIS⁷⁵.⁷⁶ Alongside the legislation, the Government⁷⁷ charged the NATU with coordinating support services for women leaving the cycle of prostitution and tracking the Law's progress.
42. In November 2020, the Government tasked⁷⁸ the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs (MOLSA), with formulating a national plan against domestic violence, improving coordination in this effort and facilitating the identification and treatment of victims.
43. In December 2020, legislation was passed⁷⁹ stipulating that a parent who is indicted or convicted of a severe criminal offense will have guardianship rights over their children revoked, pursuant to the conditions set out in the Law.^{80 81}
44. On 14 March 2022, legislation was passed⁸², regulating the preservation of test samples of sexual offense victims, and establishing the duty to preserve samples for 50 years, thus enabling victims to make use of them when choosing to file a complaint at a later stage.

⁷² In furtherance of the implementation of target 5.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁷³ Blocking of Telephone Numbers for the Prevention of Offenses Law, 5768-2018.

⁷⁴ Prohibition of Consumption of Prostitution Services Law (Temporary Provision and Legislation Amendment), 5779-2019.

⁷⁵ Approximately 20,350 USD.

⁷⁶ Note that consuming prostitution services from a child has been a criminal offense in Israel, prior to the enactment of the *Prohibition on Consuming Prostitution Law (Temporary Order)*, 5779 – 2018, and currently carries a penalty of five (5) years imprisonment.

⁷⁷ Government Resolution No. 4462 (January 13, 2019).

⁷⁸ Government Resolution No. 513, entitled "Formulation of a plan for detection, prevention and improvement of the treatment for reduction of domestic Violence by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs".

⁷⁹ Legal Capacity and Guardianship Law (Amendment No. 19) (Revoking the Guardianship of a Parent due to a Severe Criminal Offense) 5780-2020

⁸⁰ This legislation was adopted in the aftermath of a case of femicide, where the perpetrator continued to exercise guardianship powers over his children from prison, arguably against their best interest.

⁸¹ See: recommendations 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR..

⁸² Rights of Crime Victims Law (Amendment No. 15), 5782-2022.

45. On 9 June 2022, legislation was passed⁸³, providing for the suspension of the professional license of a doctor convicted of sexual offenses.
46. On 6 July, 2022, legislation was passed⁸⁴ granting victims of sexual offenses or of serious violent crimes the right to speedily claim “intermediate compensation” from the State, who would take the burden of seeking reimbursement from the perpetrators.
47. On July 7, 2022, legislation was passed⁸⁵, extending the period of limitation for civil claims grounded on sexual offenses.
48. On July 10, 2022, legislation was passed⁸⁶, broadening the confidentiality regime, in the context of judicial procedures, of information regarding psychological or social treatment undergone by victims of sexual offenses.
49. Centers for domestic violence victims, which offer protection and treatment, as well as legal assistance and relevant social services, were established in Acre, Haifa, Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Be'er-Sheva. The Police is evaluating the use of electronic monitoring of persons with restraining orders against them in the context of domestic violence, as a means to protect potential victims, following a pilot program conducted in 2018.
50. See paragraph 29 for information on the police unit tasked with addressing complaints of sexual harassment.
51. With regards to addressing economic violence by intimate partners against women, there is still no legal definition of this phenomena and therefore the extent of services that can be offered by public authorities in response, as well as remedies from the courts, remain limited. However, Israel recognizes this challenge and, accordingly, social workers in MOLSA centers for domestic violence victims are trained to recognize the phenomenon, even when there has not been physical violence. A number of projects seek to address it, for example, by empowering women and developing skills to achieve economic independence, and offering monetary benefits to help liquidate debts.

(c) Eliminating racial discrimination⁸⁷

52. The State of Israel condemns all forms of racial discrimination and maintains a consistent policy prohibiting such discrimination, including through numerous legal provisions that enshrine values of human dignity and equality.⁸⁸ The judicial effort in this regard is guided by the Supreme Court, which plays a pivotal role in developing

⁸³ Amendment to the Physicians Ordinance [New Version] (No. 13), 5782-2022.

⁸⁴ Center of Collection of Fines, Taxes and Expenses Law (Amendment No. 25), 5782-2022.

⁸⁵ Statute of Limitation Law (Amendment No. 7), 5782-2022

⁸⁶ Evidence Confidentiality Law (Mental treatment in criminal procedures regarding sexual offenses or serious domestic violence offenses) (Amendments), 5782-2022.

⁸⁷ See: recommendations 118.32, 118.47, 118.48, 118.49, 118.50, 118.51, 118.55, 118.59, 118.62, 118.127, 118.128, 118.129, 118.130 and 118.131 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁸⁸ In furtherance of the implementation of target 10.3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

jurisprudence, strongly relying on the principle of equality and non-discrimination as a constitutional principle, embodied in *Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty*.⁸⁹

53. In January 2019, new legislation⁹⁰ defined a racist motive or hostility toward a public as an aggravating circumstance in a murder offense. The explanatory notes of the legislation note that murder in these circumstances justifies the severest punishment - mandatory life imprisonment.
54. Due to the substantial increase of instances of hate speech on the internet and in social media platforms, further policy has been developed, combining enforcement efforts with raising public awareness and clarifying the "red lines" of legitimate public discourse. Promptness is also a priority, with indictments being filed within one month, parallel to the provision of information to the public on the steps taken.
55. In May 2020, following prosecution and trial, the perpetrator of the Duma arson attack⁹¹ was convicted for his crimes and severely sentenced⁹², including multiple counts of murder, attempted murder, and arson, all within the context of an act of terrorism.
56. The UCFAR was established in February 2017, and its roles include coordinating government activity on the matter, receipt and referral of complaints and more. Since then, it has appointed an advisory public council and over 70 supervisors for prevention of racial discrimination across government bodies, promoted the establishment of a civil society forum on the issue, and addressed hundreds of complaints yearly. It has also promoted policy changes for recognizing discriminatory practices and norms and eradicating them, in particular in the fields of labor, education, and law enforcement. Such reforms included establishing a dedicated police unit⁹³, prosecuting government employees responsible for racist actions and statements, offering training programs for government employees, creating joint programs of governmental and municipal

⁸⁹ See: recommendation 118.200 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁹⁰ Amendment No. 137 to the Penal Law 5737-1977.

⁹¹ This was a racism-motivated attack by Jewish extremists against a Palestinian family in the village of Duma, that resulted in the murder of three members of the Dawabshe family (the parents and a 18 months old baby), in addition to the attempted murder and serious injury of their other son and brother, aged 4.

⁹² Two perpetrators were convicted in this case. Defendant No. 2, who was 17 years old at the time of the murder, was sentenced on September 16, 2020 by the Lod-Central District Court to 3,5 years imprisonment, 18 months suspended imprisonment, and payment of a compensation of 25,000 NIS (approximately 7,500 USD). Defendant No. 1, Amiram Ben Uliel, was sentenced on September 14, 2020 to three cumulative life sentences and additional 20 years imprisonment, and to the payment of a total of 258,000 NIS (approximately 74,000 USD) compensation, to the estate of each of the three murder victims (the maximum compensation by law), and compensation of 200,00 NIS (approximately 57,000 USD) to the surviving child and to the estate of the three murder victims. Ben Uliel appealed his conviction to the Supreme Court, which rejected the appeal in September 2022, stating that "The actions of the appellant [...] are shocking and repulsive, their severity speaks for itself, and no derogatory word will reflect the magnitude of their horror. These actions even contradict and oppose all moral values and Jewish culture, which teaches patience and tolerance. Hatred of members of other religions, as well as racism for its own sake, is not a path of Judaism." (Rr.App. 7388/20 *Amiram Ben Uliel v. The State of Israel* (1.9.22)).

⁹³ See above at paragraph 29.

authorities, and more.⁹⁴ At this point, the UCFAR's responsibilities and authorities rest on administrative decisions.

57. Finally, Israel prioritizes promoting understanding, tolerance and coexistence between its various communities. Examples of projects aimed at promoting these values include training for teachers, including seminars on human rights and equality; programs for pupils including education against racism; the Arab-Jewish Orchestra; and programs to promote tolerance and coexistence in kindergartens and through art. The "Israeli Hope" program offers acknowledgement by the President of Israel to schools that have made significant contributions to education and integration in the country.

3. Rights of specific groups

(a) Rights of the Arab and Bedouin minorities⁹⁵

58. The State of Israel is committed to counter the challenges faced by the Arab community, which comprises roughly 20% of its population and includes sub-groups such as Bedouins and Circassians, and different religious affiliations such as Muslim, Christian and Druze. The State has put forward various policies to reduce gaps among the different groups in the society. While challenges persist in all fields, especially with regards to economic and social rights, the last years have seen significant improvements.⁹⁶

59. In the labor market, Arab men and women still encounter challenges and are faced with barriers and a lower employment rate than the general population. For example, in the first quarter of 2020, 39.5% of Arab women were employed, about half of the overall employment rate of women, and the average wage of Arab women currently stands at approximately 65% of the average wage of women. Efforts and the resources invested in order to raise the low participation rate are starting to materialize. Between 2012 and 2019, the rate of Arab employees in the high-tech industry increased by 190%. The rate of Arab students integrating in high-tech professions also increased by over 104%. The participation rate of women from the Bedouin population increased from 11% in 2000 to 37.3% in the first quarter of 2020, a significant growth of 240%.

60. In order to eliminate gaps in education, 50 centers of preparation for the Psychometric Entrance Test (PET) were opened in Arab localities, aiming to raise the rate of Arab students in higher education institutions. The PET is also evaluated for cultural fairness and sensitivity, with the Arabic version of the test being drafted by native Arabic speakers. Designated programs by the CHE aim to provide information, guidance and

⁹⁴ See: recommendation 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99, 118.100 and 118.200 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁹⁵ See: recommendations 118.47, 118.48, 118.50, 118.51, 118.52, 118.58, 118.127, 118.128, 118.129, 118.130, 118.132, 118.133 and 118.134 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁹⁶ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 8 and 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

support to Arab students, while the "Irtka" program provides scholarships for first degree students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Other policies include merit scholarships for Arab graduate students, and promoting the admission of academic staff members from Arab society in institutions of higher education.⁹⁷

61. Legislation provides for an obligation to ensure adequate the representation of Arabs, Druze and Circassians in the Civil Service⁹⁸. Procedures in place guarantee hiring quotas, and have led to a steady increase in the rates of Arab, Druze and Circassian civil servants. As of December 2021, 13.9% of all public servants were from the Arab population, as opposed to 10.1% in 2016, and 6.17% in 2007. 45% of Arab civil servants are women, which also indicates a positive trend.
62. In recent years, major programs for development and empowerment of the Arab community have been adopted, especially the following Five-Year Plans for the years 2022-2026:
 - a. Government Resolution No. 292⁹⁹ regarding a "Five-Year Plan for the Arab population" allocates 26.5 billion NIS¹⁰⁰ to the socio-economic development of the Arab communities, including Bedouin localities in the North and the South.
 - b. Government Resolution No. 550¹⁰¹ approved a plan entitled "Tkadum – Progress", to reduce gaps between the Arab community and the general population, and promote prosperity and full integration in society. It has a total budget of approximately 30 billion NIS¹⁰². Following comprehensive inter-ministerial work¹⁰³, it built on the previous 5-year plan¹⁰⁴ and broadened its scope to address new areas, such as additional health¹⁰⁵ and welfare issues, care for the elderly population and solitude relief, optic-fiber deployment and more. It also allocated 2.6 billion NIS to planning and zoning, providing for tens of thousands of housing units in Arab localities, urban renewal and more.
 - c. Government Resolution No. 549¹⁰⁶ established a plan to address the serious problem of crime and violence among the Arab community, aiming to increase

⁹⁷ See: recommendations 118.48, 118.49 and 118.58 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

⁹⁸ Section 15A of the *Civil Service (Appointments) Law 5719-1959* provides for an obligation to ensure adequate representation to minorities in the Civil Service.

⁹⁹ Adopted on 8.08.2021.

¹⁰⁰ Approximately 8.3 billion USD.

¹⁰¹ Adopted on 24.10.2021.

¹⁰² Approximately 9.5 billion USD.

¹⁰³ This program is the product of in-depth strategic work conducted by the Authority for Socio-Economic Development of Minority Population in the Ministry of Social Equality, in full cooperation with the relevant Government Ministries, local authorities, civil society organizations, research institutes and most important - public participation.

¹⁰⁴ Under Government Resolution No. 922, from 30 December 2015.

¹⁰⁵ The plan allocates approximately 930 million USD to enhance health care services to the Negev's Bedouin population, and tackles prevalent issues including obesity, diabetes, lung disease, preventive care, health at infancy, women's health and mental health, including performance-based incentive structures in community care.

¹⁰⁶ Adopted on 24.10.2021.

personal security and safety of all citizens and of Arab citizens and residents in particular, increase the trust of the Arab public in the law enforcement authorities, and dismantle criminal organizations. The Government allocated approximately 2.4 billion NIS¹⁰⁷ to the program, which combines “classic” law enforcement activities, such as improving policing and financial intelligence, together with measures such as expanding the use of Community Courts, empowering the Arab population to deal with regional violence and condemn violence and crime. Moreover, an inter-ministerial team was established, chaired by the MOJ, to oversee the execution of the plan and examine legislative amendments, as well as promoting the rights of victims of crimes.

63. On 5 January 2022, legislation was passed¹⁰⁸, adjusting the formal requirements to connect a residence built without a permit to an electrical infrastructure, conditioned to the submission of a sustainable plan, or to an order by the Minister of Interior if certain conditions are verified. This amendment, adopted after years of criticism by representatives of the Arab population, addresses thousands of homes built in Arab localities without permits that would otherwise be unlawfully and irregularly connected to electricity, at times in a life-threatening manner.¹⁰⁹
64. Special efforts have been dedicated to planning housing solutions for the Bedouin population in the Negev - thus opening the door to maximizing the provision of public services that would fulfill basic rights of the members of this group, including the rights to adequate housing, health, education, water and sanitation, among others. The work on planning housing solutions for this population is nearly completed. In this process, the Government has placed special emphasis on the participation of the Bedouin population, by engaging Bedouin representatives and community councils, working collaboratively to understand the needs of the community and find appropriate provisions for the Bedouin society. An example of new planning is the expansion of the village of Umm-Batin, with an estimated cost of 1 Billion NIS¹¹⁰. Plans for the expansion of other localities, including the city of Rahat, are underway. The Government is encouraging movement to regularized localities by providing financial benefits, including free or low-cost land plots and compensation for demolition of unauthorized structures. Over 60% of residents in unauthorized areas will be able to remain in their homes after they become regularized. The Government's policy is to provide residential options in recognized localities through regulation of existing unauthorized villages or by encouraging relocation with financial and land incentives.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Approximately 762 Million USD.

¹⁰⁸ Amendment No. 136 to the Planning and Construction Law 5725-1965.

¹⁰⁹ See: recommendations 118.49 and 118.132 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹¹⁰ Approximately 300 million USD.

¹¹¹ See: recommendations 118.49 and 118.132 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

(b) Rights of persons with disabilities¹¹²

65. Israel is proud of its achievements regarding the protection and promotion of human rights for persons with disabilities and remains committed to promoting a disability rights agenda, domestically and internationally¹¹³. Israel devotes tremendous resources in order to ensure equal rights to persons with disabilities, to fulfill their potential and maintain their dignity and freedom.
66. On June 3, 2022, the Knesset passed the *Social Services for Persons with Disabilities Law, 5782-2022*, which includes in its aims reference to the principles of the CRPD. It was drafted by the MOLSA in consultation with academia, persons with disabilities and other CSOs. The basket of services and solutions to which persons with disabilities are entitled, which will be detailed by regulations to be promulgated, will be provided in order to promote persons with disabilities' independent and autonomous life and their integration into the community, as well as their own role in choosing the appropriate services. The law will enter into force in January 2024, and includes a specific budget for its implementation.
67. On July 2, 2018, Amendment No. 11 to the *Special Education Law 5758-1998* entered into force, as part of a large-scale reform of the system of placement of children with disabilities in educational institutions.¹¹⁴ According to the amended Law, the pupil's parents, after receiving all the relevant information, decide whether to enroll their child in a general educational institution, or in a special education institution. The local placement committee has discretion to decide otherwise, in case the parents' decision carries substantial risk of harming the child's or others' wellbeing. Absent a preference of the parents, the default choice is given to placing the child in the general educational system. Furthermore, the Law as amended stipulates services to which the pupil with disabilities is entitled, to be provided based on *their* cognitive, emotional, linguistic and social abilities.
68. According to this Amendment, for various reasons, the services provided for pupils in special education and for pupils mainstreamed in the general education system are different (such as a longer school year, a longer school day and more treatments provided at the school itself in the special education system).¹¹⁵
69. Amendment No. 18 to the *Legal Capacity and Guardianship Law*¹¹⁶ adopted a modern approach to decision-making by persons with disabilities, allowing them to make their own decisions to the best of their abilities and provides alternatives that aim to replace and limit the use of guardianship: supported decision-making and enduring power of

¹¹² See: recommendations 118.47, 118.48, 118.49, 118.50, 118.51 and 118.126 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹¹³ With regards to the activities in the multilateral arena, please see above at paragraphs 15-18 and 20.

¹¹⁴ In furtherance of the implementation of target 4.5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹¹⁵ For paragraphs 66-68, see: recommendations 118.48, 118.49, 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹¹⁶ It was enacted in March 2016 and entered into force in April 2018.

attorney¹¹⁷. Israel has taken many steps to implement the law and realize its principles, including the appointment of approximately 700 supporters of decision-making¹¹⁸ and the allocation of funds for integrating and disseminating information¹¹⁹ among the general public and relevant professionals, in order to promote the alternatives to guardianship. The MOJ, together with the MOH, have conducted training of hundreds of relevant MOH social workers and medical professionals. Additionally, guidelines for social workers involved in legal procedures require them to first examine the possibility of appointing a supporter of decision-making, even in cases where a guardian's appointment was requested.

70. Further to what was previously reported¹²⁰, additional accessibility regulations¹²¹ have been promulgated mandating a variety of places and services to provide accessibility adjustments, after being drafted in consultation with representatives of persons with disabilities as mandated by the legislation. In 2018, regulations were adopted¹²² regarding the adjustments that educational institutions shall provide, at the request of pupils with disabilities or their parents, in order to accommodate their needs, including in outdoor activities to the extent possible.¹²³ In 2021, regulations were adopted¹²⁴ to ensure that services, such as employment and housing, are accessible to persons with disabilities in times of emergency. In 2022, two more sets of regulations were adopted: the first¹²⁵ concerning the evacuation of persons with disabilities during emergencies that so require, and their accommodation in disability-adapted dwelling places, and the second¹²⁶ addresses the evacuation of populations, provision of medications, accessibility of information and translation services during times of emergency.

71. As of February 2023, the government has continued work on draft accessibility regulations, in order to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the following areas: creation of a database of persons with disabilities to ensure accessibility of emergency services; accessibility of post-secondary and religious educational institutions; accessibility of private health services; and accessibility of public ways.

¹¹⁷ More details on this important piece of legislation may be found in Israel's Initial Report to the CRPD Committee (CPRD/C/ISR/1), paras. 90-96.

¹¹⁸ From 2016 until October 2021.

¹¹⁹ The Administrator General, together with the Commission, conducted numerous training sessions and seminars on this subject, targeting audiences such as persons with disabilities, family members and professionals. The Administrator General has also established a new call center, as well as a digital platform, for complaints and inquiries on alternatives to guardianship, enduring power of attorney and supported decision-making.

¹²⁰ See last National Report, paras. 48-51, 54.

¹²¹ Adopted under the two principal sources of legislation mandating accessibility to public places and services, the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law 5758-1998 (the "Equal Rights Law") and the Planning and Building Law 5725-1965.

¹²² Equal Rights Regulations (Individual Access Adjustments for Parent and Child) 5778-2018.

¹²³ In furtherance of the implementation of target 4.5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹²⁴ Equal Rights Regulations (Accessibility during times of emergency of services or institutions for persons with disabilities), 5781-2021.

¹²⁵ Equal Rights Regulations (Accessibility during population evacuation events and accommodation in emergency situations), 5782-2022.

¹²⁶ Health services for persons with disabilities in times of emergency, 5782-2022.

72. As reported in Israel's last UPR¹²⁷, the CERPWD¹²⁸ is charged with enforcing compliance with these accessibility obligations through administrative-criminal means (accessibility orders) and via civil lawsuits. It also conducts training of officials, awareness raising campaigns, and other means, including advancing legislation to further the rights of persons with disabilities.
73. In June 2022, new legislation¹²⁹ substantially broadened the powers of prosecution and enforcement of the CERPWD by affording it two important powers: Firstly, it allows the Commission to file lawsuits against governmental authorities as proxy of a person who was discriminated against in the provision of a public service based on their disability, in violation of accessibility obligations. Additionally, the amendment established an administrative enforcement track of the accessibility and appropriate representation provisions under the Law, allowing the imposition of financial sanctions, including on public authorities. This authority will take effect one year following the date of publication of the Law, subject to the completion of necessary regulations and procedures.
74. The CERPWD has conducted several activities directed to minority groups within Israel, with the intention of promoting the rights of persons with disabilities exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination:¹³⁰
- a. In the Arab community, several awareness raising activities on the rights of persons with disabilities were conducted: dozens of lectures, conferences and roundtables; courses for activists from the Arab minority; training for Muslim clergy members, participation in academic research, translation or subtitling of all media materials to Arabic, and even the production of a play in Arabic on the inclusion of children with disabilities that is to be performed 75 times throughout the country. Specific meetings and conferences also target the Bedouin community.
 - b. Similar activities have been realized within the ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, including culture-sensitive lectures and materials, training for professionals, and campaigns in radio stations directed to this public. The Commission has also engaged leading rabbis.
75. The Ministry of Culture and Sport conducts various activities designed to remove barriers facing persons with disabilities and encourage their participation in mainstream sports activities, and provides grants to promote activities designed for them, with an approximate annual budget of 23,750,000 NIS¹³¹. Furthermore, the Ministry for the

¹²⁷ See last National Report, p. 51.

¹²⁸ Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in the Ministry of Justice.

¹²⁹ Amendment No. 23 to the "Equal Rights Law".

¹³⁰ See: recommendations 118.51, 118.52, 118.58, 118.127, 118.128, 118.129, 118.130, 118.132, 118.133 and 118.134 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹³¹ Approximately 7,454,787 USD.

Development of the Negev and the Galilee is building 20 accessible parks in the periphery, at the cost of 12 Million NIS¹³².

(c) Rights of LGBTIQ+ persons¹³³

76. Israel steadfastly protects the rights of its citizens to live freely regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity, actively promotes the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, and protects them from violence and discrimination.¹³⁴
77. In 2019, the first openly LGBTIQ+ minister in Israel was appointed, followed by three openly gay ministers in the 35th Government (2020-21), and one in the 36th Government. Since January 2023, the Knesset has its first openly LGBTIQ+ Speaker.¹³⁵
78. In February 2022, the MOH published Director General Circular No. 3/2022, prohibiting medical professionals from carrying out the harmful practices known as “conversion therapies”¹³⁶. Citing the lack of evidence regarding the efficiency of such “treatments”, and moreover, the substantial evidence of harm caused by them, the circular bans medical professionals from offering, advertising or conducting these “therapies”, and subjects those who practice them to sanctions, including the loss of professional licenses and disciplinary procedures.¹³⁷
79. Since before this reporting period, clinics dedicated to the health of the LGBTIQ+ community already existed in Tel Aviv-Jaffa¹³⁸, but the last few years saw a decentralization of this service, so that every major city in Israel has a clinic for LGBTIQ+ health. Moreover, in September 2021, Ichilov Hospital was the first hospital in Israel to appoint a managing physician dedicated to LGBTIQ+ health, and was followed by Shiba hospital, which also appointed a dedicated staff member and opened a dedicated clinic to the community.¹³⁹
80. In the field of welfare, the MOLSA allocated social workers dedicated to LGBTIQ+ persons in local social services’ divisions in over 100 local authorities, established Hebrew and Arabic hotlines which provide social aid to the LGBTIQ+ community, participated in an initiative providing labor training to LGBTIQ+ at-risk youth, and provided “emergency” accommodation for a 4-month period to LGBTIQ+ individuals in the “Pink Roof” emergency shelter. LGBTIQ+ persons affected by drug abuse are offered 18 month stays at a rehabilitation and treatment hostel. The Ministry also

¹³² Approximately 3,766,629 USD.

¹³³ See: recommendations 118.47, 118.48, 118.49, 118.50, 118.51, 118.64 and 118.65 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

¹³⁴ In furtherance of the implementation of SDG 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹³⁵ See: recommendation 118.48 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

¹³⁶ Defined in the MOH DG Circular as “any treatment or counseling, provided in any way, whose goal is to change, so to speak, a person’s gender identity or sexual orientation, including conversational, medicinal, behavioral or educational treatment, whether if supplied by a medical or health professional, or by someone purporting to be a professional.”

¹³⁷ See: recommendations 118.49, 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel’s 3rd UPR..

¹³⁸ Since 2009 in the Clalit Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), and 2017 within the Maccabi HMO.

¹³⁹ For paragraphs 77-78, see: recommendations 118.49 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

created a “Family clinic” that offers legal aid and couple counseling to LGBTIQ+ families. Other services focus on the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ persons belonging to specific groups (Arabs, ultra-Orthodox, religious, and transgenders), such as providing culture-sensitive and tailored group-guidance to these persons, managing support groups for religious LGBTIQ+ parents, and providing dedicated emergency housing and hostel services for Arab LGBTIQ+ individuals.

81. In October 2020, an inter-ministerial team was appointed by the MOJ and the MOLSA to examine the issues faced by the transgender community in relation to public services, and to offer solutions. The recommendations presented included increasing representation of the transgender community in the Civil Service, improving accessibility of governmental forms through gender-neutral language, and providing professional training for civil servants to raise awareness of the challenges they face. Following these recommendations, the MOLSA created a program for counseling, directing, and accompanying transgender persons, and provided dedicated shelters for transgender persons involved in sex-work, besides additional services offered to the LGBTIQ+ community (see below, paragraphs 82 and 103).
82. Furthermore, in September 2022, the MOLSA published internal guidelines for social workers on how to properly address the needs of the transgender community. The guidelines provide instructions on the use of the correct pronouns while providing service to transgenders in person and in the Ministry's forms, allowing a person to use bathrooms and showers according to their gender identity, to receive a private room in out-of-home facilities, and more.
83. The MOH has issued a designated Directive to all hospitals and medical facilities in Israel concerning the treatment of intersex persons, including children, where consent and self-identification are cardinal principles.^{140 141}
84. Israel's judicial system, on all levels, has played a critical role in protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, with rulings that are often translated into broader policies. Among them:
 - a. On December 12, 2018 the HCJ ruled¹⁴² that adoptive same-sex couples had the right to be registered on the birth certificate of their adoptive children in "closed adoptions" (which disconnect the ties between the minor and his biological parents). The Court ruled that it is in the best interest of the child to have a solid

¹⁴⁰ Among other elements, the following instructions are included: (i) treatments be to be performed by an interdisciplinary team, requiring previous informed consent of the patient, the obligation for secrecy and the respect of the right to privacy and decency; (ii) regarding treatment of intersex children, no medical procedure will be done to a child if they object to it, unless there is a danger to their life, and there is an informed consent by the parents; (iii) in case of irreversible surgical procedure, it will only be performed if an interdisciplinary team has determined that it is in accordance with the will of the child and the way the child perceives themselves; (iv) the gender identity of the child will be determined in full cooperation with the child in accordance to their level of understanding, including the opposition to hormonal procedures.

¹⁴¹ See: recommendations 118.49, 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR..

¹⁴² H.C.J 7344/17 Anonymous v. The Minister of Interior (12.12.2018)

family unit, and that the legitimacy of same-sex relationships cannot infringe upon the right of the child to be registered under their parents' names, including on their birth certificate.¹⁴³

- b. On August 19, 2020, the Be'er-Sheva District Court sustained¹⁴⁴ a decision of a lower court against a printing business which refused to print pamphlets for the LGBTIQ+ Student Association, thus enforcing the legal provision forbidding discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- c. In July 2021, the HCJ ruled that a legal provision¹⁴⁵ restricting surrogacy arrangements to heterosexual couples or single women was discriminatory against same-sex couples and single men, and therefore invalidated it. Following that, in December 2021, the MOH published a Director General Circular updating the procedure in place, requiring all surrogacy agreements to be conducted in a manner that does not allow for discrimination against same-sex couples or single men, pursuant to the Court's ruling.¹⁴⁶
- d. In July 2021, the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Magistrate Court ruled¹⁴⁷ that addressing a transgender woman with male pronouns despite her requests to be addressed with female pronouns constitutes a criminal offense under the *Prohibition of Slander Law 5726–1965*, and awarded her financial compensation.
- e. In September 2021, the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Regional Labor Court ruled¹⁴⁸ that an employee was entitled to sick leave payment after gender reassignment surgery. Furthermore, it noted that the reference by the defendants to the plaintiff's gender reassignment surgery as a “cosmetic surgery”, constituted an infringement of the plaintiff's dignity.

85. For information on the approach of the education system toward SOGI issues, see below at paragraphs 98-99.

86. In 2021, the Initiative for the Promotion of the LGBTIQ+ Community in Local Authorities was established - offering material support in municipal expenses by the Ministry for Social Equality (“MSE”), for the purpose of facilitating programs for the local LGBTIQ+ communities. The initiative currently supports 73 local authorities (comprising the majority of the country's population, 59%), with 31 more in stages of joining. Among the programs financed: holiday dinners for LGBTIQ+ persons with challenging family backing (or none), therapy and social support groups, meetings with

¹⁴³ See: recommendations 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁴⁴ C.A. 52336-06-20 *Yossi Cohen v. Association for Protection of Individual Rights* (08.19.2021)

¹⁴⁵ H.C.J. 781/15, *Itai Arad-Pinkas et al. v. The Committee for Approval of Agreements for Carrying of Embryos et. al.*(11.7.21); The ruling referred to the *Agreements for Carrying of Embryos (Approval of the Agreement and Status of the Infant) Law 5756-1996*.

¹⁴⁶ See: recommendation 118.49 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁴⁷ CI.C. (TA) 48936-04-19 *Isabel Rash v. Shufersal Ltd.* (07.07.21)

¹⁴⁸ Labor Dispute (TA) 33911-12-18 *Lior Abigail Zakilo Flint V. Hemed Kindergarten Ltd.* (09.08.2021).

the local community and awareness raising, training for local government servants themselves, as well as activities dedicated to transgender persons.

87. The MSE also promoted programs for religious LGBTIQ+ persons, including group meetings aimed at raising awareness and acceptance, as well as a dedicated program for anonymous support to religious LGBTIQ+ women.

4. Children's rights¹⁴⁹

a) New mechanisms

88. Israel remains determined to protect children's rights and their welfare, and has acted vigorously to promote their rights. Besides being party to numerous treaties¹⁵⁰ and possessing robust policies and legislation on children's rights, during the current reporting period the State has created new protection frameworks to support and safeguard them.

89. In June 2022, the Government decided¹⁵¹ to establish two new institutions on the rights of children and youth: 1) a Committee of Director-Generals of government ministries¹⁵², constituting a permanent forum for coordination of policy; and 2) the appointment of a new Government Coordinator for the rights of Children and Youth at the MOJ ("GCRCY"). These organs shall provide a coordinated, comprehensive and inclusive policy in the affairs of children, and promote a whole-of-government approach in the field, which also corresponds to a multidisciplinary and diverse understanding of children's needs, including educational, health, social, physical and emotional needs. They also recognize the importance of children's participation in the formulation of decisions and policies concerning them.¹⁵³

90. Prior to the appointment of the GCRCY, in 2018 an Inter-Ministerial Coordinator (IMC) was appointed in the MOJ for preventing children from coming into conflict with the law¹⁵⁴, by conducting professional consultations, training sessions, liaising with CSOs, and coordinating the activity of the Government bodies dealing with this issue. The IMC focuses on prevention and on promoting the continuity of treatment.

¹⁴⁹ See: recommendations 118.47, 118.48, 118.49, 118.50, 118.52, 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁵⁰ The human rights treaties relating to children include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

¹⁵¹ Pursuant to Government Resolution No. 1652.

¹⁵² The Committee is comprised of the DG of the MOJ, and including the DGs of the ministries of Education (MOE), MOLSA, MOH, Public Security (MPS), Finance (MOF) and Immigration and Absorption (MoII).

¹⁵³ These new mechanisms join the Early Childhood Council, established by law in 2017 and tasked with furthering the care of infants and the fulfillment of their educational, social, health, physical and emotional needs, and the Children's and Youth Complaints Commission for Out-of-Home Placed Children.

¹⁵⁴ Pursuant to Government Resolution No. 1840 (11.08. 16).

Recently, the IMC established a youth forum where children can voice their views to the relevant public officials.

b) Child participation

91. Recognizing the importance of children's agency and their participation in decision-making in accordance with the CRC, appropriate frameworks exist throughout Israel: not only in schools (915 elementary and secondary schools have active school councils) but also in local authorities, where children are included in municipal decision making in about 20 municipal parliaments. Instructed by MOE counselors, children participate in the city council and subsequently engage with municipalities and Knesset members on issues that may interest them. Furthermore, since 2020 the MOJ and the Youth and Pupils Council, together with the MOE and MFA have been conducting annual round tables on various issues such as: privacy, the rights of LGBTIQ+ children, on-line protection, climate change etc. in order to enhance the children's agency.

c) Protection of children online and offline

92. In December 2018, new legislation was adopted¹⁵⁵ ordering the installation of cameras to protect the safety of toddlers placed in daycare, while preserving, to the extent possible, the dignity and privacy of all persons in these facilities.

93. The online sphere has manifested itself as a complex environment for children, bringing many opportunities for socializing and exercising rights such as education and culture, but at the same time, presenting many risks for children and exposing them to bullying, sexual abuse, and other forms of violence.

94. The Child Online Protection Bureau (Hotline 105) is a national program for the prevention of violence and crime against children and teenagers online¹⁵⁶. It began operating in February 2018¹⁵⁷, by providing a hotline that deals with any offense and abuse against children in the online realm, including sexual abuse, prostitution and cyberbullying. The calls are received by specially trained police officers, who rely on an inter-ministerial desk with experts on online child abuse from the MOE, the MOLSA, the MOH, the MPS and the MOJ, who are able to intervene swiftly and ensure that every call receives an appropriate and comprehensive response. In 2021 alone, the hotline handled more than 11,000 events, and during the reporting period - over 20,000¹⁵⁸. Thirty percent of incidents are sexual harassment.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Installation of Cameras for the Protection of Toddlers in Daycare Centers Law (5779-2018).

¹⁵⁶ Since its establishment, the program has been lauded by civil society and academia in Israel as an important contribution to improving the response to online crimes against children, and even resulted in international cooperation with other states examining similar policies.

¹⁵⁷ Established pursuant to Government Resolution No. 1006, from January 17th, 2016 and Government Resolution No. 1972, from September 27th, 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Since the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during lockdown periods, children have spent considerably more time surfing the internet, which exposed them to significantly greater risks of online harm. This increase has been apparent from the rise in calls to Hotline 105.

¹⁵⁹ In furtherance of the implementation of target 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

95. While the Israel Police, MOE, MOJ and other authorities have each adopted policies and mechanisms to prevent and counter sexual violence against children, the Government of Israel has not yet adopted a national action plan on sexual violence against children, which could constitute a whole-of-government framework for efforts to combat the problem.

96. For programs by the MOE promoting dialogue and human rights, see above at paragraph 57.

97. For the new policies on inclusion and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities, see above at paragraphs 67-70.

(d) LGBTIQ+ children¹⁶⁰

98. In October 2022, the MOE published draft guidelines on gender diversity in the education system, providing tools for teachers to provide an appropriate, sensitive and respectful response to LGBTIQ+ pupils.¹⁶¹ This document specifies training for teachers and school staff, strategies on approaching gendered language and clothing, specific programs for minority groups, education on sexual violence and safety, and more.

99. The above mentioned Draft Guidelines have not yet been adopted in the form of a DG Circular, and are still under consideration.

100. Similarly to the welfare programs directed to LGBTIQ+ persons¹⁶², the MOLSA and MOH manage several programs specifically focused on LGBTIQ+ children at different levels of risk. For example, social workers have been allocated to respond to LGBTIQ+ adolescents at risk under a yearly budget of 1,400,000 NIS¹⁶³. Mental health and psychosocial support are offered to LGBTIQ+ adolescents in partnership with an NGO through a 24/7 response line, and other programs offer tailored solutions for transgenders and Arab or ultra-Orthodox LGBTIQ+ children.

(e) Children in detention¹⁶⁴

101. Israel is committed to fulfilling all of the rights and needs of all children held in Israel Prison Service (IPS) facilities, including their security, physical and mental health, and nutritional needs, according to their developmental stage.

102. The IPS ensures children under its authority are integrated into educational frameworks inside the prison, take external tests and complete ten or twelve school

¹⁶⁰ See: recommendations 118.64 and 118.65 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁶¹ In furtherance of the implementation of target 4.5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹⁶² See also paragraph 80.

¹⁶³ Approximately 398,825 USD.

¹⁶⁴ See: recommendations 118.123, 118.124, 118.195, 118.199 and 118.200 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

years¹⁶⁵. Underage prisoners may also take part in therapeutic programs based on a holistic approach to develop anger management, interpersonal communication and healthy sexuality.

103. Prison staff involved with youth imprisonment undergo continuous training¹⁶⁶, focusing on the unique needs of minors. The IPS staff training deals with certain principles of the CRC and their implementation in IPS facilities, including protection of children from discrimination; the best interest of the child; and children's right to be informed and heard in decisions concerning them.

104. The IPS also strives to engage the support and involvement of the underage prisoners' families in their rehabilitation process, pursuant to the child's best interest.

5. Rights of older persons¹⁶⁷

105. A greater focus must be put, domestically and internationally, on the rights of older persons, who are often neglected by states' policies in spite of their specific vulnerabilities and needs, and their exposure to ageism and exclusion. Israel has strived to address the challenges they face, through policies developed under several ministries and authorities.

106. The MSE has defined this issue as a high priority, and dedicated several programs to it. It has trained dedicated advisers in local authorities, who have tools to respond to the needs of older persons on a local level, such as addressing solitude and creating leisure opportunities. One of the flagships of the Ministry is a call center in seven languages that provides information and assistance to older persons, removing barriers to the fulfillment of their rights and guiding them to obtain benefits and services they need, such as pensions, requesting nursing services or finding employment. The MSE also manages programs that support older persons with focus on searching for employment, preparing for retirement, and attending for healthcare needs.

107. The MOLSA has a dedicated "Senior citizens" unit to address their welfare needs. Several activity centers, such as social clubs and day centers, seek to address their needs for sociability and community, and offer occupation. Another program works on identifying cases of abuse and neglect, offering appropriate treatment and response, and also works on prevention and awareness raising.

108. Additionally, the MOLSA has dedicated programs for Holocaust survivors, including social events, free meals, material aid and more.

109. Furthermore, the State Ombudsman has directed a spotlight to the challenges faced by older persons, and has published several audit reports on the public services

¹⁶⁵ Depending on the period of their imprisonment.

¹⁶⁶ Pursuant to the Youth (Trial, Punishment and Modes of Treatment) Law (5731-1971).

¹⁶⁷ See: recommendations 118.47, 118.48, 118.49 and 118.50 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

offered to them. He has also promoted awareness and accessibility through projects and outreach programs, as well as volunteering programs. In February 2023, the Ombudsman will publish a special report on the subject of challenges and goals in the provision of service for older persons - on the basis of broad base data collection over the last 3 years.

6. Religious freedoms¹⁶⁸

- 110.** The right to freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental facet of Israeli society, and comprises both the freedom of religion and the freedom to practice one's religion, worship and access one's holy places. The *Protection of Holy Places Law 5727-1967* safeguards all holy places from desecration and subjects violators to significant prison sentences.
- 111.** Access to holy places and freedom of worship for members of all faiths is strictly guarded, with rare exceptions relating to the maintenance of public order or morals. Moreover, Israel places the utmost importance on facilitating worship by Muslims in their respective holy sites, including in Jerusalem. Within the Christian community, there are no holy sites at which freedom of access and worship is restricted by the State. The physical control over some parts of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other Christian sites has been the center of centuries-old disputes between different Christian denominations, and give rise to a certain limitation on freedom of access to members of rival denominations; the State's consistent policy has been to refrain from intervening in such disputes.
- 112.** Applicable Accessibility Regulations¹⁶⁹ require that places of worship and holy places be made accessible for persons with disabilities, thus fulfilling their right to freedom of religion. During 2020-2021 the CERPWD, in collaboration with religious Jewish NGOs, launched an awareness raising campaign about accessibility in synagogues and how to create an inclusive Jewish religious community. Similarly, in recent years the Commissioner held meetings with Muslim, Druze and Christian religious leaders with the aim of raising awareness on accessibility and inclusion in religious life.
- 113.** In the world of work, Israel fully guarantees the right of employees to observe the holidays and days of weekly rest prescribed by their religion. While the national day of rest is Saturday (the Sabbath), non-Jews have the right to observe their own days of rest either on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Employers are forbidden from refusing to hire an employee who, upon being hired, informs of their weekly day of rest for reasons of religious observance; nor may employers require an employee to work on the day of

¹⁶⁸ See: recommendations 118.88, 118.90 and 118.131 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁶⁹ The Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities (Accessibility Adjustments for a Public Place which is an Existing Building) Regulations 5772-2011 apply to all public places, including places of worship and holy places. "Mikvahs" (Jewish ritual baths), are being made accessible in accordance with these Regulations.

rest as a condition of employment. These restrictions apply with a few exceptions based on the requirements of public security, State security, public health or the provision of certain essential services.

7. Migration and the elimination of trafficking in persons

a) Eliminating trafficking in persons (TIP)¹⁷⁰

114. Israel participates actively in the global efforts to eliminate trafficking in persons, one of the greatest human rights challenges in the context of migration.¹⁷¹ Building on Israel's robust practice on the issue¹⁷², new activities include:
115. In September 2022, the Government adopted a new multi-year program (2022-2026) to combat TIP. The new program tasked NATU with the responsibility for the recognition mechanism of trafficking victims, creating a new unique inter-office model for this subject. Additionally, the program provides for a new protection model for victims, dedicated teams, and long-term research on the program's effects, and also introduced new guidelines for proactive determination and prevention of TIP following the war in the Ukraine.
116. NATU also provides lectures and training programs for government authorities, academia, and civil society organizations on the subject of TIP. Among these awareness raising activities, we can highlight a seminar in June 2021 on Technical Assistance and Information Exchange based on EU guidelines, and a seminar on TIP in Israel in December 2021.¹⁷³
117. As detailed in Israel's previous report¹⁷⁴, a dedicated fund manages forfeited assets used in TIP and slavery and related penalties. The fund's committee manages budgets reaching 2,244,662 NIS¹⁷⁵, while nearly half of this sum was allocated in 2021 alone. These resources were redirected to the protection of victims of trafficking (directly or through civil society organizations), such as professional training programs, mental health, dental treatments, and other medical services.¹⁷⁶
118. Bilateral labor agreements signed by Israel provide additional safeguards against TIP¹⁷⁷, ensuring greater transparency and protecting the rights of migrant

¹⁷⁰ See: recommendations 118.103 and 118.104 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁷¹ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 5.2 and 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹⁷² See last National Report, paras, 85-92.

¹⁷³ See: recommendation 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99 and 118.100 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁷⁴ See last National Report, para. 92.

¹⁷⁵ Approximately 656,689 USD.

¹⁷⁶ See: recommendation 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99 and 118.100 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁷⁷ Some examples were provided in Israel's last National Report, para. 88.

workers. In order to prevent abuses, they receive booklets in their own language with information on their rights and contact details of the relevant authorities, and can access and file complaints at response centers operated by the government.

b) The policy on asylum requests and protection of asylum-seekers¹⁷⁸

119. The Population and Immigration Authority (PIBA) is responsible for examining asylum applications, in accordance with Israeli law and subject to the State's obligations under international law¹⁷⁹. Extensive guidelines that are constantly updated are aimed at protecting the rights of asylum-seekers. Their latest update, from 21 March 2022, was drafted in consultation with the UNHCR¹⁸⁰ and civil society, and contains provisions specifically protecting children, persons with psychosocial disabilities, victims of torture, as well as guidelines on gender sensitivity.¹⁸¹

120. PIBA's personnel receive frequent training on issues that may arise in the course of their work, including training in cooperation with the UNHCR, the NATU and relevant Government Ministries. Recently, they had training in treating asylum-seekers suffering from PTSD.

121. Even if the temporary-stay permits held by asylum-seekers are not categorized as work permits, the State has a policy of not enforcing the prohibition of employing asylum-seekers, allowing them to work and be protected under local labor law.¹⁸² They are also entitled to legal aid, and all children are integrated into the educational system.

122. With regards to healthcare, everyone is entitled to urgent medical care in medical emergencies. Additionally, asylum seekers and migrants are offered: preventive medicine for pregnant women; babies and infants including routine vaccinations and growth and developmental follow-up at family health centers; and more.¹⁸³ Designated clinics in Tel Aviv-Jaffa (where most asylum seekers reside) offer primary health care including routine check-ups, lab services and scans, as well as mental health and psychosocial support.

123. Following Russia's attack on Ukraine, guidelines and procedures were updated to ensure the proper treatment of Ukrainian citizens, and facilitate their employment, regardless of their possession of work visas or filing asylum requests.

¹⁷⁸ See: recommendations 118.51, 118.139 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁷⁹ Most notably, the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

¹⁸⁰ The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees.

¹⁸¹ See: recommendations 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99, 118.100, 118.126 118.135 and 118.138 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁸² In furtherance of the implementation of target 8.8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹⁸³ In furtherance of the implementation of target 3.8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. Human rights in the context of promoting a sustainable development and facing climate change

124. Israel is committed to cooperating to promote sustainable development and to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁸⁴, and recognizes that climate change imposes a major challenge with far-reaching human rights impact.
125. In order to face this global challenge, Israel has set ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions¹⁸⁵. The Government has also taken action on adaptation, establishing the CCAA¹⁸⁶, which promises support and guidance to national and local authorities on the impacts of climate change, especially on the most vulnerable areas and populations.
126. A new revised and comprehensive version of the draft comprehensive Israeli Climate Bill is currently under review of the Knesset¹⁸⁷, and if legislated would formalize the targets mentioned above and help prepare for the climate crisis, among others, by establishing a Ministerial Committee on Climate Affairs headed by the Prime Minister, and an independent interdisciplinary committee of academic experts to advise decision makers.
127. In the Government's adaptation efforts, special attention is given to the peripheral and minority populations. Several programs and resources were allocated, including a subsidy for solar thermal water heaters, a project to renovate public housing buildings, and the allocation of NIS 550 million from the 2021-26 whole-of-government Arab Society Plan¹⁸⁸ to improve waste management and promote adaptation measures and resilience in these communities.
128. The MoEP¹⁸⁹ is also working with local authorities, the MOE and civil society organizations to promote environmental education in the formal and informal education systems, from pre-school until 12th grade. Furthermore, the MoEP is providing funding for environmental NGOs, in order to enable them to carry out various activities such as

¹⁸⁴ In 2019 the Israeli Cabinet approved Government Resolution No. 4631 to integrate the UN Sustainable Development Goals into strategic government programs, in order to improve governance and strategic planning.

¹⁸⁵ Among other targets, Israel has committed to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 27% until 2030 and by 85% until 2050, and has established sectoral targets in various areas such as electricity generation, solid waste, transport, and industry.

¹⁸⁶ Climate Change Adaptation Administration, established in 2018 under the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MoEP).

¹⁸⁷ The draft was presented to the current Knesset on February 2, 2023. See https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/minister_silman_climate_law_to_ministries_comments

¹⁸⁸ See above at para. 62(b).

¹⁸⁹ Ministry of Environmental Protection.

fighting the climate crisis, promoting recycling, reducing pollution, preserving biological diversity and promoting environmental innovation.¹⁹⁰

9. Human rights in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

129. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed serious danger to the rights to life and to health, and also severely impacted all human rights. When facing the pandemic, the Government of Israel has been guided by a human rights-based approach.

130. The Government, led by the MOH, has made efforts to ensure that all persons would have access to the necessary medical treatments and vaccines, and to protect the most vulnerable.¹⁹¹ In April 2020, the MOH adopted the “Fathers and Mothers’ Shield” program, coordinating the protection of older persons and persons with disabilities residing in full-care facilities, through special epidemiological measures. The dedicated pandemic legislation from July 2020 also included special provisions¹⁹² ensuring that the rights and needs of older persons, children and persons with disabilities would be taken into consideration^{193, 194}.

131. The PMO¹⁹⁵ hosted a series of inter-ministerial roundtable discussions on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rights of members of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, children and youth, which included the participation of representatives of relevant Government Ministries, as well as of civil society. Among the topics discussed were: accessibility and information sharing, active and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making, the effects of social restrictions on facilities and services dedicated to persons with disabilities, mental health, employment, education, domestic violence, sexual crimes against women, children and youth at-risk and more. The roundtable’s findings and recommendations were published, and the Government took them into consideration when developing policy on the pandemic.¹⁹⁶

132. For example, health measures often gave way to the needs of persons with disabilities. Several exemptions to travel restrictions allowed for persons with disabilities to receive visits from family members or guardians, receive medical treatment or caregiving services. All Government ministries have made efforts to

¹⁹⁰ See: recommendation 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99, 118.100, 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

¹⁹¹ In furtherance of the implementation of targets 3.8 and 3.d of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹⁹² Special Authorities to Combat the New Coronavirus (Temporary Provision) Law (Special Authorities Law), 5780-2020, Section 4(b).

¹⁹³ The COVID-19 legislation took into account and built upon protection provisions contained in the *Equal Rights Law*. See above at paragraphs 70-73.

¹⁹⁴ See: recommendations 118.49, 118.118, 118.119 and 118.126 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

¹⁹⁵ Prime Minister’s Office.

¹⁹⁶ See: recommendations 118.49, 118.91, 118.92, 118.93, 118.94, 118.95, 118.95, 118.96, 118.97, 118.98, 118.99, 118.100, 118.106, 118.107, 118.108, 118.109, 118.110, 118.126 from Israel’s 3rd UPR.

ensure all COVID-19-related information and services are fully accessible to persons with disabilities, in Hebrew and Arabic.¹⁹⁷

133. With respect to accessibility during times of emergency, see above at paragraph 70.
134. Specific policies ensured that migrants and asylum-seekers would not be left behind. In March 2020, the MOH instructed hospital administrators and other authorities to offer to them all COVID-19 tests, treatments and hotlines. All MOH information regarding COVID-19 and restriction measures were translated into the relevant languages¹⁹⁸, published online and circulated to reach these communities, and permits set to expire were extended automatically for workers and asylum-seekers. When vaccines were finally available, migrants were given full access to them, including through a specialized center in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. As of June 2021, the level of vaccination among migrants was comparable to the general Israeli population.¹⁹⁹
135. In the social realm, the Government took steps to ensure that social security grants and benefits to older persons and persons with disabilities would not be negatively impacted by constantly changing relief policies. For example, in April 2020, workers over the age of 67 who were dismissed during the pandemic were offered a special social security grant.
136. The distress and loneliness in which older persons found themselves were a constant concern, and were addressed by several governmental initiatives. For example, the MSE established a national database of older persons, and together with the MOLSA, worked to ensure the provision of food and medicine, coordinated volunteer visits and more²⁰⁰.
137. Social distancing regulations disrupted the educational system, severely impacting children, and children with disabilities in particular, in their enjoyment of the right to education. While the special education system maintained in-person learning for most of the pandemic²⁰¹, regular schools were closed or shifted to remote learning, affecting children with disabilities who were mainstreamed and suffered from special difficulties. In response to this issue, personal teaching aides were sent to these pupils' homes even during lockdown times in order to assist them.^{202 203}

¹⁹⁷ See: recommendations 118.101 and 118.126 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

¹⁹⁸ All Ministry of Health guidelines to the public regarding COVID-19 were translated into many languages, including inter alia, English, Arabic, Russian and Tigrinya.

¹⁹⁹ See: recommendations 118.49, 118.51 and 118.139 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

²⁰⁰ MOLSA's program for older persons, entitled "Golden Shield", consisted of 150 intervention coordinators that initiated contact with them and set in motion visits to address their material, social and emotional needs. It also provided 2,000 persons with digital literacy training, in order to compensate for social distancing restrictions.

²⁰¹ It was closed only for a few weeks during the first lockdown, in March-April 2020.

²⁰² Furthermore, in order to assist children with disabilities to adapt to virtual learning, as of March 2021, 2,811 computers were provided to 355 special education institutions.

²⁰³ See: recommendations 118.101, 118.118 and 118.119 from Israel's 3rd UPR.

C. New and emerging issues and challenges

138. Throughout this report, Israel has attempted to present a few of its many achievements in the promotion and protection of human rights. However, many challenges still remain, and gaps remain to be addressed, as can be seen at paragraphs 51, 56, 71, 73, 95, 99 and 139.

139. In the context of the Israeli Government's work on the rights of children in the online environment²⁰⁴, one important issue we identified is children's right to privacy. The Government has been conducting discussions on the matter and preliminary work has been done on draft legislation, but further areas need to be addressed, including the circumstances where it is appropriate for children to decide autonomously, or with the support of parents and guardians, as well as children publishing private information. This field also requires cooperation with the international community - since the domain of the internet has, by nature, transboundary implications.

²⁰⁴ See above at paragraphs 19, 93-94.