



Another incident of Haredi violence against women!

ARZA expresses concern about yet another incidence of violence that concerns all of us who endeavor to see the cause of pluralism and respect for all streams of Judaism become a reality in Israel. On May 12 Noa Raz was attacked at the Be'er Sheva Central Bus Station. (See embedded article below)

Over the past several months this kind of violent behavior has escalated. It is abhorrent that physical harm is threatened and perpetrated against anyone of a non-Orthodox stream of Judaism who chooses to observe rituals and worship in their preferred manner. The disrespect shown by the haredim to women and to other Jews who do not worship as do the haredim is intolerable. We must continue to rally for pluralism and egalitarianism, to insist that the Government of Israel not be held hostage by those who claim to be the only "legitimate" Jews, and to continue to educate that how one chooses to worship is a private, not a State-mandated matter.

Watch for further updates related to this issue as they become available.

From: Women of the Wall (on Facebook – May 13-2010)

MAY 13th -- Noa Raz, a Conservative Jew in her early thirties who lives and works in Tel Aviv, was physically assaulted early Tuesday morning by an ultra-Orthodox man at the Central Bus Station in Be'er Sheva for having the imprints of tefillin (phylacteries) lines visible on her arms. She had woken up several hours earlier to pray and wrap tefillin, as is part of her daily routine. "I'm very pale, so the tefillin lines are still visible for hours afterward," she said. While she was waiting for the bus to arrive, an ultra-Orthodox man in his forties stood next to her and stared at the lines on her arms. He asked her twice if the imprints were from tefillin. She ignored him at first, then admitted they were. At that point he grabbed her hand and began to kick and strangle her while screaming "women are an abomination." She struggled, then broke free and ran to the bus which had just pulled into the station. There were several bystanders present, though Noa Raz stated that the assault happened so quickly that none had time to react. Raz arrived in Tel Aviv and sent out a message about the assault on Twitter. Dozens of people responded urged her to go to police to report what had happened. Raz contacted the police the following day, fearing that a similar incident would happen to another woman. The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) has been working with the Be'er Sheva Police and has insisted they treat Raz's assault as the hate crime that it is. To this end, IRAC has demanded that the proper resources be allocated in the search for Raz's attacker, that security camera tapes be reviewed, and that the Chief of Police for Israel's Southern District be personally involved. Anat Hoffman, Executive Director of IRAC, stated that the assault on Noa Raz for wrapping tefillin "should not be seen as an isolated incident, but as taking place within an atmosphere of growing violence toward and intimidation of women who seek to pray freely and equally. Too often these acts of violence are tolerated. The fact that this man thought it acceptable to attack a woman for performing a religious act in private is an example of the escalation of violence targeted against women and against religious pluralists in Israel. We at IRAC are pushing the Israeli police to take this investigation seriously." She added, "Noa, a member of Women of the Wall, is expected to join us tomorrow for Rosh Chodesh Sivan."