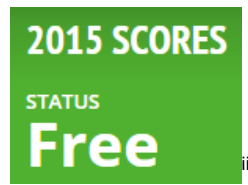


# Human Rights in Israel

- Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people and simultaneously a democratic society that guarantees civil rights to every person, including all minorities.
- Like the United States, Israel is a melting pot with immigrants from almost 100 countries.<sup>i</sup>
- Israeli law protects every religion's holy sites.
- The Israeli government has numerous programs to help minority communities adjust to Israeli society. These include language programs, immigration absorption centers, and more.

## Israel protects all citizens' civil liberties and freedoms

- According to Freedom House's 2014/2015 Map of Freedom (a watchdog organization that reports, and seeks to expand, freedom around the world), Israel is the *only* country in the Middle East with full freedoms.



Key: green = free; yellow = partially free; purple = not free

## Israel is the only liberal democracy in the Middle East

- Israel entitles all citizens -- regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation -- to vote and serve in the Israeli Knesset (governing body).
- Unlike the rest of the Middle East, all Israelis enjoy basic freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, and press.<sup>iv</sup>

*"Israel remains the region's only free country. In recent years, controversies have surrounded proposed laws that threatened freedom of expression and the rights of civil society organizations. In most cases, however, these measures have either been quashed by the government or parliament, or struck down by the Supreme Court."<sup>v</sup>*

- Freedom House analysis of Israel

## Israel guarantees its people the right to education

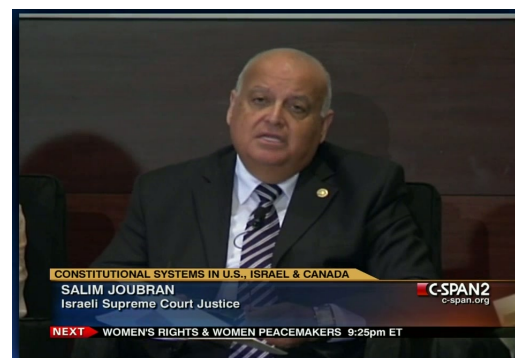
- In 2012, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development named Israel the second most educated country in the world.<sup>vi</sup>

**While surrounding Arab countries persecute and even kill women, Israel ensures women enjoy equal rights and thrive in the Jewish state**

- **Israeli law makes it illegal to discriminate against women.**
- **Israel integrates women into the military more than any other country in the world.**
  - The IDF consists of a higher percentage of women than any other country.
  - Women make up a majority (57 percent) of the IDF's non-career officers.<sup>vii</sup>
  - Women are eligible for roughly 90 percent of military jobs (more than any other country).<sup>viii</sup>
- **Women hold a prestigious positions in the Knesset.**
  - Twenty-nine women sit in the Knesset as of 2015. Some women also hold ministerial and judicial positions.
  - "Among these leaders are three government ministers, 24 members of Parliament, the heads of Israel's two main opposition parties, a general on the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, **all of whom are women.**"<sup>ix</sup> - Lior Weintraub, Spokesman for the Embassy of Israel, on January 18, 2012.
  - **Israel was the third country in history to elect a female prime minister** (Golda Meir in 1969).
- In 2013, more women received PhD degrees than men **for the first time in Israeli universities and in the world.**<sup>x</sup>

## Israel grants its Arab citizens equal rights

- Arab-Israeli citizens are guaranteed civil liberties in Israel.
  - Israel's declaration of Independence grants Israeli Arabs full rights. It says, "...the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions."
  - Israeli law today states that "There shall be no violation of the life, body or dignity of any person".<sup>xi</sup>
- As of 2015, the Israeli-Arab party is the third largest party in the Israeli Knesset (parliament).
- In 2003, Salim Joubran became the first Arab to serve on Israel's Supreme Court.<sup>xii</sup>
- In 2004, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared that every government-run company must have at least 1 Arab citizen of Israel on its Board of Directors.<sup>xiv</sup>
- Israeli-Arabs serve in different parties in Israel's Knesset. Members of the Arab community serve as both Israeli government officials and ambassadors.



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## The LGBTQ community thrives in Israel

- **The Jewish state is the only country in the Middle East that protects LGBTQ individuals from persecution.**
- A 2011 online poll ranked Israel as the world's best LGBTQ travel destination.<sup>xv</sup>
- The Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade consistently ranks as one of the most exciting LGBTQ events in the world.
- By 1992, the Israeli Knesset outlawed discrimination in the workforce on the basis of sexual orientation, which is not outlawed in some US states.<sup>xvi</sup>
  - In 1993, the Israeli military rescinded the last of its laws discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.<sup>xvii</sup>
- In 1998, Michal Eden was Israel's first openly lesbian elected official.<sup>xviii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup>Central Bureau of Statistics, Table 5: Immigrants, by Periodic of Immigration

<sup>ii</sup> Freedom House, Israel, 2014

<sup>iii</sup> Freedom House, Israel, 2012

<sup>iv</sup> Knesset.gov, *Knesset Members*

<sup>v</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2013: Democratic Breakthroughs in the Balance*

<sup>vi</sup> Haaretz, *Israel ranked second most educated country in the world, study shows*, February 1, 2012

<sup>vii</sup> Arutz Sheva, *IDF Most 'Female Friendly' Army in the World*, March 7, 2013

<sup>viii</sup> Jewish Virtual Library, *Women in Israel: In the Israel Defense Forces*.

<sup>ix</sup> New York Times, *Women's Rights in Israel*, January 19, 2012

<sup>x</sup> Universities News, *More Doctorates to Women than Men in Israeli Universities in 2013*, June 8, 2013

<sup>xi</sup> Discover the Networks: A Guide to the Political Left, *Human Rights in Arab Countries*

<sup>xii</sup> Did You Know? Religious Diversity in Israel, Jewish Federations, Embassy of Israel, Washington, D.C.

([http://www.jewishfederations.org/local\\_includes/downloads/21915.pdf](http://www.jewishfederations.org/local_includes/downloads/21915.pdf))

<sup>xiii</sup> C-Span: Video Library, *Salim Joubran*

<sup>xiv</sup> *Israel Government Portal*

<sup>xv</sup> LGBT Rights in Israel & The Middle East (Project of StandWithUs: <http://www.standwithus.com/booklets/lgbt/>)

<sup>xvi</sup> *Anti-Defamation League*, Israel: The Facts.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Anti-Defamation League*, Israel: The Facts.

<sup>xviii</sup> Qualia Folk, *Wigstock Riots*, December 8, 2011