

## **CESCR reviews Israel: No mention of Bill on NGOs' Foreign Funding**

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Surprisingly, the Committee members made no mention of the two recent bills passed early in the same week by the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Legislation on NGOs in Israel. The two bills limit foreign donations to NGOs and human rights groups to approximately 3'900 Euro per year, with an imposed tax of 45 percent. The bills come with the support of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who stated that they are a necessity in light of 'acts of incitement by many organisations operating in the guise of human rights organisations that seek to influence political discourse, the character, and policy of the State of Israel'. The bills have faced national and international opposition. Six Government ministries voted against them, arguing that the documents represent an infringement on Israel's democratic values. The bills would de facto weaken NGOs critical of the coalition government, many of whom receive funds from the European Union and its member States. The EU itself, along with the US, has pressured Prime Minister Netanyahu to reconsider the bills, stating they would harm freedom of association, freedom of speech, and Israel's image as a democracy.

CESCR's review of Israel ended on a note of disagreement, as the Chairperson, Mr Ariranga Govindasamy Pillay, restated that Israel is under legal obligation to report on the human rights situation in the OPT. In addition, the Committee's general affirmation that it saw no improvement since Israel's last review in 2003 emphasises the need for more attention by treaty bodies to following up their own work. The concluding observations will be published on the [OHCHR Web site](#).