

IDF apologizes for book claiming non-Jews do not have equal rights in Israel

IDF rabbinate book deals with questions of keeping Jewish law in the army, discusses regulations for affixing mezuzahs on IDF bases; book says concept of equal rights 'goes against the opinion of the Torah.'

By [Chaim Levinson](#) | Jun.06, 2013 | 11:31 PM | 15

The Israel Defense Forces has apologized for publishing a book of religious regulations that states non-Jews do not have equal rights in Israel.

The IDF issued the apology on Thursday in a letter to MK Zahava Gal-On (Meretz), and said it had halted distribution of the book, which claims that "the concept that non-Jews and Jews have equal rights in the state goes against the opinion of the Torah."

The book was published by the IDF rabbinate and authorized by the IDF chief rabbi, Brig. Gen. Rafi Peretz. It deals with questions of keeping Jewish law (halakha) in the army and discusses regulations for affixing mezuzahs on IDF bases.

One discussion has to do with whether mezuzahs are even needed at army bases, given the fact that both Jews and non-Jews serve in the IDF. There have been numerous halakhic rulings over the generations that mezuzahs are not required in dwellings where both Jews and non-Jews live.

As part of the discussion, the book looks at the question of who owns state property – and whether non-Jewish citizens have as much claim to it as Jews.

According to the authors, if state property truly belongs to the state, then it is neither owned by Jewish nor non-Jewish individuals. If, on the other hand, the property functions as a cooperative, then it belongs to the public – and, as the book notes, "the public is, as a rule, Jewish."

"Non-Jews did not purchase a share in it, and they have no right to state property," the book states.

"In any case," it continues, "the concept that non-Jews and Jews have equal rights in the state goes against the opinion of the Torah, and representatives of the state do not have the halakhic power to act against the will of the Torah."

After the contents of the book were publicized, Gal-On called on Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon to remove the "insulting directives" and to dismiss the senior officials in the IDF rabbinate who were responsible for their publication.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/idf-apologizes-for-book-claiming-non-jews-do-not-have-equal-rights-in-israel.premium-1.528320>