

Adalah Public Opinion Survey

Arab Citizens' Attitudes on Infrastructure and Urban Services, Government Policy toward the Arab Minority and their Degree of Trust in Israeli Institutions

Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel conducted a survey of Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel in order to gauge their attitudes in three areas:

- A. The condition of existing infrastructure and urban services provided in Arab towns and villages, and questions relating to spatial and economic issues;
- B. Government policy toward the Arab minority;
- C. The extent to which they have trust in official institutions.

The information was obtained through personal interviews and a questionnaire in Arabic. The interviews were held during the summer of 2003. The sample group was composed of 517 Arab men and women over the age of 18 from Arab villages in the north, the Triangle (center), the Naqab (Negev) (south), and from "mixed cities" throughout the country. The survey was monitored by Dr. Yosef Jabareen, lecturer in the Urban and Regional Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and visiting scholar at Harvard University; Hana Hamdan, Adalah Urban and Regional Planner and Ph.D. candidate at Tel Aviv University; and Adalah Attorney Suhad Bishara, a specialist in land and planning law.¹

The Survey Findings

A. Infrastructure and Urban Services in Arab Towns and Villages, and Spatial and Economic Issues

The participants were asked their opinion on urban, spatial, social, and economic services, such as jurisdictional boundaries, industrial zones and employment, employment opportunities for women, education, health, recreation, and infrastructure. In most categories, infrastructure and services were rated as very poor to poor. Regarding spatial issues, the situation of the unrecognized villages in the Naqab and the jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages stood out, with a particularly high percentage of participants giving these issues a grade of very poor to poor.

1. Urban Services and Infrastructure

In every area aside from health, the survey's findings show that most participants classified the urban services and infrastructure in Arab towns and villages as very poor to poor. Health services were considered average by 46.6%, and very poor to poor by only 36.5%. As can be seen from Table 1, which covers nine areas of services and infrastructure, recreational sites (including public parks and playgrounds) and industrial zones were found by more than 90% of the participants to be very poor to poor. 84.4% considered cultural services (theatre, music, etc.) to be very poor to poor. 77.5% rated physical infrastructure (such as roads, sewage system and drainage) as very poor to poor, as did 78.6% for commercial areas, 75% for sports facilities, and 72.1% for education.

Table 1: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on Urban Services and Infrastructure*

Area	Total	Very Poor to Poor	Average	Good to Excellent
Recreational sites (including public parks and playgrounds)	514 (100%)	92.6	6.0	1.4
Industrial areas	514 (100%)	91.9	7.2	0.9
Cultural services (theatre, music, etc.)	514 (100%)	84.4	13.2	2.4
Commercial areas	509 (100%)	78.6	18.7	2.8
Infrastructure (such as roads, sewage system and drainage)	512 (100%)	77.5	17.4	5.1
Sports facilities	508 (100%)	75.0	22.4	2.6
Education	512 (100%)	72.1	22.3	5.7
Public transport	515 (100%)	64.9	22.5	12.6
Health	513 (100%)	36.5	46.6	17.0

2. Employment of Women

Most Arab women of working age are not employed in salaried jobs. According to 2001 figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics, 76% of “non-Jewish” women – based on the CBS’s definition of “non-Jewish” – are not working. This figure can be explained by the weak economic structure in Arab towns and villages in Israel, and by the lack of employment zones in or near Arab towns and villages, particularly for women. In the opinion of 88.7% of the survey’s participants, the employment situation for women is very poor to poor, as appears in Table 2.

Table 2: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on Employment Opportunities for Arab Women*

	Total	Very Poor to Poor	Average	Good to Excellent
Total	505 (100%)	88.7	9.9	1.4

3. Spatial Issues

As Table 3 reveals, the unrecognized villages were seen as the most problematic spatial issue, with 98.2% responding that the situation in these villages was very poor to poor.² An especially high percentage (92.2%) responded that the situation regarding the jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages was very poor to poor, and 63.8% gave the same low grade to housing issues.

Table 3: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on Spatial Issues in Arab Towns and Villages*

Spatial Issue	Total	Very Poor to Poor	Average	Good to Excellent
Unrecognized villages	511 (100%)	98.2	1.4	0.4
Uprooted villages	505 (100%)	97.9	1.6	0.6
Jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages	512 (100%)	92.2	6.6	1.2
Environment	499 (100%)	75.6	16.6	7.8
Housing	511 (100%)	63.8	28.8	7.5
Muslim, Christian, and Druze holy sites	515 (100%)	48.0	32.0	20.0

4. Degree of Severity of the Problems Facing the Arab Minority

The participants were asked to prioritize issues requiring immediate governmental action. Their responses are reflected in Table 4. The six issues at the top of the list were education, the unrecognized villages, employment, jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages, local authority budgets, and housing. All of the areas which are mentioned in Table 4 require governmental action, as is evident from the very poor to poor rating given to the condition of infrastructure and urban services, as shown above in Table 1, and to spatial matters, as revealed by Table 3,.

Table 4: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on Matters Requiring Immediate Governmental Action, by Priority*

Subject	Entire sample
Education	1
Unrecognized villages	2
Industrial and commercial areas/employment	3
Jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages	4
Budgets of Arab local authorities	5
Housing	6
Uprooted villages (since 1948)	7
Employment of women	8
Infrastructure	9
Cultural services	10
Preservation of holy sites for Muslims, Christians, and Druze	11
Recreation sites	12
Health services	13
Environment	14
Public transportation	15

B. Justice and Fairness of Official Government Policy toward the Arab Minority

The participants were asked for their opinion on the fairness of the government's policy towards the Arab minority in general, by geographical area and by subject-matter. Regarding official

government policy toward the Arab minority in Israel in general, 93.2% of the individuals questioned considered it very unfair to unfair, while a mere 0.6% considered it fair to very fair.

1. The Degree of Fairness of Official Policy toward Arabs. by Geographical Area

Table 5 shows that the Naqab was rated as the area treated most unfairly by government policy, with 95.2% holding the opinion that the general policy against Arabs in the Naqab was very unfair to unfair. Similarly, only 90.7% regarded government policy toward Arabs living in Wadi 'Ara as very unfair to unfair. In the case of the Galilee in the north, the figure falls to 84.9%. As for the government's policy towards Arabs living in "mixed cities," 80.8% ranked it as very unfair to unfair.

Table 5: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on the Fairness of the Government's General Policy toward the Arab Minority, by Geographical Area*

Policy area	Total	Very Unfair to Unfair	Average	Fair to Very Fair
General policy toward Arab minority in Israel	502 (100%)	93.2	6.2	0.6
General policy toward Arabs in the Naqab	497 (100%)	95.2	4.0	0.8
General policy toward Arabs in Wadi 'Ara	486 (100%)	90.7	8.6	0.6
General policy toward Arabs in the Galilee	489 (100%)	84.9	13.1	2.0
General policy toward Arabs in "mixed cities"	495 (100%)	80.8	17.8	1.4

2. Degree of Fairness of Official Governmental Policy toward Arabs. by Subject Matter

The vast majority of persons interviewed believed that government policy toward Arab citizens and Arab towns and villages was very unfair to unfair across all subjects (see Table 6, below). The same opinion was held specifically as regards the policy of allocation of land for development of Arab towns and villages (96.4%), the demolition of buildings (95.4%), the expansion of jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages (95.2%), economic development of the Arab minority (95%), the appointment of Arabs to public sector positions (94.4%), urban planning for Arab towns (93.4%), public housing for Arabs (93.4%), and the allocation of the various development budgets (82.8%-86%). Police policy toward Arabs was considered very unfair to fair by 84.1% of participants. The judicial system was given a slightly higher grading, with 65% describing it as very unfair to unfair, and one-third fair to very fair or average.

Table 6: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on the Fairness of the Government's General Policy toward the Arab Minority, by Subject Matter*

Subject	Total	Very Unfair to Unfair	Average	Fair to Very Fair
Allocation of land for the development of Arab towns and villages	502 (100%)	96.4	2.6	1.0
Demolition of buildings in Arab towns and villages	504 (100%)	95.4	3.2	1.4
Expansion of jurisdictional boundaries of Arab towns and villages	500 (100%)	95.2	4.0	0.8
Economic development of the Arab minority	500 (100%)	95.0	4.2	0.8
Appointment of Arabs to positions in the public sector (government ministries)	503 (100%)	94.4	4.8	0.8
Urban Planning in Arab towns and villages	497 (100%)	93.4	6.2	0.4
Public housing for Arabs	497 (100%)	93.4	6.0	0.6
Budgets for development of cultural activities for Arabs	492 (100%)	86.0	12.4	1.6
Budgets for infrastructure in Arab towns and villages	500 (100%)	85.4	13.2	1.4
Police policy toward Arabs	497 (100%)	84.1	14.3	1.6
Budgets for social services in Arab towns and villages	502 (100%)	82.8	15.5	1.6
Policy of the judicial system towards Arabs	502 (100%)	65.0	27.5	7.6

C. Degree of Trust of the Arab Minority in State and Other Institutions

The third and final part of the survey dealt with the extent to which the Arab minority trusts government ministries, the Knesset, and other institutions, including the Israel Lands Administration, the planning authorities and the courts. Significantly, over the past two years, trust in the government has declined. Some 58% of the participants claimed that their trust in the government had declined or declined significantly, and 38% said that their trust had not changed over this period.

1. Trust in the Government and in Government Ministries

The vast majority of survey participants stated that they did not trust the present government, with 92.5% expressing distrust to complete distrust in it (see Table 7). Regarding specific ministries, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Construction and Housing received the poorest ratings, with 87.9% and 86.1% of participants respectively stating that they completely distrusted to distrusted these ministries. Four ministries received a slightly better, while still low, trust rating: the Ministry of Interior (75.8%), the Ministry of Education and Culture (74.3%), and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (73.6%). Lack of trust in the Ministry of Transportation (64.3%) and the Ministry of Health (52%) was still high, but less severe than the rating given to the other ministries.

Table 7: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on its Trust in the Government and in Government Ministries*

	Total	Completely Distrust to Distrust	Average	Trust to Trust a Great Deal
Government	(100%) 511	92.5	6.3	1.2
Ministry of Finance	(100%) 513	87.9	10.3	1.8
Ministry of Construction and Housing	(100%) 511	86.1	12.7	1.2
Ministry of Interior	(100%) 512	75.8	20.1	4.1
Ministry of Education and Culture	(100%) 513	74.3	22.0	3.7
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	(100%) 511	73.6	22.5	3.9
Ministry of Transportation	(100%) 512	64.3	29.5	6.3
Ministry of Health	(100%) 511	52.0	38.9	9.0

2. Trust in Official and Representative Institutions

As can be seen from Table 8 below, the Israel Lands Administration and the planning authorities are the institutions least trusted by the Arab minority, with 93.1% and 89.1% respectively expressing distrust to complete distrust in these institutions. The Supreme Court received the highest degree of trust, with 25.3% stating that they trust the Supreme Court or trust it a great deal.

Table 8: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on its Trust in Institutions*

Institution	Total	Completely Distrust to Distrust	Average	Trust to Trust a Lot
Israel Lands Administration	509 (100%)	93.1	5.9	1.0
Planning authorities	511 (100%)	89.1	10.6	0.4
The Knesset	513 (100%)	83.0	13.6	3.4
Israeli Hebrew media	505 (100%)	79.1	17.4	4.6
Israel Police Force	515 (100%)	78.2	18.6	3.1
The Histadrut [General Labor Federation]	507 (100%)	57.2	33.7	9.1
National Insurance Institute	501 (100%)	56.4	34.5	9.1
Arab local authorities	508 (100%)	54.9	34.8	10.3
The judicial system	509 (100%)	46.9	38.9	14.2
The Supreme Court	503 (100%)	35.6	39.2	25.3

On the question of whether their trust in government policy had changed over the past two years, 57.6% of survey participants responded that their trust had declined or declined significantly, while 37.9% said that their degree of trust had not changed (see Table 9 below).

Table 9: *Opinion of the Arab Minority on its Change in Trust in Government Policy toward the Arab Minority over the Past Two Years*

	Percentage
Total	496 (100%)
Increased significantly	2.8
Increased	1.6
Declined	15.7
Declined significantly	41.9
Did not change	37.9

¹ We would like to thank Salim Abu-Medeghem, Adalah's Naqab Field Researcher, Arin 'Abdi, Ahmad Zuabi, Hanan Hilu, and Tamer Suliman for conducting the interviews, and Mazen Zuabi, who was responsible for organizing the completed questionnaires.

² The problem of the unrecognized villages, which is most prevalent in the Naqab, arose following the enactment of the Planning and Building Law – 1965, which did not designate these areas as officially recognized villages in the master plans prepared pursuant to the law. Some of these villages predate the establishment of the state. Others were established in accordance with orders issued by the military government after 1948, whereby residents of the villages were compelled to leave their original villages and move to the villages in which they are presently living. As unrecognized villages, in most cases, the state refuses to supply them with basic services, such as water, electricity, infrastructure, schools, and health services.