

# ***The Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev-Naqab Desert in Israel***

Shadow Report Submitted by:

**Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality**

In Collaboration with:

Association for Support and Defense of

Bedouin Rights in Israel

Recognition Forum

Physicians for Human Rights - Israel

**Response to the Report of the State of Israel on  
Implementing the Covenant on Civil and Political  
Rights (CCPR)**

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Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality

منتدى التعايش السلمي في النقب من أجل المساواة المدنية

פורום דו-קיום בנגב לשוויון אזרחי

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# ***Response to the Report of the State of Israel on Implementing the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)***

## **Abstract**

This shadow report relates to the periodic report submitted by the State of Israel [CCPR/C/ISR/3] on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 regarding implementation of the Charter for Civil and Political Rights. The report was prepared by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality in collaboration with the following human rights organizations: Physicians for Human Rights, The Association for Support and Defense of Bedouin rights in Israel, and the Recognition Forum. The report deals with the manner in which the State of Israel implements the Charter for Civil and Political Rights among the Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev-Naqab, and will provide the Committee with a source of information and a critical perspective regarding what is occurring in the Negev.

The Bedouin-Arabs are an indigenous people, most of whom internally displaced from lands they had owned for centuries. From the 1950s on the Bedouin-Arabs were dispossessed from their land by means of laws passed by the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset), the Israeli legal system and varied administrative measures. Today the 190,000 Bedouin-Arabs living in the Negev are the most disadvantaged citizens in Israel and are struggling for their rights of land ownership, equality, recognition, and the pursuit of their distinctive way of life. About 60% of the Bedouin-Arab citizens live in seven failing government-planned towns. The remainder 40% live in dozens of villages that are not recognized by the government as well as in several new recognized townships. These Israeli citizens do not receive basic services, such as running water, electricity, roads, proper education, health and welfare services. In addition, they live under the continuous threat of home demolition, crop destruction and further displacement.

Following the introduction this shadow report discusses the various articles as they appear in the State of Israel's report to the United Nations Committee for

Human Rights that deals with implementation of the Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR).

The main issue at hand is the lack of recognition of land ownership rights of the Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev and the refusal of the state to grant recognition to the "unrecognized villages". This has resulted in a series of infringements upon civil and political rights involving discrimination and inequality between the Jewish and Bedouin-Arab populations, who reside side by side in the Negev. Discrimination is evident in various areas, including health, education, welfare, planning, the right to vote and religious services.

### **The Bedouin-Arab in the Negev-Naqab**

The Bedouin-Arabs are a unique Indigenous population who has been living in the Negev for hundreds of years. In 1948 the Bedouin-Arabs numbered between 60,000 to 90,000 people, and there are researchers who estimate that the number was even higher. After the 1948 War only 11,000 Bedouin-Arabs remained in the Negev while the others left or were expelled beyond the armistice lines to Jordan and Egypt (the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula). The eviction of the remainder Bedouin-Arab population still living in the Negev began in the early 1950s. They were concentrated in a restricted geographical area of approximately 1,000 square kilometers, in the eastern less fertile Negev-Naqab, which was called the "Sayag" area, while the fertile lands in the western and northern areas of the Negev were turned over to the newly established Jewish settlements: kibbutzim and moshavim to be used for agriculture. Almost no Bedouin-Arabs were left in the western, northern, and southern Negev. The Bedouin-Arabs who lived in the "Sayag" area were under military rule until 1966. This area constituted 20% of the Bedouin-Arabs land before 1948.<sup>1</sup> The Internal displacement and transfer of the Bedouin-Arab population to the eastern Negev and the dispossession of tribes from their land was accompanied by the concentration of the Bedouin-Arabs on land that was not theirs, in increasingly crowded conditions and hardship.

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<sup>1</sup> Porat H., (2009) The Bedouin-Arab in the Negev Between Migration and Urbanization (1948-1973, p. 13, Negev Center for Regional Development, Ben Gurion University, (in Hebrew).

The transfer was carried out without the Bedouin-Arabs' consent and under false assurance claims that they would be able to return to their land after a few months. It should be noted that no arrangements were made for settling the dislocated population and for providing any elementary infrastructure such as residential and economic infrastructure, education, or health care (See Map No. 1).<sup>2</sup> With the legislation of the planning and construction law of 1965 all the land in which the Bedouin-Arabs resided was categorized agricultural land and all the buildings on it became "illegal".

These areas are known as "unrecognized villages" despite the fact that some of them have existed even before the State of Israel was established and some were created as a result of the transfer of the Bedouin-Arabs population from their traditional dwelling places turning them into internal displaced people. In fact an impossible situation has been created by which the state that uprooted the Bedouin-Arabs from their original land does not recognize the villages that it created, while at the same time discriminating their residents and "legally" preventing them from the most basic human rights.

At the end of the 1960s the first government-planned Bedouin-Arab township, Tel-Sheva, was established with five more towns and one city to follow. These townships and city<sup>3</sup> which were planned before the 1990s were designed to concentrate the rural population, which was agricultural in character, in congested urban communities that had almost no infrastructure or employment opportunities. Until the end of the 1990s the government policy was to concentrate the entire Bedouin-Arabs population of the Negev-Naqab in seven towns. Since 1999 another 9 "unrecognized" villages received their recognition from the state and are in various stages of planning.<sup>4</sup> In 2000 the village of Drijat, which had existed for about 200 years, received the state's recognition (government decision 2561, Nov. 30, 2000,

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<sup>2</sup> BIMKOM Planners for Planning rights website, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
<http://www.bimkom.org/dynContent/articles/NegevUnrecognized.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> According to the Central Bureau of Statistics there were 105,300 people on December 31st, 2007 in al-Shba, Rahat, Laqieh, Ar'ara al-Naqab, Qseifa, Houra, and Shqueb al-Salam (Segev-Shalom). The size of the population in these towns is based upon change of address on people's ID cards, even if people actually live in unrecognized villages that are not in areas under the jurisdiction of these towns.

<sup>4</sup> Um-Batin, Gassar al-Ser, Al-Grain, Um-Matnan (Abu Krinat), Bir Hadaj, Makhul, Wadi Gowein (Mulada), Tarabin, Drijat, have a population of 25,000, but these are not official statistics. Eight of these towns and villages are members of the Abu-Basma Regional Council.

Section C.). In 2004 a new village was built for the displaced Tarabin-Al-Sana tribe, which replaced the old village (next to the Jewish suburb of Omer). However, it should be noted that during the last decade, since the government's decision, little change has taken place in the conditions of these villages and the living conditions of most of the population living there have remained as difficult as before. Three additional towns are now in the initial stage of planning.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of 2007 approximately 163,200 Bedouin-Arabs lived in the Negev in six townships and in the city of Rahat which were established by the State and in villages that have recently been recognized and in villages not recognized by the state.<sup>6</sup> We estimate that at the end of 2007, only about 55%-60% of the Bedouin-Arab population actually lived in these towns while 40%-45% lived in the unrecognized villages. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, 67% of the Bedouin-Arab population – about 109,353 – lived at the end of 2007 in townships and villages that were established or recognized by the government (See Table 1). Approximately 53,847 Bedouin-Arabs, mainly those who own land, live in dozens of unrecognized villages that do not appear on official maps of the state. These villages have no infrastructure for water, electricity, sewage, roads, health services, education, garbage disposal, or other public services.<sup>7</sup>

Revoking the recognition from the Bedouin-Arab villages, preventing basic services, use of demolition orders, destroying crops in the fields, and repeated harassment on the part of the “Green Patrol”, are all designed with one objective in mind: to force the Bedouin-Arabs to abandon their land and to move to the towns.

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<sup>5</sup> Abu Talul - Al Sha'abbe, Al Fur'ah, and Abde.

<sup>6</sup>Central Bureau of Statistics Website July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. CBS Statistical Abstract of Israel 2008, table 2.8, localities and population by population group, district, sub-district and natural region 31 December 2007.

[http://www.cbs.gov.il/energy/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton.html?num\\_tab=st02\\_08&CYear=2008](http://www.cbs.gov.il/energy/shnaton/templ_shnaton.html?num_tab=st02_08&CYear=2008)

Note: We estimate that in 2009 there were 190,000 Bedouin-Arabs living in the Negev-Naqab.

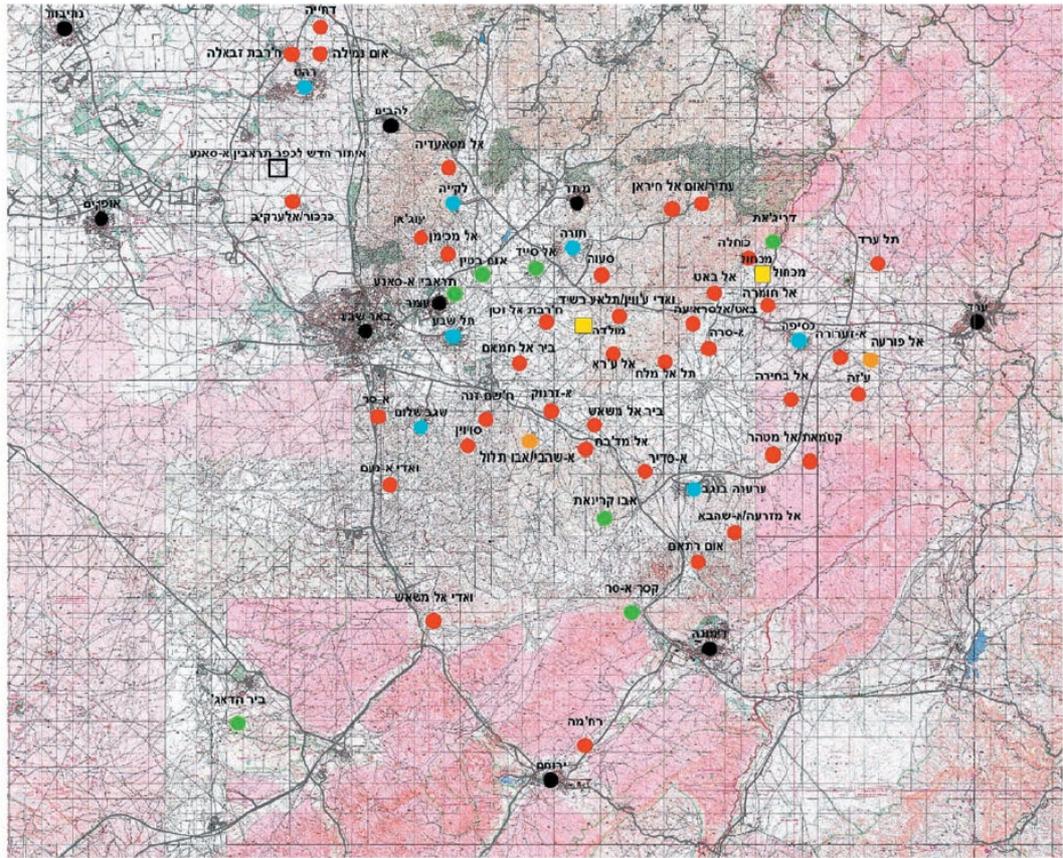
<sup>7</sup> There are also no infrastructures for electricity, roads, or sewage in villages that were recognized after 1999, and many of their inhabitants have no running water.

הכפרים  
הערבים בדואים  
הבלתי מוכרים  
בנגב

ספטמבר 2007

- מקרא**
- כפרים בדואים לא מוכרים
  - כפרים בדואים מוכרים
  - כפרים בדואים בתהליך הכרה
  - יישובים מוצעים לאנלוקסיה הבדואית
  - איזורים חלופיים לכפרים בדואים
  - העיירות הבדואיות
  - יישובים גדולים אחרים

במקום מחקרים ושגו תמוג חמט 08 (1)  
**بمكوم** مخططن من اجل حقوق التخطيط  
**Flanners for Planning Rights BIMKOM**  
 المركز العربي للتخطيط البديل  
 المركز العربي للتخطيط البديل  
 The Arab Center for Alternative Planning  
 פרטים זה הפקס מימון האזור  
 הארץ, אך אם משקף בברור  
 את נטותיו  
**עמותת במקום**  
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**Map No. 1: The Bedouin-Arab Unrecognized Villages in the Negev-Naqab**  
 (BIMKOM Planners for Planning Rights and The Arab Center for Alternative Planning)

**Legend**

- Unrecognized Bedouin Villages
- Recognized Bedouin Villages
- Bedouin Villages in Recognition Process
- Towns offered to the Bedouin Arabs Population
- Alternative places for Bedouin Villages
- Bedouin Towns
- Other Large settlements

## **Methodology**

This report discusses some of the sections of the government report pertaining only to the indigenous Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev-Naqab, who are citizens yet also a marginalized sector of society. The report therefore focuses on sections 545-589 in the government report. It was prepared by organizations that are working with the Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev-Naqab both in the recognized and unrecognized villages. These organizations have close familiarity and expert knowledge of this indigenous group.

The report discusses the Bedouin-Arabs conditions in light of three articles in the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, namely articles 25-27 concerning access to the political system, equality before the law and rights of minorities to religious practice and belief. We would like to emphasize that we have chosen to discuss the indigenous Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev, because of its unique characteristics: the poverty and hardship they are experiencing, and the discrimination that has been directed towards them for decades.

## **Responses to Sections 545-589 of the State Report**

### **Section 545: General**

The State report notes that the Bedouin-Arab villages are “urban or suburban centers” (p. 121).

The majority of these urban "centers" are totally unsuitable to the rural character of the Bedouin-Arab population, for whom agriculture is part of their tradition and livelihood. Although some villages have been successful in their struggle to be recognized, the state had recognized them as villages or towns with almost no consideration to the inhabitants' needs and wishes and no opportunity to pursue a flourishing agricultural economy.

On the whole the lands allocated by the state for the Bedouin-Arab towns and villages are very limited and contrasts sharply with land allocation to Jewish settlements.

**Table 1 – Area of Jurisdiction and Population in Negev-Naqab Settlements and Towns**

Name of Settlement/Village	Population	Area of Jurisdiction Dunams <sup>8</sup> (Dunam = 0.25 Acre)	Population Density per Dunam	Municipal Status
<b>Arab Towns</b>				
Rahat	42,223 <sup>9</sup>	19,585	2.155	City
Tel al-Saba' (Tel-Sheva)	14,038 <sup>10</sup>	4,604	3.049	Local Council
Ar'ara al-el Naqab	12,995 <sup>11</sup>	14,052	0.922	Local Council, Appointed Management
Qsiefa	10,749 <sup>12</sup>	13,691	0.785	Local Council
Houra	10,579 <sup>13</sup>	6,646	1.592	Local Council
Laqieh	8,955 <sup>14</sup>	5,728	1.563	Local Council
Shqueb al-Salam (Segev-Shalom)	6,792 <sup>15</sup>	5,981	1.135	Local Council
Drijat	575 <sup>16</sup>	1,017	0.565	Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Tarabin	No Data Available	1,130		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Um Batin	851 <sup>17</sup>	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Bir Hadaj	276 <sup>18</sup>	No Data Available		Settlement in Abu Basma Regional Council
Gasser al-Ser	867 <sup>19</sup>	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council

<sup>8</sup> NCRD Negev Center for Regional Development website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Table A8, land Use of Local Councils, 2003.

<http://statis.ncrd.org.il/tables/1008.htm> and Israel Land Authority website for Tarabin and Drijat <http://www.mmi.gov.il/IturTabot/ta2.asp?selMonzipali=&HelkaAd=&HelkaFrom=&Gush=&selSugVaada=&MisTochnit=&selYeudim=&ishuv=1349&txtMetachnen=&txtAchrai=&selMetachnen=&selAchrai=&Matara=&Makom=&fromTabal=true>

<sup>9</sup> The Central Bureau of Statistics Website, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, List of Localities in Alphabetical order as of 31 December 2007, p. 28.

<http://www.cbs.gov.il/ishuvim/reshimalefishemeng.pdf>

Note: The numbers here do not describe the size of the population as it is but merely reflect the number of people who changed their addresses on their ID cards.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p. 31

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p. 25

<sup>12</sup> Ibid p. 14

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p. 11

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p. 16

<sup>15</sup> Ibid p. 29

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p. 9

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p. 1

<sup>18</sup> Ibid p. 4

<sup>19</sup> Ibid p. 27

Name of Settlement/Village	Population	Area of Jurisdiction Dunams <sup>8</sup> (Dunam = 0.25 Acre)	Population Density per Dunam	Municipal Status
Um Matnan (Abu Krinat)	218 <sup>20</sup>	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Al Grain (Al Sayyed)	235 <sup>21</sup>	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Wadi Gowein (Mulada)	No Data Available	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Abu-Tiul - EI Sha'abbe	No Data Available	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Al-Fur'ah	No Data Available	No Data Available		Village in Abu Basma Regional Council
Abde	No Data Available	No Data Available		Being Planned
<b><u>Jewish Settlements</u></b>				
Omer	6,467 <sup>22</sup>	20,125	0.321	
Arad	23,346 <sup>23</sup>	93,139	0.250	
Mitzpeh Ramon	4,423 <sup>24</sup>	62,874	0.070	
Yeruham	8,462 <sup>25</sup>	35,584	0.237	

As shown in the table above, population density is generally greater in Bedouin-Arabs towns than in Jewish ones. For example, the density in Rahat is almost 7 times greater than that of Omer. This implies that in Bedouin-Arab towns there are less areas for development or for establishing income yielding enterprises, or for parks, public areas etc.

The Israeli official report states that plans have been approved for all the Arab authorities in the Negev-Naqab. We have to note that plans were approved only in part of the newly recognized towns. The approved plans of the townships that were recognized years ago meet only part of the demands. In Laqieh, for example, there is a severe shortage of plots and people who have moved to the town in 1976 from Tel Arad and bought optional plots, have not yet received them and are forced to live in difficult temporary

<sup>20</sup> Ibid p. 11

<sup>21</sup> Ibid p. 22

<sup>22</sup> Ibid p. 23

<sup>23</sup> Ibid p. 25

<sup>24</sup> Ibid p. 19

<sup>25</sup> Ibid p. 13

conditions. An appeal was submitted to the Supreme Court<sup>26</sup> and in 2006, the Court rejected the plea, after the state took upon itself to allot 45 plots of 800 square meters to the petitioners. As yet the petitioners have still not received the plots they were promised, and they are living temporarily in areas that are designated in the approved plans for education facilities.

The towns and villages that received the state's recognition are now in the planning stage and although health clinics and elementary schools do exist, there are no sewage systems in any of these towns and residents, especially those who live on the edge of the villages, have no running water. As noted, there is no electricity from the national power grid, or roads in any of these towns.

### Summary

Part of the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev is living in a small number of towns that are recognized by the state. These towns are overcrowded because of a shortage of land. Contrary to the claims of the official state report, tens of thousands of Bedouins still live in villages that are not recognized by the state.

### Recommendation

It is recommended to increase the area of jurisdiction of these recognized towns so that they will be less crowded and have more area for development.

Furthermore it is crucial to grant recognition to all unrecognized villages.

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<sup>26</sup> Supreme Court website July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Supreme Court Decision 6459/99 Salim Abu-Rtayush et. al. vs. The Israel Land Authority et. al., <http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files/99/590/064/O27/99064590.o27.htm>

## **Section 546: The Townships**

The assumption that the towns can contain the entire Bedouin-Arab population is a total fallacy and a discrimination against the Bedouin-Arab population. In addition, the decision of the Israeli government to establish towns for the Bedouin-Arab citizens, each with no less than several thousands of people, is extremely problematic. The Bedouin-Arab population is traditionally agricultural, and housing them in urban areas does not allow them to practice agriculture near their homes. In fact, the economic and traditional needs have pushed the inhabitants of these towns to create agricultural areas adjacent to people's homes with sheep pens and cowsheds thus causing severe ecological repercussions upon the sewage and water systems in these towns.

In December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 there were 131 communities in the Negev, 118 of which were Jewish and 13 were Arab.<sup>27</sup> This means less than 10% Bedouin-Arab villages while the Bedouin-Arab proportion in the entire population of the Negev was 28% (163,200 out of 575,900).<sup>28</sup> Approximately 100 of these communities are ethnically segregated agricultural settlements for Jews only, each with generous plots of land. In contrast, most residents of the Bedouin-Arab villages receive no more than a plot on which they can build their home and nothing else.

### Summary

There is currently no possibility for Bedouin-Arabs to live in agricultural small communities that are recognized by the State. This situation is discriminatory.

### Recommendation

Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev-Naqab must be given a variety of options for settlement, as in the case of the Jewish citizens. They must be allowed to establish agricultural settlements, shepherd communities and individual farms that will fit their character and way of life.

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<sup>27</sup>See note 6 Table 2.8 Central bureau of Statistics website, p.2.

<sup>28</sup>ibid p.2

## Section 547: The Abu-Basma Regional Council

The Abu-Basma Regional Council is a council for the Bedouin-Arab towns and villages that has been recognized since 1999. This council is different from the Jewish regional councils in that it has no territorial continuity. In the Jewish regional councils the jurisdiction areas usually extend over thousands of acres that may include industrial areas and hence yield property-tax income. In contrast, Abu-Basma Regional Council's area of jurisdiction is restricted to each village's territory only (See Table 2).

The following table shows a comparison of areas of jurisdiction and the populations of the regional councils in the Negev.

**Table 2 – Areas of Jurisdiction and Population of the Regional Councils in the Negev, December, 31st, 2007.**

Regional Council	Area in Dunams (Dunam = 0.25 Acre)	Population	<sup>29</sup> Comments
<b>Tamar</b>	1,650,000 <sup>30</sup>	2,300 <sup>31</sup>	1,100 are Arabs.
<b>Ramat-Negev</b>	4,300,000 <sup>32</sup>	6,200 <sup>33</sup>	1,300 are Arabs. Largest regional council in Israel in terms of land area.
<b>Bnei Shimon</b>	450,000 <sup>34</sup>	11,900 <sup>35</sup>	6,400 are Arabs
<b>Abu- Basma</b>	Approximately <sup>36</sup> 49,000	3,100 <sup>37</sup>	All residents are Arabs

<sup>29</sup> Arabs who live in the areas of Jewish regional councils usually live in unrecognized villages and are not eligible for municipal services and cannot run in municipal elections.

<sup>30</sup> Tamar Regional Council website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

<http://www.ma-tamar.org.il/tamar/about.htm>

<sup>31</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Table 2.13, Localities and population, by municipal status and district, 31.12.2007, p.2

[http://www.cbs.gov.il/energy/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton.html?num\\_tab=st02\\_13&CYear=2008](http://www.cbs.gov.il/energy/shnaton/templ_shnaton.html?num_tab=st02_13&CYear=2008)

<sup>32</sup> Ramat Hanegev Regional Council website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

<http://www.ramat-negev.org.il/main.php?m=1143>

<sup>33</sup> See note 31, Table 2.13 Central Bureau of Statistics, p.2

<sup>34</sup> Negev Development Authority website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 (in Hebrew). <http://www.negev.co.il/stats.html>

<sup>35</sup> See note 31, Table 2.13 Central Bureau of Statistics, p.2.

<sup>36</sup> See note 34, Website for the Negev Development Authority.

<sup>37</sup> See note 31, Table 2.13 Central Bureau of Statistics, p.2 .

Note: Population data listed is based mainly upon people who changed their address in their ID card. In Abu-Basma only 3,100 people did this, but in actuality about 27,000 people live in the area of the council.

This results in severe shortage of sources of income for the Abu-Basma Regional Council. If we add this to the fact that the income from property tax in the Arab villages of Abu-Basma is very low due to extreme poverty, these villages are doomed to poverty, hardships, and underdevelopment.

**Table 3 –Councils' Revenues from Non Government Sources and Budget for Selected Regional Councils for 2007** (in millions of Shekels, US\$1=4 NIS)

Regional Council	Revenues from non government sources	Budget	% independent Income from Budget	Main Sources of Income
Abu Basma <sup>38</sup>	1.3	121.035	1.07%	Mining and Quarrying
Tamar <sup>39</sup>	71.692	91.035	78.7%	Factories, Hotels
Ramat Negev <sup>40</sup>	62.845	73.010	86%	Factories, Army Basis

### Summary

Discrimination exists in the State's allocation of jurisdiction areas for Arab Councils. This has severe consequences for the resources and incomes of these councils.

### Recommendation

The areas of jurisdiction of the Abu-Basma Regional Council must be expanded to enable territorial continuity, and projects that will yield income such as industry zones, tourism, and health facilities.

### Section 548: Government Plans and Techniques of dispossession

<sup>38</sup> Ministry of Interior website, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Summary of financial report data from 2007, Abu-Basma Regional Council, p.6 (in Hebrew).  
[http://www.moin.gov.il/Apps/PubWebSite/MIAudRep.nsf/0/817040F6D7B9489CC225756F002BD83B/\\$FILE/AuditDoc.pdf?openElement](http://www.moin.gov.il/Apps/PubWebSite/MIAudRep.nsf/0/817040F6D7B9489CC225756F002BD83B/$FILE/AuditDoc.pdf?openElement)

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Interior website, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Summary of financial report data from 2007, Tamar Regional Council, p.6 (in Hebrew).  
[http://www.moin.gov.il/Apps/PubWebSite/MIAudRep.nsf/0/ABADAC2692B82150C22575730037D481/\\$FILE/AuditDoc.pdf?openElement](http://www.moin.gov.il/Apps/PubWebSite/MIAudRep.nsf/0/ABADAC2692B82150C22575730037D481/$FILE/AuditDoc.pdf?openElement)

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Interior website, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Summary of financial report data from 2007, Ramat Negev Regional Council, p.1 (in Hebrew).  
[http://www.moin.gov.il/Apps/PubWebSite/MIAudRep.nsf/0/ED021EDDF9C75C26C2257352002A9D95/\\$FILE/AuditDocWeb.htm?openElement](http://www.moin.gov.il/Apps/PubWebSite/MIAudRep.nsf/0/ED021EDDF9C75C26C2257352002A9D95/$FILE/AuditDocWeb.htm?openElement)

Government decision 881 of September 2003 included a multi-year plan called the “Sharon Plan”. The plan, which received a budget of 1.1 billion Shekels, was designed to span over a six-year period from 2003-2008. Approximately 80% of the funds were to be allocated from the annual-regular budgets that were designated for the Bedouin-Arab towns by the various government ministries. A large part of the additional budget (approximately 239 million Shekels) was designated for budgeting and strengthening the bodies responsible for enforcing the planning and building legislations such as the State Attorney, the Green Patrol, and the Ministry of Internal Security. The State Comptroller found out - as in the case of previous plans- that the amount of money that was actually transferred was lower than had been planned .<sup>41</sup> In 2004 only 37% of the 161 million Shekels were budgeted for activity in the Bedouin-Arab sector.

Earlier, in April 2003, the Special Ministers’ Committee for the Non-Jewish Sector established a new way of dealing with the conflict over land in the Negev-Naqab. More than fifty years after the expulsion of the Bedouin-Arabs from their lands and more than thirty years since claims of land titles were submitted, the Ministers’ Committee ordered the Israel Land Authority to submit counter land claims. This was done in order to hasten the process of state control over the Bedouins’ lands. The Authority began to operate the mechanism of “counter land claims” against the claims of ownership submitted by the Bedouins during the 1970s. These counter claims are brought before the district courts according to Section 43 of the Land rights Settlement Ordinance 1969.

Since 2004, approximately 100 counter land claims have been filed annually and as of now 401 claims for over 170,000 dunams (42,500 acres) were filed by the state .<sup>42</sup> In this procedure the court is being asked that the land be registered in the name of the state .<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Svirsky, S., Hason, Y., (2005) Transparent Citizens, p.25, Information on Equality, Adva Center (in Hebrew).

<sup>42</sup> Israel Land Authority website, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Report on Israel Land Authority activities for 2007, pp. 84-85 (in Hebrew).

<http://www.mmi.gov.il/Osh/Aspx/DownloadTofes.aspx?Maarechet=71&TofesId=109&UserId=323&RO=True>

<sup>43</sup> Israel Land Authority website, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, “The Bedouin in the Negev”, p. 9.

[http://www.mmi.gov.il/static/HanhalaPirsumim/Beduin\\_information.pdf](http://www.mmi.gov.il/static/HanhalaPirsumim/Beduin_information.pdf)

The use of counter land claims by the state has severe implications as some of the Bedouin-Arabs are giving up on court hearings and do not appear for the hearings at all, either because of the legal costs, lack of trust in the legal system due to past rulings, or because most of the descendants who inherited the land claims do not possess formal documentation proving their ownership of the land.

This method of the state has been designed to put pressure on the Bedouin-Arabs and force them to leave their land and move to one of the towns planned by the state. The state is striving to clear as much as possible large areas of land in order to enable its development for the needs of the Jewish population in the Negev. The legal system serves as an additional tool used by the state for evicting the most disadvantaged population in Israel from their lands.

In addition, in January 2005, the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) passed an amendment to the Public Land Law (Expulsion of Invaders) of 1981. The amendment afforded the Israel Land Authority to enforce ownership rights over legally disputed lands. The added authority undermines the basic principles of democracy, especially the right to due process. The amendment extends the time the authorities can issue eviction orders to 36 months following the day the individual took possession of the land. The law permits eviction of residents from their property, as well as the demolishing of homes and the destruction of crops.

An eviction order is valid as a court order and is enforced by a special executive authority. From the moment the orders are issued the responsibility for proof shifts from the Israel Land Authority and placed on the individual who is in possession of the land. As noted above, in many cases people do not have any formal documentation and have no knowledge of the bureaucratic procedures governing the issue. This shift contravenes the basic rule of civil law, which places the burden of proof on the plaintiff. It is particularly problematic in light of the fact that the legal definition of "Public land" also applies to land that was confiscated by the State and still claimed by many Bedouin Arabs in the Naqab-Negev.

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The amendment to the law infringes upon the basic rights of the Bedouin-Arabs to an equitable and just distribution of land resources, the ability to earn an honorable living, and to live a way of life that reflects their culture and needs.<sup>44</sup>

### Summary

Since the 1960s the State of Israel has initiated various plans for solving the issue of the unrecognized villages by enforcing solutions such as "Sharon Plan" (Government decision 881 of September 2003) and others on the Bedouin-Arab population. Usually this has been done without the cooperation or consent of the population, and in contradiction to their historic and indigenous rights.

### Recommendation

It is necessary to build a system of relations of trust with the indigenous Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev. The government plan must first and foremost recognize the claims of ownership of the Bedouin-Arabs' traditional lands in the Negev-Naqab (about 5% of the land in the Negev!) and grant recognition to the unrecognized villages. This would neutralize the conflict between the state and the Bedouins.

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<sup>44</sup> The Arab-Bedouins of the Naqab-Negev Desert in Israel (2006), Report to the UN Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), p. 15, by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality and other organizations. NCF website, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

## **Section 549: Bedouin Representatives in the Planning Process**

In 2000 the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (RCUV), the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) and others submitted a petition to the Supreme Court against the partial District Plan for Be'er-Sheva Metropolis.<sup>45</sup> The petition asked to change the district master plan (number 4) for the southern region, amendment 14, in a manner that would obligate the planning of rural villages for the Bedouin-Arab population in the southern region, and would include guidelines for planning the settlements that would take into consideration the numbers, locations of villages, as well as the needs and desires of the Arab-Bedouin population. On May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the National Committee for Planning and Building and others claimed that a new plan (4/14/23) was submitted, and hence demanded to withdraw the petition. Consequently the petition has been withdrawn. Various organizations submitted their planning objections to the new plan. For example, the Association for Civil Rights submitted planning objections in the name of the residents of several villages such as Alsera.<sup>46</sup> Other associations also took part in this action, such as Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights, The Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages, The Arab Center for Alternative Planning and the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality. The Association for Support and Defense of Bedouin Rights in Israel submitted planning objections in the name of the Al-Uqbi Tribe, who has been struggling for many years for an agricultural village and whose grievances have never been addressed. These objections were submitted in November 2008, but have not yet been dealt with, despite the long time that has passed since their submission.

During the last decade there has been some change and certain democratization in the planning processes due to the pressure of the Bedouin

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<sup>45</sup>Supreme Court website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Supreme Court Case 1991/00 Ishak Abu-Hamad et. al. vs. the Ministry of Interior et. al., Court Decision.

<http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files/00/910/019/R31/00019910.r31.htm>

See also ACRI website, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, "Discrimination against the Negev Bedouin in the State planning". <http://www.acri.org.il/eng/Story.aspx?id=402>

<sup>46</sup> ACRI website July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, "ACRI Submits Objections to the Be'er-Sheva Metropolis Plan". <http://www.acri.org.il/eng/Story.aspx?id=502>

population to participate in them .<sup>47</sup> This led to Bedouin-Arabs being more involved in the planning process compared to the past when decisions were made for them without taking their positions into consideration or consulting with them.

So, for example, the state now includes Bedouin-Arabs in the planning process. However, the criteria for nominating people are not clear, nor is it clear whether there are any criteria at all. It also appears that in most cases the voice of the inhabitants and of their representatives is not taken into consideration in the planning process. Consequently, in most villages there is a dispute between representatives of the local village committee and the outside planners from the Ministry of Interior regarding the village character. As a result no progress is made, or there are gaps between the concepts held by the state and those held by the residents of the village. Such incongruities took place in Bir–Hadaj and Um-Matnan where the development of these towns was halted in 2007. <sup>48</sup>

Despite the fact that the Bedouin population is mainly agricultural , most of the state's planning resulted in urban or suburban settlements (as stated in section 545), occasionally with agricultural neighborhoods at the edges of the towns. These will always be large towns with thousands of residents since the state representatives claim that the towns must be large in order to be economically viable. However, this claim is not applied when planning Jewish settlements (as in the case of "Halutziot" or the settlements in the Eastern Lachish region <sup>49</sup>). There are currently no agricultural villages for Bedouin-Arabs, and none are being planned!

### Summary

Planning serves as a tool for concentrating the Bedouin population in towns, even if there are Bedouin-Arab representatives who are supposedly involved in planning. The results reveal that planning is mainly homogenous, urban

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<sup>47</sup> Meir, A., (2003) From Planning Advocacy to Independent planning: the Negev Bedouin on the Path to Democratization in Planning, p. 83, Negev Center for Regional Development, Ben Gurion University of the Negev (in Hebrew).

<sup>48</sup> See note 42, Report on Israel Land Authority activities for 2007, p. 76.

<sup>49</sup> Prime Minister's Office Website, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Working Plan of the Ministry of Housing, 2009, Slides 25, 33, 35. <http://www.pmo.gov.il/Files/binui.ppt>

and discriminatory, and is in opposition to the desires of the Bedouin population.

### Recommendation

Local communities' representatives of the Bedouin-Arab population must be allowed to be more active and submit their input in planning. Criteria for appointing representatives must be clearly defined. The planning of a variety of settlements and the approval of plans that are prepared and submitted to the village commission, with the help of independent Arab planners, will make the planning system more democratic and reliable.

### **Section 550: Control Authorities**

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the government decided to establish an Authority for the Regulation of the Bedouin Residence in the Negev.<sup>50</sup> This administration was planned to replace the 'Authority for the Advancement of Bedouin in the Negev' (AABN) that had previously dealt with the issue of land compromise. Yet this new authority has not in fact been in operation and the AABN continues its activities as before. Since its establishment in 1986, these activities have served as a device for controlling all areas of life of the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev-Naqab. For more than twenty years the AABN had reached land claims settlements with the Bedouin-Arabs on approximately 160,000 dunams (40,000 acres), while claims of ownership of the Bedouins in the Negev mount to more than 900,000 dunams (225,000 acres). It should be emphasize that all facilities - location had to be approved by the Authority, which still controls most areas of the Bedouin-Arabs citizens' lives.<sup>51</sup> Often connections to the water system or a building permit for a

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<sup>50</sup> Prime Minister's Office website, from 10 July, 2009 Decision 1999 of 15.7.2007.

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2007/07/des1999.htm>

<sup>51</sup> The Bedouin Authority or the 'Authority for the Advancement of Bedouin in the Negev' is a special authority that operates under the jurisdiction of Israel Land Authority (ILA). The Bedouin Authority is responsible for allotting government funds for the towns, for planning and development of neighborhoods and for establishing new towns. The Authority has also control over connecting the unrecognized villages to the National Water Network and the allotment of water to families, placing medical clinics, and schools and allocating seasonal farming and grazing leases. The Bedouin Authority was transferred every few years from one ministry to another, from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Housing Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Government Decision 631 of 5.11.2006 for example deals with transfer of the Bedouin Authority again from the Ministry of Trade and Industry to the Ministry of Housing, "on the condition that traditional authorities that were lawfully submitted to the Israel Land Authority and the Israeli Land Council will remain in their hands". It should be emphasized that due to a pact between the state and the KKL-JNF (Jewish National Fund) the Israel Land Authority Council, the supreme body of the ILA, is made up of 50% state representatives

school are conditioned upon the family promising to enter negotiations with the AABN to relocate to a town or reach a land compromise. It should also be noted that the AABN works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, the police, and the General Security Service, and representatives from these bodies often sit on its committees, as for example, the committee for allotting drinking water.

The primary purpose of the newly established Authority for the Regulation of the Bedouin Residence in the Negev, as was that of the previous one, according to Government Decision 1999 of July 15, 2007, is to undermine Bedouin claims of land ownership. In any negotiations between the Bedouin-Arabs and the Government, the first issue that is discussed is the land title. Issues of housing, employment, and education – in which the Bedouin population is so badly discriminated – are only then being brought up, and are still considered secondary to claims on land.

Meanwhile, the mandate accorded to the new Authority has not been implemented. Perhaps this is for the best. The Bedouin population is part of the population of Israel and does not need special mechanisms for control or for settling disputes.

### Summary

The establishment of a separate authority implies the creation of a controlling body that will bring about increased eviction of the Bedouin-Arab population from its land assets.

### Recommendation

There should be no separate bodies for controlling the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev-Naqab and for resolving their problems. The government must stop finding ways to evict the Bedouins and instead it must search for ways to assist them in the development of their social, cultural and economic pursuits according to their aspirations.

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and 50% representatives from the KKL-JNF! The KKL-JNF does not allow Arabs to settle on its land, except for isolated cases such as Ka'adan who appealed to the Supreme Court.

See Government Decision 631 <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2006/11/des631.htm> .

## **Section 551: The Goldberg Commission**

In July of 2007 the government decided to appoint a commission for Regulation of the Bedouin Settlements in the Negev headed by a retired judge.<sup>52</sup> In October 2007 the decision was amended and retired judge of the Supreme Court Eliezer Goldberg was appointed to head the commission.<sup>53</sup> The commission began its work in January of 2008 and Judge Goldberg submitted the commission's report to the Ministry of Housing in December of 2008.<sup>54</sup>

The Goldberg Commission held more than 20 public meetings in Be'er-Sheva from January to May 2008. During this time 120 public figures, representatives of the unrecognized villages, associations and social organizations, representatives of government offices, members of the Knesset, researchers, and academic experts testified before the commission. The commission conducted several excursions to Bedouin towns and visited several of the villages. For all intent and purposes, the commission appeared to be working in a democratic and open manner. However, the criteria for choosing representatives to the commission were unclear. Worse still, no representative from the unrecognized villages was appointed to the commission! The exclusion of people from the unrecognized villages, whose issues were the main topic of the work of the commission, was severely criticized by organizations in the field such as the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages, the Recognition Forum, and others. The secretariat of the Negev Coexistence Forum wrote to Judge Goldberg on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008, inquiring – among other things - what were the criteria for appointing members to the commission by the Ministry of Housing. "Itach", an organization of women lawyers for social justice even petitioned to the fact that there were no Bedouin women appointed to the committee, but the court ruled that the petition would be rejected on technical grounds.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Prime Minister's Office website, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, decision 1999 from 15.7.2005.

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2007/07/des1999.htm>

<sup>53</sup> Prime Minister's Office website, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, decision 2491 from 28.10.2007.

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2007/10/des2491.htm><sup>53</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Prime Minister's Office website, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Goldberg Commission Report (in Hebrew)

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/063BBB1A-E947-4816-9BD7-81547A01008C/0/DochGoldberg.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> Itach Association website, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 3974/08 Itach – Women Lawyers for Social Justice et. al. vs. the State of Israel et. al.

<http://www.itach.org.il/poelet/links/atir.doc>

However, the court decision stated that the government's decision spoke of the establishment of a council alongside the authority for regulating the Bedouins' residence in the Negev and that: "We should hope that while the council is established, the mistake of not appointing Bedouin-Arabs women to the commission will not be repeated". A representative of the State attorney stated that: "this would be done". This was recorded in the court's decision.<sup>56</sup> Various social organizations voiced their dissatisfaction with the makeup of the commission as well.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the Goldberg Commission presented its recommendations to the Ministry of Housing. The commission determined the rules for regulating the issue of the Bedouin-Arabs residence in the Negev, including the amount of compensation, arrangements for alternative land allotment, civil enforcement, and the schedule for carrying out the arrangements. In addition, the commission's recommendations included suggestions for legislation as determined in its letter of appointment. The conclusions<sup>57</sup> were presented to the government and discussed in January 2009 but so far they haven't been approved. We fear that the decision the government will take eventually will be even less favorable for the Bedouin-Arabs than the recommendations of the Goldberg commission.

### Summary

Despite its recognition of several villages and its recommendation to increase the level of compensation, the Goldberg Commission report does not resolve the issue of most unrecognized Bedouin-Arab villages. Since its recommendations depend on restrictions imposed by the Be'er-Sheva 'Metropolis Plan', only a handful of new villages will be recognized, if any. Hence the eviction of the Bedouin population will persist, and the policy of concentration in towns will continue as before.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, Court Decision <http://www.itach.org.il/poelet/links/3974-08.htm>

<sup>57</sup> Ministry of Construction and Housing Website, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Goldberg commission report (in Hebrew) <http://www.moch.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/770ABFE7-868D-4385-BE9A-96CE4323DD72/5052/DochVaadaShofetGoldbergHebrew3.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> NCF (Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality) website, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, newsletter no. 11 p. 1. [http://www.dukium.org/user\\_uploads/News-Letters/yedion11\\_Eng\\_web.pdf](http://www.dukium.org/user_uploads/News-Letters/yedion11_Eng_web.pdf)  
ACRI website, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, "ACRI: Mixed Reaction to Goldberg report". <http://www.acri.org.il/eng/story.aspx?id=591>

## Recommendations

There must be recognition of the traditional ownership of Bedouin-Arabs lands of – approximately 600,000 dunams (150,000 acres), as well as recognition of most of the unrecognized villages in the Negev, and consented resettlement of Bedouins living in hazardous zones. This recognition will be in accordance with the United Nations declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295) and the recommendations of the UN committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/ISR/CO/13).<sup>59</sup> Such recognition will also result in the opening of a new page in the relations between the State and its Bedouin-Arab citizens in the Negev-Naqab, and the creation of civil equality that has not existed in the Negev-Naqab for six decades.

### **Section 552: Government Plans for the Development of the Negev**

The government made several decisions for dealing with the Bedouin-Arab population as an important step towards integrating the plans for development of the Negev and the Galilee. This section notes the need for expanding the area allotted to the towns in order to add to them the populations from the unrecognized villages.

The government report states that “The towns are designed to absorb the scattered population groups”. The reference in the state report to the Bedouins living in these villages as a 'scattered population' is meant to explain the need of the state to gather and concentrate them in few places. However, the Bedouins are not a scattered population. The Bedouin-Arabs live in villages, some of which have existed even before the establishment of the state. These villages are known as 'unrecognized villages' because they do not appear on the map, sometime are not within the area of any municipality, and usually have no services for their residents. The unrecognized villages

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<sup>59</sup> UNPFII Website, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295). <http://www.un-documents.net/a61r295.htm>  
Adalah website, July 10th, 2009, concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, section 25 p. 6. <http://www.adalah.org/eng/intl07/cerd-concluding-mar07.pdf>

are usually rural-agricultural according to the traditions and choice of their residents therefore relocating the people living there to towns is often against the people's desire. It should also be noted that according to the criteria defined by the Ministry of Interior, villages of this size would ordinarily be recognized and would be allotted a budget for development as well as for each resident.<sup>60</sup> Because of the lack of status, residents in these villages cannot vote or be elected in democratic elections – a fact that contradicts article 25 of the UN Covenant (CCPR). Bedouin residents who live in the villages within the area of jurisdiction of the Jewish regional councils of Bnei Shimon, Tamar, and Ramat Negev, as well as others who live in areas with no jurisdiction are denied the right to vote and be elected.<sup>61</sup>

What are the government's plans? In recent years the government has initiated several plans for development of the Negev, but these failed to address the major issues confronting the Bedouins in the Negev.

Government decision (4415)<sup>62</sup> of November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005 called for budgeting 17 billion Shekels to fund the development of the Negev over a period of ten years. This plan has been frozen since the Second Lebanon War (2006), when resources that were designated for the Negev were diverted to the Galilee. More important, the plan does not deal with the two main issues that prevent improvement in the Bedouins' conditions: the issue of land and the issue of the unrecognized villages.<sup>63</sup>

Statutory plans such as National Master Plan No. 35 and partial District Master Plan for Be'er-Sheva Metropolis (4/14/23) of the Ministry of Interior did not provide a solution for the settlement of the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev-Naqab. A petition was therefore submitted to the Supreme Court, followed by objections to the amended plan as mentioned in section 549.

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<sup>60</sup> See Note 2 on the BIMKOM website. If a community fulfills the criteria of having a permanent population of more than 40 adults, independent administration, and is not within the municipal jurisdiction of another settlement, according to the Minister of Interior the site can be termed a settlement. According to these criteria there are dozens of Bedouin Arabs unrecognized villages that are entitled to municipal status. At least 36 of these have a population of more than 400, and the largest has a population of 5,000. Each village has a permanent physical structure and an internally agreed identity regarding the management of village matters.

<sup>61</sup> The area with no municipal status is under the jurisdiction of the Southern division of Ministry of Interior in the

<sup>62</sup> Prime Minister's website, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Decision 4415 from 20 November, 2005.

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2005/11/des4415.htm>

<sup>63</sup> Svirsky, S., (2009) Plans for Developing the Negev, A Critical Perspective p. 20, 37, Negev Center for Regional Development, Adva, Bedouin Society Research Center, Research Unit (in Hebrew).

Policy documents and work papers such as that of the National Security Council also suggested the relocation of Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev, in the manner in which Jewish settlers from Gaza strip were removed (in 2005), claiming that if it was possible to transfer 9000 Jewish settlers, it should also be possible to transfer 80,000 residents from the unrecognized villages. It must be strongly stated here that there is no comparison between an indigenous population who have been living on their traditional lands for hundreds of years and settlers who moved to occupied territories (upon which settlement is illegal according to international law), even if they have done so with government permission. Despite their illegal and short-term settlement, the Jewish settlers were awarded far higher compensation than that being offered to the Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev-Naqab.<sup>64</sup>

Two additional decisions of the government were Decision 2886 of 12.12.2004 and 2959 of 23.12.2004, which described the steps that the government would take to enforce decision 881 (mentioned in section 548). These decisions aimed to establish an inter-ministerial administration to coordinate actions for enforcing the land laws. The administration was established within the framework of the Israeli police in order to coordinate the activities of the various enforcement bodies.

### Summary

The government plans and recent changes in the laws are not in favor of the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev-Naqab. These plans are an additional device for eviction and dispossession and are designed to promote the development of the Jewish population at the expense of the Bedouin-Arabs. These plans do not address the needs and just claims of the Bedouin-Arabs.

### Recommendation

State plans must bring about real changes and improvements in the conditions of the Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev, rather than merely serving as a “legal” tool for continued eviction. The implication of this is that government plans must encompass many areas and be directed to closing the gap between the Bedouins and all other citizens.

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<sup>64</sup> See Note 41, *Transparent Citizens*, pp. 44-45.

### **Section 553: The "Illegality" of the Villages**

In this section the State report refers to the unrecognized villages as "illegal concentrations" that ignore the plans of the state. It should be noted that some of the villages have existed long before the State of Israel was established and part of them before the "Planning and Construction Law" was passed in 1965. As stated previously, part of the Bedouin-Arabs were internally displaced in the 1950s when the state relocated them from their traditional areas of residence in the Western Naqab-Negev and resettled them in various places within the Sayag area (between Arad, Dimona, Be'er-Sheva, and Rahat). These villages did not receive any status despite the fact that their residents appealed many times and demanded it. However, with the passing of the Planning and Construction Law, the government began to apply the law retroactively, issuing demolition orders for many of the buildings in these villages, most of which were designated as "illegal". The villages continued to grow and develop after the law had been passed because of natural growth and in the absence of a response on the part of the authorities, who failed to prepare plans and settle the Bedouin-Arabs on their land.

Bedouin-Arabs people prefer to live in these villages because the towns have been unsuccessful and have failed physically and socially. The Bedouin towns are the lowest in the socio-economic scale of Israeli municipalities and are ranked within the bottom cluster as follows: Qseifa (1), Tel al-Saba' (Tel-Sheva) (2), Rahat, (3), Ar'ara al-Naqab (4), Shqueb al\_Salam (Segev-Shalom) (5), Laqieh (7), Houra (8) .<sup>65</sup> These towns are also plagued by unemployment, crime and drugs.

The government ought to provide services to the unrecognized villages, as it does to Jewish settlements. The 112 Jewish settlements in the entire Negev area are much smaller than the Arab ones: Jewish settlements have an average population of 309, while the Bedouin-Arab villages have an average population of 1,740. In the Jewish settlements there are dozens of single farms with populations of less than 10 individuals, and these are connected to

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<sup>65</sup> The Central Bureau of Statistics website, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Table 2: Local Councils and Municipalities, by Socio-Economic Index, ranking, and Cluster Membership for 2003  
[http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/publications/local\\_authorities2003/pdf/t02.pdf](http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/publications/local_authorities2003/pdf/t02.pdf)

water and electricity as soon as they are established. These facts are evidence of clear-cut ethnic discrimination between the Jewish and Bedouin-Arab populations in providing basic services such as running water and electricity. The denial of these services makes water and electricity much more expensive for Bedouin-Arab consumers. The price of water is 3 to 10 times higher per consumer as that provided by "Mekorot", the national water company and electricity is also more expensive than that provided by the National power company. Bedouin families are forced to purchase petrol run generators and use this expensive electricity only for several hours in the evenings. This has resulted in absurd situations where a national power station is in the center of the village of Wadi Al-Na'am, but the village houses are not connected to the power grid and there is no electricity supply to the village.

#### Summary

Some of the unrecognized villages were established before the founding of the State of Israel and some afterwards. Withholding services to people living in the unrecognized villages in order to persuade them to leave the villages constitutes discrimination and a flagrant breach of basic civil rights.

#### Recommendation

All the basic services must be provided to the residents of the villages as long as no settlement has been reached regarding their future. Withdrawal of these services must not be used as a tool in the hands of the government for pressuring people to relocate to towns.

## **Section 554: House Demolitions and Townships**

The report claims that the problem of the “illegal building” will end when their residents move to the new towns. The greatest advantage for the Bedouin-Arabs living within the area of the new recognized towns is that they have been relieved to some extent of the constant fear of their homes being demolished, and this is indeed important. It is equally and no less important that houses in the unrecognized villages be declared legal as well, and that people are assured of stability in their lives in these places. Currently, tens of thousands of residents of the Negev - men, women, and children - live under the continuous threat of house demolition!

The report does not explain why recognition has not been granted to all of the unrecognized villages or why the residents have to move from their traditional locations to towns. It must be emphasized that the residents strongly oppose the relocation into these towns.

### Summary

The state is not willing to recognize the struggle of the Bedouin-Arabs to remain on their traditional lands or on lands to which they were transferred by the state during the 1950s. In order to hasten their move to the towns the state issues judicial and administrative demolition orders and often demolishes the homes of Bedouins in the Negev.

### Recommendation

The Bedouins must be allowed to remain in their villages and these villages must be recognized. Villages must be planned, as much as possible, in consideration with the existing houses in order to prevent the demolition of houses.

### **Section 555: State Compensation and relocation into towns**

In order to evict people from their land in the unrecognized villages and turn it to state property, compensation is given to people who relocate to the towns. Compensation is an additional means of forcing people to move into towns seemingly of their own will, and by so doing change their traditional way of life. The amount of money usually offered is about NIS 100,000 (\$25,000) but since the cost of building is high this amount is not sufficient to build a house. It should be remembered that this is an extremely poor population that usually has no savings to cover debts and therefore many of the houses in the towns are only partially built.

It should also be noted that the number of annual transactions of plots do not meet the demands of natural growth in the towns. In addition, the move to the towns severely restricts the availability of plots in the towns. 2,801 plots were marketed in the five-year period from 2003-2007, but more than 2000 new couples marry each year! The number of available plots is far short of that needed to meet the growth rate of the population. It should also be noted that in 2007 out of the total of 1,270 plots transactions<sup>66</sup> 1,088 (85.7%) were in the city of Rahat. In all the other towns only 182 plots were marketed with 6.9% (88 plots) marketed to residents of the unrecognized villages that were relocated to the towns within the framework of land settlements.

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<sup>66</sup> See note 42 p. 90 Report on Israel Land Authority activities for 2007.

**Table 4 - Distribution of Plot Transactions that were Approved in the Bedouin Towns According to Settlements 2003-2007<sup>67</sup>**

Settlement	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Rahat	27	28	49	34	76
Rahat Expansion	1,061	70			
Shqueb al-Salam (Segev-Shalom)	31	57	55	47	65
Ar'ara al-Naqab	52	26	79	36	48
Houra	54	55	83	53	62
Laqieh	19	45	45	60	41
Qseifa	9	18	35	35	42
Tel al-Saba' (Tel-Sheva)	17	16	21	26	69
Tarabin	0	21	152		
Um Matnan (Abu-Krinat)	0				
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,270</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>519</i>	<i>291</i>	<i>394</i>

### Summary

The areas for development in the towns are limited and do not offer a solution to the problem of couples who marry each year in the Bedouin-Arab towns and villages. The monetary compensation is low and is not enough to enable people to complete the building of houses.

### Recommendation

The policy of concentrating all Bedouin-Arabs in one type of township must be halted, and sufficient areas must be made available for development for the entire population. When there are no alternatives but to relocate people from their villages, the amount of monetary compensation offered must be increased or the state must build decent housing.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid p.90

## **Section 563-564: Water Supply**

The existing recognized towns have running water. However, in recognized new towns which are still in the planning stages, water is supplied only to parts of the town and anyone living on the edges of these towns, far from the center where the services are located, must lay temporary long pipelines. This is expensive and the water pipes often leak.

It should also be noted that villages such as Tel Arad, Awajan, Sawawin and other unrecognized villages have no running water at all, and in other villages like Wadi Al-Na'am large segments of the population have no running water and must bring water from far away in tanks carried by tractors, which makes the cost of water extremely expensive. Petitions by Bedouin-Arabs to have their homes connected to the water supply have been rejected by the court.<sup>68</sup>

### Summary

Water is a basic right in Israel<sup>69</sup> and all citizens have running water in their homes, with the exception of Bedouin-Arabs citizens in the Negev-Desert unrecognized villages. In addition to the prevention of services and house demolition, water in unrecognized villages is used as a means of pressure to forcibly concentrate the population in the state-planned towns.

### Recommendation

All families in the Bedouin Arab villages must be connected to running water immediately.

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<sup>68</sup> Adalah website July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Appeal 000609/05 Court for Water Issues Abu Mssaed et. al. vs. The Water Commissioner et. al., Court Decision.

<sup>69</sup> Environmental laws in Israel website, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, The Water Law 1959, section c (in Hebrew). [http://www.snunit.k12.il/www\\_teva/law/israel/h2.html](http://www.snunit.k12.il/www_teva/law/israel/h2.html)

### **Sections 565, 567-568: Medical Care**

The right to medical care constitutes one of the most important components of the right to health. The International Charter of General, Social, and Cultural Rights declares that all countries that are part of the charter (of which Israel is one) must see to the creation of conditions that will ensure medical services and care in the event of illness to all.<sup>70</sup>

As is the case of other rights, the right to health depends upon the fulfillment of four essential requirements in receiving medical care: availability, accessibility, compatibility, and quality.

**Availability:** This is defined as the existence of health facilities, services, and plans that are sufficient to meet the demands of the population.

**Accessibility:** Access to facilities, services and health programs in an egalitarian non-discriminatory manner that ensures the elimination of physical, financial or informational barriers.

**Compatibility:** Compatibility of the services with the social and cultural milieu of populations; respect to the principles of medical ethics and the cultural compatibility of the services.<sup>71</sup>

**Quality:** Preserving sufficiently high quality of the level of medical and scientific services.

The principle of equality constitutes one of the basic obligations of the state in fulfilling these requirements.

Israeli law also emphasizes the value of equality in fulfilling the various components of the right to health. The Government Health Insurance Law - 1994, states that "Government health insurance...is based upon principles of justice, equality, and mutual help" and that "general health services included in the services must be offered according to medical judgment, at reasonable quality within a reasonable time and at a reasonable distance from the patient's place of residence". The Patient's Rights Law 1996 explicitly states that "A patient is entitled to receive proper medical treatment from the standpoints of professional level and medical quality as well as from the

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<sup>70</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, article 12(d).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

standpoint of human relations"<sup>72</sup> and that "a health care provider or medical institution must not discriminate between one patient and another on the basis of religion, race, gender, nationality, country of origin, or any other reason".<sup>73</sup>

In section 565 the state report claims that the primary healthcare clinics in the unrecognized villages are equipped with air conditioning and proper equipment. In reality the picture is different because a large portion of the 12 clinics that serve the population in the unrecognized villages are in caravans. The clinics are not connected to the national power grid and generators provide the power needed, so that there is no possibility of refrigerating medications outside of operating hours. A petition was submitted by ACRI to the High Court of Justice in 2007, demanding that primary healthcare clinics and family health stations operating in the unrecognized villages in the Naqab-Negev be connected to the national power grid.<sup>74</sup>

In addition the healthcare clinics are on the outskirts of the village. This makes it difficult for women, the elderly and children to visit them. Another fact is that the Bedouin-Arabs cannot receive treatment in clinics in the nearby Jewish settlements. In some of the places, as in Be'er-Sheva, Yeruham, and Dimona, there are clinics for "minorities only" that are designed to serve only residents of the unrecognized villages.

**Problematic Opening and Reception Hours:** The Bedouins are also discriminated against with regard to reception hours. The average number of reception hours of physicians for every 1000 residents in the villages is 13 hours each week, as opposed to 21 hours in the Jewish settlements.

According to the "Klalit Healthcare Fund", the clinics are open five days a week for approximately 8 hours each day. According to the testimony of a doctor from one of the clinics in the Bedouin villages, the Healthcare Fund does not send a substitute if the physician is absent due to illness or

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<sup>72</sup> Patient's Rights Law, 1996, Section 5.

<sup>73</sup> Patient's Rights Law, 1996, Section 4.

<sup>74</sup> Israel State Court Authority website, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Appeal 6602/07 The Regional Council of the Unrecognized Arab Bedouin villages in the Negev et. al. vs. Minister of Health et. al.

<http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files/07/020/066/b10/07066020.b10.htm>

ACRI website July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, "ACRI to Court: Link clinics in the Bedouin villages to electric grid".

<http://www.acri.org.il/eng/Story.aspx?id=389>

vacation, and the clinic is left periodically without care for a week or more. Because of the lack of public transportation the medical staff must arrive via organized transport and often arrives late to open the clinics and leaves early. There is no solution for the evening hours with the exception of the Healthcare clinic in Al-Grain (Al-Say'yed) which is open in the evenings once a week.

### **Section 567**

There are presently 8 family health stations adjacent to primary healthcare clinics as well as mobile family health station units. These mobile units have no means of measuring a child's height or taking urine samples. The family health stations in the villages suffer from a severe shortage of medical staff and limited reception hours, and a large portion of them operate only once a week, as opposed to 2 days a week as they did previously. As a result of long waiting queues many women do not take their children to medical examinations and those who do come often return home without receiving treatment.

### **Section 568**

The principle of equality in medical treatment is not applicable in the unrecognized villages in the Negev. The reality in the villages is far from the spirit of the International Charter or the local laws. The facilities and health centers in the villages are inaccessible and currently only 12 clinics serve a population of about 83,000 residents. The quality of services is extremely low in comparison with other places in the country. The gap between the needs of society and the services that are actually offered in these villages indicates the extent to which residents of the unrecognized villages in the Negev are discriminated against in all matters connected with the equal right to enjoy health services, as opposed to their Jewish neighbors. This is undoubtedly a flagrant breach of the principle of equality.

In 34 of the unrecognized villages there are no medical services at all, including the village of Al-Fur'ah, with a population of 3,885 while in the clinics that the healthcare services operate in the unrecognized villages there are fewer reception hours of physicians, fewer laboratory examinations and fewer

reception hours for laboratory examinations (one hour as opposed to a national average of three hours per 1000 residents). There are no specialized medical services except for family medicine, no pediatricians or gynecologists, and there is no pharmacist or pharmacy in any of the villages. In addition, the accessibility of the clinics is extremely problematic due to the lack of infrastructures: there are no roads or public transport, and the clinics are often located far from the residential areas in villages and towns.

#### Summary (sections 565, 567-568)

The healthcare clinics are not providing proper health services. Accessibility, availability, and the suitability of the services offered to the Bedouin-Arabs in the unrecognized villages are at a very basic level. In addition, the state prevents the provision of an infrastructure and fails to offer essential services or the building of healthcare clinics in all villages. It prevents varied health services and uses this as a means to apply pressure and to force residents of the unrecognized villages to relocate to the townships and to relinquish their ownership of land.

#### Recommendation

In order to improve the state of health of the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev it is necessary to improve the availability and accessibility of health services. This requires a differential investment in developing services in the unrecognized villages.

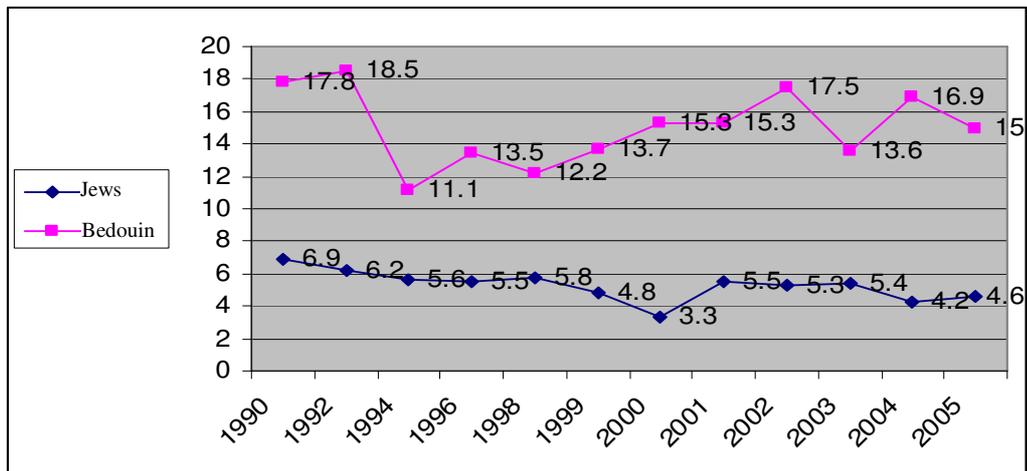
#### **Section 571: Infant Mortality**

The following graph shows that there has indeed been a slow decline in infant mortality among the Bedouins in the Negev, especially in 2003. But since then, there has been a slow increase in mortality.

The graph also shows that there is a gap in infant mortality between the Jewish population and the Arab population in the Negev that has not closed over the years. In 2005 the infant mortality rate among the Arab population in

the Negev was 15:1,000, while in the Jewish population the rate was 4.6:1,000 live births.

**Figure 1 - Infant Mortality Rate in the South According to Population Groups During Selected Years between 1990 – 2005 (Per 1,000 Live Births).<sup>75</sup>**



### Summary

Although a significant portion of infant mortality may be attributed to birth defects, an outcome of intermarriages, some of the infant mortality is probably due to a lack in pre-natal screening, as well as the deficiencies in medical and emergency services in the villages, as described in our response to sections 567-568.

### Recommendation

Develop more pre-natal services (screening and counseling) and increase availability of emergency healthcare services as well as accessibility of health services.

<sup>75</sup>Knesset website, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Knesset Research Center, Children in the Bedouin Sector in the Negev (2006). <http://www.knesset.gov.il/MMM/data/docs/m01676.doc>

## **Section 579: Availability of Schooling and Education**

The section on education discusses only the workforce of women and the opening of day care centers for their children. The educational system and its achievements is what will determine the ability of the Bedouin-Arab population to cope with the challenges of the future. Today this system is among the poorest in Israel, with high dropout rates, a shortage of physical infrastructures, and the lowest level of achievements in matriculation examinations. We have chosen to present an illustration of the number of students who matriculated. In 2005 and 2006 53.3% of students in the Jewish sector passed successfully their matriculation examinations. On the other hand, in the Arab sector there was a decrease in the rate of students who earned their matriculations in 2006 as opposed to 2005. 35.7% matriculated in 2006 as opposed to 36.8% in the previous year. Only 27.9% of Bedouin students matriculated in 2006 as opposed to 28.38% in the previous year.<sup>76</sup> It should also be noted that there is a high dropout rate in the Bedouin high-schools (up to 77%), and only a small percentage of the students earns a matriculation certificate that opens the door for higher education. In the unrecognized villages there are no high schools at all. "Adalah" - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel submitted a petition to the Supreme Court in that matter, and under the settlement that was approved by the Supreme Court the Ministry of Education is obliged to open the school from September 2009.<sup>77</sup> It is worth mentioning that there are dozens of villages in which there are no elementary schools, which increases the dropout rate, mainly of girls.

### Summary

The Bedouin-Arabs educational system in the Negev is among the poorest in the State of Israel. This leaves the Bedouin population far behind and deepens the gap between them and the Jewish population in the Negev.

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<sup>76</sup> Y-Net, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. – “The Right to Ignorance – Jews More, Arabs Less”(in Hebrew).

<http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-3411067,00.html>

<sup>77</sup> Adalah website, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, appeal 2848/05 Fatimha Abu-Sabila et. al. vs. The Ministry of Education et. al. "Demanding the Establishment of a High School for 750 Arab Bedouin Students from Abu-Tulul – El-Shihabi and Six Surrounding Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab".

### Recommendation:

A multi-year plan must be prepared in order to close the gap between the Bedouin-Arab population in the Negev and the other populations. Additional schools must be built – particularly high schools in the unrecognized villages and elementary schools fully equipped in the larger villages.

### **Sections 583-589: Welfare**

The detailed sections on welfare services in the state report do not mention several facts that we would like to point out here.

-There is a severe shortage of protected housing, day centers, and clubs for the elderly in the Bedouin towns, as well as centers for dealing with the prevention of domestic violence.

-There are almost no government agencies - social security, employment, and others – operating in the towns.

- There are practically no Arabs working in the public service in the Negev.

The rate of poverty among the Bedouin in the planned towns is 66% and in the unrecognized villages it is as high as 79.2% (about double the national average in Israel).<sup>78</sup>

### Summary

Welfare services in the Bedouin villages in the Negev-Naqab are far below national standards.

### Recommendation

A multi-year plan must be prepared to overcome the failing welfare system which is operating below standards. There is a shortage of welfare services for all parts of the population and the shortage of welfare infrastructures must be overcome in order to close the extreme gap between the Arab welfare system and that of the general population in the Negev.

The following are tools for reducing poverty:<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Baader, S., and Gottlieb D., (2007), Poverty in the Bedouin population in the Mirror of the Other Arab Population in Israel. Van-Leer Institute, Jerusalem (in Hebrew).

- Improving education for long-term employment (including not only direct educational expenses but also investing in infrastructures),
- Legislation for encouraging capital investments: changing priorities according to a socio-economic index, investing in human capital especially of poorly educated people.
- Improving infrastructures
  - Industrial areas
  - Access to transportation
  - Culture and leisure (libraries, youth centers, sports clubs)
  - Health (Family healthcare station, emergency services (Magen David Adom - Red Cross equivalent)).
- Fighting discrimination in the labor market of educated people (affirmative action in the public sector)
- Reducing the number of non-Israeli workers
- Enforcing labor laws and the protection of workers' rights

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<sup>79</sup> These suggestions are made by Bader and Gottlieb (Ibid). We must note that despite the value of these suggestions, we still oppose Bader and Gottlieb conclusion that the number of non-Israeli workers should be decreased since this involves infringement of human rights towards Palestinians and migrant workers.

## **Some information about articles 25 and 27 of the CCPR that were not discussed in the State report**

We would like to briefly discuss articles 25 and 27 of the UN covenant (CCPR), which the state did not discuss in its report.

Article 25 has not been fulfilled in the case of the residents of the Abu-Basma Regional council, where there have been no elections since its establishment in February of 2004. The Abu-Basma Regional Council has been an appointed Council for more than 5 years and is headed by Amram Qalaji. The council has nine members who represent the Bedouin settlements that were recently recognized or established and state representatives. It should be noted that most of the workers in Abu-Basma Regional Council are not Bedouin-Arabs and its offices are located in the city of Be'er-Sheva.

It should also be emphasized that many of the Bedouin-Arabs who live in the areas of the Jewish regional councils of Bnei Shimon, Ramat-Negev, Tamar and others are not part of the municipal electoral system and are not listed as residents of the councils, and consequently do not take part in the management of public affairs. After a petition was filed in 1999,<sup>80</sup> the Minister of the Interior promised the Supreme Court to change the situation in the next elections, but so far this did not happen.

Another important issue is the fact that Bedouin-Arabs workers have not been integrated in public services or as workers in government offices, with the exception of the Ministry of Welfare and especially the Ministry of Education.

### **Cultural and Religious Issues**

We would like to call to the attention of the committee to issues relating to Article 27, regarding freedom of worship and especially places of prayer and burial. Bedouin-Arabs in the Negev are prevented from praying in the mosque of Be'er-Sheva, and the case is currently being examined by the Supreme

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<sup>80</sup>Israel State Court Authority website, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, Supreme Court Decision 1990/99, Yosoff Abu Hamed et. al. vs. the Minister of the Interior et. al. <http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files/99/900/019/E03/99019900.e03.htm>  
See also ACRI website, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, (in Hebrew) <http://www.acri.org.il/Story.aspx?id=487>

Court. The 'Great Mosque' in Be'er-Sheva was built in 1906 with Bedouin funds and served as a place of worship for residents of the city and the surrounding area until 1948. From 1948 until 1953 the mosque served as a prison and a wing of the courthouse, and from 1953 to 1991 it housed the Museum of the Negev. From 1991 to the present the 'Great Mosque' has been abandoned and neglected. The Moslem residents of the city of Be'er-Sheva and the Bedouin-Arabs villages in the vicinity are prevented from worshipping in the mosque despite their numerous requests to do so. There is no mosque available to the Arab population of the city, which numbers about 5,000.

The Moslem-Bedouin cemetery in the heart of the city of Be'er-Sheva is even more neglected. The Be'er-Sheva municipality does not maintain or care for the cemetery and the place is frequently crowded with drug dealers and stray dogs.

In all unrecognized villages there is no state allotment for cemeteries. The Bedouin-Arab residents see to their own cemeteries as best as they can. The situation has not changed despite the decision of the Supreme Court 1113/99 in which the court emphasized the importance of the principle of equality in allotment of state resources, and ordered the Ministry of Religion to see to it that budgets were equal for the entire Israeli population.<sup>81</sup> However, the unrecognized villages do not benefit from this decision.

The state does not transfer resources for places of worship in the unrecognized villages and the mosques there are built with money from the community, who must also maintain them.

### Summary

The state does not permit places for Moslem cultural or religious activities in the city of Be'er-Sheva. There are no places for prayer or burial, and it does

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<sup>81</sup> Adalah The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel Website, Jul 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Supreme Court Decision 1113/99, Adala et. Al. vs. the Minister of Religion e.t al., The Petition as submitted in February 1999 and the court came to a decision in April 2000.  
<http://www.adalah.org/heb/legaladvocacypop.php?file=legaladvocacyreligious7311>

not allocate resources for places of prayer or cemeteries in the unrecognized villages.

Recommendation

Resources must be allotted equally for religious and cultural needs in the city of Be'er-Sheva and in the unrecognized villages.

## **Profile of the Organizations Collaborating to Prepare this Report**

### **Negev Forum for Coexistence and Civil Equality**

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality is a non-government organization that was established in 1997 by Arab and Jewish Israelis who live in the Negev-Naqab. The objective of the forum is to enable a framework for Arab-Jewish activities in the struggle for equal civil rights for promoting tolerance and coexistence in the Negev.

The activities of the Forum include common meetings and social activities between the two communities, activities for increasing public awareness to the hardships experienced by the Bedouin-Arabs, common struggle against discrimination in employment and services, and struggling for distributive justice and suitable solutions for the residents of the unrecognized villages.

### **The Association for Support and Defense of Bedouin Rights in Israel**

The association was established in 1979 By Bedouin-Arab residents of the Negev-Naqab. The association was the first to wage a struggle on the issue of land and the unrecognized villages in the Negev and submitted alternative plans for planning villages.

### **Physicians for Human Rights**

The association was established in the first months of the Palestinian uprisings in the occupied territories in 1988. The association was established by a group of Israeli and Palestinian physicians and fights for human rights in general and the right to health in particular in Israel and the occupied territories.

### **The Recognition Forum**

The Recognition Forum was established in 2002 and is a coalition of the organizations that work towards recognition of the unrecognized villages in the Negev-Naqab. The forum includes the following human rights organizations: The Alternative Information Center, Association Forty, The Association for Support and Defense of Bedouin Rights in Israel, Coalition of Women for Peace, Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, New Profile, Rabbis for Human Rights, and Ta'ayush.