

JANUARY 2023

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# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

HOTLINE FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS



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# REFLECTING ON 2022 AND LOOKING FORWARDS

## AYELET OZ'S FAREWELL

January 2023 marks four years since I have joined HRM, back in January 2019. So much has happened since I first set foot at HRM's offices: five elections; thousands of clients – each of them a world of their own; one global pandemic and two of the most horrific wars the world has seen since WWII – the war in Ukraine and the civil war in Ethiopia, both still ongoing, putting millions at harm's way.

Protecting those who flee persecution puts one at the forefront of human sorrow. Many times, the burden feels just too heavy. But at the same time, when I look back at my time as the Executive Director of HRM, I am humbled by our achievements, almost unbelievable considering the fact that HRM is comprised of a staff of less than 20 people. We have utterly reformed the way victims of human trafficking in Israel are handled and brought justice to many; led the Israeli government to provide legal representation to immigration detainees; protected the children and families of the citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo from forced deportation; provided protection to those who came from the Tigray region in Ethiopia and so much more. Without the tireless work of HRM's staff,



so many people would have been left unprotected and stripped off their human dignity.

Looking forward, challenging times lie ahead. The anti-refugee anti-human-rights forces are on the rise worldwide and have obtained considerable political power in Israel in the November 2022 elections. But where there is a fight, there is hope. Where there are people willing to fight for the protection of others, truth and humanity will prevail. Even though I will not be the one leading the Hotline in the battles lying ahead, I will always be a part of it at heart.

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# ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

## 1. ACHIEVING PROTECTION TO CONGOLESE CHILDREN

After the Interior Minister removed the group protection from the Congolese asylum-seeking community, we appealed the decision in court, and achieved protection from deportation to the children of the community and their families.

## 2. INFLUENCING THE ISRAELI POLICY TOWARDS UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

When thousands of Ukrainians fled the war and arrived in Israel, we initiated 12 media items and participated in 5 Knesset discussions to influence the Israeli policy to protect their rights.

## 3. CONDUCTING RECEPTION DAYS DESIGNATED FOR WOMEN

Our CIC (Crisis Intervention Center) team conducts monthly reception days for women in our office and gives para-legal aid in several visits a year in the periphery.

## 4. OBTAINING GOVERNMENT-FUNDED LEGAL AID FOR MIGRANTS IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Following our advocacy, the government has announced it will provide representation to migrant detainees who cannot represent themselves, and that it intends to amend the Legal Aid Bureau Act to include this right.

## 5. RELEASING MIGRANTS FROM ILLEGAL HANDCUFFING

Following a complaint we filed to the Minister of Internal Security and media attention we initiated, the Israel Prison Service published a directive that every detainee brought before the immigration detention review tribunal will be completely released from handcuffs.

## 6. INCREASING THE RECOGNITION OF SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Following our many years of activity, today 74% of the victims of human trafficking who ask for protection are recognized by the state.



## **7. PUBLISHING A REPORT ABOUT THE LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES**

We published a report comparing Israel's policies with those of ten Western countries. We found that if the children of asylum seekers in Israel had lived in any of the other ten countries for the same length of time as they have resided in Israel, they would have already been entitled to citizenship or permanent residency.

## **8. PUBLISHING THE "NOTHING WILL EVER BE ENOUGH" REPORT**

We published, together with HIAS Israel, a report analyzing the way Eritrean asylum requests are being considered and the main flaws that lead to their overwhelming rejection rate.

## **9. DETENTION OF MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ISRAEL: ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

We published our annual report that reveals two cases in which migrants testified before the Detention Review Tribunal that they were held in Israel in slavery-like conditions, yet they were deported without any further investigation of their cases.

## **10. PUBLISHING THE "DOUBLE VULNERABILITY" REPORT**

We published the report "Double vulnerability: gender vulnerability of women and LGBTQI refugees and migrants in the Israeli asylum and immigration system"

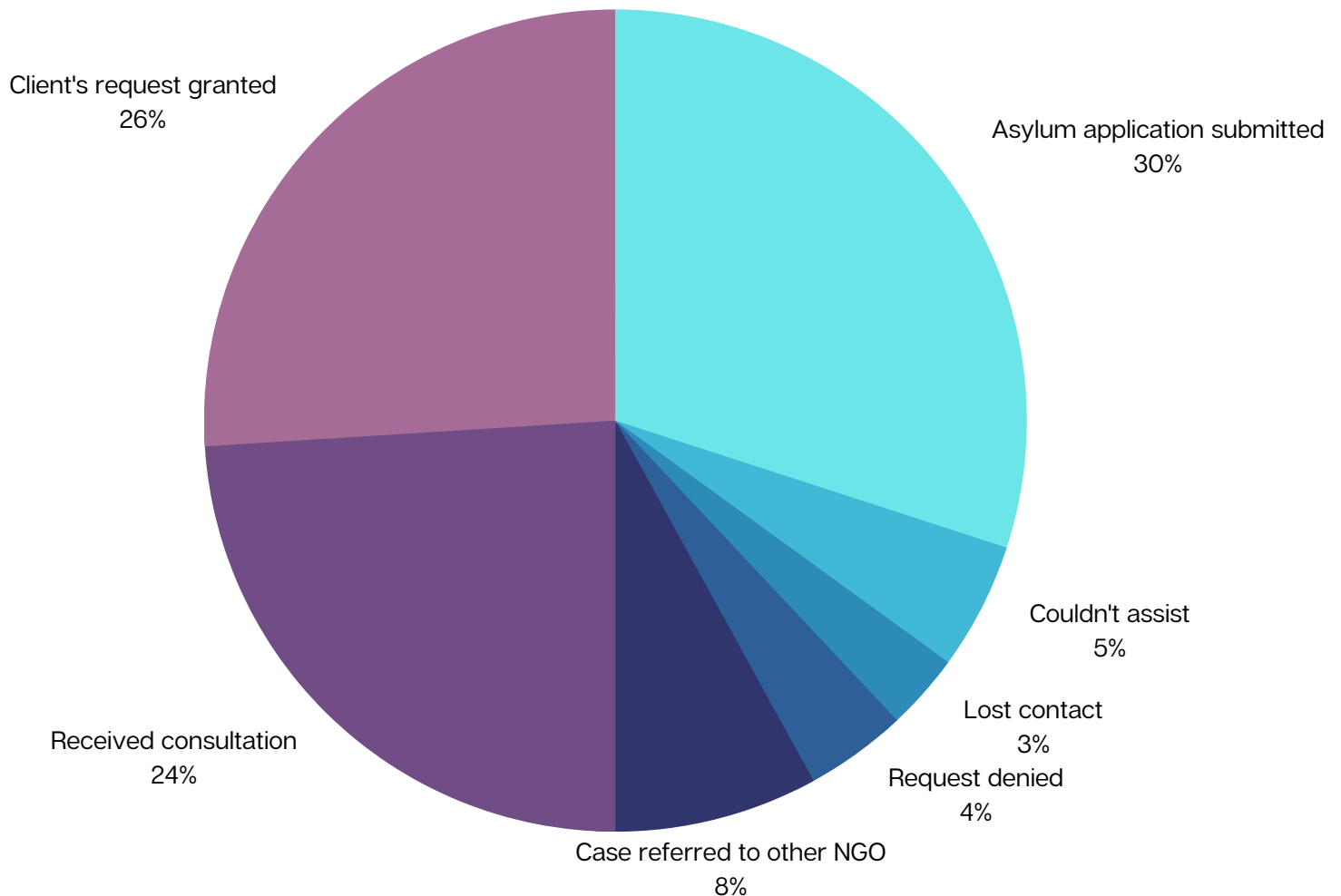
## **11. PROMOTING REFUGEES' SELF REPRESENTATION**

We promoted the participation of asylum seekers in discussions in the Knesset and in the media. We also conducted a media and lobbying workshop for 10 asylum seekers. They acquired tools and specialized in lobbying work, writing columns for publication in the press, conducting media interviews and giving lectures and tours to groups from the Israeli public.

# HRM IN NUMBERS

IN ONE YEAR WE...

## CLIENT CASES: 89% SUCCESS



Assisted 2,548 clients

1,105 clients face-to-face  
1,443 clients via WhatsApp

Assisted 178 clients with  
asylum requests

Assisted 82 clients in filling asylum  
requests

Prepared 77 clients for asylum  
interviews

Escorted 9 vulnerable clients to asylum  
interviews

Assisted 10 clients to reopen their  
asylum cases

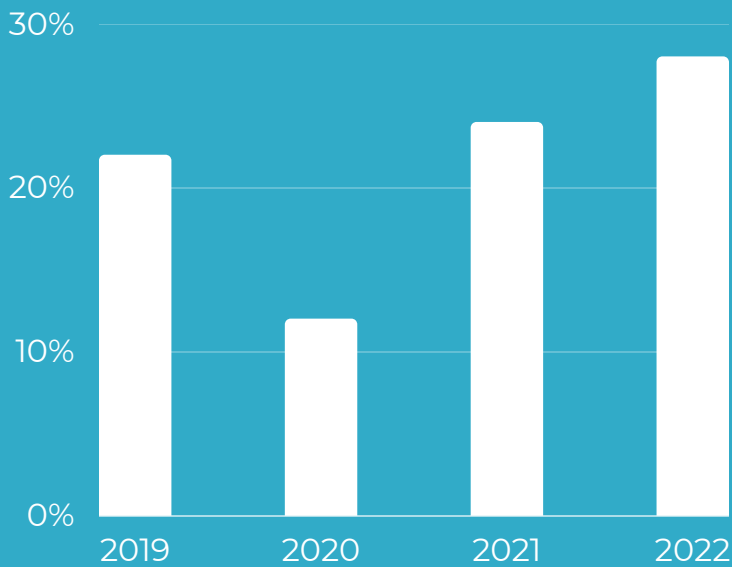


# WOMEN CLIENTS

In 2022, 28% of our clients were women

Out of the 1,105 face-to-face clients, 306 were women

An increase in percentage of women we assisted since 2019



We held 6 reception days designated for women in Tel Aviv and the Periphery

- >> In Eilat (27.2) we assisted 47 women and identified 2 survivors of tortures
- >> In Haifa (10.5) we assisted 40 women
- >> In Haifa (20.9) we assisted 15 women and identified 3 survivors of human trafficking





# Initiated 50 legal interventions

18 individual cases

32 principal cases



## Raised awareness and conducted trainings

We conducted 11 trainings for NGOs, lawyers and governments officials

We gave 32 lectures and tours to hundreds of people about refugees' rights in Israel

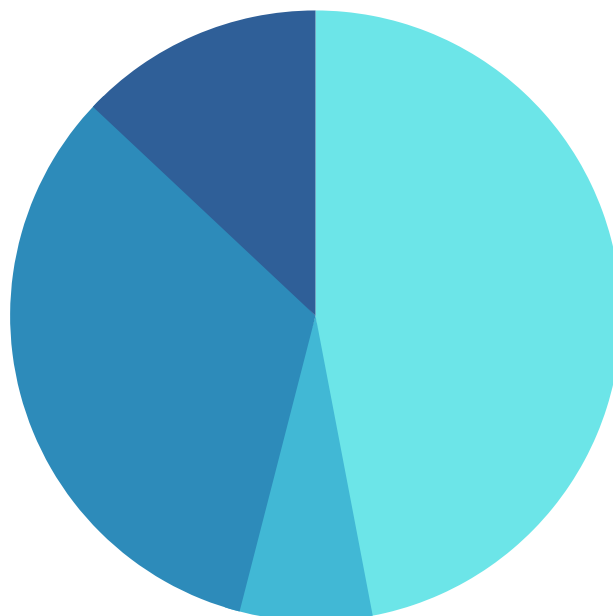
## SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Transferred to a shelter for survivors of human trafficking

13%

Request was not submitted

33%



Request approved

47%

Request for formal recognition rejected

7%



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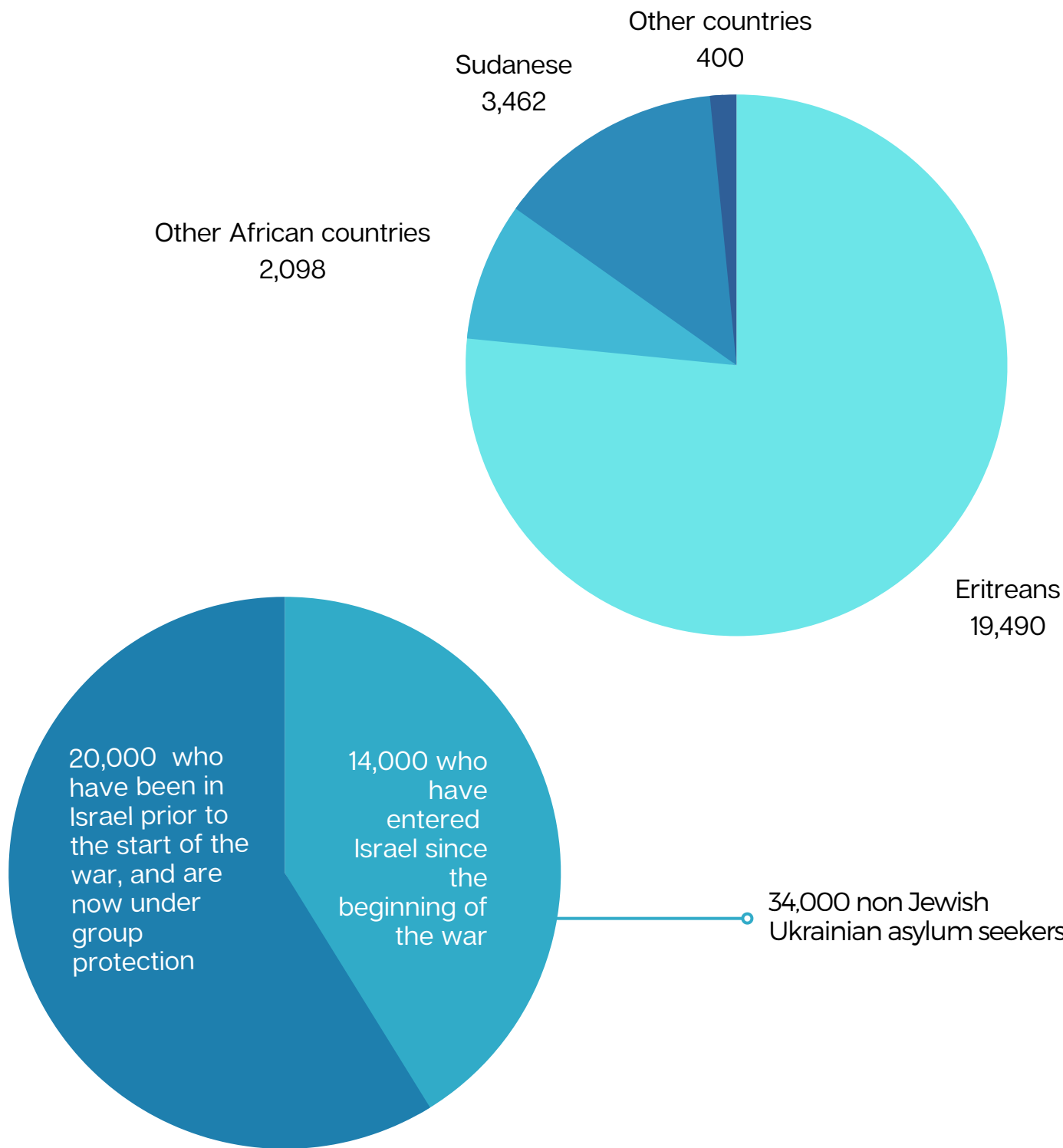
# ASYLUM SEEKERS' SITUATION IN ISRAEL TODAY AND THE THREAT OF THE INCOMING COALITION

*Despite the fact that over a decade has passed since asylum seekers have started entering Israel from the Southern border, the legal and social environment for asylum seekers in Israel still falls short of establishing an internationally acceptable asylum system. Israel has not adopted any national refugee legislation; the recognition rate for refugees is well below 1%; there is no time limit for deciding asylum requests; no coherent group protection policy; and in late June 2022, the asylum seekers' right to work in Israel was severely limited. Moreover, the incoming coalition, founded following the November 2022 elections, is composed mainly of right-wing parties who are antagonistic to refugees' rights, and have announced their intention to forcefully deport refugees, promote mass detention of asylum seekers, and risk the basic livelihood of refugees who have been living in Israel for years.*

2022 was marked by recurring emergencies which affected both the lives of asylum seekers, as well as the work of the Hotline itself. **In February**, Russia invaded Ukraine, and tens of thousands of refugees have asked for asylum in Israel. **In April**, Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked announced the removal of group protection for citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), putting men, women, and children at risk of forced deportation, after being protected by Israel for over two decades. **In June**, Minister Shaked published a procedure which severely limits the right to work for all asylum seekers in Israel, putting at risk their basic livelihood. **In November**, the election results led to the creation of Israel's most right-wing government ever, composed of several prominent anti-refugee figures, who have already announced their intention to promote mass deportation and mass detention of refugees and migrants and to eliminate the (very limited) protection given to refugees in Israel today. **In November**, the government decided to immediately change its ongoing policy, and required asylum seekers to renew their permits in person, causing inhuman lines for hours a day in another attempt to make the lives of asylum seekers in Israel intolerable.

Asylum seekers in Israel: statistics

According to the Immigration Authority's report (October 2022) in Israel there are currently **25,450** asylum seekers (*not including Sudanese asylum seekers who received a temporary residence visa (A5), nor Ukrainians refugees who fled the war*). We estimate there are **8,000** children in addition.



# 2022: A YEAR OF TURMOIL

## FEBRUARY 2022: ENSURING SAFETY FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

*On February 24, Russia invaded Ukraine, causing the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since WWII, with close to 8 million refugees. Over 26,000 non-Jewish Ukrainian refugees entered Israel since the beginning of the war, and currently residing in Israel are roughly 14,000 non-Jewish Ukrainians who have entered since the war began and 15,000 Ukrainians who were in Israel prior the invasion and are currently residing in Israel under a group protection policy.*

Since the beginning of the war, HRM took a leading part in the design of Israel's policies towards the rights of war refugees from Ukraine. Together with fellow NGOs, we have promoted advocacy, lobby, and media work to make sure Israel provides protection and basic rights to those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Within the first month of the war, we initiated 12 media items and participated in 5 Knesset sessions regarding the rights given to Ukrainian refugees. We have managed to push Israel to set [a non-exclusion policy for Ukrainians](#) and to allow all Ukrainians [to work legally](#). But as Israel does not have a clear group protection policy (read [Dr. Ayelet Oz's op-ed](#) on the matter), the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Israel is constantly deteriorating, as refugees lack basic means of livelihood.



*A tweet by MK Ibtisam Mara'ana from a visit she conducted at the facility*



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# APRIL 2022: PROTECTING FAMILIES IN THE CONGOLESE COMMUNITY FROM FORCED DEPORTATION

*On April 5, 2022, Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked announced the removal of group protection for citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) which they have held since 2003.*

Immediately after the [announcement](#), we reached out to the Congolese community in Israel (numbering about 400 people, including 130 women and 50 children), explaining the Minister's message. On April 12, we held an open meeting at a community church, attended by several dozen people, in which we shared our plans moving forward.

On May 23, We initiated a discussion in the Knesset's Interior Committee, in which two Congolese asylum seekers, [Tonton](#) Amisi Kalupa and [Patrick](#) Kapuya Tshiuma called the Knesset to oppose the decision. At the end of the hearing, the Interior Committee called on the Interior Minister to reverse her decision. On May 3rd, we filed [a petition](#), together with HIAS Israel and in the name of other NGOs, to the Jerusalem District Court. While the court did not cancel the decision, following the petition the government decided to exempt from its decision all of the community's children and their families. We will continue to assist all members of the Congolese community.



*From left to right: Shani Bar Tuvia of the Refugee Forum, Ayelet Oz, Tonton Amisi Kalupa, and Patrick Kapuya Tshiuma at the Knesset hearing*

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## JUNE 2022: A DIRE THREAT TO ASYLUM SEEKERS' LIVELIHOOD

*At the end of June, Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked announced a new regulation: asylum seekers will be barred from most employment opportunities in all major cities in Israel. Under the new regulations, asylum seekers are forbidden from working in 17 cities unless they work in construction, agriculture, institutional caregiving, hotels or restaurants.*

This decision will push many to poverty and will open a door for employers to violate the rights of the asylum seekers who will not have a choice but to continue working in these cities illegally. In July, we and other refugee organizations issued a petition, led by Kav LaOved, requesting the cancellation of the geographic restrictions procedure. The petition is still pending.

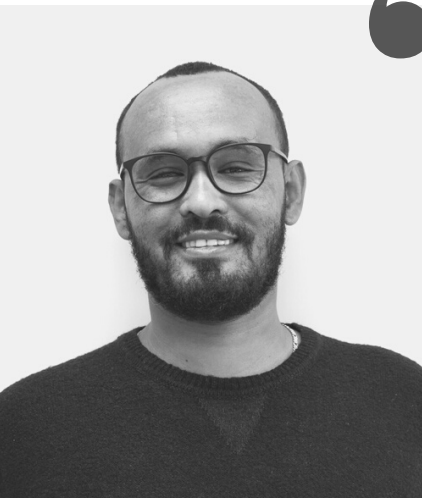
## NOVEMBER 2022: INTOLERABLE LINES AT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S OFFICES

*For over a decade, the Israeli policy towards asylum seekers has been “making their lives unbearable” to make them leave Israel “voluntarily,” as stated by the former Interior Minister Eli Yishai. As we have shown over the years, one of the means the Immigration Authority uses is recurring bureaucratic hurdles that obstruct the daily lives of asylum seekers and cause despair (Read here [“Languishing in Line”](#) (2018) and [“Trapped in Limbo”](#) (2020)).*

On November 23, the Immigration Authority decided to stop the automatic renewal of asylum seekers' permits which has been going on for months, and required that asylum seekers would immediately return to extend their visas in person. No necessary preparations were put in place for this unexpected change of policy, which has caused mayhem in the entire community. In the last two months of 2022, we have received hundreds of complaints from asylum seekers that their visa has expired, and as they could not renew it, it cost them their job. In an attempt to enter the facility, every morning, from 4:00 am, there is a long line of people in front of the bureau, but most asylum seekers still go back empty-handed (read the [Haaretz article](#) (HE)).



During December, our Crisis Intervention Center (CIC) team visited the Bnei Brak bureau to collect testimonies, monitor, and document the number of people standing there outside without protection from the rain, no drinking facility, and only a few chemical toilets.



“

*Kibrom Twelde, one of our CIC coordinators, explains that because of this difficulty to renew the visas, “employers hesitate before they recruit asylum seekers, single mothers come to the Bnei Brak bureau one day after another, again and again. The guards of the bureau refer them to an email address to make an appointment, but according to the Immigration Authority’s response, we understood that one cannot make an appointment via email.”*

”

On December 26, we submitted [a petition](#) to the Central District Court, with HIAS Israel and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), against the Population and Immigration Authority, in order to find an immediate solution to this situation. Dozens of community members came to the court hearing in the case, and we were touched to read [the comments of the members of the asylum community](#) posted in regards to our appeal, such as: “We appreciate and we are thankful for your work and efforts for the community and we hope you will continue to help us until there is a solution”.



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## DECEMBER 2022: THE FORMATION OF AN ANTI-HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

*After nearly four years of political deadlock and five elections, on December 29 Israel swore in the most right-wing government in its history. The coalition agreements of the right-wing religious parties include draconian anti-refugee and anti-human rights clauses, that seek to harm the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Israel.*

The Likud signed coalition agreements with the Religious Zionism and Otzma Yehudit ("Jewish Power") parties that call for the next government to promote a new Immigration Basic Law that would allow: 1) Unlimited incarceration of asylum seekers; 2) Deny foreigners access to justice; 3) Allow the state to withhold the money of refugees and migrants; 4) Limit their movement inside Israel. If passed, this law would be even worse than the anti-infiltration laws we have seen in previous years. In addition, the agreements ban the government from joining the Istanbul Convention that details the actions a state should take to fight violence against women and domestic violence. In 2023, we will collaborate with partner organizations to fight those anti-democratic policies.



*A demonstration in Tel Aviv against the new government (14.01.22)*

# PROJECTS 2022

## PROTECTING MIGRANTS' RIGHTS IN DETENTION

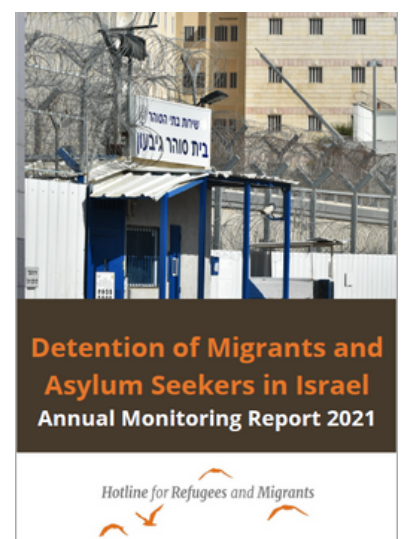
*As the only NGO with access to immigration detention facilities, HRM plays a vital role in protecting the rights of immigration detainees in Israel. Our constant advocacy to create better safeguards for the rights of migrants in detention, based on our 20 years of experience in representing immigration detainees in Israel, has proven successful, and in 2022, we have marked a milestone for which we have been advocating since 2015: providing government-funded legal representation to immigration detainees who cannot represent themselves.*

Following our advocacy, in November 2022, the government has formally announced to the Supreme Court that it will provide representation to immigration detainees who cannot represent themselves, and that it intends to amend the Legal Aid Bureau Act to include this right. We will continue to closely monitor the transcripts of the Detention Review Tribunal, to make sure that the rights of all prisoners are preserved.

Another milestone we have achieved is the elimination of illegal handcuffing of immigration detainees. In several of our visits to the Givon Immigration Detention facility, we witnessed two migrant women handcuffed to each other. We filed an immediate complaint to the Minister of Internal Security and [initiated media attention](#). Following our letter, Israel Prison Services announced that detainees should not be restrained illegally, and the Head of the Detention Review Tribunal, adjudicator, Yoav Bar Lev, has issued a directive that every detainee brought before the tribunal must be immediately released from handcuffs.

*In 2022, we published the seventh annual monitoring report for 2021: "Detention of Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Israel".*

The report reveals at least two cases in which migrants testified before the Detention Review Tribunal that they were held in Israel in slavery-like conditions, yet they were still deported without any further investigation of their cases. The report also reveals that during 2021 migrants were held for months in unnecessary detention only due to Covid-related difficulties in arranging flights ([Read the full report](#) (EN)).



# YULIA'S STORY

Yulia (pseudonym) escaped her homeland, a former Soviet Union country, after she was persecuted on political grounds. HRM staff met Yulia in prison, after the Ministry of Interior has repeatedly tried to deport her, although her asylum case was still open.

Tali Bromberg, the CIC coordinator, and attorney Inbar Barel, the manager of our legal department, rushed to the prison to meet Yulia. After hearing her full story, they submitted an urgent request for her release. After two weeks, the court ruled that she must be released. Despite the court's ruling, the Immigration Authority delayed her release and ordered a flight back to her home country for the same evening! We insisted that Yulia must be released according to the court's decision, and after several nerve-wracking hours – she was finally released! After her release, we continued the legal battle for her recognition as a refugee. After over a year and a half of legal proceedings, during which Yulia was forbidden from working and became homeless, the district court ordered the government to reassess her case in light of the deteriorating protection of human rights in her home country. Yulia's asylum application was reopened, and she received a temporary protection visa which allows her to work and to sustain herself.



*Tali Bromberg, Inbar Barel and Ayelet Oz representing Yulia in Court.  
In order to protect Yulia's safety, she was not photographed.*



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# PROTECTING ASYLUM-SEEKING WOMEN

## ***Reaching out to women in the periphery and Tel Aviv***

*HRM has been assisting migrant women and protecting their rights for over 20 years. As women are especially vulnerable, we have made it our goal to reach as many women as possible. In 2022, 28% of our CIC clients were women – an increase of 4% in comparison to 2021 – and 51% of our clients in legal proceedings.*

In 2022 we started a project of conducting designated reception hours for women only – both in our office in Tel Aviv and in cities in the periphery. In February, our CIC staff went for a two-day visit to Eilat, where they assisted 32 women; in May and September, our team held reception days in Haifa, assisted 55 women in total, and identified 6 victims of human trafficking. By giving special attention to women we discovered, for example, that many women did not know they need to submit individual asylum applications, separate from their husbands', in order to qualify for protection.

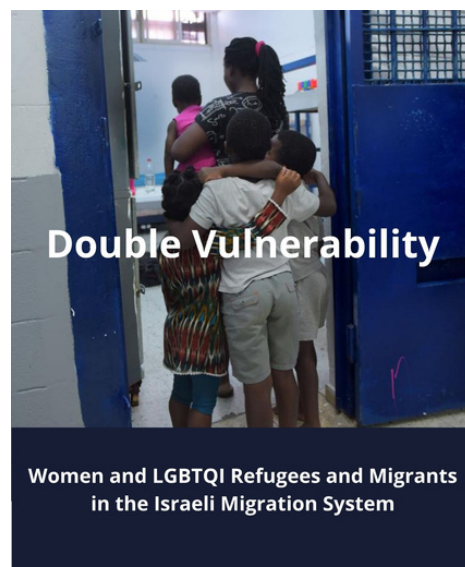
To create long term impact, in our visits to the periphery, our CIC team also trained teams of relevant front-line organizations, communities, and activists. We taught our colleagues how to identify victims of human trafficking, and what rights do asylum seekers in Israel have. Following our trainings, we kept in touch with the relevant bodies, and provided counseling and assistance as needed. Another long-term impact we achieved through this project is building strong relationships with asylum-seeking communities throughout Israel, who do not have similar access to NGOs as those in central Israel.



### ***Publishing the report “Double vulnerability: gender vulnerability of women and LGBTQI refugees and migrants in the Israeli asylum and immigration system”***

*Women and LGBT people face heightened vulnerability even within the disempowered populations of refugees and asylum seekers.*

We regularly face clients who suffered sexual and gender-based violence and harassment – be it from abusers at the county of origin, state officials, the Israeli public or other members of the community. In December 2022, we completed (and will publish soon) a report detailing the required policy and procedure changes needed in order to protect those vulnerable groups.



Hotline for Refugees and Migrants

## **PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

### ***Identifying new trends of human trafficking***

*For over 20 years, HRM has been identifying new trends of human trafficking in Israel, publishing annual reports and alerting the authorities about them. In 2022, we identified an alarming trend of trafficking women from the Horn of Africa to Jordan and the West Bank.*

During 2022, we identified 6 women who arrived in Israel through a trafficking route we identified – from the Horn of Africa to Jordan, and then to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and eventually to Israel. We were the first to alert the government about this new phenomenon, and we continue to assist the survivors and work closely with the government to stop this trafficking route. Overall, this year, we identified 15 survivors of human trafficking, torture, and work in slavery conditions. For 10 of them, we submitted a request to be formally recognized by the state as such so they can receive adequate benefits and rights. 9 of the 10 received a formal recognition and/or were transferred to designated shelters. This percentage (90%) is higher than the national percentage of formal recognition of survivors of human trafficking (74%).

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## **Monitoring the implementation of the National Program to fight human trafficking in Israel**

*In September 2022, the government published decision 1862, to promote a multi-year national plan to eradicate trafficking in persons, implementing many of HRM's recommendations.*

HRM took an active part in the government-NGOs teams that have met throughout 2021, which resulted in the main recommendations in the decision. Two of our most important recommendations, adopted by the government, were a reform to the procedure governing the formal recognition of trafficking victims as such and its transfer to a committee led by the Ministry of Justice; and a reform in the rehabilitative services provided to survivors. The implementation of the national plan will begin in 2023, and HRM will closely monitor the implementation process, while also continuing to assist and represent individual victims as it has done throughout the last 20 years.

## **First-ever publication of a national report by the Anti-Trafficking Unit**

*Until December 2022, Israel has never publicly published its internal annual report about the government's efforts to fight human trafficking.*

For three years we have fought to make this internal report visible to the public, and following a Freedom of Information petition we have filed in March 2022, the government was forced to publish this information. Following the petition, in December 2022, the government published its first-ever public report on the matter, including the main statistics for the last five years. According to the report (read here, HE), in 2022, 74% of the applications filed by people to be formally recognized as survivors of human trafficking were approved. The publication of the report as well as the high recognition rate demonstrate the huge impact HRM's constant work and advocacy achieved in this field.





## DESTA'S STORY

Desta (pseudonym) was persecuted during the ongoing civil war in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. After being arrested twice, she decided to leave her country. She arrived in Jordan as a domestic worker, and was made a maid in a household. The family that employed her, not only overworked her in long hours without any compensation, but also forced her to satisfy the sexual desires of the men in the family. After five months, the family allowed Desta to contact the agency that brought her to Jordan, and representatives of the agency came to collect her. The agency did not protect her, but transferred her to the West Bank where she was held in slavery conditions and was sexually abused. After seven months Desta finally managed to escape, but as a statusless woman with no identification documents, no means of communication and no knowledge of the Arabic language, she fell victim once again to three men who identified themselves as police officers. She then lost consciousness and therefore does not know how she got to Israel.

In Israel, a woman found her bleeding and injured and brought her to a church in Jerusalem, where they referred her to us. In October, Desta came to us injured and hungry. On the same day we transferred her to a shelter for survivors of human trafficking. The shelter took her to the hospital to receive medical treatment for survivors of sexual abuse, and she now stays at the shelter and she finally receives the protection and assistance she deserves.



# SASHA'S STORY

Sasha (pseudonym) came to Israel after being persecuted in her home country for being a trans woman. In order to survive, she engaged in sex work, and fell victim to sex trafficking by brothel owners in Israel. After several years, she fled her captures and arrived at a shelter for trans women. This is where we met her, after the shelter contacted us. We have assisted Sasha to be recognized as a victim of human trafficking, and move to a rehabilitative shelter. She is now rebuilding her life, and hopes to assist the police in bringing her abusers to justice.



© Tomer Applebaum

# SALACH'S STORY

Salach (pseudonym) was sent to work as a camel shepherd by his father when he was only 7 years old. He was forced to work throughout his entire adolescence without getting paid, with no access to healthcare, and while being subject to mental and physical abuse by his employers. As an adult, he managed to flee his servitude and reach Israel. After we assisted him in filing for asylum and became aware of his story, we also helped him to file for recognition as a victim of human trafficking. He was formally recognized as a victim by the police, but despite his recognition, the ministry of the interior has still rejected his asylum request. We assisted him in obtaining legal representation from the Legal Aid Bureau so that he could appeal the rejection.

# SOLOMON'S STORY

Solomon (pseudonym) was trafficked by smugglers and was held in captivity for three months in the torture camps in Sinai. He was held in chains, threatened, beaten and starved. We have applied in Solomon's name to the Police Task Force on Trafficking, so that he would be formally recognized as a victim of human trafficking, and receive the rehabilitative services he direly needs. The police not only refused to recognize him, but they went even further and refused to even interview him to hear his testimony firsthand. Therefore, we have filed a petition to the Supreme Court, to force the police to interview him. After the filing of our petition, the government has retracted from its refusal, and have invited Solomon for an interview. Sadly, the police officer who interviewed him has not been sensitive to his vulnerability as a trauma survivor and has minimized many of the elements of his story. Solomon experienced mental distress after the interview, and to add insult to injury, his request was denied, based on scandalous arguments, such as holding against him the fact that he was given soup while in captivity, or that he was shackled in chains "only partially". Of course, we did not accept this result, and still continue to fight for justice for Solomon and all the survivors of the torture camps. As before, we will go all the way up to the Supreme Court, if needed.



# ADDRESSING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

Nearly 8,000 children have been born and raised in Israel to asylum-seeker parents. These children are educated in the Israeli education system, their primary language is Hebrew, and their culture is Israeli, but they have no pathway to status in Israel, and they live without security, stability, or a genuine ability to plan for their futures. Studies show that this instability and the ongoing threat of deportation severely impair their development. HRM is determined to change this reality. In 2022, we have put forward the topic in the Knesset, the media, and with the Israeli public.

On World Refugee Day, June 20, we published a research report criticizing the way Israel treats children of asylum seekers. The report compares Israel's policies with those of ten other countries and shows that if the children of asylum seekers in Israel had lived in almost any other democratic country, they would have already been entitled to citizenship or permanent residency.

We have presented the report in a special Knesset hearing which called on the government to grant permanent status to those children. Teenage asylum-seeking girls and parents presented their stories in the hearing (see [here](#) two of the speakers in the Knesset), and the report and the hearing attracted [significant media attention](#).

Aranshi Fithawi, an asylum-seeking teenager, has published [a follow-up op-ed](#) in "At" magazine (HE) about her life in Israel as a daughter of asylum seekers from Eritrea.

Arsema Teame speaking in the Knesset







*Emmanuel Lam gives a speech on the opening evening of his exhibition*

*To engage the Israeli public to support our fight for the rights of children of asylum seekers, we also organized [an art exhibition](#) on World Refugee Day, presenting photographs by the talented Emmanuel Lam (27), an asylum seeker from South Sudan who arrived in Israel with his mother and sibling when he was 12 years old. In the exhibition, he presented pictures of his friends – all of whom grew up in Israel as children of migrants and asylum seekers. Thousands of people visited the exhibition that was presented in the Dizengoff Center in Tel Aviv. The exhibition was held in collaboration with Elifelet, ARDC, and UNHCR, and curated by Dr. Tal Frenkel Alroy.*

*>> [Watch here](#) the exhibition's beautiful video clip prepared by Filmon Berhe, Eritrean asylum seeker filmmaker.*

## LISA'S STORY

Lisa (pseudonym) came to us with her two teenage daughters. She has told us that as a girl she was forced to undergo female genital mutilation, and she was terrified that if deported, her girls would face a similar fate. We have sent a request to reopen her asylum case, after a decade in which it was closed, supporting our request with the results of a medical examination proving her story. The Refugee Status Determination Unit accepted our request and ordered the reopening of her asylum case. She received a visa that allows her for the time being to work and earn a living in Israel, without fear of deportation.



# PROMOTING REFUGEE SELF-REPRESENTATION

*During 2021-2022 we developed and conducted a media and lobbying workshop for new leaders of the asylum seeker community.*

In 2022, the graduates of the workshop practiced their newfound skills by meeting with Members of Knesset, writing op-eds, giving lectures to the Israeli public, and more.

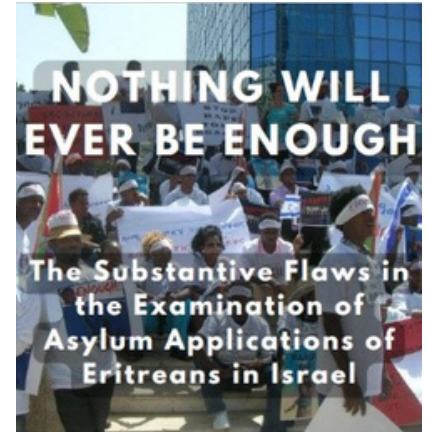
>> [Watch here](#) Kibrom Twelde speaks at the UNHCR's event for World Refugee Day about the asylum seekers' mental strength (HE).



## FIGHTING FOR ERITREAN ASYLUM SEEKERS

*The majority of asylum seekers in Israel are Eritrean, who are recognized as refugees in high numbers worldwide (an average 80% recognition rate in EU countries), but in Israel, the vast majority of Eritreans' asylum requests are denied (the recognition rate falls below 0.5%).*

In addition to our ongoing legal cases, on June 30 we published, together with HIAS Israel, [a report](#) analyzing the way Eritrean asylum requests are being considered and the main flaws that lead to the overwhelming rejection rate. The report will serve as a reference for attorneys representing Eritrean asylum seekers, judges, international bodies, and decision-makers.



**HIAS**  
Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.

Hotline for Refugees and Migrants

## PROTECTING STATUS-LESS PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE CLIMATE CRISIS

*Together with our partners, Physicians for Human Rights (PHRI) and ASSAF - Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel, we participated in the President's Climate Forum, headed by former MK Dov Hanin.*

We defined the special needs of the migrants and refugees in a climate crisis in order for the authorities to take this population into consideration as well (read more about the forum and our initiatives [here](#)).



*From left to right: Sigal Rozen (HRM), Orly Levinson-Sela (ASSAF), and Zoe Gutzeit (PHRI)*



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## ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

**In September** we initiated our second-ever crowdfunding campaign and raised over one million Shekels! We are thankful to you – our donors and supporters!

**On July 19 and 25**, we held a two-day workshop, led by a psychologist and a social worker, to build the team's capacity to deal with secondary trauma and avoid burnout.

**In August** we took a day off and participated in a cooking workshop of Colombian food. It was great to enjoy some quality time together in this stressful year.





**Asmait Merhatsion**, a member of our CIC team, has left HRM as she moved to Canada with her family. We look forward to seeing all she accomplishes in her future endeavors. She was replaced by **Netsnet Tsegay**, an Eritrean asylum seeker and a mother of three. We welcome Netsnet warmly to our team!

In addition, our resource development department has a new manager – **Naomi Frid** – who worked before at Elifelet and Wahat al Salam – Neve Shalom. She joins Hamutal Sadan, who continues her work as the coordinator in the department.

Lastly, we would like to thank **Dr. Ayelet Oz**, our Executive director, for her work in the last four years, in which she led HRM with professionalism and empathy. She guided our way through difficult times and knew how to support and direct all the departments in an admirable way. We wish Ayelet great success in her new path and know that no matter where she goes, she will be a huge asset.

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This year, we have lost two close friends of HRM. Yuval Frenkel, Amigur's CEO and a supporter of the HRM, and Dr. Tally Kritzman-Amir, a refugee law scholar and an activist. We mourn their passing, and we send our condolences to their families.



