



New Profile: The Movement to Demilitarize Israeli Society 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear partners, supporters, and friends,

We hope you and your loved ones are all safe.

The sharp escalation of military violence in Israel and Palestine that began in October continues to take the lives of thousands of Gazans, destroy most of the Strip's infrastructure, and traumatize Israeli and Palestinian society. The lines drawn between the military and civilian life have almost completely disappeared. The Israeli government is waging an endless war, with members of the cabinet releasing public statements with genocidal and ethnic cleansing inclinations, which are also being echoed by Israeli mainstream media.

We call for an immediate end to the war. This violence continues decades of differentiation, killing, and destruction that we are working to prevent and dismantle. In our eyes, it is evidence of the necessity of de-militarizing the region and renouncing military actions in favor of dialogue, justice, and equality alternatives.

Since the beginning of the military offensive in Gaza, the Israeli Military has initiated a massive recruitment of reservists, with almost 300,000 people drafted. Civilians in Gaza are in the midst of a humanitarian crisis, without access to clean water, food, medicine, and shelter from Israel's ongoing bombardment, and over 100 Israeli hostages are still held captive by Hamas. Mainstream Israeli media outlets are blatantly ignoring the Humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the mass death of Palestinian civilians by the Israeli Military. Meanwhile, Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to escalating violence, displacement, and detainment by soldiers and Israeli-Jewish settlers, who are cynically utilizing the situation and the international media's focus on the military offensive in Gaza to deepen their attacks on the livelihood of Palestinians in the West Bank.

Since the beginning of Israel's military aggression, New Profile has been subjected to constant digital attacks on our website and members' electronic devices. In one instance, hackers breached our website and deleted all of our content. We retrieved and reuploaded the content on the same day and enhanced our website's security measures. We have learned that other like-minded organizations in Israel also experienced such attacks. Such attacks are part of a wide attempt in Israel, executed by the Parliament, the Police, the military, mainstream media, and right-wing organizations, aimed at silencing critical voices that oppose the continuation of bloodshed and offer non-militaristic alternatives.

As evident from the ongoing military offensive in Gaza and the mass armament of Israeli civilians since October, militarism continued to be a major component of life in Israel, and its manifestations in civil society intensified. Yet, we remain steadfast in our goal of a demilitarized, non-violent, and peaceful society. Especially in these dark times, we see the importance of our work in resisting the war machine.



New Profile is an explicitly anti-militaristic, feminist political movement. We aim to counteract the militaristic and patriarchal impact of the army on the lives of women, Palestinians, marginalized Jewish Israelis, and society at large through our Counseling Network, Education and Outreach programming, The Database of Israeli Military and Security Export, and our periodic research projects.

From the team of New Profile, we sincerely wish our supporters, donors, and friends a year of good health, peace of mind, and decreased presence of military, weapons, and war in our day-to-day lives.

In solidarity,

Nissi Peli and Renato Beginsky
Development Co-Coordinator



We are building and offering alternative education.



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New Profile challenges the militarization of Israeli society and advocates for a more civilian and less patriarchal society. Our work with professionals who work with youth challenges the prevalent notion that enlistment is a measure of success in life and that one's military service is the chief index reflecting one's worth in Israeli society. Our work with the public, through lectures, seminars, conferences, and workshops, offers an alternative discourse and ways of thinking about the roles of civil and democratic society. Our online presence on social media platforms and our website offer a wide range of materials that promote critical thinking about the military's role in society.

Our support for youth seeking exemption from military service offers individuals and the public a chance to question the militarism in Israeli society critically and legitimizes one's decision not to join the military or discontinue military service.

Our research project, DIMSE - The Database of Israeli Military and Security Export, seeks to provide accessible, credible, and comprehensive information about Israel's arms exports and the human rights violations committed by the countries and militaristic bodies to which they are imported. The database's work is rooted in a belief in the importance of accessible information for use by the public, journalists, activists, researchers, decision-makers, and local and global communities affected by the Israeli military and defense industry.

IN 2023, NEW PROFILE DID THE FOLLOWING:

In 2023, New Profile's Counseling Network, led by Or Ben David and Inna Lebedinsky, supported over **1,376 people who independently chose to refuse enlistment** to the Israeli military for reasons of political or conscientious objection, family financial obligations and mental health or physical health conditions. Of the 1,376 people who approached New Profile in gaining an exemption from the military, **496 identified as women**. 263 parents approached us on behalf of their children. Our Counseling Network was supported by **24 highly skilled and trained volunteers**, to whom we offer our sincere gratitude. It should be noted that the number of counselees in 2023 was significantly higher than that mentioned above.

The first months of the war, especially the first month, were very intense, and the Counseling Network received a large number of applications in a very short time. Along with the mental difficulties of dealing with the aftermath of the events of October 7th, the military offensive in Gaza that followed, and the complex and challenging cases of counselees that applied to the network at that time, it became challenging to monitor the number of applicants to the network closely. In addition, a significant number of the network's volunteers felt that they needed a break from the counseling because it was mentally difficult for them to deal with the strenuous cases, in addition to the mental challenges brought up by the war. This also required additional resources from the Network's coordinator, including seeking and training new volunteers. The Counseling Network team decided it was more important to prioritize the Counseling work rather than keep exact track of the numbers. As soon as it was mentally possible, the coordinator resumed closely monitoring the number of applicants.



Since the general elections in Israel that took place in November 2022, and until the escalation of violence in October 2023, our Counseling Network saw a significant **rise in inquiries from teenagers, parents, and people in active military service**, who declared that they are not ready to serve in the Israeli military under the current government and its efforts to lead an anti-democratic authoritarian coup. As civil protests against the government's fascist actions grew, such inquiries to our Network increased. We also saw greater interest in our ideas and work from the Israeli mainstream, while many challenged the role of the Military in civil society and legitimized military refusal as an effective political tool to combat the State's unlawful and immoral actions.

The surge of military violence in Israel and Palestine that began in October was a devastating turning point and put an abrupt end to the civil protests against the government and the growing trend of refusal in the Israeli mainstream.

Since the mass recruitment of people to reserve military service that took place as part of the Israeli military offensive in Gaza, our Counselling Network noticed a high increase in requests for support from soldiers in compulsory service and reserve soldiers. **Many of those who contacted the network explained their decision to not join the military or discontinue their compulsory or reserve service as a result of the war, which worsened the mental state of many, created distrust in the military and its concern for their lives.** Other explain their decision to discontinue military service as a result of a newfound realization, with the many Israelis dead and others captivated in Gaza, that there is a profound importance in the preservation of life, as opposed to the military's disconcert for the lives of Israeli soldiers, kidnapped civilians, and lives of civilians in Gaza. The sharp increase in cases of reservists and deserters has brought us to train counsellors to support such cases specifically.

The risk factors for young people subjected to compulsory military service and compulsory reserve service have grown significantly because of the ongoing military violence, the military's wartime policies towards soldiers seeking exemptions, and the massive recruitment of reservists. These have brought a surge of mental and physical health challenges for many, as well as socio-economic downfalls.



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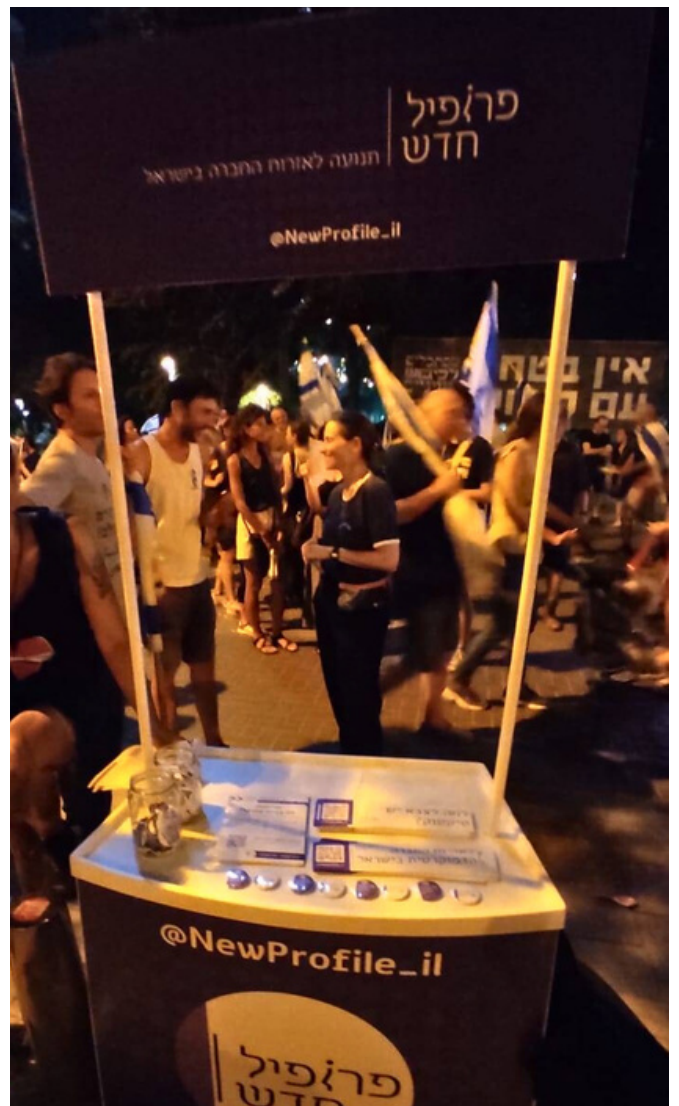
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Also, in 2023, Our legal department, led by Inna Lebedinsky, supported **76 people in complex legal cases**, including evasion and desertion, which under Israeli law is considered a criminal, prisonable offense. In 2023, we saw **an increase of 85% in cases** compared to 2022, with **100% success with all legal cases**, meaning all have received or are in the process of exemption. The legal team continued offering legal counseling to many beneficiaries, most of whom are young immigrants, including refugees from Ukraine and Russia. Such support was given to these beneficiaries in various cases, including preventing unlawful discrimination in employment due to partial or nonexistent military service, unlawful discrimination in admission to universities and colleges, and more. Continuing counseling after the exemption process is over is an essential aspect of our work, ensuring our support remains intact in our ward's civilian lives to ensure their rights are not violated due to not completing compulsory military service.

Also in 2023, our Education and Outreach team, led by Dana Yair and Rotem Biran, hosted **14 education and outreach events**, including our conference on militarism in education, a workshop on Gender and Militarism, two lectures about militarism in Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a workshop on Cybersecurity & the Occupation and two events on Education and militarism.

The team also organized an activist action with a group of 15 students from Tel Aviv University, opposing the participation of weapon manufacturing companies at the university's annual technological job fair. The group built a fake stand of a weapon company outside of the official fair, where they spoke to students and academics about the harmful and unethical actions of the weapon companies involved in the job fair. Weapons are often present throughout Israeli campuses, depicting another layer of the militarism present in all aspects of Israeli civilian life. The team also organized a demonstration in front of the Russian embassy to protest the recruitment orders sent by the Israeli military to over 1000 war refugees from Russia and Ukraine.



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In 2023, participants in our events totaled **624** individuals, including teachers, professionals working with youth, public attendees, and activists from other social and human rights organizations in Israel and Palestine. The team also saw an increase in social media followers, with 136 new followers on Facebook and 720 new followers on Instagram, totaling **3,749** followers on both platforms by the end of the year. This was a **28%** increase in followers on both social media platforms compared to the beginning of the year. The increase in followers resulted from our continuous efforts to harness social media to expose a wider audience to New Profile's discourse and activities. After the escalation of military violence in October, the team decided to further direct their efforts towards promoting non-militaristic alternatives to the war, including calls for a ceasefire and exposing our Israeli Hebrew-speaking audience to the effects Israel's military aggression has on civilians in Gaza.

During the weekly demonstrations in Tel Aviv against the judicial overhaul and the violent and fascist actions initiated by Israel's current extreme right-wing government, the team organized stands where they spoke with many demonstrators and handed out antimilitarist materials, including stickers, pins, and flyers. The stand was part of our publicity efforts for our Militarism in Education conference and our attempt at exposing radical and anti-militaristic ideas to the Israeli mainstream.

In mid-August, **we held our Militarism in Education conference in Tel Aviv, attended by 50 individuals** - educators, activists, and youth. The conference program included a lecture by Rela Mazali, one of New Profile's founders; three workshops - one about myth-busting, another about critical pedagogy, and a third about the different ways parents can influence their children's educational institutions; Another workshop about Political Imagination was held for all participants of the conference.

The workshop about critical pedagogy involved a discussion about the intersection of critical pedagogy from the premises of Paulo Freire and Mizrahi feminism. The workshop presented the theories and offered tools for educators to implement in their teaching methodology. The workshop about the ways parents can influence their children's educational institutions offered important tools for parents to organize and combat militarism in schools and other educational institutions. The workshop about political imagination invited participants to understand the present and sharpen their intentions for the future they want, free from the shackles of the present reality for civilians in Israel, which is often shaped by war and militarism. The participants were invited to imagine different scenarios such as: "What can a non-militaristic society look like?", "How would we like it to look?", "Who am I in this future?" and "How does it feel there?".

Afterwards, participants split into groups, where they discussed the different ways in which militarism affects the education system and what can be done to oppose it; Lastly, there was a lecture-performance about the ways the military system maintains and worsens inequality in Israeli society. As part of the preparation for the conference, we produced a [video](#) about the history and missions of our movement.





Our research project, DIMSE - The Database of Israeli Military and Security Export, led by Yaara Bengur Alaluf, saw great interest throughout the year, featuring **information about 56 countries** that use Israeli military products, 18 Israeli weapon and cyber technology companies exporting arms, and **8 different types of military technologies**, from drones to cybersecurity. Additionally, 20 **major public events and lectures** were carried out with **over 113 participants**.

In light of the Israeli offensive in Gaza, DIMSE's steering committee decided to shift a part of the project's resources from its prime focus on Israeli arms export to exposing the weapons being used against the people of Gaza and southern Lebanon. This change of focus was based, first, on the understanding that there is a demand for information on current Israeli use of weapons by human rights organizations and journalists wishing to monitor Israeli war crimes, and second, on the demand of activists wanting to stop military export from the US and Europe to Israel (both to the forces attacking in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Syria and to settlers in the West Bank).

In November 2023, DIMSE and AFSC's database "Investigate" joined forces in tracking the weapons used in these attacks and the companies that provided them. The main product of this cooperation is a resource titled "The Companies Profiting from Israel's 2023 Attack on Gaza," which is being continuously updated, providing information on the states and companies supplying Israel with massive amounts of weapons being used to wage devastating aerial and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip, killing more than 20,000 Palestinians - mostly women and children - at a historic pace.

The project also maintained close connections and collaborations with other like-minded initiatives and is a part of coalitions with different researchers and activist groups worldwide, including Coalition of Groups against Arms Fairs, Abolish Frontex, Coalition against arms export to Mexico, WRI and AFSC Investigate, as well as local groups in Palestine/Israel, of them One Climate, Yanshoof, WhoProfits, 7amleh, Amnesty International Israel, and the Association for Civil Rights Israel.

Lastly, in 2023, **we undertook a research project** to delineate the various manifestations of militarization within Israeli academic institutions and their cooperations with public and private militaristic organizations, including the Israeli Military and the military and defense industry. Our methodology involved conducting interviews with academic faculty and students, submitting free information requests to the Israeli Military and selected universities, engaging in open-resource research, distributing questionnaires, and analyzing the collected responses. Our efforts culminated in a comprehensive report in Hebrew, which will be published in the coming weeks.

SUPPORTED
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3,749
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ONLINE PRESENCE:

Also, in 2023, activists of New Profile were published several times in the media.

Rela Mazali, co-founder and an ongoing member of New Profile, was interviewed in an [article](#) concerning the loosening of legal gun licensing in Israel and its implications on a society with deep roots of militarism and violence that was published in The Media Line in January 2023 (in English). Rela Mazali was interviewed in another [article](#) published in the Haaretz newspaper in October, which also dealt with the same topic, about the peak of applications for gun licenses by civilians following the escalation of violence that took place that month (in English).

An [article](#) titled 'So you decided to refuse [military service]? Excellent. Here are some things you need to know', published in the online Magazine Local Call in March 2023 in response to the sharp increase in people seeking exemption from military service due to the attempted regime coup, presents the work of New Profile's counseling network. Or Ben-David, New Profile's Counselling Network coordinator, is interviewed in the article (in Hebrew).

Our work assisting Russian refugees who flee Russia from war, only to find themselves forcefully drafted into the Israeli military, was reported in an [article](#) by The Moscow Times in August 2023, informing Russian-speaking people who face similar situations and need assistance about the existence of the counseling network (in English). Or Ben David also wrote a piece about our work with Russian and Ukrainian refugees drafted into the Israeli military, published on the website of our partner organization Connection e.V. (in [English](#) and [German](#)).

Or Ben David was also interviewed about refusal in wartime for an [article](#) published in November by the Korean news outlet Raven (in Korean).



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FEEDBACK:

In our optional survey issued to users of the counseling network, respondents replied:

81% report that they shared their exemption experience with family and friends. **58%** of respondents say that their networks of family and friends were influenced by their choice to obtain a military exemption and consequently became more accepting of their decision not to serve in the army.

The information provided by New Profile proved effective, with **23%** of respondents saying, "I used to think that everyone should serve in the army, but today I disagree." **77%** responded that they always believed that non-conscription was a legitimate choice for some or all.

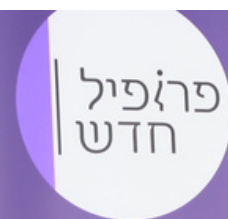
42% of respondents said they would be interested in joining political activity related to anti-militarism.

Written feedback from our optional surveys included the following:

"My counselor helped me a lot and provided me with information that helped me deal with all the pressure of the process. She was there every moment I needed her. Even when she was busy, she knew how to make time for me."

"The counselor accompanied me from the first moment. She asked questions relevant to my situation and provided me with information accordingly. The legal aid coordinator looked for me while I was incarcerated. After my incarceration, she accompanied me with professionalism and kindness at the highest level. The information and the human form of accompaniment were extremely significant."

"She [the counselor] helped me a lot. I approached her with all kinds of questions and concerns related to my complex situation. She gave me professional, well-founded, and detailed assistance in everything I needed, all with patience and care, with questions during the process and phone calls before meetings with the army officials. I felt that she had a lot of experience. Without the understanding the counselor provided me of how the system works and is conducted, I wouldn't have been able to be exempted, so that was super significant. I was also confident that I knew how to approach the situation. Thank you very much for that!!!"



למען חברה אזרחית
משוחררת
מהשפעה צבאית



A RECENT STORY OF SUCCESS:

R., a military observer [a soldier stationed in an observation post] in her mandatory military service, was positioned in one of the military bases in the south of Israel that Hamas militants breached on October 7th. On that day, R. witnessed some of her friends being murdered. As a result, R. was in an extremely difficult mental state - she couldn't sleep or eat and experienced constant anxiety and post-traumatic flashbacks. R. asked her commanders to meet with a Military Mental Health Officer in the hope that she would be able to receive some assistance. After a long waiting period, her commanders finally granted her a meeting with a Mental Health Officer.

R. was experiencing acute distress and wanted to understand if she could receive any assistance or relief in light of her situation. The Officer replied: "It's hard for everyone. Deal with it. We are at war". She was then sent back to her military position at the base without any kind of assistance or time off. Moreover, there was a shortage of soldiers, which forced her to work more hours than usual. The conversation with the Mental Health Officer worsened R.'s mental state, and she applied to New Profile for counseling. The counselor conducted several long phone calls with R., including emotional support and vital information. R. decided to return home from the base without permission from her commanders, even though the counselor explained the possible risks of unapproved absence from service during wartime.

R. admitted herself to an emergency care facility for a few days, after which she returned to the base, where she was allowed to meet again with a Mental Health Officer. The officer was again very cynical and condescending but understood the seriousness of her situation, referring her to a Military Psychiatrist. Shortly after she met with the Military Psychiatrist, R. was granted an exemption. The counseling was very significant for R. - she received a great deal of emotional support, information about the exemption process, and the dissolution of the blame and guilt.



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LOOKING FORWARD:

This year started with an uncertainty of when this war will end, and it's still hard to measure its long-term impact on Israeli and Palestinian society, the region, and the fostering of non-militaristic and peace values. We intend to partner with other organizations and be active on the ground to advance discourse against weapons on university campuses, conduct educational events with a focus on the political imagination of peace and non-militaristic approaches to conflicts, and be a platform for political and feminist resistance against militaristic, violent, racist and oppressive institutions, policies and practices. This requires ongoing work and focus on Social Media presence, educational programming, and research to reach many more people and engage those who wouldn't usually participate in such programs.

We will continue to provide updated, reliable, and accessible information through publications, our social media accounts, and our website. We aim to expand our reach to TikTok and other platforms widely used by youth in Israel. Overall, we believe that our ongoing consolidated online presence in the last year will allow us to reach a broader audience in Israel, Palestine, and abroad and raise more awareness of militarization, its consequences, and civilian alternatives.

We call for an immediate end to the war and sincerely hope that our work contributes to dismantling the war machine.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR DONORS WHO SUPPORTED US IN 2023:

Bread For the World · IHL Human Rights Fund · Kurve Wustrow · Mennonite Central Committee · American Friends Service Committee · Women's World Day of Prayer · Disrupt · British Shalom-Salaam Trust · The Radley Charitable Trust · SIVMO · Haëlla · The Radley Charitable Trust · EAPPI UK & Ireland · Women for Peace Switzerland · Palästina - Friedensstiftung Rachel Corrie · Rosa Luxemburg Foundation · Refuser Solidarity Network · Individual Donations from Israel and abroad

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US:

Like most movements working for social change, New Profile relies on donations to cover its running costs.

Your contribution is highly needed and appreciated:

Support us through PayPal [here](#).

In the US: Make a tax-deductible donation via the Refuser Solidarity Network [here](#).

In Canada: Make a tax-deductible donation via La Galerie Fokus: Fokus Galerie Charity Registration No. 132450230 RR 0001 Plateau Mont-Royal 68, Ave. Duluth E. Montreal, Quebec H3W 1G8

Send a wire transfer to our bank account: Bank Hapoalim, Account No. 421120, Branch 630, Sokolov Street 90, Ramat Hasharon, Israel, 4726405. Swiftcode: "POALILIT", IBAN: IL21012-6300-0000-0042-1120 (Note: Following new banking regulations, you must specify the IBAN code in any money transfer for it to go through). Please kindly notify us by e-mail or using our contact form.



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