



ANNUAL REPORT

תשע"ה | 2015

Thank You

We are deeply grateful to all of our friends, supporters, and founders, who have played an instrumental role in making this organization what it is today. Through your encouragement and assistance we have been able to advance a wide range of vital activities and projects, to reach out to women in need and to make social change to improve the status of women in family law in Israel .

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For the Advancement of the Status of Women לקידום מעמד האשה

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Year Overview



**Professor
Ruth Halperin-Kaddari**
Founding Head of
The Rackman Center
since its establishment in
2001

Another year has come to a close and I could not be more proud of The Rackman Center. Beginning with our long-awaited Bat Mitzvah celebrations, we were able to reflect on the whole reason The Rackman Center was established. At the end of 2015, I can honestly say that we are truly fulfilling Rabbi Rackman's vision of realizing and safeguarding women's rights within Judaism, the State of Israel, and the world at large.

We always knew we faced many challenges, and there is still a long way to go, but thanks to our incredible staff and wonderful leadership the Rackman Center is paving the way and ensuring that no change happens without our involvement or without us impacting the change.

We have achieved this in numerous ways. Central to our work is the goal of increasing knowledge. We do this by using social media to promote our work and explain the issues we are dealing with, inviting media professionals and informing them about the issues that are being debated, sensitizing Ministers and policy-makers, discussing issues at length in Knesset Committees' meetings and increasing our internet presence on our updated website and regular Facebook posts.

Another key way is through our determination to ensure the enforcement of laws that exist to protect women. As you know, we successfully passed the law to raise the age of marriage. After some delay caused by Operation Cast Lead and the elections, we were finally able to hold a Knesset meeting where we presented our Law Enforcement Report on how this law should be implemented and monitored, so as to ensure its actual effect.

A most valuable endorsement and quality affirmation is demonstrated by the fact that after a lot of hard work, we have just been awarded a substantial grant from the European Union Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights, for our program: Realising Women's Human Rights and Access to Justice in Family Law in Israel. This is a specific new project that will enable us to work towards better access to justice for all women in Israel, allow us to provide volunteers to help women through the divorce process, reach more clients, assess the scope of the Agunah problem and the Gett Abuse through a new survey, and submit a new report to the UN CEDAW committee on Israel's commitment to meeting International Standards regarding Women's rights.

All this, is of course, in addition to the regular course of work within the Legal Aid Clinic, the Lawyers of Tomorrow Program, the various publications and conferences, all of which you will see in the following pages of this Report.

Thank you to all of you who have helped make all of this possible. Your constant support enables us to do so much.

I am just so glad that you will be joining us along the road in 2016 to create a better world for all our children—and make long term legal and social change for women in family law and society at large.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Halperin-Kaddari'.

Our Mission

Established in 2001 at Bar-Ilan University's Faculty of Law with the goal of improving women's status and bringing an end to gender discrimination and inequality in Israeli society, The Rackman Center is now proud to be the forefront organization of legal and social change for women in family law in Israel, working to fulfill the vision of advancing women's rights, and bettering women's standing within family law in general and Jewish family law in particular.

Believing in a dual-track approach for bringing about mobilization and social change, we work from both within and outside the religious world, to change the Jewish legal system using its own internal tools and methodology, and at the same time enable, for example, each citizen of Israel a choice of marriage ceremony which suits their beliefs.



For the Advancement of the Status of Women לקידום מעמד האשה

Our dual-track approach continues when we cooperate with the government to promote policy reforms, and at the same time make an independent stand where appropriate.

Our position as an academic institution in a law faculty creates a unique synergy between the work we do representing our clients in family law cases, and our academic expertise in analyzing the cases, researching scholarship, finding innovative solutions and recommending legal changes. This demonstrates another facet of the dual-track approach, that of engaging in a bottom-up method through individual litigations, and at the same time promoting the top-bottom process of legislative changes and policy reforms. We translate academic research, knowledge and training into action working towards our goal and mission to bring social and legal change for women covering all aspects of family law.

The work that we do affects agents of change of all levels, starting from legislatures and policy-makers, civil and rabbinical judiciatures, lawyers, welfare workers, and other divorce professionals, through law students who are the future of this profession, to the individual women and children who are directly assisted by the Center.

Achievements 2015

Legislation and Public Policy

Submission of 11 bills and regulations

Work and research of 11 bills and regulations including support of other bills , tracking progress of bills and fighting against various bills

Attending 20 Knesset meetings : Knesset Constitution Committee , Committee for the Advancement of Women , the Committee for Children's Rights Committee and the Committee of State Control

Submission of 11 petition papers

Giving expert advice to Members of Knesset

Working on our Law Enforcement Project (PAI)

The international project related to Israel's commitment to the CEDAW Convention

Handling issues arising from the Schnitt Committee

Collaboration work with ICAR

Legal Aid Clinic for Women in Family Law

44 women received free full legal representation

370 women received free legal aid via our legal aid hotline

We submitted and were involved in 6 High Court Appeals

We trained 24 high-caliber students on our 'Lawyers of Tomorrow' Program

We held one Moot Court

We contributed updates on the topic of Family Law to the web project 'Kol Zchut' - 'All Rights' (www.kolzchut.org.il)

We conducted 3 student tour days; visiting a Family Law Court, Rabbinical Court, a Women's shelter and the Knesset

Achievements 2015

Publications

3 issues of HaDin VeHadayan (The Law and its Decisor)

2nd Law Enforcement Report published and presented to the Knesset

Events, Conferences and Groups

We celebrated our Bat Mitzvah at a special reception

We held The 'Gett' Conference, together with the Ministry of Justice on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

We held our 12th Annual Conference

We held a pre-election conference about religion and the state

We held a conference for International Women's day for female Members of Knesset and Knesset member hopefuls, concluding with a declaration of their support towards women's issues

We hosted our second conference in Israel on Collaborative Divorce

We ran our annual Halachic Conference, this year, honoring Malka Puterkovsky

We held a Media Conference

We facilitated 1 client support group

Publicity and Social Media

The Rackman Center was mentioned 45 times in the newspapers and online news sites

The Rackman Center staff were interviewed and mentioned on the radio and television

We established our social media presence, published articles and improved our publicity via Facebook and our website

We produced a short film on the occasion of our Bat Mitzvah

The Year At A Glance

October 2014 CEDAW

Prof. Halperin-Kaddari was invited to be the keynote speaker at the CEDAW Seminar convened by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Human Rights Center in Finland, after having served as the Rapporteur for the Periodic Report of Finland to CEDAW during the Committee's 57th session. Finland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Minister of Welfare and Health, had also addressed the Seminar. This is the first time a State Party to one of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies invites a Committee Expert, who was in charge of evaluating the State Report to discuss the outcome of the dialogue with the Committee; and it may well serve as an example of good practice for other states to follow. Prof. Halperin-Kaddari's presentation was received with a lot of enthusiasm, and her honest remarks pointing to much that is still needed in Finland – usually viewed as a paradise for women – were highly appreciated. Image right: Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari with Mrs Ruth Rapaport at the UN CEDAW 60th session.



November 2014 IACP Conference

Adv Adi Raz was awarded a grant to attend the Collaborative Divorce Conference in Vancouver, Canada. Pictured above, with international colleagues all working towards the goals of collaborative divorce, Adi learnt valuable tools and information, which she brought back to educate others and implement here in Israel. We are thrilled that she helped found The Israeli Organisation of Collaborative Divorce, which was set up at the end of 2015.

'The Gett' Conference

Following the successful release of the film 'Gett' about Jewish divorce, for which we helped advise, we held a special screening with all the members of the Ministry of Justice. The then-Justice Minister, Tzipi Livni welcomed everyone and after the screening, we had a special live skype appearance with the producer.



This was a huge success and the whole film garnered a lot of attention for the important issues it addressed.

Image right shows the Rackman Staff at the event, (from left) Adv Shai Zilberberg, Adv Osnat Horowitz, Dr Galit Shaul, Prof Halperin-Kaddari, Adv Adi Raz, Adv Osnat Prinz.



December 2014 Ot Katan

Ruth was the recipient of this year's Katan Award for the Advancement of Gender Justice through Voluntary Work. The Award was bestowed upon Halperin-Kaddari by the Ruach Nashit NGO in Israel in recognition of her long-term commitment to social activities and volunteerism on behalf of women and Israeli society, and for upholding the values that were dear to the late Prof. Yosef Katan, in whose memory the Award was founded. Halperin-Kaddari was recognized in particular for the establishment of the Rackman Center and the legislative and policy work the Center promotes towards the advancement of women's rights and legal aid for disadvantaged women; educational and scholarly work for gender justice; advancement of feminism within Jewish Orthodoxy; and her international influence through her work on the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).



Biannual Statistical Report

We published and distributed our next edition of statistics on the topic of family law in Israel.

The Year At A Glance

Walk of Silent Truth

Last year we described in depth the case of Karen Levy, whose children Yishai and Sara were tragically murdered by their father on a routine custodial visit to Israel in 2014. Staff members, including our lawyer, Adi Raz, who fought for her throughout this time, joined Karen on a silent march in their memory.

Collaborative Training Course Run jointly by the Rackman Center and Bar Ilan's Commercial Law department this was the first official training for collaborative Divorce in Israel.

January 2015

Pre-Election Conference Religion & State - a panel with MKs

The 12th Annual Conference

This well-established conference was once again over-subscribed with hundreds of legal professionals in the field. This topic was the race for jurisdiction.



February 2015 - CEDAW

Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari declared the assumption of her duty as a CEDAW member for a third term. Pictured above, third from the right, with the whole committee.

March 2015

The Declaration We held a special conference for International Womens day, inviting female Knesset members and hopefuls to discuss how they will support women's issues in Knesset. The conference concluded with everyone (including some who were unable to attend that day) signing a declaration of support towards women's rights. This was well-publicized in the media.

The Ruth Colian Case

Head of a new Haredi Women's Political Party, Ruth Colian, was banned from publishing election advertisements in the Haredi press. We represented her in court to try and make them publish it before the election. We won our case, but the newspaper asked appealed, which held us up and meant that the opportunity to publish passed. We will work to ensure this is not an issue for future elections.

The Haddassah Foundation

(right) We were thrilled to welcome our friends from The Haddassah Foundation - our long-standing partner in making social change for women in family law in Israel.

Child Support

(see right) The Coalition for Child Support was established.

April 2015

Austrian Embassy We were delighted to host members of the Austrian Embassy who visited the Center. (right, including Ms Lilian Hofmeister, CEDAW member, center)

May 2015 Support Group

We began our support group for women going through divorce, consisting of twelve meetings.

Our Bat Mitzvah We celebrated our Bat Mitzvah with prominent guests, donors and University staff, with a special film in honor of Rabbi Rackman z"l. We honored 12 guests who lit a candle each on this special occasion. Guest speaker was Blu Greenberg.

June 2014

Lawyers of Tomorrow Program

Pictured here are the students who fought as 'real' attorneys in program's Moot court.

Halachic Conference in memory of Rabbi

Rackman z"l The topic of this year's Halachic Conference was "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof"



July 2015 Media Conference

The Rackman Center invited journalists (below) for a special talk to explain about the issues of Family Law and, in particular, the current hot topics - child support and the tender years presumption law.

September 2015 Students enrolled for the new academic year and we welcomed in the new Jewish and academic year.



The Legal Aid Clinic

The Program for Legal Aid, Advocacy and Outreach in Family Law and Women's Rights

Our Legal Aid Clinic works on three fronts:

1. **The free Legal Aid Hotline** : Our Hotline provides free legal advice to over 300 women of all backgrounds each year.

2. **High Court Appeals and free Case representation**: We advocate for the rights of agunot and work to eradicate extortion of women and exploitation of children as leverage in divorce. We offer free legal representation in both civil and religious courts for over 40 women each year who come to us in financial distress or with particularly challenging cases. We also select potentially precedent-setting cases and bring appeals to the Supreme Court, Grand Rabbinical Court and petition the High Court of Justice, as another effective venue to bring about legal change.

3. **Lawyers of Tomorrow Program**: Believing in the future and in the critical role education plays in mobilizing social change, we select the best law students to train in our clinic through the Lawyers of Tomorrow Training Program. Those selected demonstrate a commitment to promoting and advancing gender and social justice, and to learning the essential representation and litigation tools that enable them to do this.



The Rackman Center Legal Team

From Left: Adv Osnat Prinz, Adv Adi Raz, CEO Dr Galit Shaul, Founding Head Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Adv Keren Horowitz, Adv Osnat Karplus and Adv Shay Zilberberg

1. The Legal Aid Hotline

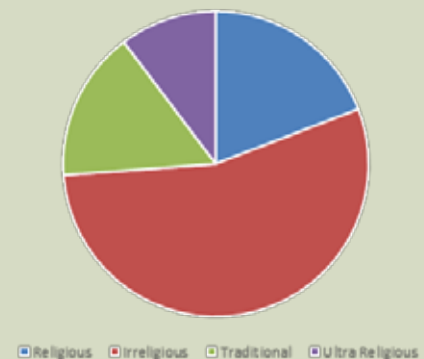
Some statistics from 2015:

- 370 women received legal advice via our hotline this year.
- The average time spent with each client was half an hour for the initial call and 45 minutes with one of our lawyers, with callers often providing legal documents for review beforehand.
- The average client age was 42.6 years, and clients on average had 2.5 children.
- After calling the hotline, some callers were invited for a meeting before we selected which cases to represent.

Main reasons for calling:

- Issues to do with child support during and after the divorce process.
- Domestic violence
- Race for jurisdiction: most often when the husband starts talking about divorce and caller wants to know which court she should go to or what to do if he goes to the rabbinical court first.
- Economic-related divorce issues - distribution of property, mutual debts, debts registered in the name of one of the parties.
- Custody arrangements - requests to change or enforce visitation rights.
- Prenuptial Agreements

Backgrounds of Clients



Life stories from callers to our hotline

Division of Property

Leah needed advice about how to deal with her husband's refusal to sell the house. The couple were joint owners of the apartment, and the divorce agreement required them to sell it and divide the equity equally. It was ruled that if they don't manage to sell the apartment, it will reach insolvency proceedings. In addition they were forbidden to live in the apartment during this time. Leah was aware that her ex-husband was staying there occasionally. She wanted to buy her ex-husband's share of the apartment, and they signed an agreement to do this. Meanwhile, however, he refused to allow anything to move forward.

Our lawyer, advised her to avoid expensive insolvency proceedings. We advised her to submit an application through a lawyer we recommended to explain everything - the fact that the apartment is empty, increasing their debt, etc., and ask that the ex-husband be ordered to cooperate with the sale as agreed and sell the apartment within 30 days. Leah followed our advice and successfully bought her ex-husband's share of the apartment.

Violence & Betrayal

Hila contacted us after her husband filed for divorce. He had openly cheated on her for 4 years and his mistress would even call their house. In addition, he was violent towards his wife, swearing at her, pushing and hitting. The couple have a four year old girl, and despite everything, Hila had resisted divorce in fear that the child might be affected. The girl has also expressed that she wants them to remain together, and Hila feels terrible guilt towards her about the situation. Hila's husband filed for divorce in the rabbinical court. Still, Hila was keen on staying together for the benefit of the child. Our lawyer explained to Hila that even if the Tribunal advised to try reconciliation, it was unlikely that the violent and humiliating behavior would change. Despite being aware of this, Hila was willing to try again for her daughter. Our lawyer recommended Hila to check her eligibility for legal aid, and the case is being carefully followed in case further legal assistance is required from The Rackman Center.

2. High Court Appeals

This year we represented in six appeals. Appeal cases come from calls to our hotline, referrals from other lawyers or welfare organisations, or from media reporting as in the case below:



Post-surgical single mother of 7 sent to jail by the rabbinical courts

The Jerusalem rabbinical court has sent a mother - who is the sole carer for her seven children, including a disabled child - to jail until a hearing date!

This mother (from a Haredi background) is the sole care-giver for her disabled child, and her other six children, having separated from her husband four years ago. Her husband is an established contractor and owns six apartments. At the Family Court two years ago it was decided that the husband will give one apartment to the woman and then he would give her the 'Get'. It was later decided that the husband would also pay the mortgage for this apartment. The husband did not fulfil any of these court orders.

There was one court hearing, the wife was not represented at and did not appear because she had just come home from hospital following surgery, and sent medical confirmation to the court accordingly. Due to her absence it was decreed that she should be sent to jail for a week until the next court hearing in order to ensure that she turns up at the next hearing, at which the apartment was due to be handed over together with her Get.

On the way to jail, the woman became ill (due to

her post-surgery state) and was taken to Shaarei Tzedek Hospital. All the time she was in hospital she was handcuffed and accompanied by two policemen. As soon as we heard of this case, the Rackman Center took the woman as our client free of charge. It was not easy to obtain power of attorney as the police did not allow her to speak on the phone. Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Head of the Rackman Center said: "As soon as we heard about this egregious conduct to this woman, The Rackman Center rushed to her aid (image right) and began legal representation. We are working hard to prevent her return to jail and bring this case to a rapid conclusion, in order to prevent further hurt to our client and to ensure she receives her rights in their entirety, and the marriage will end in a fairness and decent way."



A Get after 12 Long Years!

Rachel got married in 1990. After the first couple of years, her husband became very violent. It was so bad that as a result of his violence she went in to early labor and sadly the baby died a few hours after her birth. Up to then, Rachel had not reported the violence to the police but the welfare authorities got involved. However the violence only got worse. He broke her teeth, bruised her badly and broke items in the house. In addition there was economic violence - he absolutely refused to pay towards the home and the children. At one point, her husband left the house to live with another woman and would come back only on weekends. He would yell and hit her, and then leave again. There was also violence against their children. Over the years, Rachel earned her own money and fully supported herself and her children. Her husband was hardly at home, but when he came back, he continued to hit and yell at

her. At one point, he even returned to live at home. All these years they lived in separate rooms – Rachel in the living room and her husband in their bedroom, with Rachel living in fear of her life – and all the while her husband refused to divorce her. Finally, Rachel approached us in desperate need of our help. In November 2015, we successfully represented Rachel in the Rabbinical Court and she received her long awaited Get after 12 long years!



Appeal for equal rights to promote religious women's party in ultra religious media

A high profile appeal case that we were involved in was the case of Ruth Colian (see image below), head of the Haredi party, U'bezchutan. She approached us for help because she was being prohibited from advertising her political party because she was a woman.

We took her case to the court (see left), which ordered Yated Ne'eman, the highest circulating Haredi daily newspaper, to publish an election campaign advertisement from U'bezchutan, a party which seeks the Haredi women's vote. Ruth Colian, has objected to the lack of any women on any of the electoral lists of the haredi parties – Shas, United Torah Judaism and Yahad – saying the needs and concerns of Haredi women are not being addressed by the male MKs in the different ultra-orthodox parties. So she boldly decided to create a party for Haredi women.

Unfortunately, the newspaper appealed, which meant that in the end it was too late to be concluded in our favor before the election deadline - but we successfully highlighted this injustice, receiving plenty of media attention.

Finally, in July, Ruth had her chance and was allowed to publish an advert in the Haredi media - see right.

We hope that this fight will help ensure better publicity is allowed for women in Haredi media in future.



לסייע למהפכה
רות הלפרין קדרי

דעות מעדיב

« פרופ' רות הלפרין קדרי »

המהפכה שלא התרחשה

הציבור והתקשורת חיבקו את הנשים החרדיות שרצו בבחירות חנחו אותן אחריהן. מצער עוד יותר שמערכת המשפט לא העניקה גב למעשה האמיץ

התרחשויות הקרוניות סביב הבחירות ולאחריון השכיחו לחלוטין את ענייני הנשים החרדיות. כך כמעט נשכחה המהפכה הגדולה שהתחוללה בראשונה להקים מפלגה ולרוץ לכנסת. בכך תן יצא בגלוי נגד המצב העצמי של המנהיגים ומדיי ההלכה של החברה החרדית, ואף היו מוכנות לשלם על כך מודר אישי ומשפחתי כבד. התקשורת הציבור שחיבקו אותן לזמן קצר וזכו אותן. מצער יותר שמערכת המשפט אכזבה אותן. תן וזכו מבית המטבח של המנהיגים התרשמו שהחוקה מעמד יומיים, ער שהמפכה בבית המשפט העליון. שיאה של הדרמה התרחש ארבעה ימים לפני הבחירות. כאשר בית המשפט המחוזי קיבל את בקשתה של מפלגת 'ובזכותן' לפרסם מודעות בחירות. רות של מפלגת הנשים. את לאחר שג' כשלו ניסיונות נשות המפלגה החרדית לפרסם מודעות בכיתות החרדיות. מיוון שהעיתונות החרדית היא ערוץ התקשורת היחיד הנגיש לקהל החרדית והבחרים המטענאים של מפלגה זו,

סירובם של העיתונאים לפרסם את המודעות חסם כל אפשרות להביא את פעילי תהליכי המהפכה, את עצמקוטה, ליריעה. המחוייב כמעט כי בנסיבות מסוימות שיוטיל שותף בבחירות, כמו גם מניעת הפליית נשים החרדיות, נטורים על זכות התקשורת רות והקניין של נגד מסחר כמו העיתונאים אלא שהעליון, כאשר, הפך את החלטת המחוזי על פיה, תוך שהוא נשען על נג' מיקים פורמליסטיים, כשיקבע כי המסגרת הרגילות שעל פיה נתגלה ההחלטה מחוייב לא התאימה לבידור העניין. בכך נתגלתה אהולת הוד של המערכת השיפוטית והגטייה השמרנית של העליון בכל הקשר להחלטה של שינויים חברתיים. בית המשפט העליון את המורטליי זם המסמטי המייחס חשיבות לטיב הולך על פני קבלת החלטה ערכית חברתית. בית המשפט אימנם נמנע מלקבוע קב"ע מהותית כאשר להתנגשות בין ערכי המודיון לחופש התקשורת והכות הקניין. עם זאת, הוא הפנה אצבע מאשימה כלפי הנשים שסביכול השתחו כבגייתן לע"י אבות, ובכך סיכלו את האפשרות למעגות את הדין המעמיק בשאלה המסכססת. חוסר ההוגנות וההגיינות בהאספת זו

ל בית המשפט העליון כלפי הנשים הוא משוע, אמת מידה פורמליסטית מוסרית תת חסר את הצד הרגמני החוק, ופר עלת נגד הצד החלטי. בהצבת הדיעות מחמירות ביוחס להתנהלות הדינות, התי עלם בית המשפט לחלוטין מהמכסולים העצמיים שניצבו בפני הנשים החרדיות כבאנקה החברתית והמסכססת. תן מצאו את עצמן בודדות מול הכוחות החוקים ביותר בחברה החרדית, נאלצות לשקול האם מסתכן אכן בצריקה מחירים מסכססטיים כבירים, וכל זאת ללא משאבים נאלצו לחדר כר שגם לשים ייצוג מסכססטי נאלצו לחדר על הפתחים. על רקע זה, ייוחס "עיון" להתנהלותו וזכו חוסר צדק. בכך למעשה נתן בית המשפט את ידו להרחיבן של הנישים החרדיות ולהפיקתן לשיפוט. יש לטעות שכאשר תפערד שאלה זו שוב כבירים הדין המשפט, ריע בית המשפט לערוך את האיוון הראוי בהתנגשות שבין ערכים חסובים אלה, וימצא האומץ התי מוד לסייע לנשים הנאנקות במקוריים הקשים של הפליית נשים החרדיות מהסחית הגיבורי במחיות חבויה.

הכוננות היא ראשת מרכז דקמן לקידום מעמד האישה

ובזכותן

חרדיות עושות שינוי.

Thank you...

Thank you from Rachel

who received her Get after 12 long years!

Dearest Osnat (Adv. Osnat Karplus)

How can I sum up years of struggle, so many tears and endless court sessions in the Rabbinical Court that led to nothing?

For fifteen years, I did not receive my divorce (Get). I was all alone, looking after my four children Fifteen years ago I was refused a divorce, , a single mother, receiving no rights because my status was so unclear. I got married in 1990 and apart from the first few years, my life was hell.

The man I married, gradually isolated me from everything and everyone, humiliated me, beat and hurt me. I lived in constant fear and shame, even from myself.

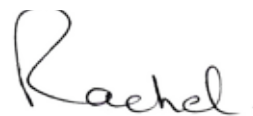
For years no one in the Rabbinical Court listened to my pleas for help or accepted my complaints or my requests. In fact according to them, my words were 'cancelled' and only what my ex-husband said was adhered to. I found myself surrendering to the grim reality of "dead ends" and was let down each time. This was until I found you - an angel in human form, you hugged me with both arms and implanted in me the self-confidence and self-worth that I had lost over the years.

You collated and sorted all the documentation and fought for my rights when I had given up all hope. You stood by my side and after only a few months I finally received my long awaited Get.

Beautiful angel, I want to thank you on my behalf and on behalf of my children on your total investment, dedication, care and concern and especially for just being "there" for me. Thank you and thanks to all the wonderful staff at the Rackman Center.

A thousand thanks and it is incredible that you are there to help women who have long lost all hope and help them return to a normal life.

With utmost appreciation and best wishes,



Rachel (not her real name)

Thank You from another client....

Dear Shai (Adv. Shay Zilberberg)

It has taken me a while, but I wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the incredible care and professionalism with which you (and Osnat) took over my daughter's case. We arrived to you in distress and with a feeling of total helplessness, and the minute we came to you, you knew the necessary steps to reach a solution to the problem. Everything just moved smoothly , until the successful conclusion a month ago , when my daughter received her long-awaited divorce .

We are so grateful and well done on your amazing work and the blessed work of the Center .



Sarah (not her real name)

3. Lawyers of Tomorrow

This year, 24 students completed a training program (see image below of some of our graduates), which aims to mold the lawyers of tomorrow into committed advocates in the battle for women's and children's rights.

The program is part of an obligatory third-year course for students to work in a legal clinic. Student applicants are selected based on their academic excellence and commitment to women's rights.

A great deal of thought and planning is invested in the students' studies and practical training, in which we emphasize both theoretical and practical solutions in all areas of family law.

Training includes bi-weekly group meetings and lessons in which cases are analyzed and Halachic and legal solutions are discussed, as well as other legal dilemmas.

Student meetings in the past year were led by Professor Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, Adv. Yossi Mendelsohn, and our Center's lawyers. We also brought in specialist lecturers, including: judges, social workers and lawyers who specialize in areas taught through our program.

Students also benefitted from individual meetings to discuss factors involved in choosing appropriate

legal procedures in each case. Participants met with clients and attended Courts hearings, wrote pleas and lawsuits, and were active in drafting new bills for legislation.

Students in the training program also participated in educational tours, including visits to: the Knesset, the Ramat Gan Family Law Court, the Rabbinical Court, and a battered women's shelter. The Knesset tour was especially significant in allowing the students to see firsthand the process of bill submission and legislation, which is so vital for making long-term social change.

This training not only builds students' skills and experience, but also empowers them as individuals to become lawyers with strong ideals and the confidence and tools to make positive change, helping their community and supporting women and children.



My Year on The Lawyers of Tomorrow Program

I would like to begin by describing what had the most impact on me as part of this program: walking in to the courts, whether it was walking in as part of the tours, or if I was attending court cases of clients for whom I had actually helped prepare their case. It just always makes me think about how people who once loved one another, got married and lived together for many years, and brought children into the world, now stand on opposite sides of the table, arguing about every little thing, only focusing on what they want, without looking at the whole picture (for example the best interest of their children). Certainly, the area of family law is very emotional, complex and delicate, and that feeling is a core part of working in this field.



I remember one of the clinic's lawyers who lectured us, described a case he did not take on but followed to see what happened, in which a man, who seemed normal for all intents and purposes, was called to the court because his wife wanted to divorce him. In response, this man said that he will decide when they will divorce. He actually showed the court a calendar date, demonstrating that he planned to divorce his wife in another five years time! Indeed, this man was true to his word and the woman received a divorce after five years. I remember that I told this story to all my friends and they were shocked.

Indeed, there are many divorces that end quickly, but some women's lives are put on hold because their husbands won't give them their Get and this makes me appreciate the importance of the existence of the Rackman Center and the other organizations that fight for them.

In the specific case that I dealt with at the clinic, the woman was not an Agunah but she needed strengthening and support, and indeed this is something which the Rackman Center really provided her. The last time I saw her, she told me that she had been offered a great job that she really wanted and that she felt stronger than ever. She attributed this to the support given to her in the Rackman Center's support group.

I will finish with the last experience I got from the clinic: The Moot Court - an experience that I am so grateful for and will never forget. I participated in a mock trial attended by retired Supreme Court President Judge Dorit Beinisch, retired Supreme Court Judge Edna Arbel, and the honorable judge Rabbi Yitzhak Rapoport. I represented the position of the rabbinical courts, and I must admit that although every coin has two sides, and we certainly had good and logical arguments for the rabbinical courts, I was glad when the petitioner actually won. It makes me hope that, one day this could take place in a real High Court trial, and I am pleased to see the winds of change in the air.

The experience of speaking in front of the honorable judges and the large audience, and of course my family, was certainly unique. This was a golden opportunity, and I am glad it was given to me and I definitely left at the end of the event with a big smile.

So, I thank the Rackman Center for accepting me to the program!

I'm so happy that I took part in this legal aid clinic to fight for Women's Rights in family law!

Chen Halzband



The Moot Court

The Moot court is one of the highlights of the 'Lawyers of Tomorrow' training program. The Moot Court simulates a real court hearing. The students prepare both sides of the case and present with a claimant and the respondent to a packed court (see image below) in front of three professional judges who express their views and provide a detailed judgement. The Moot Court was organized by our former Head of Legislation, Adv. Adi Bluttner and overseen by our professional legal advisor, Adv. Yossi Mendelsohn.

The topic discussed whether property and support claims be attached to a suit for divorce based on civil marriage.

The students worked very hard and it was a thrilling case to watch. This was the background to the fictional case which ended in favor of Moran, the wife:

Lior and Moran lived together for 10 years. During those years they had two children. They wanted to officially recognize their relationship, but refused, for ideological reasons, to get married religiously so they travelled to Cyprus, and married in a civil ceremony. When they returned to Israel, they got themselves registered as married.

Since their return to Israel, and after a stay in America, their relationship floundered and Lior filed for divorce at the rabbinical court (which has exclusive jurisdiction over divorce for Jews, even if they were married civilly), and asked the rabbinical court to decide on all other matters - property, custody, alimony and child support issues – by attaching those claims to the divorce petition. Moran expressed her objection to the rabbinical

court's jurisdiction at the first hearing, but the regional rabbinical court rejected her arguments and ruled that: "The parties did not marry according to religious law, nevertheless we rule that they will divorce according to strict religious law. The defendant will need to file a statement of defense to support her claims."

Moran appealed to the Great Rabbinical Court about the claims involved, but was rejected by a majority.

Moran now decided to file a petition to the Supreme Court asking for an order instructing the rabbinical tribunal to explain why they would not eliminate the judgements.

The court gave very serious consideration to all the arguments and perhaps unsurprisingly, the end result was split between the two former High Court Judges and the Rabbinical Court Judge.

The former President of the Supreme Court, Judge Beinisch gave the final decision that was in essence precedent setting (had it taken place in a real court), holding that a petition to divorce a civil marriage in a Rabbinical Court, can never attribute jurisdiction over other matters – only to divorce.



The Moot Court was judged by former President of the High Court, Judge Dorit Beinisch, former High Court Justice Edna Arbel and Rabbinical Court Judge Rabbi Yitchak Rapoport, to a packed and enthralled courtroom.

The Moot Court

משפט מבוים
תשע"ה 2015
 יערך ביום שני, י"ד סיוון תשע"ה 1.6.15 בשעות 17:00-19:30
 בפקולטה למשפטים באוניברסיטת בר אילן, בנין 305, אולם מס' 11
בנושא:
כריכה בעל כורחה-
האם ניתן לכרוך את העניינים הנלווים לנישואין לתביעת
גירושין של בני זוג שנישאו בקפריסין?

בפני ההרכב המסודר:
 שופטת כיהמ"ש העליון בדימוס נשיאת ביהמ"ש העליון בדימוס דיין בית הדין הרבני האזורי בחיפה
 הש' עדנה ארבל הש' דורית ביניש כב' הרב יצחק רפפורט

בהנחיית עו"ד עדי בלוטנר
 יועצת אקדמית: פרופ' רות הלפרין-קדרי יועץ מקצועי: עו"ד יוסי מנדלסון
 הקליניקה המשפטית: עו"ד עדי רז, עו"ד אסנת קרפלוס-גלעם, עו"ד אסנת פרינץ

הכניסה לסטודנטיות/ים של הפקולטה למשפטים באוניברסיטת בר-אילן ולקהל הרחב

נשמח לראותכם/ן!

מקד המידע לשיוחך: *9392 • Information Hotline: www.biu.ac.il



From top; Prof Shahar Lifshitz, Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari introduce the Moot Court proceedings. Students in defense of the respondent, the students on the prosecution for the claimant. Image below; all the participants of the Moot Court, including the students, our lawyers and Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari (center) with Dr Galit Shaul (right of center)



Collaborative Divorce

Collaborative Divorce is an Alternative Dispute Resolution process that strives to preserve the emotional and financial resources of the family, while achieving a marital settlement agreement that considers and respects the welfare of everyone in the family.

Collaborative Divorce is quite a new model in divorce, certainly for Israel, and we at the Rackman Center are thrilled to be leading the way forward for this important and ideal legal procedure aiming towards a more harmonious divorce. Spearheaded by our lawyer, Adv Adi Raz, the model of collaborative divorce is gradually gaining more momentum here in Israel. In October 2014, Adi was awarded a grant to attend the IACP Conference on collaborative divorce in Vancouver. (left image)



In January 2015, we held a conference about collaborative divorce. Adi, (left) spoke to a full conference room together with other esteemed speakers on the theme 'There is another way'. In addition, Adi spoke about the topic on the popular Ben Caspit show, see image right (January 2015), gave lectures about it in both Tel Aviv and Nazereth on a Family Law Training course for lawyers. She also ran training programs on

Collaborative Divorce for professionals in the field and authored a research paper testing the success of Collaborative Divorce in high conflict divorces. Adi also gave a lecture at the conference for Center of Religious Women on the importance of collaborative divorce as a tool in all types of cases. As 2015 came to a close, the new Israeli National Organization for Collaborative Divorce was established and we are proud the Adv. Adi Raz is one of the founders. See image above with colleagues, Rachel Vladimirsky and Adv. Idit Shacham.





Legislation & Policy

Legislation and Public Policy

This year, the elections definitely impacted our progress in legislation and policy change, However, once again in 2015, we still continued to work towards all of our main strategic goals:

- Ensuring proper female representation in religious governmental positions and policy making positions;
- Reducing post-divorce poverty of women and children ;
- Enhancing access to justice in family law;
- Promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution tools for families in crisis; and
- Eliminating the Race for Jurisdiction and reducing its impact on family disputes

Our Achievements

Right at the end of 2015, we passed the **Social Housing Law Amendment**. This is a huge step towards helping women who are forced to leave their homes as a result of violence in the home. Previously, if a woman left her house (and did not go to a shelter) she would lose the right to purchase her home (provided at a reduced price from Social housing) because the law stated that she would only have right to purchase the house if she can prove five consecutive years living there. By leaving, women would be breaking this five year requirement. With our new law, as long as a woman has a signed note from a social worker confirming she left the house due to violence, this will not be considered a break from the five year law but will be considered as if she is still living there. This not only protects women physically, but also financially, as they will not need to suffer violence in order to be assured her right to purchase their house. In addition we worked on seven more bills of our own and presented three position papers to the Knesset, totaling 10 bills in progress altogether. Our Law students helped prepare these bills as part of their training. We participated in 20 different Knesset Committee meetings .

Case example to make social change:

The Race for Jurisdiction

In Israel, family law cases can be held in two different courts: the Rabbinical Courts or the civil Family Courts, and the court in which a specific case will be heard is determined by where it was filed. If the two sides of the case do not agree, then the party that filed first determines where the case will be heard. This is what is known notoriously as “the race for jurisdiction”. Adv. Shelly Firestein Tiar and Adv. Shlomit Beckerman Efrati, in collaboration with two of the Rackman Center’s lawyers: Adv. Keren Horowitz and Adv. Shai Zilberberg, represented in this important case in front of the High Court of Justice, whose ruling, handed down just this week, has the potential of narrowing men’s ability to abuse this situation.

The case involved a husband who refused to pay child support and was also a “get” refuser. The husband had filed for divorce in the Rabbinical Court and “attached” to the divorce case the issue of child support. The High Court of Justice came to a decision in favor of our client that the husband was insincere (a legal condition) in filing for divorce due to the fact that he was a “get” refuser and thus was not actually interested in divorcing his wife. Additionally, it was determined that the “attachment” of the child support was also insincere considering the exceptionally low amount that the husband offered to pay as child support. Therefore, it was decided that the civil Family Court has the sole jurisdiction over the issue of child support in the case.

In summary, the High Court of Justice decided that the legal condition “sincerity” when filing a case does not stand when the husband is a “get” refuser or refuses to pay child support. It is our hope that this important decision will drastically decrease the cases in which “get” refusers or fathers refusing to pay child support exploit the legal system for the purpose of extortion in the process of divorce.



Coalition to Ensure Child Support Payments

In March 2015, The Coalition to Ensure Child Support Payments was established (images right). As you can see from the logos (above), this is a coalition of The Rackman Center, Ruach Nashit and Em Habanim.

A Coalition for Securing the Payment of Child Support - A Summary of Our Position Paper:

The purpose of child support payments after divorce is to divide the financial burden of child rearing between both parents and reduce the number of children living in poverty. It is a fundamental right of children to be provided with child support by their parents.

The Child Support Law 1972 (the "Law") is intended to protect the rights of children to receive child support. According to the Law, in the event that a minor does not receive child support from a parent who is obligated by the court to provide such support, the child is entitled to a limited child support allowance from the National Insurance Institute (the "NII"). The NII attempts to collect the sum owed by the parent that did not pay child support. The Child Support Regulations (Guaranteeing Payment) -1972 (the "Regulations"), which were enacted under the Child Support Law, states that the amount of child support provided by the NII is dependent on the income of the custodial parent.

The problem with the existing arrangement is that the Regulations consider child support as a benefit given to the custodial parent (in most instances the mother) and not as a right belonging to the child. The mother's salary is deducted from the child support and in result the law does not fulfil its purpose which is to ensure a dignified life for the children of divorced parents. The current situation in fact, puts the full financial burden of raising the children on the mother. The current situation has many ramifications. One consequence is children living in poverty. Another implication of the current situation is that it encourages the single-mothers to stay at home and receive child support benefits which amount to a low sum but are fixed, rather

than trying to increase their earning potential. Additionally, mothers who earn



above the fixed sum by the Regulations are denied child support and also lose entitlement to a host of benefits that are given together with child support such as property tax discounts, discounts on daycare, etc. As a result of the current situation, many women work in unregistered jobs and therefore do not receive social benefits required by law and do not accumulate pension rights. A Further consequence of the current situation is the enabling of continued financial abuse by ex-husbands who refuse to pay child support after divorce. Treating child support as a benefit rewarded to the mother even though it is a payment that a father is obligated to provide for his children limits the mother from receiving additional NII benefits such as unemployment benefit, disability benefit, etc.

The coalition asserts that in order to implement the objective of the Child Support Law in, which is ensuring payment of child support, a separation must be made between child support and the mother's income. The solution proposed by the coalition is that it there be a set minimum payment of child support that is not reduced according to the mother's income as long as the income is below minimum wage. This solution will improve the lives of the most underprivileged mothers; however it does not constitute full recognition of child support as a right of the child. Adoption of the proposed solution will allow mothers to enter the workforce, receive social benefits, and work in jobs with higher wages without giving up essential child support payments for their children. Moreover, the inclusion of single working mothers in the Israeli workforce will improve the Israeli economy overall.

Other Projects

Support groups for women:

Again this year, the Center facilitated a support group for women who are divorced or are in the process of divorcing. Group meetings were organized in conjunction with The School of Social Work at Bar Ilan University, and included qualified social workers.

This project provides emotional and social support for women undergoing divorce transition, above and beyond the advice and support given by our clinic lawyers. We strongly believe that legal advice and emotional support complement each other and should run in parallel to help women as much as possible.

The project group met weekly for an hour and a half. Group sessions ended a few months ago and were highly successful, according to feedback from the participants and staff. As a result, we very much hope to repeat this valuable service again next year and build it into a permanent program in the future.

Project 'All-Rights'

Once again we continue to be involved with 'All Rights,' a project which collaborates with organizations across the country to provide a thoroughly informative website that explains all human rights in Israel.

In addition, Kol Zchut will be partnering with us in 2016-18 on a new project sponsored by the EU Human Rights Grants program (see the last page) to produce pages explaining the laws that pertain to women's rights in Arabic in order to increase access to justice for more women in Israel.

Our Legal Aid Clinic provides information on women's rights in Family Law, which is an exciting and important project being written by students at the clinic under our lawyers' supervision.

www.kolzchut.org.il



Collaboration with Other Organizations

We often collaborate with other organizations doing work that touches on ours. Many cases are referred to us by other organizations working in the field, and we are also happy to refer cases to appropriate organizations when we feel they would be more suitable.

We also often collaborate with other organizations through legal advice, joint bill proposals or appeals to the High Court, and even joint representation.

The Center is also a well-respected member of the ICAR Coalition, an international coalition for the rights of Agunot and Mesoravot Get (as you can read on the next page), and we take an active role in ICAR's Legal Steering Committee, and the Committee for events for the Agunah Day, Legal Committees and Committee for Rabbinical Appointments.

We also regularly work together with other bodies within Bar Ilan, including the Gender Studies Program, the Student Union, and the School of Social Work, among others.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the other amazing civil society women's organizations with whom we collaborate towards the same goals to advance women's rights in Israel.

***"Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much."*** Helen Keller





Our Work with ICAR:

ICAR is a coalition of 12 organizations of which The Rackman Center is one of the founding and leading members.

Together, we work to promote solutions to the problem of Agunot and Mesoravot Get (women whose husbands are unable or unwilling to grant them a Jewish divorce), in accordance with Halacha (Jewish Law).

ICAR unites social welfare, women's rights, human rights, and social justice organizations, as well as academic centers, serving as an umbrella organization for groups with differing and varied religious approaches. ICAR's goal is to ensure that no woman is trapped in the confines of marriage against her will and that no woman should have to pay for her freedom. ICAR's mission is to ultimately eliminate the problem of Agunot and Mesuravot Get.

ICAR works in many different ways to promote the rights and advancement of Agunot and Mesuravot Get. Our activities include: constructing a website as a venue for raising public awareness, advocating for legislative reforms that will improve and relieve the plight of Agunot and Mesoravot get, educating the public regarding Halachic and legal solutions to the problem and encouraging the use of the existing Halachic and legal solutions and efforts by the various religious movements to discover new solutions. We also encourage the use of prenuptial agreements.

One big challenge that ICAR fought against this year was Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu's post-election move to bring to the negotiating table two ultra-orthodox parties, Shas and United Torah Judaism in order to form the government. These parties' demands were potentially detrimental to the status of women in Israel. In June 2013, Knesset Members Dr. Aliza Lavie, Shuli Muallem, and Zehava Gal-On, together with the Rackman Center were successful in passing "The Law of Rabbinical Judges" which ensured the inclusion of women on the selection committee of Rabbinical judges. These Rabbinical judges play a crucial role in the outcome of Rabbinical court cases. These cases are of utmost importance because marriage and divorce of Jewish Israeli citizens, secular and observant, are under the sole authority of the Rabbinical courts.

However, these ultra-orthodox parties attempted to use this situation to reverse this law. Women cannot be Rabbinical judges. Therefore it was crucial to ensure their effective involvement and influence in the process of selecting these Rabbinical judges was protected. We were indeed successful and the law was not reversed.



הקואליציה הבינלאומית
לזכויות העגונה ומסורבת הגט



Conferences & Events

Pre-Election Conference Religion & State



In collaboration with the Student Union, we ran a successful and exciting conference on the hot topic of Religion & State.



We were honored that MK hopefuls together with current MKs Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid), Rachel Azaria (Kulanu), Amir Ochana (Likud), and Yakov Margi (Shas) joined us and presented their standpoints on different panels.



The first panel was about the choice of marriage - i.e., civil or religious marriage. The second panel discussed the Religious (rabbinical) courts. The final panel discussed the Nation State.

The discussion was fired up by the fact that no one from HaBayit Hayehudi party agreed to participate in the event. The event was chaired by Baruch Karah, reporter from channel 10 News.

Images:

Above - Dr Galit Shaul, Prof Lifshitz, Amir Ochana, Baruch Karah and Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari before the panel.

Middle - the panel of MKs

Left - MK Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid); Bottom left, MK Rachel Azaria (Kulanu); top right, Yakov Margi (Shas) and bottom right, Amir Ochana (Likud).





Conferences & Events

The 12th Annual Conference on Women, Family & The Law

“The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.”

What has happened to the race to jurisdiction?



This year's conference addressed the most disturbing, salient feature of the difficult divorce arena for Jews in Israel from the perspective of civil law: the jurisdictional split between family and rabbinical courts and the race for jurisdiction. This drives each party to file immediately for divorce in order to gain jurisdiction in the more favorable forum rather than attempt other ways to resolve divorce issues.

Some would prefer to say that this is no longer the case and that the race for jurisdiction has ended. We think otherwise which is why we titled the conference with the famous quote by Mark Twain, “The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.” Indeed, the vast majority of speakers at our conference - all of whom were, as they are every year, leading experts in this field - agreed that the situation remains very problematic and needs immediate resolve. Once again, the conference was well attended, by over 300 professionals in the legal field, from all over the country.

Our speakers this year were, Dr. Blecher-Prigat Ayelet - Sha'arei Mishpat Law College, Rabbi Eliyahu Heishrik of the Chief Rabbinate, Judge Abira Ashkoloni, Adv Dr. Ronen Dalyahu, Dr Benny Shmueli, MK Dr. Aliza Lavie, Dr. Ruth Zafran - Radzyner LawSchool, IDC, Herzliya, Dr. Hila Meller, Judge Rav Yair Ben Menachem - Rabbinical Court in Netanya, Prof Adv. Dov Primmer. The event was hosted by Prof Shahar Lifshitz and Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari.




 אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

 הפקולטה למשפטים

12

 הועידה השנתית ה-

 לענייני נשים, משפחה ומשפט בישראל

**”השמועות על מותי
 היו מוקדמות מדי”**

 האמנם חלף מרוץ הסמכויות
 מן העולם?

 יום שלישי, כ"ט טבת תשע"ה

 20 בינואר 2015

 אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

מרכז רקמן

 המרכז לקידום מעמד האישה

 THE RUTH AND EMANUEL

 RACKMAN CENTER

 FOR THE ADVANCEMENT

 OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN





The Halachic Conference in memory of Rabbi Rackman z"l

"God Understandeth the Way Thereof, and He Knoweth the Place Thereof"

Commemorating Malka Puterkovsky's book: "Going Along Her Way
- Life Challenges From a Halachic Viewpoint".

On June 17th 2015, we held our annual Halachic Conference in memory of Rabbi Rackman z"l.

This year's topic was "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof" (The Book of Job 28:23) as a follow up to Malka Puterkovsky's newly published book "Going Along Her Way - Life Challenges From a Halachic Viewpoint".

The conference opened with a panel discussion in the light of what may be the greatest resolution in the halachic world in the past few years, namely, the entry of women into the realms of higher halachic study and knowledge.

This was followed by a dialogue between Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari and Malka Puterkovsky addressing Malka's own personal leadership and involvement in this process.

Image top right - Dr Galit Shaul (left), Head of Bar Ilan's Midrasha Dr Tova Ganzel, Dr. Ronit Irshai, Malka Puterkovsky, Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari and Prof. Miri Faust (Rector of Bar Ilan)

Image below - Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari (left) with Malka Puterkovsky and clinical psychologist, Miriam Shapira.

Image center - Prof. Miri Faust

Right - Dr Galit Shaul with Malka Puterkovsky when she was nominated to light a flame at the State Yom Haatzmaut ceremony in honor of all her work for women's rights. According to the torchlighters' ceremony panel, Puterkovsky is "a women's lecturer and teacher who is a unique trailblazer in the world of Halacha and Talmud, subjects reserved not long ago solely for men."



הכנס ההלכתי בנושא:

"אֱלֹהִים הֵבִין דְרָכָה
וְהוּא יָדַע אֶת מְקוֹמָהּ"

(איוב כ"ח, כ"ה)



מספר המקומות מוגבל
נא אשרו השתתפותכם בלחיצה על הלינק המצורף



ELECTION 2015

Women of the Knesset Unite

To commemorate International Women's day on 8th March and in preparation before the March election, the Rackman center held a pledge meeting with the prospective female candidates for the upcoming Knesset elections.

The meeting concluded with significant progress: all those who attended, signed a pledge that, if they should get elected, they promise to do their best to push women's rights forward, and to work hard to change legislation and ensure greater equality for women.

After an introduction by the Rackman Center's head, Prof Ruth Halperin-Kadarri each party representative stated their views on what they will try to do to advance women's rights.

This was followed by a fascinating discussion led by Rackman's CEO, Dr Galit Shaul, together with producer and actress Ronit Elkabaz who spoke movingly about her highly acclaimed film, 'Gett'.

Attendees also had the privilege of watching a couple of clips from the film dealing with withholding the 'get'.

Images: Top left, Dr Galit Shaul holds the declaration; Dr. Galit Shaul with Ronit Elkabaz and Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari; below left, Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, center chairs the questions from the MKs; below the photograph that was publicized in The Jerusalem Post.



WOMEN OF THE KNESSET UNITE

Female MKs and candidates for the next Knesset from across the political spectrum sign a document yesterday committing to promote gender equality at Bar-Ilan University's Rackman Center for the Advancement of Women's Status on International Women's Day. The film "Gett" was screened at the event, in which the movie's director and star, Ronit Elkabetz (left), participated. Participants included (from left to right) Bayit Yehudi candidate Anat Roth, Zionist Union candidate Revital Swid, MK Gila Gamiel (Likud), MK Ayelet Shaked (Bayit Yehudi), MK Merav Michaeli (Zionist Union), MK Karin Elharar (Yesh Atid), Rackman Center director Galit Shaul, Rackman Center chairwoman Ruth Halperin-Kadari, Kulanu candidate Yifat Shasha-Bitton, Yisrael Beytenu candidate Shira Mistryal, Kulanu candidate Rivka Balistra, Meretz candidate Gabi Laski and Ubezchutan candidate Gila Yashar. (Text: Lahav Harlov; Photo: Meuhutan Halivy)



Bat Mitzvah



A real rite of passage for any woman, the Rackman Center celebrated it's Bat Mitzvah in May 2015, with a reception and special candle lighting ceremony to honor 12 exceptional people who have helped us get to where we are today. We were proud to share our amazing achievements (see opposite page) and we were thrilled to host Blu Greenberg (middle left with Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari) co-founder of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, as our key note speaker who wowed the packed auditorium as she gave a talk titled, "The Interplay of Halakha and Justice: The Aguna as a Case Study". We were also excited to present a new movie (see clip below right) that has already ben widely watched, which explains how we are fulfilling the dream of Rabbi Rackman in advancing women's rights in Family Law in Israel.

You can find the movie on our website or via this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tckBEoDcljw>



Magel Tori

On your
Bat-Mitzvah

Bat Mitzvah

Achievements and Accomplishments

Legal Aid Clinic

Free legal advice provided to up to **300** women per year. Totaling **2,450**

women since 2001. That is **220,500** minutes of free professional legal advice in all family law matters including custody, divorce, property, child support.

Free full legal representation provided to up to **40** women per year.

490 women have been successfully represented by us.

We have made **84** appeals on behalf of our clients to the Supreme Court, the High Court of Justice, and the Grand Rabbinical Court.

Legislative Advocacy

We have passed on average **2** laws or regulations

per year totaling **42** laws, regulations and law amendments. We have submitted

6-8 bills per year as well as collaborated with other women's organizations, totaling **112** bills since 2001.

We have participated in **20** Knesset Committee meetings per year, totaling **200** meetings. We have put forward on average **12** position papers per year.

The Ruth and Emanuel Rackman Center is the forefront organization for making legal & social change in Family Law in Israel



Bat Mitzvah
2015

Lawyers of Tomorrow
20 students per year are specially selected for our highly regarded 'Lawyers of Tomorrow Program'.

This means that **280** future lawyers and been trained by us and have the tools and the experience in the intricacies of family law in Israel and are committed to gender justice.



Outreach

1000s of family lawyers and other professionals have attended our Annual Conferences, **3000** family law professionals receive our 'Din VahaDayan' publication **3** times a year, **100s** of students attend our innovative Moot Court per year, **100s** of Jewish law scholars attend our Annual Halachic Conference in memory of Rabbi Rackman z'l.

Family Law Empower Impact Religious Law

Shift Research Training Policy



The Reception





Candle Lighting

As part of the celebration, we took the opportunity of our Bat Mitzvah to honor some special people who have each contributed in their own ways to the success and growth of the Rackman center and to our mission of advancing women's rights in family law in Israel (see images from left):

Jane Stern Lebell, Founder, who together with her husband Don, were true friends of the late Rabbi Rackman and his lifework; **Nissim Dahan**, son of our late Honorary Chairman **Aharon Dahan**, who, in his usual generous style, was one of the first to become a Founder of the Center;



Mordy and Nicky Katz, Founders, and steadfast supporters of feminism and modern orthodoxy; **Gary Baskind**, our outstanding development professional, who revered Rabbi Rackman and worked hard to ensure that his legacy would continue through the Center; **Ronnie Stern**, son of Jane and Jerome Stern, currently President of the American Friends of Bar-Ilan, following in the footsteps of his parents;



Dr Aliza Lavie, Knesset member and former chair of the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women and Gender Equality and of course part of the Bar-Ilan community - a true leader in fighting for women's rights in Israel and a partner in our mission; **Vered Sweed**,



Executive Director of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, never stops believing in us; **Iris Avni**, whom we have had the privilege of assisting in her struggle for freedom after her *get* was retroactively cancelled by the rabbinical court; **Prof. Dudi Schwartz**, now Rector at Ono Academic College, and the Dean of the Law School at Bar-Ilan University when the Rackman Center was established; **Saviona Rotlevi**, former Judge of the Tel-Aviv District Court and Head of a National Commission on Children's Rights, ; a candle was also lit to honor the work of **Harav David Stav**, Chief Rabbi of the City of Shoham & Chairman of the TZOHAR organization.



The final candle was lit by **Blu Greenberg**, our honored guest who then gave her key note speech.





Blu Greenberg

Our keynote speaker was veteran modern Orthodox feminist leader Blu Greenberg, co-founder of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance. Blu Greenberg was the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Bar-Ilan during the school's 2015 board of trustees gathering. The article on the opposite page describes our entire event. As Blu said,

“Until we have a systemic solution that can serve as a deterrent to get abuse, until we have an internal systemic solution that eliminates the need for public rallies and civil court briefs, until we have universal conditional marriage or mandatory and universal coverage with prenuptial or post nuptial agreements, we will continue to have this rank injustice in our midst,”

In her talk, titled “The Interplay of Halakha and Justice: The Aguna as a Case Study,” Greenberg said, “It appears that halacha (Jewish law) trumps God’s justice, a great pity in a system so centered on justice.” She called for a “systemic solution to the problem, a solution within the halacha that can cover every case of [get refusal]—which must be defined formally as a function of time so that urgent methods can be applied.”

Images from bottom left: our staff at the Bat Mitzvah, audience pictures, musical accompaniment by Atalya Tirosh and Roi Zakai, Prof Shachar Lifshitz speaks to the audience, Prof Ruth Halperin-Kaddari introduces our speaker. Blu Greenberg addresses the audience.



At 'Bat Mitzvah,' Israeli center seeks more women's advancement milestones

By Judy Lash Balint/JNS.org Photo Credit: Yael Havoosh.

The controversy surrounding Israel's complex framework of laws relating to family life is well-known. Often portrayed via popular culture in films and books, the laborious get (Jewish divorce) process, along with other issues relating to the status of women in family law, are a major concern among both secular and Torah-observant Israelis. Against that backdrop, one Israeli institution dedicated to bringing about legal and social change is the Ruth and Emanuel Rackman Center for the Advancement of the Status of Women, housed within the faculty of law at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan. The center celebrated its "bat mitzvah" year with a ceremony attended by former Knesset Committee for the Status of Women chair Aliza Lavie, Meretz party head Zehava Gal-On, rabbis, judges, members of Bar-Ilan's board of trustees, supporters from the American Friends of Bar-Ilan University, faculty members, and students.

The Rackman Center is a unique body that combines legal and legislative advocacy with research, and also maintains a legal aid clinic that provides free legal advice and representation to women on issues of custody, divorce, property, and child support. Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, head of the Rackman Center, explained that the clinic advocates for the rights of agunot—Jewish women whose husbands refuse to give them a religious divorce—and works to eradicate extortion of women and the exploitation of children as leverage in divorce. Over the years, the center has brought appeals before Israel's Supreme Court and Rabbinic Court, in addition to bringing petitions before the country's High Court of Justice in an effort to create legal change. The keynote speaker for the center's bat mitzvah event was veteran modern Orthodox feminist leader Blu Greenberg, co-founder of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance and recipient of an honorary doctorate from Bar-Ilan during the school's 2015 board of trustees gathering. Prof. Halperin-Kaddari called Greenberg "a woman who has inspired a whole generation of Jewish women around the world, [the] founding mother of Orthodox femi-nism." In her talk, titled "The Interplay of Halakha and Justice: The Aguna as a Case Study," Greenberg said, "It appears that halacha (Jewish law) trumps God's justice, a great pity in a system so centered on justice." She called for a "systemic solution to the problem, a solution within the halacha that can cover every case of [get refusal]—which must be defined formally as a function of time so that urgent methods can be applied." "Until we have a systemic solution that can serve as a deterrent to get abuse, until we have an internal systemic solution that eliminates the need for public rallies and civil court briefs, until we have universal conditional marriage or mandatory and universal coverage with prenuptial or post nuptial agreements, we will continue to have this rank injustice in our midst," she said.

Greenberg lauded the work of advocacy groups for agunot, but noted that the rallies against recalcitrant husbands work in only a few cases, and "not for the thousands of women in the rabbinic courts subject to get abuse." Regarding Jewish-legal prenuptial agreements, she feels they are positive development, but since they are so far not mandatory and not used by the haredi world, most existing Jewish marriages are not covered by them. "They (prenuptial agreements) should be viewed as meritorious but small stopgaps, and not a global systemic solution," she said. Greenberg called for rabbis to declare that every case of a recalcitrant husband violates the Torah's standards of justice and that the men who refuse to grant a divorce "are nothing more than extortionists, evildoers." "But I have no illusions as to this ever happening," she said.

A possible game-changer, however, is the International Beit Din (IBD) religious court—created 10 months ago and headed by Rabbi Simcha Krauss, whom Greenberg called "a great and daring talmid chacham (scholar)." Krauss and IBD's judges, she said, have "declared war on iggun (the creation of agunot through get refusal)." Krauss, a religious Zionist leader, is a former pulpit rabbi in New York City's Queens borough who made aliyah in 2005. According to Greenberg, the IBD is totally committed to halachic marriage and divorce, yet is ready to include in those principles some contemporary arguments for leniencies that have been neglected by mainstream rabbinic authorities in favor of traditional stringencies. "The IBD has its eye on the aguna, her suffering, and that of her children, and tries its best to ameliorate her condition. It uses, with pleasure and gratitude, those lenient precedents," Greenberg said. "We should all consider that the release of agunot, as many great rabbis have said in the past, is the work of God," she said. Halperin-Kaddari told the audience, "I pray for the day when you will join us for the final event of the dismantling of the Rackman Center, held because its work is no longer necessary."



The Gett Conference:

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

On November 10th, the Rackman Center and the Ministry of Justice held a joint conference marking The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The conference was held at Bar Ilan University and was attended by 400 members of the Ministry.

The event included fascinating speakers - the then Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni (see image right) and a talk by Prof Ruth Halperin-Kadarri about the results of our recent Agunah survey. This was followed by a screening of the movie *Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem - The Law is for us all*. This was followed by a live video link-up to producer, Shlomi Elkabetz, who answered questions about the film.



From left, President of Bar Ilan University - Prof Hershkowitz, Former Justice Minister - Tzipi Livni, Director General of Ministry of Justice – Emi Palmor, CEO of Rackman Center - Dr Galit Shaul, Prof Ruth Halperin-Kadarri – our Founding Head and former Bar Ilan University Deputy President Prof. Yaffa Zilbershats.

The film *Gett*:

This film is a moving drama that takes place in a court room. It shows the roles of each player in the Jewish divorce process and demonstrates some of the serious issues that women deal with on a daily basis in order to get a Jewish divorce.

The film is a bold way to publicise these issues, including inequality, the lack of female support and poor client treatment. We are thrilled that this film reached so many and it was even approved for Rabbinical judges to watch it in order to allow them an opportunity to understand how this situation feels from the woman's perspective.



As published in The Times of Israel, "the stirring drama, from brother-and-sister duo Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz, picked up Best Picture prize on Sunday night at the Ophir Awards, (the Israeli equivalent of the American Academy Awards)." We are thrilled at the success in this powerful film and hope it helps to bring the Gett problem to light."



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 BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

OFFICIAL ENTRY - ISRAEL
ACADEMY AWARDS®
 BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

"ASTONISHING"

—Leslie Felperin, *Hollywood Reporter*

**"EXPERTLY WRITTEN AND
 BRILLIANTLY ACTED!"**

—Joy Weissberg, *VARIETY*

"FASCINATING"

—Don Fainaru, *SCREEN DAILY*

**"AN EMOTIONALLY
 CHARGED POWDER KEG"**

—Nicholas Bell, *IGN CINEMA!*

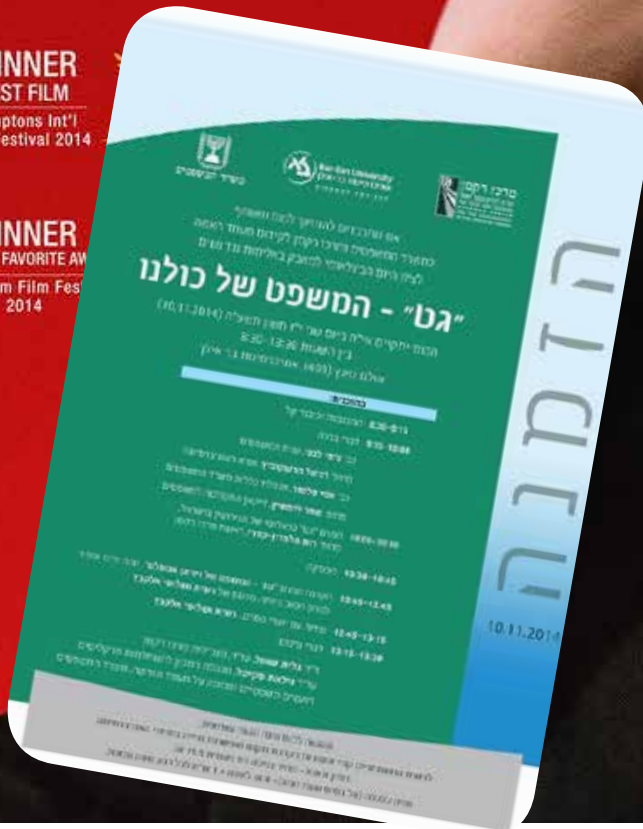
"MESMERIZING"

—Peter Sobczynski, *ROGEREBERT.COM*

WINNER
BEST PICTURE AWARD
 Israeli Film Academy
 Ophir Awards

WINNER
BEST FILM
 Hamptons Int'l
 Film Festival 2014

WINNER
AUDIENCE FAVORITE AWARD
 Jerusalem Film Fest
 2014



GETT

THE TRIAL OF VIVIANE AMSALEM

MUSIC BOX FILMS, DEUX BRUXES FILMS, ELZEVIR & COMPAGNE, FINA FILM PRODUCTIONS PRESENT
 VIVIANE ELXABETZ-SHARON ANKAWAN "GETT: THE TRIAL OF VIVIANE AMSALEM" A FILM BY RONIT AND SILVAN ELXABETZ
 with MEHARSHI ROY, SASSON GARAÏ, ELI SOUKSEFI, RANI DANIN, ROBERTO PELLAK, YU-JIANG FONG
 and SILVIAN ELXABETZ, YON DOLLA, SHARON BESH, JILLIAN JEANNE LAPORTE, JULIEE ALEXIS
 TOLLY CROW, ITZHAK COHEN, STEPHAN ANKAWAN, ANITA ORNA LOPKIND, ERIC GUTTERMAN
 and EL ALAMIC, with EFRAT BISHI, SANDRINE BRADIER, SILVIAN ELXABETZ, MARIE MASQUIN
 and DEANS CAROT, MICHAEL ECKELT & COMPAGNE DEUX BRUXES FILMS, ELZEVIR & COMPAGNE
 FINA FILM PRODUCTIONS ARTE FRANCE CINEMA with the participation of ESPRIMO FILM FUND KESKET GESHET MINTOCHA JOURNAL
 FILM FUND CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINEMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE ARTE FRANCE CANAL+ FILMFORGERUNG
 HANNOVER SCHLESING HILFSTEIN FILMFORGERUNGSTAL with the support of EUROIMAGES and FILMS DISTRIBUTION
 MUSICBOXFILMS.COM/GETT #GETT/MUSICBOXFILMS 28G



Rabbinic judges to see film that indicts them

'Gett - The Trial of Viviane Amsalem' tells of woman denied a Jewish divorce

**Nirit Anderman
and Yair Ettinger**

The rabbinical courts administration is planning a screening of the movie "Gett," directed by Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz, for dozens of rabbinical court judges (dayanim) at their annual convention in February.

The initiative for the screening came from Rabbi Shimon Yaakobi, who is also an attorney. He told Haaretz that the idea came to him when, during an interview with the Makor Rishon newspaper, he was asked to comment on the film, which he hadn't seen. He told the interviewer that he didn't go to the movies, but that he thought he "and all the rabbinical judges should see this movie."

Yaakobi, who is the legal adviser to the rabbinical courts, obtained the approval of Supreme Beit Din (religious court) president Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef to hold a private screening of the movie for the rabbinical judges, to be followed by a discussion of it.

"The president of the Beit Din has given his approval for the movie 'Gett' to be screened on one night of the conference that will be held in February 2015, on condition that Mrs. Yona Giat (in charge of overseeing service conditions in the rabbinical courts for dayanim and rabbinical court advocates) watch the movie first and ensure that there are no modesty issues that would prevent the dayanim from watching it," Yaakobi wrote in a November 8 email to the members of the dayanim association.

The Elkabetz siblings' movie "Gett - The Trial of Viviane Amsalem" depicts the protracted ordeal endured by a woman who goes to the rabbinical court seeking to be released from her marriage, despite her husband's refusal to give her a gett (divorce). The movie had



Scene at rabbinical court in "Gett."

Ami Berlowitz

its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival where it won much critical praise. It went on to win the award for the best film at the Jerusalem Film Festival (along with the movie "Princess") and recently won the Ophir Award for best film, which means it will also be Israel's entry for the Best Foreign Motion Picture Oscar.

This won't be the first time that dayanim watch a movie that is igniting a public debate about their institution. In 2004, some senior dayanim had a special viewing of the documentary film "Me-kudeshet," directed by Anat Zuria, which followed the travails of women in the rabbinical courts and even brought men and women out to the street to protest in front of the Jerusalem Beit Din. At the time, senior Beit Din officials were invited to take part in public discussions about the film, and Rabbi Shlomo Amar, then chief rabbi and president of the Supreme Beit Din, publicly responded to the movie, and refuted the statistics that were cited in it.

The precedent this time is that the organized screening will take place at the annual dayanim convention, which is a key professional gathering attended by many dayanim from rabbinical courts around the country. The vast majority of these rabbis are ultra-Orthodox, who would never go to the cinema.

Yaakobi says, "I think the rabbinical courts should be attentive to the public discourse. I really think they need to see this and need to understand the nuances and to see how we are perceived by the public, and to have an internal discussion about it. If the public sees us in a certain way, even if it's inaccurate, it's important for the system to analyze this and propose ideas for what to do so that the true picture will be projected. If the portrayal is credible, and a real change of conduct and management is required, then this needs to be talked about and done, too."

"This movie has already become a leading factor in the social discourse and not just a cultural event," says Ami Palmor, the Justice Ministry director-general who is also serving as temporary director-general of the rabbinical courts. "It brought about greater public awareness of the rabbinical courts and women's status in them, and it's creating tension in the rabbinical courts, which already work under a female minister and director-general (Justice Minister Livni and Palmor herself). Their legal adviser, who is also ultra-Orthodox, is in contact with me and with the minister, and knows that there is public discussion surrounding 'Gett.' Following the screening we held for Justice Ministry employees (this past Monday at a

conference on Israeli women who are refused a gett), he came up with this initiative and decided to pick up the gauntlet."

"The reason this screening for the rabbinical court judges is so important is that the movie conveys the point of view of the woman who has been unable to obtain a gett," says Dr. Rachel Levmore, a rabbinical court advocate and coordinator of the Agunah and Gett-Refusal Prevention Project of the International Young Israel Movement in Israel and the Jewish Agency.

"Dayanim, particularly the more experienced ones, think that they understand the woman's point of view. But even for a rabbinical court advocate like myself, who has represented hundreds of women - when you see this movie, because its effect is not just intellectual but emotional too, it enables you not just to understand the woman who is seeking a gett,

but also to feel a little of what she feels and to understand something of what she's going through."

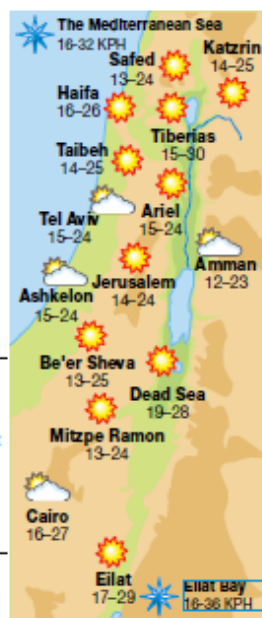
Throughout the movie, the dayanim are repeatedly shown to be in no hurry to release Viviane from her marriage because they don't see sufficient cause to do so from a halakhic standpoint. "The kind of unstable relationship you see between the couple in the movie - that's something very common in the divorce cases that come before the rabbinical courts," says Levmore. "We would place Viviane Amsalem's suit to obtain a gett in the halakhic-legal category that's called *ma'us alai* ('he has become insufferable for me') - i.e., without a clear explanation, because her husband didn't beat her or rape her. Today, a majority of the divorce cases in the rabbinical courts fall into this category - a situation that isn't strong enough to obligate the husband to provide a gett."

Weather

No change

Mist is possible on the coast and in the Negev this morning, but the weather will be partly cloudy to clear in the afternoon. Temperatures will be unchanged. Tomorrow, Friday and most of Saturday will be the same. Rain is likely along the coast on Saturday night.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunrise 06:04 Sunset 16:42		
Air pollution index: 11.11.14		
low ● medium ● high ●	low ● medium ● high ●	low ● medium ● high ●
Jerusalem	Tel Aviv	Haifa
Be'er Sheva	Karmiel	Afula
Mod'fin		
pollution forecast for this morning: medium-high		





The Media Seminar

The Role of the Media in Family Law in Israel

In a new venture which we have already planned to repeat on a regular basis, we invited journalists and media representatives to discuss their role in representing the issues of Family Law in Israel.

The program involved a personal talk by interviewer Anat Sargusti, an independent journalist and lawyer, followed by a talk by Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari on the divorce process in Israel today. This was followed by a round table discussion (image above) between all the journalists on how they see their role on the topic of family law. This was chaired by our CEO, Dr. Galit Shaul.

The event provided an opportunity for the attendees to further their understanding of complex matters, which we hope will ensure that they are better able to report about. Feedback from those who attended this conference was very positive and they each came out of the conference with an improved understanding of the issues at hand and on how we are working to resolve them.

Images: bottom left is a group photo of our staff with the journalists, right is the program for the conference, below left, Adv. Adi Raz discusses divorce from her legal experience at the Center, below center, Adv. Osnat Karplus also discusses examples from her case experience at the Center.



**מרכז דקמן כותיף עם המרכז לחקיקה ומחקר
מתכנני' למסגרת כנסים סוגי - שולחן עול במסגרת**

**"לא הכל נשאר במשפחה" -
חסידי החקיקה בדין הביטור על דיני המשפחה בישראל**

המפגש יתקיים א'היום שלישי י"ב באב תשע"ה (2015.7.28)
בין השעות 9:00-12:00

חדר סגל 201 קומה ב', בנין 300, המכללה למשפחה, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

9:00-9:30
התכנסות והחלפת בוקר

9:30-9:45
דברי ברכה

מוסי' שחר לימשיך, דיקן המכללה למשפחה, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן
מוסי' רות הלפרין-קדרי, ראשת מרכז דקמן לקידום מעמד האישה,
המכללה למשפחה, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן
ד"ר ענת פלג, מנהלת המרכז לחקיקה ומחקר,
המכללה למשפחה, אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

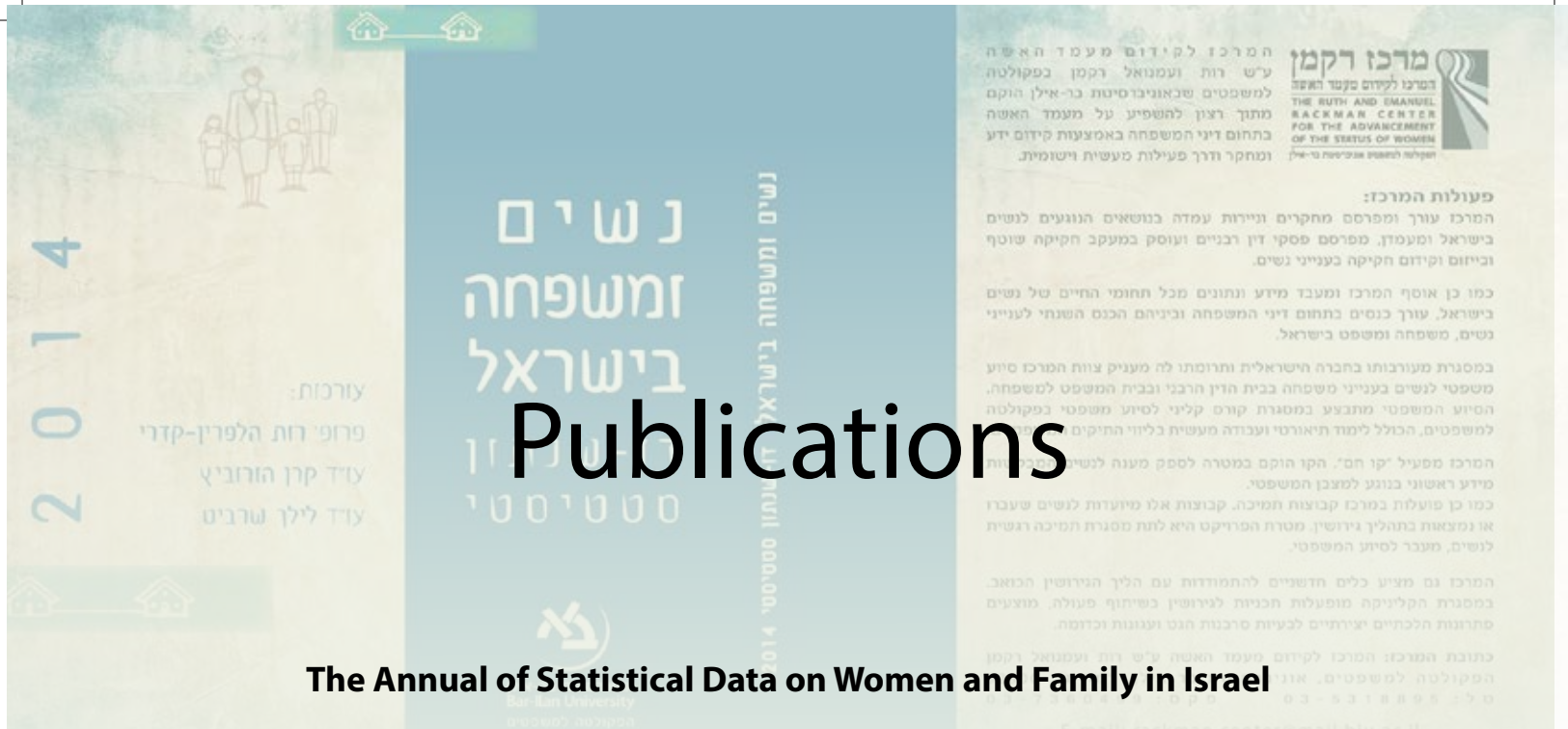
9:45-10:15
"מבט אישי - נשים בהליכי בירואי ישראל 2015"
מראיות ענת סרגוסי, ועורכת עיתונות ומסמכת

10:15-10:45
"הישראלית של הברואי בישראל"
מוסי' רות הלפרין-קדרי

10:45-12:00
"חקיקה של החקיקה וחינוך דיני המשפחה"
שולחן עול דין חובים בהגות ענת סרגוסי

הארוחת ייעור בגניית ד"ר גלית שחול, ע"ד. מכללת מרכז דקמן
הערוכת אים פוסט לפרוב. הנכנסה לחוקיקה ומחקר

מקד המידע לשרות: *9192 | biu.ac.il | f



Publications

The Annual of Statistical Data on Women and Family in Israel

This was the fourth Rackman Center's Annual of Statistical Data on Women and Family in Israel. The publishing of this volume was delayed due to several reasons, but fortunately, we overcame the hindrances and finally completed this undoubtedly significant accomplishment.

There is probably no need to emphasize the importance of gathering and assembling data within the creation of bodies of knowledge, the structuring of information and planning processes. Data is a valuable resource and an essential tool for the formation of policy and planning in every field, and particularly in a domain requiring social change such as the promotion of gender equality. The accessibility of data in Israel has been significantly improved following the enactment and application of the Freedom of Information Law (1998) but, as we have contended before, there are still quite many public institutions commanding substantial data which do not present this data on the basis of gender-oriented segmentation. Such is, for example, the court system with the ample litigation data gathered within it. We are again realizing that the lack of gender-oriented segmentation of the civil courts' data is preventing, for example, comparison of the litigation dynamics in the family courts and religious courts. Although the rabbinical courts do provide some gender-oriented segmentation, thus further stressing the lack of it in the civil court system, the processed data provided by them is quite fractional and fails to shed full light upon the gender-oriented aspects of the judicial litigation pertaining to divorce and Family Law.



The Annual provides the fullest information possible regarding one of the most significant subjects to women in Israel: women in the family, and the relations between women and family. In addition to the methodical presentation of accessible data from different resources such as The National Insurance Institute and The Central Bureau of Statistics, the Annual continues to present exclusive data, some of it never presented before!

If you would like your own copy, please contact: publications.rackman@gmail.com

הדין והדיין

פסקי דין רבניים בנושאי משפחה

The Law and its Decisor: Rabbinical Court Decisions in Family Matters



Ha Din VeHadayan The Law and its Decisor

Together with The Center for Women's Justice, we published the "HaDin VeHadayan" - the Law and its Decisor, made possible through the ongoing generous support of Mr and Mrs Romie Tager, QC, London, England.

The first issue was published in February 2003, and each issue contains summaries of cases and full rabbinical court decisions in family matters.

This publication consistently offers crucial access to Rabbinical Court holdings. The importance of this project is twofold: first, from a legal professionals' perspective, these cases are now available to all lawyers and judges involved in family law. More than one lawyer has shared with us how this information was used as evidence in court. Secondly, the publication of rabbinical court decisions and deliberations will contribute to an increased public awareness of both problems and potential solutions, while serving as an internal review mechanism.

This Years issues contained ruings under the following topics:

ISSUE 37: Custody, property, Get cancellation, Get conditions, Divorce fees

ISSUE 38: Divorce fees, civil marriage, custody, property, race for jurisdiction, damages claims, Get conditions

ISSUE 39: International authority, Divorce fees, Get conditions, Get cancellation, race for jurisdiction.

פרסום זה התאפשר על עזרת דומי תיגר (QC) ורעייתו אסתר מלונדון, אנגליה. This publication was made possible through the generous support of Mr. Romie Tager, QC, and his wife Esther, London, England.





Staff Leadership



Professor Ruth Halperin-Kaddari - Founding Head. Ruth is a senior lecturer at Bar Ilan University's Law School in Feminist Jurisprudence and Bioethics. A graduate of Yale Law School under a Fulbright Scholarship, Professor Kaddari is co-founder of Kolech - the Religious Women's Forum and the Israeli Association for Gender and Feminist Studies, and serves on the board and legal advisory committees of a wide range of women's organizations in Israel. She was awarded the US State Department's International Woman of Courage Award and is a former Vice-President of UN CEDAW Committee, on which she remains an active member this year.



Dr. Galit Shaul - CEO since April 2014. Galit is a lawyer by training and holds a Ph.D. in criminology from the L.U.de.S. University of Human Sciences and Technology of Lugano (Switzerland). In the past she held various positions in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services, among them: Director of Volunteer Services in the northern region and consultant to the Deputy Director General of the Ministry. In her most recent position Galit was Director of Volunteer Services at the Ministry.



Adv. Adi Raz - Head of the Legal Aid Clinic and Collaborative Divorce. Adi earned her L.L.B. in The College of Management, and did her legal internship in one of Israel's most prominent family law offices. For four intensive years, she worked in a family law office, and became highly specialized and professional, both through her daily work and the many cases she represented, and through the many professional training programs in which she participated. She recently gained an LLM in Law and Mediation at Bar Ilan University and heads our Collaborative Divorce department.



Adv. Osnat Karplus - Legal Aid Clinic Lawyer. Osnat earned her L.L.B. from Netanya Academic College. Osnat began her career in criminal law and then spent 5 years working in personal status and family law before joining us.



Adv. Shay Zilberberg - Legal Aid Clinic Lawyer. Shay earned his L.L.B. from Bar Ilan University. Shay did his internship in the Legal aid Clinic and has stayed on as a certified lawyer.



Adv. Keren Horowitz - Head of Legislation. Keren joined us in May 2014. Keren earned her L.L.B. in Law from Tel Aviv University and a master's degree (B.Sc.) in Computer Science from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Keren did her legal internship at the Ehud Shiloni law office and worked as a lawyer specializing in labor law at the Herzog Fox and Neeman law office. Today, she regularly participates in various Knesset committees and submits recommendations on bills and laws in family law.



Adv. Osnat Prinz - Legal Aid Clinic Lawyer and Head of the Legal Aid Hotline. Osnat received her L.L.B. from The Academic Center of Law, Hod Hasharon. She was a self-employed family lawyer before joining us and prior to that worked in Family Law for seven years. We look forward to her continuing to work with us. She believes that the fact that Rackman Center is both a center providing legal aid and a part of academia, contributes greatly to both her and the law students that take part in the legal aid clinic.

Board of Directors

We would like to thank Professor Yaffa Zilberschatz, Professor Tova Cohen and Professor Noam Zohar who have just completed their term on our outgoing board of Directors. Their advice and support has been much appreciated and we have been privileged to have them.

Our new Board of Directors:



Professor Shahar Lifshitz

Continuing as Chair of our Board, Prof. Shahar Lifshitz is the Dean of Bar Ilan University Law School. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute, where he co-directs the project on Human Rights in Judaism. His research fields are family law and contract law.



Professor Shmuel Feiner

Prof Feiner is a senior Lecturer in Jewish History at Bar Ilan University. He is also head of the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem



Dr Ronit Ir-Shai

Dr. Ronit Irshai is one of a select cadre of scholars exploring what she terms the "dynamite combination" of halakha and feminist thought, she is a sought-after speaker, author of an innovative work on fertility and Jewish law, and activist in the Orthodox Jewish feminist organization Kolech. She is academic advisor for the Gender Studies Program at BIU.



Professor Rachel Dekel

A leading member of the School of Social Work, Professor Rachel Dekel's team's research focuses on coping and adjustment following traumatic events and their implications on the survivor, family, therapist and community.

Conclusion

Thank You & a Look into the Future

Once again, this has been an exciting year for the Rackman Center.

With our utmost thanks to our selfless staff who give their all in order to provide our clients the best service and in order to make a real difference towards our goals in making legal and social change for women in Family Law in Israel.

Of course, none of this could be achieved without the support of Bar Ilan University, our generous donors, our fabulous grant partners, supporters and friends.

2016 brings a brand new project on an international scale, titled;

“Realising Women’s Human Rights and Access to Justice in Family Law in Israel” .

After a lot of hard work and strong competition, we are thrilled to have been awarded a grant specifically for this project, by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) – Israel. We have attached a summary of this project to the end of this report.

We look forward to updating you on our work, achievements and progress throughout the upcoming year.

Thank you!





European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
(EIDHR) – Israel

“Realising Women’s Human Rights and Access to Justice in Family Law in Israel”

From a broad perspective, Israeli women share much of the de-facto discriminations, hardships and hurdles faced by women in other industrialized countries. There are, however, two distinct factors which make the situation for women in Israel more challenging than for their counterparts: the on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the nexus between religion and the State. The proposed action falls within the framework of the latter, as it has direct legal bearings on women’s rights and gender (in)equality, primarily in the area of family law. In fact, from a purely legal perspective, this is where Israel is unique among the industrialized countries in maintaining formal-legal discrimination against women by giving religious law exclusive jurisdiction over marriage and divorce. Due to the inherently patriarchal nature of all religious laws, all women in Israel, whether Jewish, Muslim, Druze or Christian, find themselves subject to discriminatory laws in the most critical area of family relations that has the vastest ramifications on any woman’s life.

As noted by CEDAW’s Concluding Observations to Israel’s fifth Periodic Report in 2011, Israeli women’s human rights are violated in this area in a number of ways. First and foremost, is the right to exit a union, namely the possibility of divorce. Significantly, it selected this area of “Marriage and Family Relations” as one of the two Follow-Up issues, signalling it as a top priority concern to be tackled by Israel on an immediate basis.

It is in this context that the Rackman Center at Bar Ilan University operates and has designed the proposed action, “Realising Women’s Human Rights and Access to Justice in Family Law in Israel”. The Center has been actively working since its establishment with the goal of bringing an end to gender discrimination and inequality in Israeli society, primarily in the area of family law, which – as explained above – is still the Achilles’ heel for gender equality in Israel. Our work so far has been characterized by linking research with activism; legislative work with litigation; public advocacy with individual support; and we believe it is now time for linking the domestic with the international, by using the international norms and obligations as baseline for mobilisation of legal change. Notwithstanding the obvious differences, CEDAW’s Concluding Observations on Marriage and Family Relations (which relied inter alia on the Rackman Center’s Alternative Report), present an unprecedented opportunity by providing a valuable tool for the advocacy work in this area. By becoming party to CEDAW, Israel took upon itself to fulfil the obligations set therein, including with respect to marriage and family relations (notwithstanding its reservation).

The Action is designed to promote these obligations using new activities and increased impact indicators for our on-going work. We have defined the overall objective as follows: To realize women’s human rights in family law in Israel with emphasis on concerns by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) regarding ‘discrimination against women in the context of divorce’ due to the fact that religious laws have exclusive jurisdiction over marriage and divorce.

This overall objective will be directed at the following target groups and final beneficiaries:

- Israeli women of all religions who are going through the divorce process
- Members of the Parliament (Knesset) and government officials
- CEDAW Committee
- Family lawyers, divorce professionals and law students

To focus this objective and maximize the effect on the target groups and final beneficiaries, we have identified the following specific objectives and results. Based on our experience and skills, we believe that these objectives and results will be the most effective in creating real change on the ground during the Action period for these groups.

Specific objectives:

1. Bringing Israel closer to international standards as set out by the UN CEDAW Committee and raising awareness of these standards among policy makers.
2. Facilitating and easing access to justice in family law in Israel for women of all religions.
3. Sharing knowledge with other women's rights organizations in Israel and internationally to develop tools and protocols together.

The Action builds upon our experience by introducing new elements to increase our overall impact and influence. The specific changes and new elements we built into this Action include:

- Increasing the number of MK's and government officials that we are in regular contact with;
- Building a group of MKs that are committed to promoting women's rights in family law;
- Narrowing Israel's reservation to Article 16;
- Creating a pool of volunteers to offer emotional support and free legal support;
- Increasing the impact of the services we provide in the form of free legal representation and the legal hotline;
- Surveying the impact of these services on raising awareness and reducing Get extortion;
- Making our legal assistance available to thousands of women for free through Kol Zchut's rights website
- Cooperating and sharing knowledge with international organizations.

We are confident that this new horizon, together with our experience from the past 13 years, will produce results that work to change the face of women's rights in family law in Israel.



The Annual report was prepared by Deborah Dickson, Resource Development Coordinator, The Rackman Center

