



Israel
Religious
Action
Center



Israel Movement for Reform
and Progressive Judaism
התנועה הרפורמית והתנועה מתקדמת בישראל

Gender Equality in Action

Gender Equality on the Radio

Ultra-Orthodox radio station, Kol Barama, refused to broadcast female voices, whether members of Knesset or women calling the station to ask questions. The radio station has claimed that allowing women to speak on their station will offend religious men and therefore harm the radio station financially, but this is not a valid reason to discriminate against women, and listeners were not harmed by the eventual broadcasting of women's voices.

IRAC first attempted to pressure Kol Barama to alter its exclusionary practices, but after no change we filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Kolech, which we won in September 2014. This was the first class action lawsuit related to gender exclusion and civil rights in Israel. Kol Barama appealed the decision, but in December 2015 the Supreme Court confirmed that Kol Barama's exclusion of women was unjustified and that Kolech and all women harmed by this practice can claim damages.

Kol Barama gradually began to include women more – in fact, IRAC's Executive Director, Anat Hoffman, was interviewed on the radio station. In 2018, the final ruling in this case determined that the station must pay 1 million NIS in damages for exclusion of women. The awarded money will go towards the empowerment of ultra-Orthodox women's voices in the media.

The precedent set by this class action lawsuit has paved the way for IRAC to file a class action lawsuits in other cases of discrimination.

