

## **NGOs in Israel Sign Joint Statement: We have Nothing to Hide**

5 January 2011

On Monday, Yisrael Beiteinu announced its intentions to establish a parliamentary inquiry commission into the funding of Israeli organizations accused of working to prosecute IDF soldiers and officers abroad. According to media reports, organizations singled out include Btselem, Machsom Watch, Shovrim Shtika and Yesh Din. More than a dozen Israeli NGOs, including The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), sent out a message of solidarity on Tuesday, stating:

You wish to investigate? Go ahead and interrogate all of us. We have nothing to hide. You are invited to read our reports and publications, and we will welcome if for a change you will answer our questions instead of slandering us time and again. Similar attempts to silence criticism have failed in the past, this attempt will fail too.

When and if we will be summoned, we shall remind you that:

- In a democracy, criticizing government policy is not only legitimate - it is essential.
- In a democracy, you don't go after those who raise questions - you hold a real discussion and look for genuine answers.
- In a democracy, defending human rights is not subject to the whims of a passing parliamentary majority.
- Human rights serve as everyone's protective shield - if it's broken to pieces we are all in danger.

List of organizations:

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)

Assaf

Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights

Btselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

Gisha: Legal Center for Freedom of Movement

The Public Committee against Torture in Israel

Hamoked: Center for the Defense of the Individual

Public Hotline for Migrant Workers

Machsom Watch

Mossawa - Center for the Rights of the Arab Citizens of Israel

Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

Ir Amim

Women's Coalition for Peace

Kav Laoved

Physicians for Human Rights - Israel

Shovrim Shtika