

# Hotline for Migrant Workers Annual Report 2012



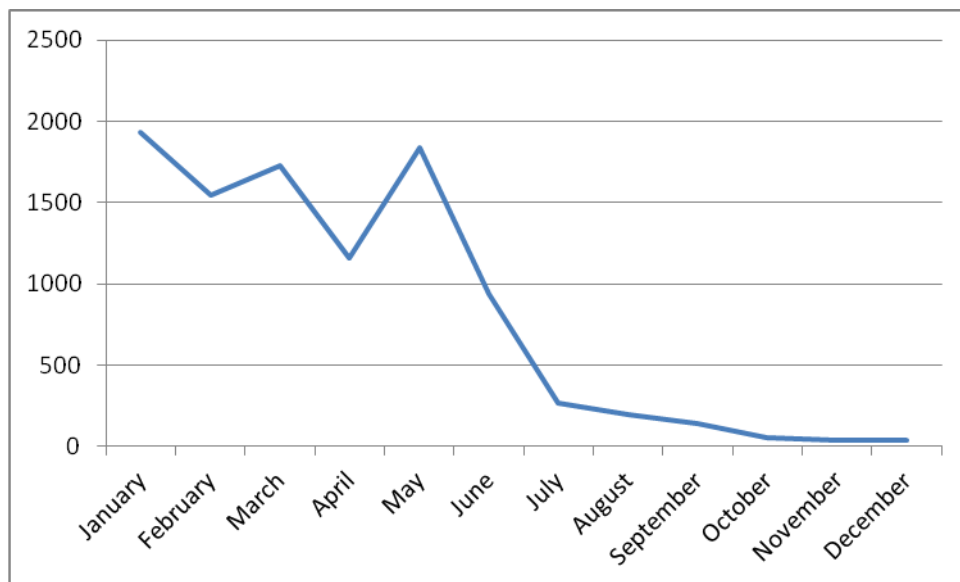
# I. Developments in 2012

## A. Refugees and Asylum Seekers

### 1. Facts and Figures

According to figures published by the Population and Immigration Authority, there were about 55,000 asylum seekers residing in Israel at the end of 2012. 66% of them are Eritreans, while 25% of them are Sudanese. The numbers of asylum seekers entering Israel has declined dramatically in 2012:

Unauthorized Entrants via the Israeli-Egyptian Border in 2012



Source: Population and Immigration Authority

While 1,931 asylum seekers reached Israel via the Egyptian border in January 2012, numbers of new entrees started to decline in May, and in December 2012 only 36 individuals made it across the border. This number further declined in 2013.

The decline of asylum seekers reaching Israel is closely related to the measures the government adapted to prevent unauthorized entry. Most importantly, Israel has almost completed a fence along the border with Egypt. In the Eilat area almost 230km of fence have been raised and only about 10

more kilometers were slated to be constructed as of April 2013. The fortified border has rendered reaching Israel virtually impossible for refugees crossing the Sinai, many of which just escaped the notorious torture camps in the desert. This new reality has led to dramatic scenes at the border. In one highly publicized incident in September, a group of 21 Eritreans was stuck at the fence for a week in the scorching heat – on Israeli territory but on the southern side of the barrier. In the end, only two women and a 14-year-old boy were allowed entry, while all the others were forced back into Egypt. This case received media attention, but the HMW is aware of dozens of other cases in which asylum seekers were denied entry into Israel. In July, the army detained about 40 Eritreans just inside Israeli territory and then forcibly returned them to Egypt, where they face the threat of arrest and deportation.



## 2. Government Program to “Combat Illegal Infiltration”

The border fence is part of a wider government program to “combat illegal infiltration”, which has been implemented since late 2011 and for which 760 Million NIS have been allocated. The program encompasses the construction of the border fence and new detention facilities, as well as a number of new laws and amendments currently at various stages of the legislative process, including the amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law, and stricter enforcement measures.

**Interior Minister Eli Yishai minces no words to explain the purpose of the program:**

“I have asked the Treasury for a budget increase to build more detention facilities, and until I can deport them I'll lock them up to make their lives miserable.”

Ynet, 16.08.12

Accordingly, the existing immigration detention facilities were expanded and construction of a new prison, Nahal Ravid, originally meant to house up to 10,000 individuals, began in 2012. Since the

sharp drop in numbers of new arrivals construction has been halted and in June 2013 the tent city at Nahal Ravid was dismantled.



### Campaign: Stop the Detention of Refugees Now



The *Hotline for Migrant Workers*, *Amnesty International Israel* and *Assaf – Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel* cooperated to draw attention to the long-term detention of asylum seekers under the Anti-Infiltration Law.

As part of our campaign we took a group of 35 bloggers and journalists on an informational tour to the detention facilities in southern Israel, as well as to the construction site of the planned new facility and the fence at the Israeli border. The tour resulted in 8 media items.

### Amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law

The most important part of the government program is the amended Anti-Infiltration Law, which was passed on January 9, 2012 and has been enforced since June 2012. Under the law, all men, women and children who cross Israel's border without authorization can be held in detention without a trial for three years. Citizens of "enemy states", such as Sudan, can be held indefinitely. The law is clearly intended to deter asylum seekers from trying to reach Israel and paints "infiltrators" as a security threat instead of as refugees in need of protection.

#### Did you know?

The **Anti-Infiltration Law** makes **no special provisions for children**. They are held in detention with their parents without adequate play and education facilities. According to figures provided by UNHCR Israel, 356 migrant children were detained for various length of time in 2012. In addition, 469 unaccompanied minors were held in detention during the year.

The Immigration Detention Tribunal is entitled to release detainees only under "exceptional circumstance". In addition, the law allows for the release of asylum seekers if the authorities have not begun to examine their asylum requests within three months of filing the application, or if no answer to an asylum request has been received within nine months.



## Arresting Asylum Seekers under the Criminal Procedure

Although the amended Anti-Infiltration Law allows for the detention of everyone that has crossed Israel's borders without authorization, the authorities so far have chosen not to arrest the tens of thousands of African migrants already in the country. However, an official procedure in place since September 24, 2012 has allowed the Immigration Authority to arrest and detain refugees suspected of criminal offenses or involved in criminal activity under the Anti-Infiltration Law. As soon as the police close an investigation, the suspect is being transferred to the custody of the Immigration Authority, which can detain him without time limitations, even if all charges have been dropped. Since the implementation of this procedure, hundreds of refugees have been arrested and will remain in detention unless they obtain legal representation.

### Did you know?

In the course of 2012, **four legislative amendments** were introduced in the Knesset that **severely curtail the rights of asylum seekers** in Israel. These amendments include proposals that would criminalize employing, providing shelter and transporting asylum seekers; that would forbid asylum seekers to send money abroad; and that would allow appealing against a deportation order only from outside Israel.

## Hotline for Migrant Workers Prevented from Accessing Immigration Detention

One of the most important parts of the HMW's core work consists of our regular visits to immigration detention. For years, we have been the only Israeli organization with access to detained migrants. We are their life line to the outside world; we provide them with information, represent them in the



Immigration Detention Tribunal, offer legal advice and help them realize their rights. Despite this unique and important position, the Prison Authority, suddenly and without prior notice, prevented HMW staff and volunteers to enter Saharonim and Kziot Prisons, the largest facilities, in June. Only after we petitioned court in August, were we able to resume our visits

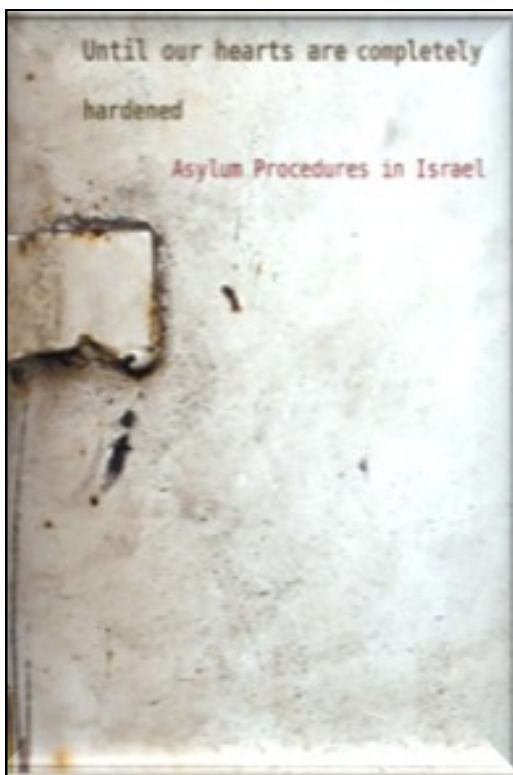
– albeit in a much more restricted format. In Saharonim and Kziot, we can now only represent those that have signed a power of attorney. In Givon Prison, where

many migrant workers are detained, changes were much more drastic. Until June we had been able to visit the wings and talk freely with all detainees in the common area. Now, the same format as in Saharonim and Kziot also applies in Givon.

### 3. Refugee Status Determination

Asking for asylum in Israel remains exceedingly difficult and refugee recognition rates are still below 1%. Until the implementation of the Anti-Infiltration Law, Sudanese and Eritrean nationals had automatically received a status the state calls "temporary group protection", which al-

lowed for their release from prison and temporarily prevented deportation without granting the right to work or any social benefits. At the same time, Eritreans and Sudanese were prevented from asking for asylum. Since the implementation of the new law, however, citizens of these states, like all others, remain in detention. In theory, they are now entitled to request asylum



from jail. However, placing a request was virtually impossible until the end of the year. Detainees were not informed about their right to request asylum. The HMW was refused any kind of information about asylum proceedings in detention. In November, the HMW started to draft letters stating the intention to request asylum for 120 detainees. However, these letters were not deemed sufficient by the Ministry of the Interior and rejected on the grounds that special forms had to be filled in. Only in 2013 were detainees finally provided with these forms to request refugee status – forms that many of them could not fill out because they were written in English or even because pens were not made available.

**Publication: Until our hearts are completely hardened – asylum procedures in Israel**, by Yonatan Berman. Hotline for Migrant Workers, March 2012. The report is available on the HMW's website.

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## ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Supreme Court rules: State must provide adequate translation services in RSD interviews**

In the case of an Ethiopian asylum seeker represented by the HMW, whose RSD interview had been translated by a fellow detainee, the Supreme Court sided with the petitioner and determined that the State has to provide professional and adequate translation. It also stated that recording asylum interviews would greatly promote transparency.

### **Visas for Released Asylum Seekers**

According to law, every person released from immigration detention is entitled to a 2a5 conditional release visa. While this document does not entail a work permit, Supreme Court has ruled that employers of asylum seekers who hold this visa cannot be fined as the holders have no other means to provide for their livelihoods. Without the visa, asylum seekers have even greater trouble finding work and are vulnerable to arbitrary arrest.

Nevertheless, the State has repeatedly refused to issue these visas, especially to asylum seekers with contested identities. Accordingly, the HMW submitted a petition against this practice in August. The State subsequently committed to issue 2a5 visas to all released detainees within three months. Court also awarded 15,000 NIS in court expenses to the HMW.

### **Equal Rights for Spouses of Israeli Citizens**

Israeli citizens in a relationship with a foreign national are entitled to request residency rights for their spouses. In June, however, the Ministry of the Interior suddenly disqualified foreign nationals who had entered Israel without authorization. The HMW represented several couples and petitioned court on behalf of one of them. Consequently, the regulation was reversed in August.

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## **4. Deportation of South Sudanese**

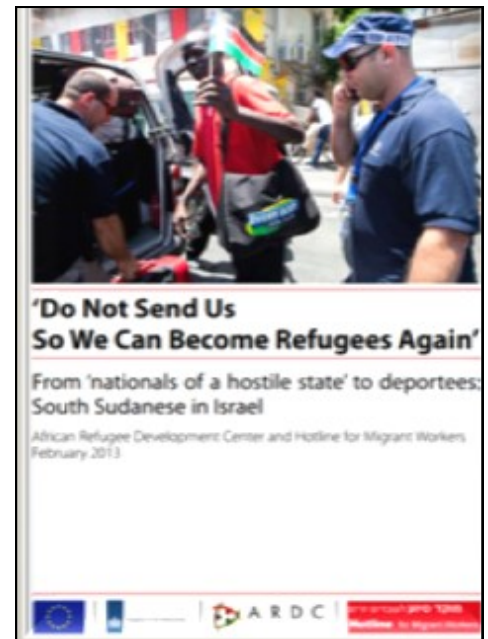
In June, a campaign to deport all South Sudanese from Israel was started. After South Sudan's independence the MoI decided to eliminate the non-removal policy for South Sudanese, even though the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs characterized the humanitarian situation in South Sudan as 'extremely precarious' and called on states hosting refugees to ensure that every return was voluntary. In total, more than 1,000 individuals were deported to Juba during the summer of 2012.





Even before the deadline to leave Israel voluntarily passed, the Mol refused to renew visas for South Sudanese citizens. Others were arrested even though they had signed up for voluntary return. Families were split up in detention; some were not able to collect final salaries because they were suddenly detained. In addition, in some cases Sudanese from Khartoum, the Nuba Mountains and Darfur, which are not located in the South, were also refused new visas.

Today, only a handful of South Sudanese remain in Israel.



**Publication: Do not send us so we can become refugees again. From 'nationals of a hostile state' to deportees: South Sudanese in Israel**, by Laurie Lijnders. African Refugee Development Center and HMW, Feb. 2013. The report is available on the HMW's website.

#### **Did you know?**

After successfully deporting all South Sudanese from Israel, **Interior Minister Eli Yishai** announced in October that he would **deport all North Sudanese** as well. The HMW and partner organizations immediately petitioned court and received an injunction prohibiting the arrest of asylum seekers from Sudan. Subsequently, the State announced that there had never been any plan to arrest all Sudanese and that the minister had acted without the approval of the government.

## **4. Torture Camps in Sinai**

Refugees continue to be tortured and held for ransom in Sinai desert camps. They experience horrific beatings with iron rods, cables and rifle butts, rape, electrocution, starvation, blindfolding and shackling. As the numbers of asylum seekers trying to reach Israel has declined, more and more of the survivors we encounter report being abducted in Eritrea or Sudan, without ever having the intention of coming to Israel. According to our investigations, the sums captives have to pay to be released (an average of 33,660\$ per person) and the length of time individuals are imprisoned (an average of 140 days) have steadily increased since 2010.

In March, information provided by the HMW to the police led to the indictment of an Israeli citizen who had collaborated with the Sinai criminals to extort money from family members of victims who were already in Israel. The police continue their investigation and have filed several more indictments.



Since the implementation of the Anti-Infiltration Law, many of the survivors of the Sinai torture camps have been detained for months as their experiences were not considered sufficient grounds to release them from prison. Others never make it to safety in Israel. Between June and October 2012, there were at least eight

**Publication: Tortured in Sinai, Jailed in Israel: Detention of Slavery and Torture Survivors under the Anti-Infiltration Law**, by Sigal Rozen. HMW and Physicians for Human Rights, October 2012. The report is available on the HMW's website.

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## ACHIEVEMENTS

The HMW managed to receive considerable **media attention** for the Sinai issue. Articles were published in the Israeli as well as in the international press, including pieces in the Independent, the Atlantic, the New York Times and Die Zeit.

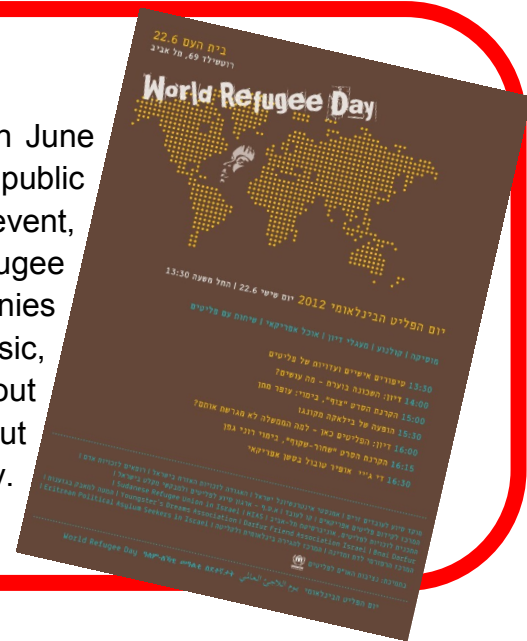
We also hosted a side-event about the Sinai torture camps at the **UNHCR's** Annual Consultation in Geneva and briefed a closed session of the **European Parliament**. International awareness is growing: In both the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) 2010 and 2011 Country Reports on Israel and Egypt the ill-treatment, systematic abuse and torture of refugees and migrants in the Sinai are highlighted. The same is true for the US State Department's Human Rights Report and Trafficking in Persons Report. Public figures as well as international institutions, including the Pope, the High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Parliament and US President Barack Obama have all spoken out against these abuses. The German Parliament has discussed the issue in its Human Rights Commission.

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## Public Event: World Refugee Day

As in previous years, we celebrated World Refugee Day in June with a number of other organizations and invited the Israeli public to take part in our day-long event in Beit Ha'Am. The event, which was organized with the active participation of the refugee community, included two panel discussions, live testimonies given by refugees, an exhibition, a concert of African music, food, and a party. The participating NGOs also gave out information and distributed an informational leaflet about refugees in Israel, which was prepared especially for the day.



## B. Migrant Workers

### 1. Facts and Figures

According to government statistics, there were 69,354 migrant workers in Israel at the end of March 2013. They were invited to work in Israel in care giving (58%), agriculture (29%) and construction (8%) and come mostly from Asia, including from the Philippines, India, Nepal, Thailand and Sri Lanka. In addition, there are 14,800 migrant workers without a permit. They have lost their legal status due to various reasons, many of them associated with the narrow restrictions Israel imposes on documented migrant workers. These include strict time limitations for work permits, difficulties to change employers and difficult working conditions, often in the periphery (agriculture) or in the employer's home (care giving).



### 2. Employment Systems

Almost two years after parliament passed a law that restricts migrant care givers to certain geographic locations and certain fields of employment, the law has still not been implemented as no protocols have been established by the Ministry of Interior (Moi) to enforce the law.



In the mean time, there have been some other changes regarding the employment of migrant workers. According to a new regulation issued by the Mol, migrant care givers are now required to hand in resignations earlier. But in a more positive development, a new protocol was established in December 2012 which entitles migrant care givers to take on short term replacement jobs. Migrant workers come to Israel with a permit that allows them to work in the country for 63 months. However, if they lose their job after 51 months – for example due to the death of an elderly employer – they are not entitled to take on a new long-term engagement, essentially losing a year of employment in Israel. The new protocol now allows these workers to work as substitutes for other care givers who are on vacation. Thereby, all involved parties are better protected: Employers will be able to find substitutes, employees will be able to take vacation, and care givers who have passed the 51 months can stay on and find short-term engagements.



Fundraising Concert for the HMW

## A Client's Story

Natasha\* came to Israel to work as a caregiver in the fall of 2012. She had paid 6,000\$ for her placement by a manpower agency. But things did not quite work out as she expected and she filed a complaint about her difficult working conditions with the agency that had hired her. Yet she was shocked when representatives of the agency showed up at her employer's house shortly afterwards – not to help her, but to tell her she was fired and had to leave the country immediately. They made her pack her things and took her to the airport the same day.

Dazed by the rapid progression of events, Natasha complied. Only after she had already passed passport control, did she realize that her ticket was issued to Ukraine, not to her home country. Natasha refused to get on the plane. But her ordeal did not end here. Border control clerks claimed that her visa had lost its validity when she had crossed the passport check, and she was arrested and imprisoned in the airport detention facility. From there, she called the HMW.

HMW lawyer Nimrod Avigal immediately turned to court and received an injunction against her deportation. Later we facilitated her release and obtained a new visa for her. Natasha has found a new employer. Our complaints against the manpower agency are still pending with the Ministry of Trade and Labour and the police.

\*Name has been changed to protect the clients' privacy.

### 3. Biometric Database

We petitioned Supreme Court against the practice of taking biometric data from migrants and placing it in a government database. We argued that the Ministry of Interior was acting without authority and infringing on the privacy rights of migrants. In response, the government informed court that it was in the process of formulating a procedure that would alleviate these concerns. In July 2012, the State announced that migrants are now given forms which explain that their fingerprints and photographs are being taken and stored and to be used by the Ministry of the Interior. It also submitted a legislative amendment in accordance with these provisions. Our petition was therefore rejected in November.

#### Public Event: International Migrants Day

In December, we celebrated International Migrants Day in cooperation with the Tel Aviv Cinematheque with an 8 hour program, which consisted of a food stand, an information booth, film screenings of three feature films about human trafficking and migrants, two performances by migrant dancers and singers, and a panel discussion about the commission fees migrant workers have to pay to work in

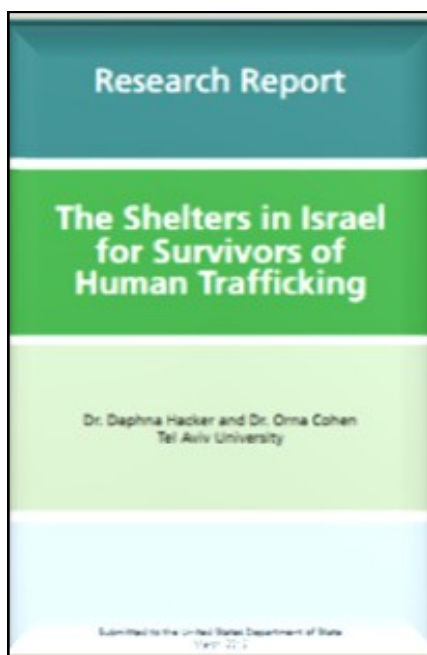
#### Did you know?

The **largest number of undocumented migrants** in Israel are not asylum seekers, refugees or migrant workers but tourists who overstayed their tourist visas. They make up almost 40% of migrants in the country. Many of them have Israeli family members but are not entitled to Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.



## C. Human Trafficking

It remains to be difficult to estimate how many victims of human trafficking currently reside in Israel. Our largest group of concern are currently victims of torture, slavery and rape in the Sinai. We estimate that there are dozens of victims of forced labor and slavery-like conditions. Recently, there have also been reports of Eastern European women entering Israel on tourist visas to work in strip clubs and possibly prostitution. Another worrying phenomenon concerns refugee women: Many of the Eritrean women held captive in Sinai for ransom arrive in Israel with high debts. In some cases, the ransom has been paid by a man from the Eritrean community in Israel, whom she will now have to marry. In other cases women may have to resort to prostitution to pay off the debts they incurred when family members or acquaintances paid their ransom money.



Another worrying phenomenon concerns refugee women: Many of the Eritrean women held captive in Sinai for ransom arrive in Israel with high debts. In some cases, the ransom has been paid by a man from the Eritrean community in Israel, whom she will now have to marry. In other cases women may have to resort to prostitution to pay off the debts they incurred when family members or acquaintances paid their ransom money.

**Publication: The Shelters in Israel for Survivors of Human Trafficking**, by Dr. Daphna Hacker and Dr. Orna Cohen. Hotline for Migrant Workers, March 2012. The report is available on the HMW's website.

### 1. Sailor Scheme

In January 2011, the HMW discovered a new trafficking scheme: Migrants from Sri Lanka were brought to Israel on special sailor permits, which are normally only bestowed upon sailors temporarily in Israel as the crew of international vessels. These migrants, however, were employed as fishermen and port laborers under extremely abusive conditions, including sleep deprivation, non-payment of wages and insufficient supply of food. Later, we learned that migrants from India, Thailand and the Philippines were also working under the same conditions. The HMW assisted in freeing the men and transferring them to a shelter for trafficking victims.

We subsequently represented four victims in court. While three of them have returned to Sri Lanka, we argue that the victims should be allowed to return to Israel on work visas and that the scheme that they were brought in on needs to be dismantled. The case is still pending in the Supreme Court.



The first four victims were not officially recognized as trafficking victims due to the short time they spent working in the port. A fifth victim was immediately deported after being freed by the police from his employer. However, this marked a turning point. In reaction to the treatment of this fifth victim, the HMW and partner organizations exerted heavy pressure on the authorities and via the media. As a result, eight additional victims we represented subsequently obtained temporary legal status and now receive state-funded legal aid. The employer and the scheme by which the victims were trafficked into Israel are currently under investigation. In the meantime, the company continues to employ migrants without work permits to work in the port.

## **2. Gynecological Treatment at the Saharonim Immigration Detention Facility**

About 20% of the Eritrean asylum seekers who enter Israel via the Egyptian border have been held under horrific circumstances in smuggler camps in the Sinai desert where they are tortured and abused to extort ransom money. Some are forced to work as sex or labor slaves and qualify as trafficking victims. Almost all of the women who pass these camps have been raped and some are pregnant as a result. When they reach Israel, they are imprisoned in immigration detention. Yet gynecological examinations and treatments are not regularly offered at the Saharonim detention facility where most are detained. In November 2011 we filed a petition against the Prison Authority together with Physicians for Human Rights Israel and the Association of Rape Crisis Centers for its lack of gynecological treatments in Saharonim. Consequently, the Prison Authority informed us that women who request treatment would be referred to the nearest hospital. We continued to maintain that all detained women should be offered such treatments. In its December 31 ruling, the court determined that referring women to a hospital upon demand is not enough and instructed the Prison Authority to find a solution in cooperation with the petitioners.



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## A Client's Story

Hanna\*, the child of a single mother from Eritrea, grew up with an Ethiopian adoptive family in Sudan, in which she experienced physical and psychological abuse. Her stepmother forced her to prostitute herself to a much older man, who gave the family a house in return. Full of despair, Hanna finally decided to flee and stole some money from her stepmother to pay a smuggler. But she was not brought to safety. Instead, she was taken to one of the notorious torture camps in the Sinai desert. There, Hanna was held in an underground cell, shackled and chained, and raped over and over again.

Desperate for help, she called her stepmother and asked her to pay the ransom her captors demanded. "They can kill you", was the answer she received. Finally, she managed to reach her abuser in Sudan who agreed to pay 25,000\$ for her release.

Hanna then made her way to Israel where she was recognized as victim of sex slavery and transferred to a shelter. But after a year in the shelter, Hanna was informed that she would be deported to Ethiopia – the authorities contest her claim that she is from Eritrea. This is when HMW lawyer Raya Meiler took up her case.

Due to her difficult psychological state, we requested an additional rehabilitation year for Hanna and asked for clarification regarding her contested nationality. The case is still pending, but at least for now, Hanna is safe from deportation.

\*Name has been changed to protect the clients' privacy.

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### 3. Lack of Shelter Space

The State funds two shelters for trafficking victims, providing 35 places for women and 35 places for men. In addition, new apartments were opened to house additional victims in 2012. However, the available places are not sufficient to accommodate the large number of victims who have undergone torture in the Sinai. These victims are usually identified while in immigration detention. If there is no available space in the shelter, they are unlikely to be

released from detention. As a result of lack of shelter space, 33 women and 10 men were stuck in immigration detention as of the end of 2012. This means that our ability to release them from prison is severely limited and that a smaller percentage of victims receive rehabilitation measures in a shelter.

**From a European Parliament resolution of  
March 15, 2012:**

*"The EU Parliament applauds the activities of Egyptian and Israeli human rights organizations, which provide assistance and medical treatment to victims of human traffickers in Sinai, and urges the international community and the EU to support their work."*

### 4. No Work Permits for Sinai Victims

According to Israeli law, recognized victims of human trafficking are entitled to a rehabilitation year, during which they receive placement in a shelter

and are allowed to work. They can extend the relevant permit under certain circumstances. However, victims of sex slavery and forced labor in Sinai, while recognized as trafficking victims and placed in shelters, have never received a visa in accordance with this provision. Instead, they receive an unofficial slip issued by the shelter which serves as temporary protection from arrest and deportation and states that employers will not be fined for employing the holder. However, since this document is not an official work permit, finding work with it is all the more difficult. In addition, the document does not serve as an ID – which the victims usually do not have – and therefore cannot be used to open a bank account, rent an apartment or any other matter that requires an ID. Moreover, because the document is issued by the shelter, anybody that sees it can immediately gather that the holder has been trafficked, which constitutes a serious breach of the holder's privacy.

## **D. Children**

### **1. Children of Migrant Workers**



In 2010, 701 migrant worker families applied for legal status for their children. The government had decided that children meeting certain criteria who had hitherto been undocumented would be eligible for permanent residency. The Interministerial Committee examining the applications announced in the end of 2011 that it had finished its work and that the Interior Minister would make final decisions.



In early 2012, the Ministry of the Interior declared that it would inform all families of the outcome of their requests. It also announced that 257 families had been approved. However, in mid-2012 the Mol stopped sending answers. According to our own count only 150 families had received positive replies by the end of 2012 and approximately 450 cases were still pending. Of 80 rejections known to us, 36 families received the joint assistance of the HMW and the NGO Israeli Children to appeal the decision. All of these appeals are still pending.

Throughout the year, Israel deported mothers with young children who had not met the criteria set in the 2010 government decision. Approximately 150 children were deported in 2012.

## **2. Detention of Asylum Seeker Children**

Under the Anti-Infiltration Law male unaccompanied minors are sent to a special detention facility or released to boarding schools. Other children, however, are detained together with their mothers in Saharonim. While women and children were recently moved from tents into a concrete building after the State Comptroller harshly criticized their detention conditions, the jail certainly does not present an environment suitable for children. Children are separated from their fathers. Teenage boys are separated from their mothers and detained with adult men.

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### **Testimony of a mother who was imprisoned at Saharonim with her toddler son for eight months:**

*"Section nine is a large compound. One enters it through two large steel doors. Inside there is a large rectangle-shaped space that is totally closed. On one side of the closed section there are two floors of prison cells. The cells have steel doors. In every cell there are up to ten women in bunk beds. On the other side of the section there is an extremely large wall, reaching the ceiling. Between these two sides there is a large stone yard. This is the only yard and we cannot go out to another yard. The ceiling in the section is closed. Sometimes, in the morning a little light comes in but one cannot feel the sun. Ever since we were transferred to this section we have not seen sunlight, except when we were rarely taken out of the section. When we did go out of the section, our eyes hurt because of the sunlight."*

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In November 2012, the HMW and partner organizations launched an EU-funded project to end child detention in Israel, which will draw attention to alternatives to detention, draft a National Action Plan and inform the Israeli public.

### 3. An End to Segregated Education for Asylum Seeker Children

In the beginning of August, the District Court in Beer Sheva accepted a petition filed by the HMW and partner organizations to challenge the segregation policy in Eilat public schools, which was filed on behalf of 15 children of asylum seekers. They had been schooled in a separate, substandard school outside of municipality boundaries. The Court ruled that the State's duty to provide equal public education applies to all children in Israel, regardless of their legal status or lack thereof and determined that "fear of the stranger is a common fear, and therefore its existence should be acknowledged, but should not be accepted. The fears of the Israeli parents in Eilat, who are concerned about the integration of asylum seekers' children in public schools, are unfounded fears, which cannot serve as a consideration against integration."

#### Did you know?

The detention facility Matan, opened especially for minors, only houses boys. Girls have to remain in detention with adult women if they do not have family in Israel who can take them in.

After the Eilat municipality appealed the verdict, the Supreme Court ordered the city to find a way to integrate the children of asylum seekers into the municipal school system.

The children started to go to regular public schools at the beginning of the school year in September.



## E. Xenophobia

2012 witnessed a sharp increase in hate crimes and government-led incitement against Africans in Israel. Africans have been physically and verbally attacked, and their apartments and stores have been torched and looted. The majority of reported attacks occurred in southern Tel Aviv, where most of the



55,000 asylum seekers living in Israel reside. This wave of hate crimes was precipitated by incitement from elected officials and public figures, as well as biased, dangerous and misleading reportage in Israeli media.

During 2012, Israeli elected officials, most of them members of the government coalition, escalated the racial incitement against refugees.

Israeli government officials refer to asylum seekers residing in Israel

"I am saddened by the recent xenophobic violence in Israel against African migrants and asylum seekers, and sadder still that, even in condemning the violence, Israeli discourse repeatedly refers to the victims as 'infiltrators.' [...]"

Anti-infiltrator rhetoric only serves to fuel xenophobic tensions within Israel, gives ammunition to Israel's enemies abroad, and undermines the confidence of Israel's friends in the Jewish state's commitment to refugee protection."

exclusively as "infiltrators" and insist that the asylum seekers residing in Israel are all work migrants and not genuine refugees. They present the refugees as a grave demographic threat that necessitates the deployment of harsh measures, including open-ended internment and expulsion from Israel. Israeli officials also present refugees as a security threat and as sources of crime and disease. Israeli media largely adopted these claims and language when referring to refugees.

For example, Interior Minister Eli Yishai stated in a sympathetic interview to the daily Maariv that many Israeli women do not report being raped by refugees for fear of being thought of as contracting AIDS. Needless to say, Yishai did not offer any proof for this inflammatory claim and the interviewing journalist did not ask for any.

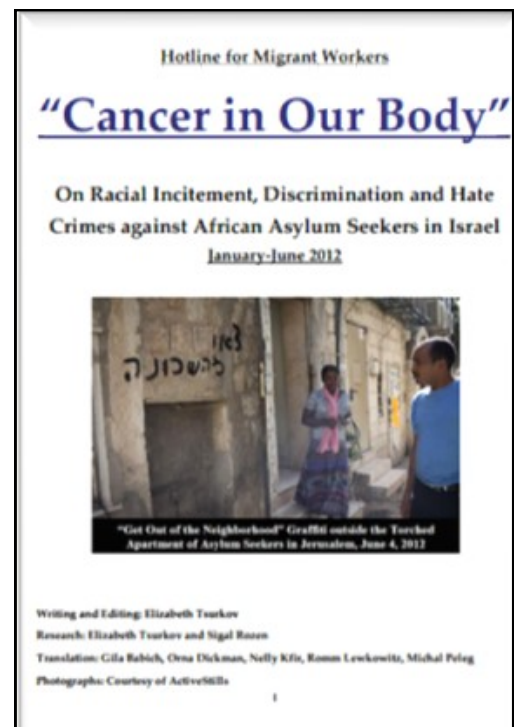


MK Danny Danon (Likud), who later founded and headed the Knesset Caucus for the Expulsion of Infiltrators, called asylum seekers “a national plague”, while MK Michael Ben Ari (National Union) claimed that they are “not hungry only for bread... they are hungry for women”, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the phenomenon of African asylum seekers “threatens the national security and our national identity”.



The clear affect of government incitement was seen in May 2012, when a rally calling for the expulsion from Israel of all refugees was held in southern Tel Aviv. Knesset members from the governing Likud party, as well as the centrist Kadima and far-right National Union party were present and gave speeches that inflamed the crowd of approximately 1,000 protesters. MK Miri Regev (Likud) blamed refugees for crime and unemployment and labeled refugees as a “cancer in our body.” Following such inflammatory speeches, some of the protesters went on a rampage against Africans, attacking individuals with black skin and ransacked shops owned by asylum seekers in the area.

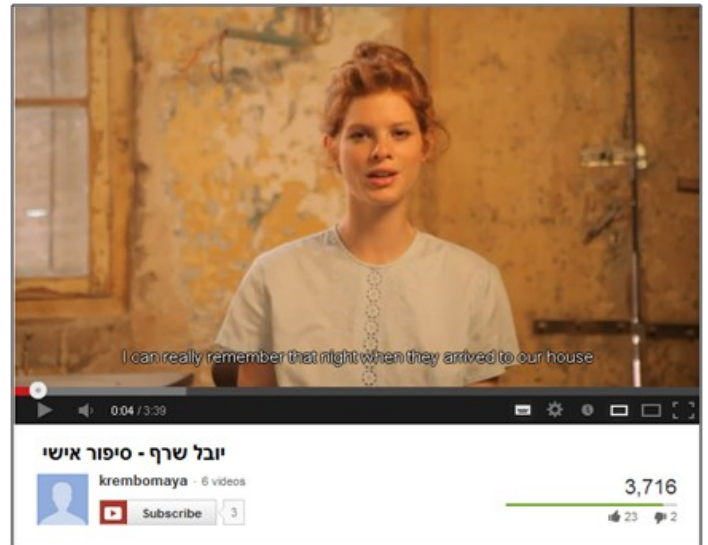
**Publication: ‘Cancer in our body’. On racial incitement, discrimination and hate crimes against African asylum seekers in Israel**, by Elizabeth Tsurkov and Sigal Rozen. Hotline for Migrant Workers, June 2012. The report is available on the HMW's website.





### Campaign: Not Infiltrators. People.

In cooperation with the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, the Hotline for Migrant Workers produced 5 videos in which prominent actors told the personal stories of refugees who have fled from countries like Sudan and Eritrea to Israel. This campaign gave a face to the men and women who are considered “infiltrators” by many Israelis. In total, the videos were viewed almost 8,000 times.



Actress Yuval Sharf tells the personal story of a refugee woman who arrived in Israel in 2006.



## II. Activities in Numbers

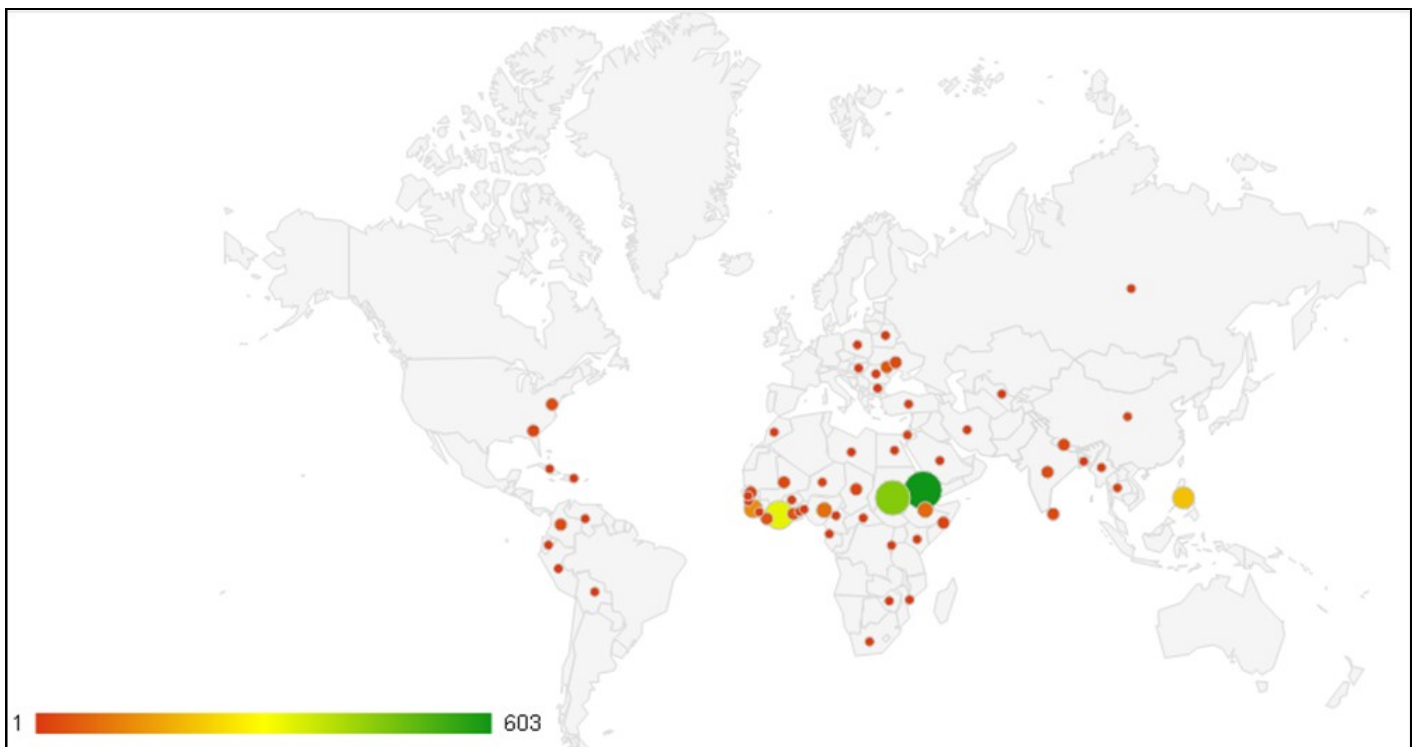
### Direct Assistance

The HMW's Crisis Intervention Center operates 5 days a week and provides legal advice, general information and para-legal assistance by telephone and through direct consultation. Reception hours amount to 25 hours a week. In particular, we facilitate the release of detainees, especially of vulnerable groups such as mothers with children and torture victims. We also assist our clients in receiving visa extensions, access to asylum procedures and social rights, as well as in addressing complaints regarding their treatment at the hands of the authorities.

In total, we provided services to 753 migrant workers and 1,740 asylum seekers/refugees (72% men, 28% women) in our Crisis Intervention Center in 2012.

### Clients

In 2012 our clients originated from 70 different countries. Most were from Eritrea (24%), Sudan (17%), the Ivory Coast (13%), the Philippines (8%), and Guinea Conakry (5%).



Heat map depicting the source countries of clients receiving assistance from the Crisis Intervention Centre.



## Visits to Detention Facilities

Our staff and volunteers conducted 225 visits to 7 detention facilities in 2012 during which we provided more than 2,200 consultations. Almost 80% of our consultations were given to asylum seekers, but we also provided assistance and information to migrant workers, unaccompanied minors and trafficking victims in detention.

Detention Facility	Visits in 2011	Visits in 2012
Givon	131	126
Saharonim	48	62
Kziot	-	20
Eshel	4	8
Haela	1	6
Dekel	4	1
Matan	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>225</b>

The number of visits increased by almost 18% vis-à-vis 2011, despite the fact that we were restricted from visiting Kziot and Saharonim for two months. However, the number of consultations given remained roughly the same – attesting to the fact that the process of meeting detainees has been made more complicated and time consuming by the restrictions laid upon us by the authorities.



Saharonim Prison in the Negev Desert

## Interventions

To obtain our clients' rights we intervened on their behalf with the relevant authorities regarding such issues as release from detention, visa extensions, requests for asylum and more. In total, 1,779 letters were written and sent to the following authorities regarding the following issues:

Authority	Asylum Seekers and Refugees	Migrant Workers	Total
<b>Immigration Detention Tribunals:</b> Requests for release from detention	584	148	732
<b>Interior Ministry:</b> Requests for release from detention, requests for extension of visa	151	102	253
<b>Interior Ministry:</b> Refugee Status Determination procedures, requests for residency permits, appeals to the humanitarian committee	120	88	208
<b>Immigration Authority:</b> Requests to refrain from arrest	298	34	332
<b>Prison Authority:</b> Humanitarian requests (including health and educational issues), family visitations, transfer of belongings	173	81	254
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,326</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>1,779</b>

## Direct assistance to Trafficking Survivors

Assistance provided to victims of trafficking, including labor and sex trafficking, slavery and kidnapping, included legal representation, release from detention, transfers to shelters, referrals to other aid providers, information and support.

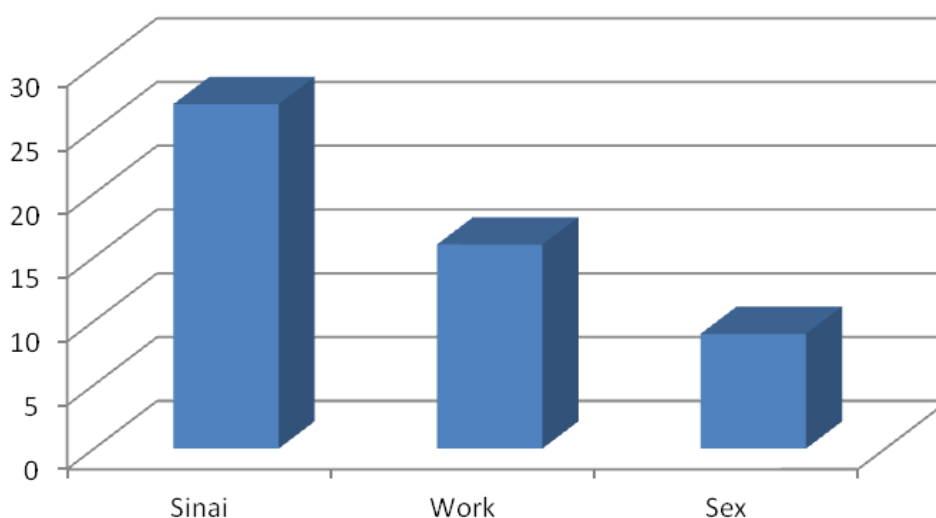
In total, we provided direct services to 52 survivors of human trafficking. Of these, 36 were cases first encountered during the reporting period, while the remaining 16 cases had been encountered previously and were still ongoing.

The types of assistance provided:

Assistance provided	Number of people receiving this assistance*
Transfer to shelter	19
Representation in Immigration Detention Tribunal	9
Legal representation in court	16
General information, advice and humanitarian assistance	27
Representation in matters concerning residency status	20
Assistance in medical issues	6

\*Please note that often clients were provided with more than one form

Number of clients according to type of trafficking



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## ACHIEVEMENTS

As a result of our interventions on behalf of trafficking victims...

... **8 clients** received (temporary) **legal status** in Israel

... **11 clients** were **released** from immigration detention

... **19 clients** received placement in a state-run **shelter** for trafficking victims

... **19 clients** were **recognized as trafficking victims**, entitling them to state-funded legal aid

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## Legal Cases

In total, the HMW\* handled 129 legal cases in 2012.

	Migrant Workers	Trafficking Survivors	Asylum Seekers and Refugees	Total
Supreme Court	2	1	13	16
District Court	4	8	25	37
Pre Trial	31	8	30	69
Other**			7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>129</b>

\*28 cases were outsourced to external lawyers.

\*\*Includes cases in the Immigration Detention Tribunal and Appeals Committee.

## Media

In 2012, the HMW initiated 743 items\* in the local and international media on the following topics:



	Type	Asylum Seekers/ Refugees	Migrant Workers	Trafficking in Persons	Total
<b>Israeli media</b>	Newspaper	489	10	21	<b>520</b>
	Radio	70	3	4	<b>77</b>
	Television	34	2	2	<b>38</b>
<b>International media</b>	Newspaper	67		4	<b>71</b>
	Journal	1			<b>1</b>
	Radio	6		2	<b>8</b>
	Television	27		1	<b>28</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>694</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>743</b>

\*Listed items include items that are based on information given by the HMW or in which the HMW is mentioned by name.

## Talks and Tours

The HMW offers talks and educational tours to various groups in order to increase awareness of the issues facing migrants in Israel and to educate the public about migration and asylum policy.

	Lecture	Tour
Educational Institutions	14	11
Youth Groups	1	6
NGOs	-	2
General Public	-	2
Government Agencies	1	2
Corporations	-	3
Army	1	-
Foreign Groups	1	7
Other	1	3
Total	19	36



In total, more than **1,400 people** participated in HMW lectures and tours.

## In 2012...

Our Crisis Intervention Center assisted **2,493** people from **70** different countries.

We sent **1,779** letters to authorities on behalf of migrants.

Our staff and volunteers made **225** visits to immigration detention facilities.

**743** media items were initiated by us.

We handled **129** legal cases.

We gave **55** talks and tours reaching more than **1,400** people.

We identified and assisted **52** trafficking victims.



### III. Staff

Ms. Reut Michaeli – Executive Director

Ms. Sigal Rozen – Public Policy Coordinator

Ms. Emi Saar – Director of Government Relations and Trafficking Victim Support

Ms. Adi Lerner – Director of Crisis Intervention Centre

Mr. Asaf Weitzen – Lawyer, Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Mr. Nimrod Avigal – Lawyer, Migrant Workers/Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Ms. Raya Meiler – Lawyer, Victims of Human Trafficking /Asylum Seekers and Refugees (NIF law fellow)

Ms. Rona Perry - Public Campaigns Coordinator

Ms. Francesca Katz – Case Worker

Ms. Yael Eisenberg – Case Worker

Ms. Messi Fisahaie – Translator, Tigrinya

Mr. Tekle Ghebrehiwut – Translator, Tigrinya

Ms. Amal Ismail – Translator, Arabic

Ms. Saroj Elam - Office Manager

Ms. Maike Harel - Resource Developer

Ms. Poriah Gal – Spokesperson





## IV. Acknowledgements

We are grateful to our generous donors and friends for their encouragement and support in 2012:

Samuel Sebba Charitable Trust  
CAFOD  
Sigrid Rausing Trust  
Moriah Fund  
Keren Ezvonot (Ministry of Justice)  
The Zanyvl and Isabelle Krieger Fund  
UNHCR  
New Israel Fund  
Keren Aviad  
UN Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking  
European Commission  
Pro Asyl Foundation  
Rosa Luxemburg Foundation  
Stiftung Do  
Tel Aviv Municipality  
Foundation for Population, Migration and Environment  
A.C.R.C.  
UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

And many private donors from Israel and abroad



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### **For tax deductible donations in Israel:**

Please send checks to: The Hotline for Migrant Workers, 75 Nahalat Binyamin Street, Tel Aviv 65154, Israel or contact Maïke Harel at [maïke@hotline.org.il](mailto:maïke@hotline.org.il).

Bank transfers can be made to:

Account holder: Hotline for Migrant Workers

Bank: First International Bank of Israel

Branch: 067 (Shalom Tower)

Account No. 609064

IBAN number: IL660310670000000609064

Swift code: FIRBILITXXX

\*Please let us know if you've made a donation via bank transfer so that we can follow up and issue a receipt.

### **Online donations**

Online donations can be made via <http://www.israelgives.org/amuta/580333094>.

### **For tax deductible donations in the U.S.:**

Contributions of at least \$100 may be made via the New Israel Fund. Contributions should be marked as donor-advised to The Hotline for Migrant Workers (grantee number 5334) and sent to The New Israel Fund, PO Box 91588, Washington DC 20090-1588.

Contributions of at least \$25 may also be sent (and must be made payable) to P.E.F. Israel Endowment Funds, Inc., 317 Madison Avenue, Suite 607, New York, NY 10017 referencing the Hotline for Migrant Workers.

### **For tax deductible donations in Canada, the U.K, Switzerland or Australia:**

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**U.K.:** New Israel Fund UK, 25-26 Enford Street, London W1H 1DW

**Switzerland:** Neuer Israel Fonds Schweiz, Postfach 425 CH-4010 Basel

**Australia:** New Israel Fund Australia, Level 10, 65 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000