

Press Release
5 January 2011

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) Categorically Rejects The Right Wing Call To Establish A Parliamentary Committee Of Inquiry To Investigate NGOs That Work On Human Rights And Humanitarian Violations Committed By Israel's Security Forces.

- The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel sees any such investigative committee as authoritarian, immoral and illegitimate and mourns the slow but sure death of democratic values in Israel.
- PCATI Executive Director: "No human rights organization has succeeded in harming Israel in the way those Israeli politicians who introduce and support such despotic initiatives damage Israeli society".

PCATI's executive director, Dr. Ishai Menuchin categorically rejects and condemns the right wing political party "Yisrael Beitanu" (Israeli is our Home) initiative to introduce legislation to establish a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry designed to persecute and repress human rights defenders in Israel. Dr. Menuchin called the effort "an affront to democratic values" and stated that he is "not surprised by the effort given the recent legislative history of law proposals clearly designed to inhibit and suppress human rights and democratic activism".

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, like other members of the human rights community in Israel consistently strives to instill a greater respect for democratic values in Israel. Human rights are not only a legal issue. "Protecting detainees from torture and ill treatment, working against the annexation barrier, preventing the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and the take over of their homes in East Jerusalem is a moral issue" stated PCATI director Menuchin. "The most recent effort by MK Fania Kirshenbaum is an embarrassment. If she is worried about what the world will think about Israel then she should introduce legislation that would end impunity and force all complaints of human rights violations to independently and impartially investigate." PCATI has consistently acted against the abuses against detainees that are committed by Israeli security forces, including the army and the Shin Bet (General Security Services ? GSS) and has recently reported on the impunity that plagues not only investigations of torture but all human rights violations.

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel sees any such investigative committee as authoritarian, immoral and illegitimate and mourns the slow but sure death of democratic values in Israel. Dr. Menuchin further attested to the "systematic deterioration of democracy in Israel" and wondered "how the international community, particularly Jewish communities in the West would react to such blatant and venomous McCarthyism in their own democracies."