



# Women's Representation in Senior Positions in the Civil Service

The obligation for adequate representation of women in all roles within the Civil Service, including senior management positions, is enshrined in various legal provisions. The Women's Equal Rights Law 5711-1951, in Section 6c(a), stipulates that **in public bodies** (including government ministries and their subsidiary units), **adequate representation shall be given, under the circumstances, to the representation of women across various job types and ranks among employees, management, board of Directors, and council.**<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Section 15a(a) of the Civil Service Law (Appointments) 5719-1959 establishes that "among Civil Service employees, **across all grades and professions, in every ministry and subsidiary unit, adequate representation shall be given, under the circumstances, to the representation of both genders.**" Section 15a(b) of the same law imposes an obligation on the government to take necessary measures to promote adequate representation and to set targets for such representation.<sup>2</sup>

**These laws do not specify a target for adequate representation nor do they establish the required percentage of women to fulfill the obligation of adequate representation.** According to the Attorney General's Guidelines regarding adequate representation for certain sectors, the court determined that "the appropriate level of representation should be determined considering the nature, objectives, and special needs of the public body, and based on the distribution of available candidates from both genders suitable for the specific position in question." Furthermore, "the court raised the possibility - without explicitly ruling on it - that in the absence of proven circumstances justifying giving extra weight to one gender, 'adequate

---

<sup>1</sup> Women's Equal Rights Law, 5711-1951.

<sup>2</sup> Civil Service Law (Appointments), 5719-1959.

representation' should be interpreted as requiring equal representation for women and men," and that until equality is achieved, priority should be given to the obligation of preferential treatment for women.<sup>3</sup>

Women constitute the majority (approximately 63% in 2023) among civil servants, yet they remain a minority (45.5% in 2023) in its senior ranks.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the relative share of women decreases further at higher levels of seniority within the senior ranks (34% at the highest of the seven seniority levels in 2022).<sup>5</sup> Regarding women's representation in senior positions, Government Resolution 1697 of June 6, 2014, adopted the recommendations of the Committee for the Advancement of Women in Civil Service (Stauber Committee),<sup>6</sup> which **proposed setting a governmental target of 50% representation for women in senior positions in the Civil Service.**<sup>7</sup> Government Resolution 454 of October 18, 2020, **established measures to achieve the goal of at least 50% representation for women in senior positions.** Among the detailed steps in the resolution, it was determined that the Civil Service Commissioner would consider designating positions for women across all ranks, including the senior leadership cadre in the Civil Service.<sup>8</sup>

Generally, according to Section 19 of the Civil Service Law (Appointments), 5719-1959, appointments in the Civil Service are to be made through a tender process.<sup>9</sup> However, different mechanisms have been established for filling the most senior positions in the Civil Service: Section 12 of the aforementioned law stipulates that government ministry Directors-General are to be appointed by the government upon the recommendation of the minister in charge of that ministry, and that these appointments are exempt from the tender requirement. Additionally, Section 23 and the Appendix to the law specify positions and types of positions exempt from the tender requirement and likewise allow the government to modify this list of positions. Among these types of positions are Associate Directors-General and various position that are equivalent to that of a Director-General.<sup>10</sup>

It should be noted that the obligation for adequate representation for women in the Civil Service applies to all positions and roles, regardless of the appointment method. Thus, according to Section 15a(c) of the Civil

<sup>3</sup> Attorney General's guidelines, Attorney General's guideline No. 1.1503, Adequate Representation for Certain Sectors, March 2003, updated May 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Civil Service Commission, Gender Equality Report in the Civil Service, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Civil Service Commission, Gender Equality Report in the Civil Service, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Civil Service Commission, Report of the Committee for the Advancement of Women in Civil Service (Stauber Committee), June 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Government Resolution 1697 of the 33rd Government, Promotion and Integration of Women in Civil Service, June 8, 2016, updated: September 18, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Government Resolution 459 of the 35th Government, Promoting Adequate Representation of Women in Civil Service and Delegation of Government Authority, October 18, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Civil Service Law (Appointments), 5719-1959.

<sup>10</sup> Government Resolution 3075, Improving the Staffing Procedures for Senior Positions in the Civil Service and Amending Government Resolution - Continued Discussion, October 15, 2017; Civil Service Commission, Section 11.96 of the Civil Service Regulation Book (Takshir): Positions for which the appointment is made by the government or requires its approval, updated: June 13, 2024.

Service Law (Appointments), 5719-1959, **the provisions for adequate representation in the Civil Service "shall apply to all methods of employment and promotion, including appointment by tender, employment without a tender, and acting appointments"**.<sup>11</sup> The Attorney General's guidelines on adequate representation stipulated that **the provisions for adequate representation under the Women's Equal Rights Law apply to any appointment or selection for a position in the public service, including the appointment of a Director-General in a public body or government ministry**.<sup>12</sup>

Following Government Resolution 454, which determined that the Civil Service Commissioner would examine designating positions for women across all ranks including the senior leadership in the Civil Service, Civil Service Commissioner Directive No. 1.17 was published in December 2021. It established that for units failing to meet the minimum threshold for women's representation in senior staff,<sup>13</sup> and not showing improvement in their representation metrics over several years, the Civil Service Commissioner would decide whether to designate senior positions for women in these units and whether to halt staffing in the relevant units. **The directive also states that in determining compliance with the minimum threshold for women's representation in each unit, senior positions of trust in each unit will also be taken into account, including the senior rank in the ministry (such as Director-General and Associate Director-General).** However, the directive stipulates that **the designation of positions for women itself will not include positions of trust and positions exempt from tender** within the framework of an appointments committee or search committee.<sup>14</sup>

In preparation for a discussion by the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality on the representation of women in senior positions in the Civil Service, the Knesset Research and Information Center was asked to provide data on the number of women holding senior positions in the Civil Service and their appointment dates. We were requested to address the following positions:

1. **Director General (DG)** - The highest non-elected position in a government ministry. According to Section 12 of the Civil Service Law (Appointments), 5719-1959, each government ministry shall appoint a Director General based on the recommendation of the minister in charge of that ministry.
2. **Associate Director General** - Government Resolution No. 3075 stipulated that in each government ministry with over 150 employees (including employees in subsidiary units under the minister's

<sup>11</sup> Civil Service Law (Appointments), 5719-1959.

<sup>12</sup> Attorney General's Guidelines, Attorney General's Guideline No. 1.1503, Adequate Representation for Certain Sectors, March 2003, updated May 2020.

<sup>13</sup> 33% women in senior staff and 25% in leading senior staff, or a score of 60 or below in the gender equality index published by the Human Capital Management Control Division in collaboration with the Strategic Planning and Policy Division of the Civil Service Commission.

<sup>14</sup> Civil Service Commission, Attorney General's Guideline No. 1.17, Designation of Positions for Women in the Civil Service, December 15, 2021.

responsibility), one Associate Director General position would be allowed, which would be part of the Director General's office.<sup>15</sup>

3. **Director General Equivalent** - A position for which the salary and employment conditions are equivalent to those of a Director General or heads of subsidiary units employed at the highest grade of the pay grade attached to their position.<sup>16</sup>

The Knesset Research and Information Center received data from the Civil Service Commission on all incumbents in the aforementioned positions, their appointment dates, and their gender. Additionally, data was requested on all **Deputy Director Generals in the Civil Service**, as well as data on these holders of senior positions appointed in the last decade, including those no longer serving – in order to examine whether there have been changes in the proportion of women among these position holders. Regarding current and historical data on Deputy Director Generals, the Civil Service Commission informed that extracting and analyzing the data from existing information systems involves considerable work and would not be possible within the timeframe for the writing of this document. Therefore, **we will present below the current situation of women and men serving in Director General, Associate Director General, and Director General Equivalent positions** - for which we received complete information.

#### **Data - Current Situation on Women's Representation in Senior Positions in the Civil Service<sup>17</sup>**

The Civil Service Commission provided us with data on men and women occupying positions in three senior groups: Directors General, Associate Directors General and Director General Equivalents. The Commission also reported eight unfilled positions as of the date of their response, but noted that there might be occupied positions not recorded in the system for various reasons. A detailed check revealed that at least two of the eight positions are occupied (one by a man and one by a woman). Therefore, according to the Commission's data and the additional detailed check, **as of today, 101 employees serve in the most senior positions in government ministries and various governmental bodies** (29 Directors General, 16 Associate Directors

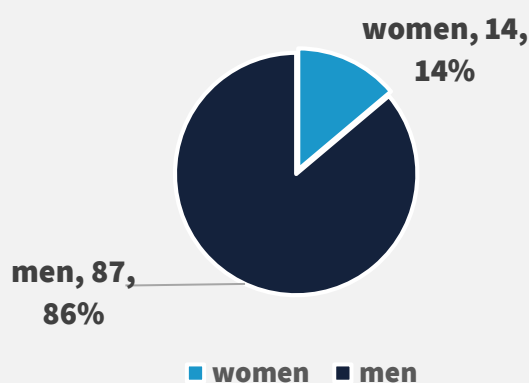
<sup>15</sup> Government Resolution 3075 of the 34th Government, Improving the Staffing Procedures for Senior Positions in the Civil Service and Amending Government Resolution - Continued Discussion, October 15, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commissioner Directive 02.6: Procedure for Staffing Offices of Directors General and Equivalent to Directors General, June 19, 2023. Among the positions equivalent to Director General: Commissioner of Capital Markets, Insurance and Savings, Director of the Tax Authority, Director of the Governmental Authority for Water and Sewage, Chairman of the Electricity Authority, and Hospital Directors.

<sup>17</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the source of the data presented in this chapter is: Yaniv Brody, Projects Manager, Senior Division for Strategic Planning and Policy, Civil Service Commission, response to the Knesset Research and Information Center inquiry, email, July 4, 2024.

General, and 57 Director General Equivalents),<sup>18</sup> of whom 14 are women (14%), as shown in the following chart.

**Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Directors General, Associate Directors General and Director General Equivalents**

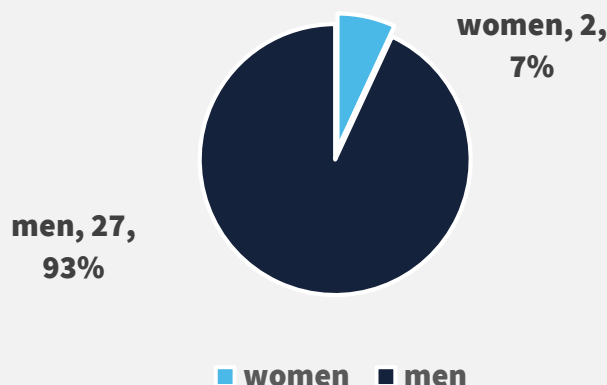


The following presents the number of employees in each group, divided by gender.

#### **Directors General**

According to the Civil Service Commission data, there are 29 Directors General serving in 30 government ministries.<sup>19</sup> Below is a gender-based breakdown of those holding Director General positions.

**Figure 2: Gender distribution of Directors General in government ministries**



As the graph shows, Directors General serve in 29 out of 30 government ministries - two of whom are women, constituting approximately 7% of all currently serving Directors General in government ministries: in the

<sup>18</sup> The sum of occupied positions is greater than the number of employees occupying them because currently, the Director General of the Authority for the Advancement of Women's Status also serves as the Acting Director General of the Ministry for Social Equality and the Advancement of Women's Status.

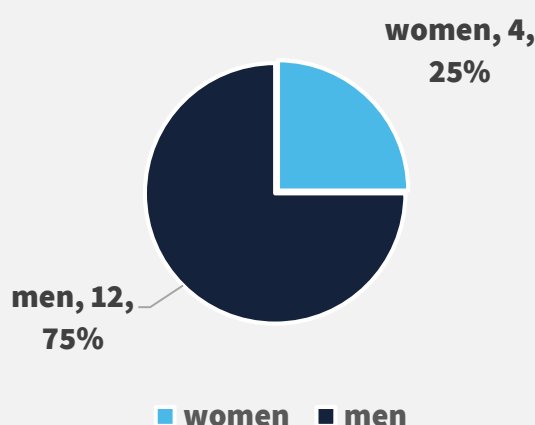
<sup>19</sup> According to the response provided by the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, there is no appointment for the position of Director General of the ministry.

Ministry of Communications and in the Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of Women's Status (Merav Stern, who was the Director General of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women's Status,<sup>20</sup> was appointed - after the ministry's dissolution - as the head of the Authority for the Advancement of Women's Status,<sup>21</sup> and also serves as the acting Director General of the Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of Women's Status<sup>22</sup>). It should be noted that the vast majority of those serving as Directors General were appointed during the tenure of the current government; and only three Directors General were appointed earlier: the Director General of the Ministry of Health was appointed in 2015, the Director General of the Ministry of Environmental Protection was appointed in 2018, and the Director General of the Ministry of Tourism was appointed in 2021.

### **Associate Directors General**

The Civil Service Commission provided us with data on Associate Directors General serving in 16 ministries.<sup>23</sup> The following presents those serving in the role of Associate Director General in the Civil Service, divided by gender.

**Figure 3: Gender distribution of Associate Directors General in government ministries**



As the graph shows, women serve as Associate Directors General in four out of 16 government ministries where this position is filled (25%): Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Prime Minister's Office, and the Ministry of National Security. It should be noted that all appointments to the position of Associate Director General were made during the tenure of the current government; two of the women appointed to this role (in the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of National Security) were appointed at the end of June 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Government Decision 653 of the 37th Government, Appointment of the Director General of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women's Status, June 18, 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Government Decision 1431 of the 37th Government, Appointment of the Director of the Authority for the Advancement of Women's Status, February 18, 2024.

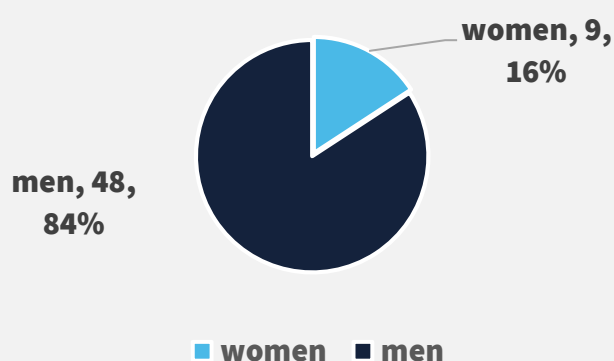
<sup>22</sup> Website of the Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of Women's Status, accessed: July 7, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> According to the response provided by the Ministry of Housing and Construction and the Ministry of Religious Services - there is no appointment for the position of Associate Director General of the ministry.

### **Director General Equivalents**

According to the Commission's data, there are 60 positions for Director General Equivalents in the Civil Service, of which 55 are filled. However, the Commission clarified that there may be filled positions not recorded in the system for various reasons. A detailed examination revealed that at least two positions that appeared in the Commission's data as unfilled are in fact filled: the Director of the Authority for the Advancement of Women's Status (who also serves as the acting Director General of the Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of Women's Status) and the Director of the Government Companies Authority.<sup>24</sup> The following presents those serving in Director General Equivalent positions, divided by gender, including these two positions.

**Figure 4: Gender distribution of Director General Equivalents in the Civil Service**<sup>25</sup>



As the graph shows, **nine women serve in Director General Equivalent positions in the Civil Service – 16%**. Six of these women are employed as hospital Directors. The other three are the Director of the National Digital Agency, the Director of the Competition Authority, and the Director of the Authority for the Advancement of Women's Status, who as mentioned also serves as the acting Director General of the Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of Women's Status. **18 of the Director General equivalents were appointed during the tenure of the current government – 17 men and one woman.**

<sup>24</sup> In addition to these two, Director General equivalent positions that appeared in the response as unfilled are: Director of Sha'ar Menashe Hospital, Director of the Metro Authority, and Director of the National Infrastructure Headquarters in the Ministry of Finance.

<sup>25</sup> Yaniv Brody, Projects Manager, Senior Division for Strategic Planning and Policy, Civil Service Commission, response to the Knesset Research and Information Center inquiry, email, July 4, 2024; Government Companies Authority website, accessed: July 6, 2024; Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of Women's Status website, accessed July 6, 2024.