

ISRAEL—SECOND LAW PROPOSED TO TARGET HUMAN RIGHTS NGOS

[JNews](#) reported on April 29, 2010, that the most recent proposed amendment to the Associations (Amutot) law in Israel is the second attempt to target human rights NGOs in the past few months. Introduced into the Knesset as “Amendment Exceptions to Registration and Activity, 2010,” the bill more specifically targets NGOs that provide information about suspected war crimes by Israelis to other organizations than the earlier bill. The amendment would outlaw an NGO “if there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the organization is providing information to foreign bodies or is involved in lawsuits abroad against senior officials in the government in Israel and/or officers in the Israeli army regarding war crimes.” Thus focusing the law reflects Israeli outrage at NGOs that provided information for the [Goldstone Report](#) for the UN Human Rights Commission. Indeed, supporters of the law represent all political parties.

The law is curious, because [Adalah](#) (one of the targeted NGOs) says in a [press release](#): “If the legislation is enacted, it would constitute an official admission by the State of Israel that it is committing war crimes, and is ordering human rights organizations in Israel to keep silent about them, to refrain from passing on information about them, and to cease assisting both the victims and the international community in working to prevent their continuation. Only a state that commits prohibited acts would be interested in such legislation.” Adalah also asserts that the law would violate Israel’s international law and international humanitarian law obligations.

Whether such a provision (to so restrict the grant of freedom of association of the targeted (but not by name) organizations) is a violation of Israeli Basic Law or whether it violates Israel’s international law and international humanitarian law obligations, [as some other Israeli NGOs have said](#), is another matter. ICCSL had provided [comments on the earlier bill](#), which would have classified NGOs receiving foreign assistance from political entities (e.g., USAID, the EU, etc.) as political parties, and these comments were helpful to the debate because they pointed out the danger of the bill’s language, which would result in the loss of tax exempt status for all such NGOs.