

Israeli Professor Donates National Prize to Left-wing Orgs After Year-long Battle

Education minister, who tried to withhold the prize over Professor Goldreich's support for boycotting a university in a settlement, says he's a 'provocateur'

Shira Kadari-Ovadia

Apr. 13, 2022 6:11 PM

Israel Prize winner in mathematics and computer science Prof. Oded Goldreich declared on Wednesday his intention to donate the prize money to five left-wing organizations.

The High Court of Justice overruled in March a decision to deny the prize from Goldreich due to his support for a decision to boycott an Israeli university located in a West Bank settlement.

Goldreich, a [Professor of Computer Science](#) at the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science of Weizmann Institute of Science will divide the 75,000 shekels (\$23,300) among five organizations he said are working toward the goals of fighting to the end the Israeli occupation, genuine equality for all of the country's inhabitants and for social justice.

The organizations are [B'Tselem](#) NGO, which documents human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories; [Breaking the Silence](#) NGO of Israeli veteran soldiers who, according to their website, "expose the Israeli public to the reality of everyday life in the Occupied Territories;" [Adalah](#) – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, [Kav LaOved](#) – Workers' Hotline and the [Standing Together](#) movement of Israeli and Palestinian activists.

Education Minister Yifat Shasha-Biton said in response to Goldreich's decision: "The fact that Prof. Goldreich decided to donate the Israel Prize to organizations that work against Israel Defense Forces soldiers who risk their lives for us – after having called to boycott an Israeli academic institution – proves that he is a provocateur who cannot engage in academia with clean hands, and does not deserve a national prize." Shasha-Biton added that "the High Court's decision to award him the prize in opposition to my opinion was wrong."

The organizations said in a joint statement that they were moved by Goldreich's decision to donate them the money. "This is also our opportunity to express our appreciation for that fact that throughout his remarkable academic career, Prof. Goldreich has used his name, status and achievements to promote battles for equality, justice, democracy and human rights."

The statement added that it is due to his "determination to promote these values which certain politicians are determined to mock," that he was initially denied the prize.

"We are proud to pledge that the former and present education ministers will be agitated by our actions for the benefit of Israelis and Palestinians with the generosity of Prof. Goldreich."

In April 2021, then-Education Minister Yoav Gallant denied Goldreich the prize over his signature on a letter supporting a boycott of Ariel University, based in the West Bank, a decision that was upheld by Shasha-Biton and [overruled by the top court in March](#).

On Monday, Shasha-Biton [rebuffed the ceremony](#) held for Goldreich at the Education Ministry in Jerusalem after he refused to participate in the prize ceremony on Independence Day in May.