

Data on disciplinary proceedings against Palestinian students for their social media activity since 7 October 2023

Persecution of Palestinian Students, Citizens of Israel, in Israeli Universities and Colleges during the War

Updated 25 November 2023

Introduction

Since 7 October 2023, many Palestinian students, citizens of Israel, found themselves in the midst of a storm when Israeli universities and colleges initiated disciplinary proceedings against them, brought on by complaints about their social media activity. These complaints were initiated with the encouragement of the Israeli Students Union, as well as other right-wing organizations, after the heads of many academic institutions announced a “zero tolerance” policy for posts containing alleged “incitement”. The Chairman of the Higher Education Council, Education Minister Yoav Kish, ordered the heads of the academic institutions to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the students and report them to the police.

The disciplinary committees that discussed these complaints overstepped the limits of their authority under the Student's Rights Bill, which limits disciplinary proceedings to offences listed in the bylaws of the institutions, and only to those committed in relation to the student’s studies at the institution.

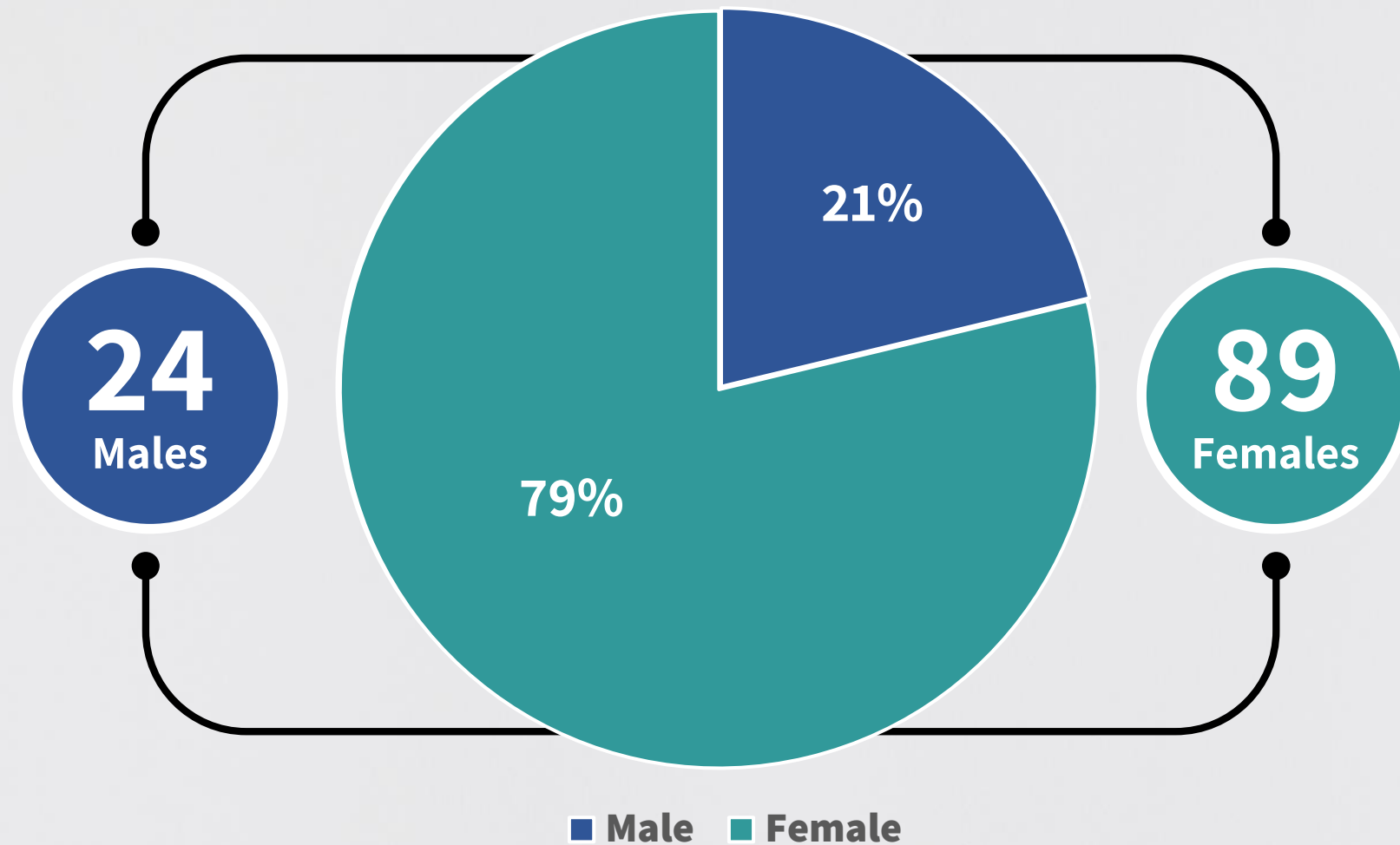
Adalah - The Legal Center for the Arab Minority Rights in Israel, acting in cooperation with the Emergency Committee of the High Follow-Up committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, is providing legal representation to students against whom complaints were filed.

- From the beginning of the war, 113 students studying at 33 Israeli universities and colleges approached Adalah for legal representation concerning complaints against them for their social media activity.
- Adalah is providing legal aid and legal representation to 93 of those students, in the various stages of the disciplinary process.
- The data contained in this report represents a snapshot of the full phenomenon. The Committee of Arab Student Union estimates that about 160 students have been subject to disciplinary measures regarding their social media activity during the war.

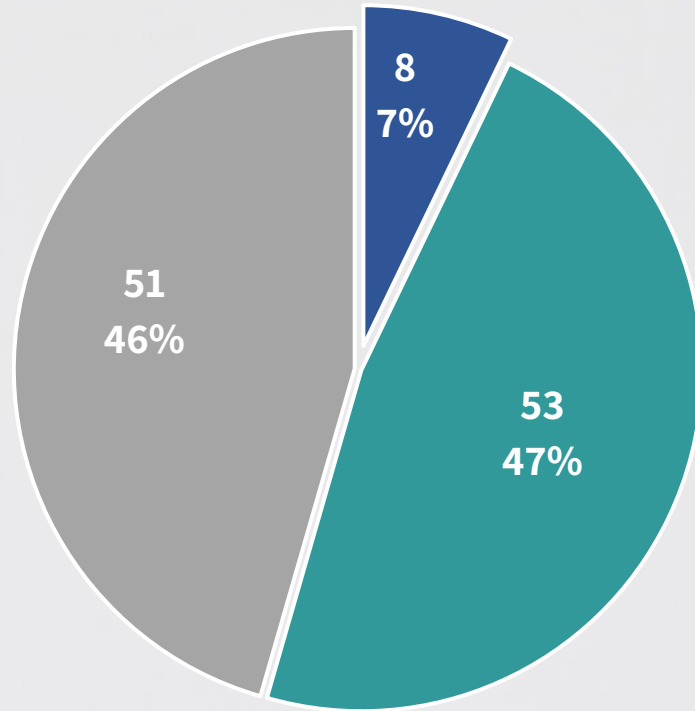
113

**students from
33 institutions
approached
Adalah for
assistance**

Gender Division



Violations of Due Process



- Expulsion without a hearing
- Temporary suspension prior to disciplinary proceedings
- Disciplinary proceedings prior to a decision

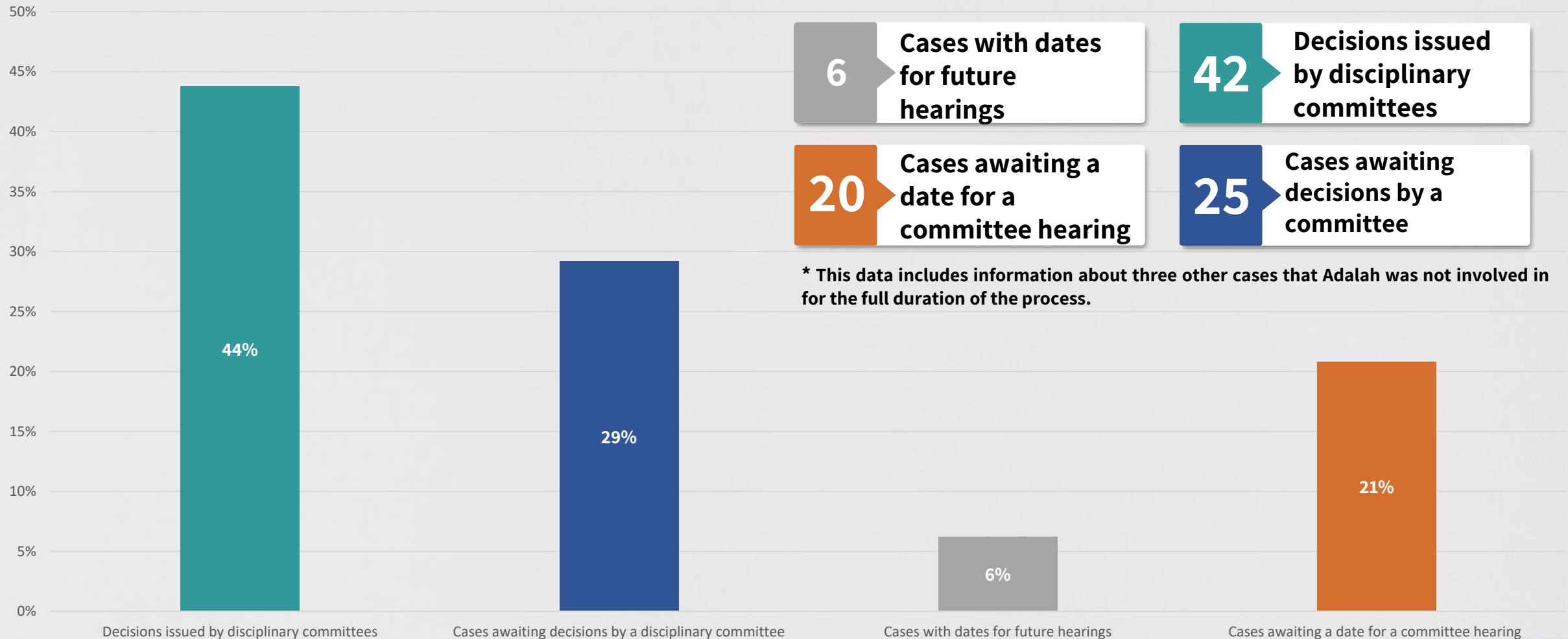
Of the 113 students* who approached Adalah:

- 8 students received a letter of suspension from studies, without being afforded a hearing. It was only following Adalah's intervention that the academic institutions cancelled these decisions and initiated disciplinary proceedings.
- In 47% of cases, the institutions temporarily suspended the students before initiating any disciplinary proceedings.

* One student was removed from his dormitory, but there is no disciplinary procedure against him at the university

Current Status of Disciplinary Proceedings

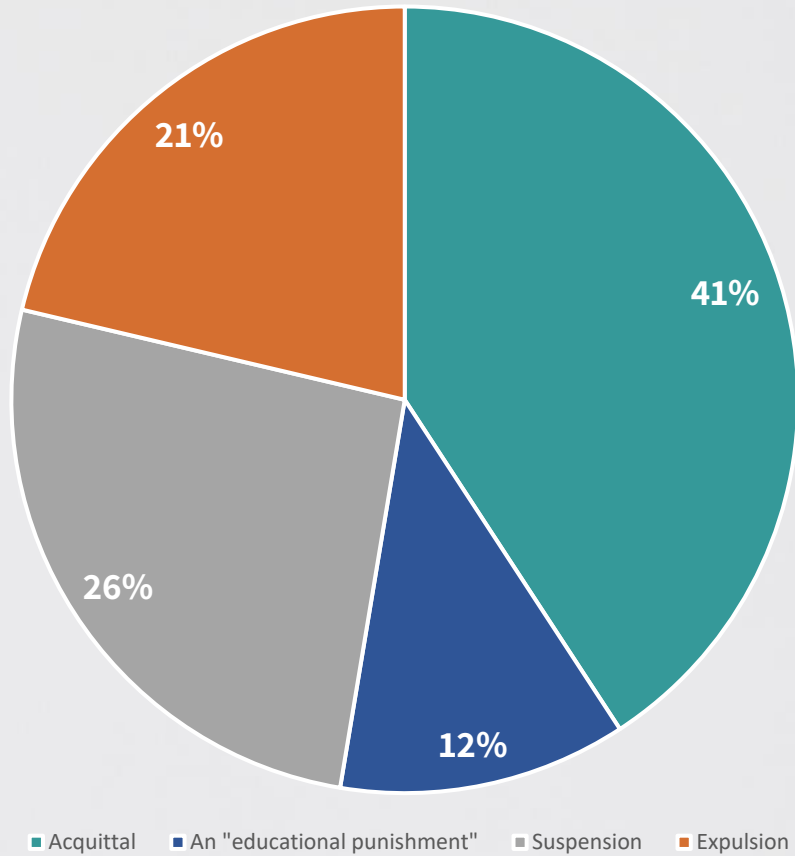
Of the 93* cases in which Adalah is representing:



* This data includes information about three other cases that Adalah was not involved in for the full duration of the process.

Decisions following Disciplinary Proceedings

Of the 42* decisions issued by disciplinary committees:



- 17** Cases that ended in an acquittal (in full, due to lack of proof, or retraction of complaint)
- 5** Cases in which students were sentenced to an "educational punishment" (e.g. a letter of apology, social engagement, a social course)
- 11** Cases that resulted in suspension (6 students suspended for up to one semester, 5 students suspended for a year)
- 9** Cases in which students were expelled**

i If the decision included more than one punishment, it was included in only one category, according to the most severe penalty.

* This data includes information about three other cases that Adalah was not involved in for the full duration of the process.

** One decision resulted in a suspension for three years, without a guarantee of the student's reinstatement at the end of this period.

Appeals

- **Students have the right to appeal decisions of a disciplinary committee to an appeal's committee in each institution, according to the institution's bylaws.**
- **In each case, Adalah discusses whether or not to appeal with the affected student, deliberating the severity of the punishment and the authority of the appeal's committee to increase the punishment.**
- **To date, Adalah has submitted eight appeals, and is working on additional cases.**