

Policy Paper

**Bill for Stricter Penalty for Sexual Offenses Committed for Nationalist Motives
(Legislative Amendment), 2023**

Submitted to the joint National Security and Gender equality committee

The above Bill expands the Counter-Terrorism Law to include sexual offenses as defined in the Penal Law, with the aim of allowing more severe punishment for perpetrators of such an attack with national motives. The Abraham Initiatives strongly opposes the Bill for the following reasons:

1. The very Bill creates a false narrative of a "phenomenon" for which there is no evidence of its existence and there is no consensus on it. As far as is known, the motives for attacking a Jewish woman by an Arab assailant and attacking an Arab woman at the hands of a Jewish assailant, stem from a need to control and use violence and do not stem from nationalistic motives.
2. As for cases of sexual assault which are nationally motivated, there already exists an answer in existing legislation. The Counter-Terrorism Law states that the offender commits an offense according to section 1144 (a) of the Penal Code ("an offense motivated by racism as defined in point A.1", which states that "racism - persecution, humiliation, humiliation, showing enmity, hostility or violence, or causing harm towards the public or sections of the population, all due to color or belonging to a race or national-ethnic origin"), "the penalty for that offense shall be doubled" - the same severity in punishment the Bill in question seeks to establish.
3. The Bill seeks to brand Arab men, categorically, as violent who prey on Jewish women. This is an act of dehumanization of Arab citizens with the aim of presenting them as having a violent and dangerous nature who are a threat simply by being part of society, including around Jewish women, and not as regular citizens.
4. The Bill uses the difficult phenomenon of sexual violence in a racist manner in order to legalize Jewish supremacy. This is by relying on the national identity of the offender as the deciding factor of the severity of the crime and thus the severity of the punishment. This distinction violates the fundamental principal of equality before the law.

In conclusion, the bill makes malicious use of the justified empathy towards victims of sexual assault, with the aim of increasing the enmity between Jews and Arabs in Israel while reinforcing representation of the Arabs as violent and dangerous. **The Abraham Initiatives strongly opposes this Bill.**