

# NIF RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS



New Israel Fund is the leading organization committed to equality and democracy for all Israelis.

## Israel's Affordable Housing Protest Catches Fire



A huge wave of protests against the high cost of housing, started by a single "tent city" in Tel Aviv, is the newest destination for NIF and SHATIL support. NIF allotted emergency grants to tent protest compounds in Be'er Sheva,

Herzliya and Jerusalem almost immediately after the first protest began, and with the support of North Americans, is continuing to provide emergency grants to protest initiatives. SHATIL is advising protest leaders on sustaining and enlarging demonstrations, and in collaboration with NIF grantees the *Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)*, the *Coalition for Affordable Housing* and the *Movement for Life and Equality*, has produced a comprehensive "Guide to Tent-camp Campaigning" which is being distributed throughout Israel.

## Knesset Rejects "Investigation" of Human Rights Groups

On July 20, the Knesset voted to reject a proposed "parliamentary inquiry" into human rights organizations in Israel. Despite the passage of the "boycott" law in early July, this was a decisive victory for the NIF and its flagship grantee *ACRI*, who have been fighting against anti-democratic legislation in the Knesset since last year. Over 1800 North American NIF supporters contacted four wavering Likud leaders to urge them to vote against the measure; two voted to reject the "parliamentary inquiry" and two abstained. This was the Knesset's second rejection of a McCarthyite investigation designed to shut down the human rights community, and reflected a resistance by both opposition and Likud leaders to this measure penalizing and defunding progressive civil society.



## Israeli Government Recognizes Civil Marriages

In a decision which has opened the door for civil marriage in Israel, the High Court of Justice ordered the Ministry of the Interior to recognize the marriages of 14 Israeli couples married in the El Salvadorian Embassy in Tel Aviv. NIF supports this push toward recognizing civil marriage and is funding the Freedom of Choice in Marriage Campaign. Currently, there is no civil marriage in Israel, and Orthodox rabbis hold a monopoly over Jewish marriage. Couples who do not meet the rabbinate's standards still must travel abroad to legally marry.

## Shavuot Tikkun Encompasses the Entire Spectrum of Israel Society



In June, in honor of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, NIF funded 35 special study sessions on topics ranging from religious pluralism, the Book of Ruth, and the religious identity of the Chosen People in light of Israel's Arab minority. These

sessions drew thousands of Israelis from all walks of life, including religious women, Ethiopian immigrants and Reform movement members to reflect on the complex composition of Israeli society and the daunting range of moral issues confronting the country. Many of these sessions, held throughout the country, were sponsored by groups not previously associated with NIF, and proved a unique way to mark this holiday which is characterized by serious study and learning.

## ACRI Wins Prestigious US Human Rights Award

In July, flagship NIF grantee *ACRI* received the prestigious Gruber International Justice Prize for 2011 along with four other organizations and individuals. In presenting the award, the Gruber Foundation noted "ACRI's role in protecting and promoting freedom of expression, the right to privacy, freedom of movement, the right to health, the right to adequate housing, and the right to education, and in protecting the rights of discriminated minorities, including Arab citizens of Israel, women, the LGBT community, migrant workers, and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories." *ACRI* is the second Israeli person or organization to win the Gruber Prize, after former Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak won in 2006.



## Racism Declines in Israeli Soccer

NIF's **Kick Racism Out of Israeli Soccer Campaign** has contributed to an impressive 39% decrease in racist chanting during the 2010/2011 soccer season. Counter-racist actions, including booing and silencing fans

who act in a racist manner, have increased by 18% due to NIF activities, which increased media attention and educational awareness, and helped outlaw racist behavior in sports stadiums. Hapoel Haifa won the NIF-Israel Football Association Fair Play Award, while Macabi Tel Aviv and Beitar Jerusalem had the worst-behaved fans. In light of punishments by the Israel Football Association, Beitar launched a campaign to combat racism.

**Vision.** For a better Israel. **Values.** For social justice. **Impact.** Because you can make a difference.

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