

HOW ISRAEL'S COURTS CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT

- * In 2003, the Israeli courts overturned the disqualification of two Arab political parties that supported terrorism.
- * The Supreme Court has on numerous occasions ordered that the route of the security barrier between Israel and the West Bank be changed to decrease its impact on Palestinian residents. In 2006 alone, the Supreme Court heard over 100 petitions filed by NGOs and Palestinian civilians alleging hardship resulting from the route of the barrier. The Ministry of Defense continues to alter the route of the barrier in response to these rulings.
- * One such ruling was in September 2007, when the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the government to draw new boundaries near the Palestinian village of Bilin because the current route of the security fence was "highly prejudicial" to the villagers and not justifiable on security grounds. This followed a concerted campaign by the Bilin Popular Committee to alter the route of the fence that was cutting Bilin residents off from much of their agricultural land.
- * In November 2007, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the state to halt proposed electricity cuts to Gaza in response to Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli towns until it could prove that such cuts would not harm medical and other services essential to the civilian population.
- * By comparison, South African courts under apartheid had no choice but to enforce the laws of parliament, regardless of whether they thought those laws were just or not. Successive apartheid-era governments further progressively hobbled the powers of the courts through the imposition of extraordinary security legislation.