



HIAS IN ISRAEL

Founded: 1950

Staff Size: 10

Country Director: Sivan Carmel

Office Location: Tel Aviv

REFUGEES IN ISRAEL

Israel is currently host to **more than 39,000 asylum seekers**, the majority of whom are from Sudan and Eritrea. Many of the African asylum seekers entered Israel through the Sinai after a life-threatening journey at the hands of human traffickers. Their ability to exercise basic human rights, access asylum, and live in dignity and safety in Israel has been an ongoing challenge for over a decade. Government policies and legislation are mostly focused on deterring migrants from entering the country and encouraging those who are seeking asylum to leave the country. Detention and deportation are a constant threat. Although some refugees have been in the country for several years and speak Hebrew fluently, they still have no prospects of local integration and lack stable immigration status and access to basic rights.



The extremely low recognition rates of the Israeli asylum system (less than 1%) make it nearly impossible to be recognized as a refugee and granted the rights that refugee status entails. To date, only seven Eritreans and two Sudanese have been granted refugee status. By comparison, the global recognition rate of Eritreans is over 80% and that of Sudanese is over 60%.

HIAS BENEFICIARIES IN ISRAEL

During the last three years, HIAS has assisted hundreds of asylum seekers in legal proceedings, including detention, asylum and domestic violence cases. HIAS prioritizes individuals that are vulnerable such as

victims of torture and trafficking, single parents, unaccompanied minors and LGBTI asylum seekers. HIAS also facilitates the resettlement of some cases to access safety outside of Israel.

HIAS SERVICES IN ISRAEL

Legal Services

For many of the asylum seekers in Israel the stakes are high — they face government proceedings that could deprive them of liberty and protection or leave them separated from their families. Being represented in these proceedings by legal service providers can significantly improve the outcome. Securing legal status is vital to refugees being able to heal and rebuild. It provides freedom from detention, access to services and public benefits, the ability to seek employment and important legal rights. In addition to help with asylum claims, HIAS provides other forms of legal aid to asylum seekers including legal assistance regarding family reunification, domestic violence humanitarian requests and other proceedings.



In 2014, HIAS launched a program to train and mentor young Israeli professionals in the legal field who recognize the plight of asylum seekers in Israel by providing pro bono legal representation. Through the Rukin Fellows program, HIAS has built a cadre of outstanding lawyers and law students dedicated to providing legal services to those most in need. This network has grown rapidly and today spans over 100 law fellows and volunteers.

The project's objective is to increase access to high quality and free legal representation. We believe that increasing judicial review in a critical mass of proceedings can change the system, make it more fair and more in line with Israel's obligations under international refugee law.

Scholarship Program

For the last three decades HIAS Israel has been running a [scholarship program for students who have immigrated to Israel \(olim\)](#). The HIAS Scholarship Program has awarded funds for higher education tuition to student olim based on academic achievement, financial need and community service.

PARTNERS

- African Refugee Development Center (ARDC)**
- ASSAF (Refugee Aid Organization)**
- Eritrean Women's Community Center (EWCC)**
- The Geshar Mental Health Clinic**
- The Hotline for Refugees and Migrants**
- Jerusalem African Community Center (JACC)**
- The Migration Clinic at the Ramat Gan Center for Law and Business**
- Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)**
- The Tel Aviv Municipality Aid and Information center for Migrants (MESILA)**
- Tel Aviv University Refugee Rights Program**
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**