**Background**

The Shittah Institute is a research and action institute that works to strengthen the values of local democracy in Israel. It believes in the central role of local government in building the resilience of Israeli society as egalitarian, progressive, and diverse. The Institute was founded by Tel Aviv Deputy Mayor Chen Arieli and is managed by Maria Jeries, a former senior official at the Ministry of the Interior.

This emergency grant aims to establish a personal security program for local authorities.

The issue of personal security is a blind spot for the liberal-democratic camp. It is also fertile ground for the fascist right to gain power and momentum. This trend has become increasingly apparent in recent years amid the rise of the fascist right and has been further amplified by the events of October 7 and the outbreak of war. The prevailing approach towards addressing the public’s sense of insecurity involves the large-scale arming of public spaces and the establishment of local emergency militias. This approach is being promoted through a deliberate policy by right-wing fascist elements led by the National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir. These elements are working to establish armed militias and increase tensions between Arabs and Jews, while exploiting the public’s sense of distress and insecurity that has arisen as a result of the ineffectiveness of the government and state institutions.

In light of policies that seek to privatize the state’s responsibility for internal security, weaken and corrupt the police, and strengthen local militias, while deliberately stoking societal tensions, there is a growing need to develop and implement a security doctrine based on democratic values. This is particularly important at a local authority level. Such a policy would provide an opportunity to push back against these dangerous trends and create alternative local policies.

The liberal-democratic camp faces numerous challenges related to the issue of personal security. These range from the adoption of populist right-wing approaches, including by politicians within the camp, to the absence of any internal security policy. The goal of this program is to develop a democratic-liberal alternative to local militarization. Shittah’s liberal-democratic security policy starts by taking a holistic, long-term perspective on the security challenges we face and adopting a responsible, values-driven security approach. This approach does not blur the distinction between emergency and routine situations. Neither does it succumb to public and political pressure to escalate the use of force and militarization.

**Workplan**

The Shittah Institute will develop a new program focused on personal security as part of the grant. The program will include the following:

1. Developing a toolkit for promoting security policies based on liberal-democratic values aimed at local council members and senior employees in local authorities.
2. Establishing a Security Forum for elected officials in local authorities to create a shared policy.
3. Advancing a pilot program in two local authorities, which will be supported and guided by Shittah, to develop and implement a municipal security work plan.
4. Developing policy proposals for a future government that will correct the distortions that have emerged in the area of security.

**Budget**

The Shittah Institute requests a grant of $50,000 for the establishment and operation of the experimental program.

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| Salary – Head of Security (six months) | $38,897 |
| Hosting, advertising, and refreshments – Security Forum | $2,325 |
| Consultation hours | $6,660 |
| Variable costs | $5,128 |

**Outputs**

* Four policy documents developed by the Shittah Institute for local authorities.
* Participation of 10-15 liberal council members from various local authorities in the Security Forum in at least four meetings per year.
* Eight recommendations adopted and promoted by council members participating in the Forum.
* Two local authorities participate in Shittah’s supported pilot model in the program’s first year.
* Development and implementation of workplans in the pilot local authorities to prevent dangerous actions and promote liberal-democratic security policy.
* Writing two policy documents in response to national security initiatives (concerning current government policy).

**Goals and desired outcomes**

1. To promote a liberal-democratic security worldview within local authorities.
2. To increase the involvement and influence of liberal public officials within security policy at the local authority level.
3. To encourage knowledge sharing among local authorities regarding security and to develop collaborations between local authorities on this topic.
4. To promote collaborations and coalitions among elected officials in local authorities as a joint response to national initiatives.
5. To influence local policy in the pilot local authorities and implement the democratic model that is developed.
6. To develop policy for a future government of Change 2.0.
7. Adoption of the policy by a future government and the revision of the current dangerous policy.

**Purpose of the grant**

To support the establishment of a new project by the Shittah Institute – Security in Local Authorities: A Liberal-Democratic Alternative to Local Militarization.