



منتدى التعايش السلمي في النقب من أجل المساواة المدنية  
פורום דו קיום בנגב לשוויון אזרחי  
Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality

**Adalah** The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel  
عدالة المركز القانوني لحقوق الاقلية العربية في اسرائيل  
עדאלה המרכז המשפטי לזכויות המיעוט הערבי בישראל



Joint NGO Submission to the  
UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination  
Re: List of Themes for the State of Israel

**Violations of the ICERD against the  
Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel living in the Naqab/Negev desert**

Submitted by:

Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF)  
& Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

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## I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Bedouin citizens of Israel are an **indigenous population** that has been living in the Naqab/Negev for centuries, long before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The Bedouin community is an integral part of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel and the Palestinian people as whole, one that has a distinct way of life and other special characteristics. International bodies, including the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter: the UN Committee), have issued consistent concluding observations (hereinafter: COs) calling on Israel to recognize and respect the rights, historical land claims, and traditional way of life of the Bedouin community.<sup>1</sup>

Like many Palestinian citizens of Israel, Bedouin citizens in the Naqab were forcibly displaced and expelled from their lands during and after the 1948 war. All Palestinians, including the Bedouin, were placed under Israeli military rule from 1948-1966. The military government relocated the Bedouin in the 1950s to an area called the Siyāj (900 km<sup>2</sup>) or “fence”, which constitutes only 7% of the total area of the Be'er Sheva (Beer el-Sabe) district, and prohibited them from returning to their historical lands.<sup>2</sup> Today, about 258,500 Bedouins live in the Naqab in **three types of communities**: government-planned townships, newly-recognized villages, and unrecognized villages.<sup>3</sup>

The State's policy in the Naqab has been guided, and continues to be guided, by the mythologizing of the area as a vast empty space that should be prioritized for the settlement of Israeli Jewish citizens. This longstanding view has led to the **non-recognition of Bedouin ownership of their lands**, with the State filing legal actions to confiscate and register Bedouin property as “state lands”.<sup>4</sup> As a result, today there are 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Naqab that the State refers to either as “illegal”, “unauthorized”, or “unregulated” villages”, and to their inhabitants as “diaspora”, “criminals” and “trespassers” on state land. The State exhibited this same hostile attitude towards the unrecognized villages in its report to the Committee, claiming that their existence “obstructs urban expansion in the greater Negev area and is not beneficial to the common good of the Bedouin population.”<sup>5</sup> Some of these villages existed long before the establishment of the State, while others were created after the forced transfer of the population to the Siyāj area.

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), as of 2017, more than 28% of the Bedouin population (around 86,000 people) lives in unrecognized villages, although civil society organizations estimate that the number is closer to 90,000-92,000 people.<sup>6</sup> These villages do not appear on any official maps. The State **does not provide most of them with basic services** like healthcare, educational facilities; all of them lack infrastructure including connection to the national electricity grid, running water, paved roads and sewage disposal systems. Their residents have no representation in the various local governmental bodies and some of them cannot register to

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Committee, 99th Session, Geneva, 12-30 July 2010. Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, Raquel Rolnik, Mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 24 December 2012. A/HRC/22/46/Add.1.

<sup>2</sup> Adalah, *Nomads Against Their Will*, 2011, p. 8, at: <https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/eng/publications/Nomads%20Against%20their%20Will%20English%20pdf%20final.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), *Localities and Population, by District, Sub-District, Religion and Population Group* (2.15), 31 December 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Adalah, *Nomads*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> State of Israel Report to the UN CERD Committee, p. 23, para. 200.

<sup>6</sup> CBS, *Total population estimations in localities, their population and other information*, 2017.

participate in municipal elections. Additionally, as a result of non-recognition, the building of permanent structures in these villages is illegal and can lead to heavy fines and home demolitions.<sup>7</sup> While the State refuses to grant recognition to these villages, it has provided Israeli Jewish families with thousands of dunams of land for their exclusive use, creating almost 100 "individual settlements". This policy seeks to maximize areas that have an exclusively "Jewish" population, and to **prevent development by the Bedouin community**. For example, a new law enacted in 2010 allowed for the retroactive recognition of 60 family farms in the Naqab, stretching over 81,000 dunams, many of which were established without permits and contrary to planning laws.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to non-recognition, since the 1950s the State has executed plans to forcibly displace Bedouins in the Naqab and concentrate them into limited geographic spaces.<sup>9</sup> These plans were implemented by establishing seven government-planned Bedouin townships in the Siyāj area in the 1970s and 1980s, in a jurisdiction under 76,800 dunams. All the Bedouin townships are characterized by poverty, deprivation, high unemployment, crime and social tension, as well as inadequate provision of state services. According to CBS data, 72% of the Bedouins in the Naqab reside in these towns, about 186,400 people.<sup>10</sup> These towns are part of an **ongoing, non-consensual and non-participatory process of forced urbanization** aimed at dismantling Bedouin culture and traditional way of life.

In addition to the seven townships, the State recognized 11 Bedouin villages from 1999 onwards, hailing their recognition as a fundamental shift in governmental policy, which had previously focused exclusively on forced urbanization. However, almost two decades later, there is **no significant difference between these villages and the unrecognized villages**. The residents of most recognized villages continue to be denied access to basic services and are under constant threat of house demolitions. According to the CBS, only 6.6% of the Bedouin community resides in these villages, numbering around 19,000 people.<sup>11</sup> The jurisdiction of these villages is 71,300 dunams. In total, all the recognized towns and villages for Bedouins in the Naqab are built in a geographic space that does not exceed one percent of the total area of the District of Beer el-Sabe.<sup>12</sup>

## II. **RACIST INCITEMENT AGAINST BEDOUINS** | *Article 4*

In its 2012 Concluding Observations (COs), the Committee expressed concern at the increase in **racist and xenophobic acts, manifestations and discourse**, especially against Palestinians and asylum-seekers of African origin. This concern is also relevant to the Bedouin community in the Naqab, which not only suffers from racial discrimination by Israeli laws and policies, but also from racist statements and discourse by Israeli public officials against them. The propagation of such incitement directly violates Article 4 of the ICERD, which calls on state parties to condemn any "attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form" and to "not permit

<sup>7</sup> Adalah, The Arab Bedouin and the Praver Plan, 2011, at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/122424008/The-Arab-Bedouin-and-the-Praver-Plan-Ongoing-Displacement-in-the-Naqab>.

<sup>8</sup> Adalah, Discriminatory Laws Database, "Negev Individual Settlements" – Negev Development Authority Law, Amendment No. 4, 2010, at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/law/view/500>. The enactment of the law followed litigation by Adalah, Bimkom and the NCF challenging the government's policy of affording to recognition to the illegal individual settlements (farms) that were established in the Naqab contrary to local, district and national plans, and without obtaining the necessary permits as required by law. The Israeli Supreme Court upheld the planning authorities' decision. See HCJ 2817/06, *Adalah, et. al. v. The National Council for Planning and Building, et. al.* (decision delivered 15 June 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Adalah, Nomads, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> CBS, Total population estimations in localities, their population and other information, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Adalah, Nomads, p. 9.

public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination".<sup>13</sup>

An example of this racist incitement are statements made by the director of the Bedouin Development Authority, Yair Maayan. In a tape from 2017 in the possession of Israeli news site Ma'ariv Online, Maayan is heard referring to the residents of Bīr Haddāj, a recognized village, as **thieves of state land**.<sup>14</sup> In March 2017, a year after he was appointed to his position, Maayan was also quoted in the German magazine Süddeutsche Zeitung calling the Bedouin "thieves." According to the magazine, Maayan also said that "traditional land acquisition agreements are worthless" and that "instead of putting these thieves in jail, we will give them a piece of land as a gift. It is a good deal and if the Bedouins refuse, the police will force them". Maayan's statements are alarming and dangerous, particularly as he is the official in charge of the main governmental agency, which currently sits within the Ministry of Agriculture, that deals with all aspects of the lives of the Bedouin population in the Naqab.

Another example of inciting speech is by Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, following a deadly police shooting incident during home demolitions in the unrecognized village of Umm al-Ḥīrān. During these events, Ya'aqub Abu al-Qi'ān, a math teacher and Bedouin resident of the village, and a police officer were killed as the former was trying to drive out of the village at a slow speed. Erdan was quick to declare the incident as having "a nationalist background" – in other words, a terror attack – and tweeted "The terrorist sharply turned his wheel and quickly accelerated in order to run over a group of police officers".<sup>15</sup> However, police video footage of the incident and eyewitness testimony revealed that police opened fire on Abu al-Qi'ān's vehicle before he accelerated in the direction of officers, thus disproving Erdan's and the police claims that Ya'aqub Abu al-Qi'ān sought to "ram" them.<sup>16</sup> The minister **has not apologized for his remarks to this day**.

Other officials have also incited against Bedouin citizens. In June 2018, during a discussion in the Knesset Interior Committee, the Minister of Construction and Housing Yoav Galant referred to the unrecognized Bedouin villages as "terrorism" and "Islamist Palestinian expansion".<sup>17</sup> In a coalition meeting in June 2017, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the demographic growth of the Bedouin community in the Naqab as an **existential threat to the state**, and asked Ministers Ze'ev Elkin, Yariv Levin and Uri Ariel to formulate a national plan that would prevent what he called "unnatural growth".<sup>18</sup> A legislative bill is now being formulated to this effect.

### III. DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING & PLANNING | *Articles 5 (d)(v); 5(e)(iii)*

#### *(a) Home demolitions*

The right to housing and to own property, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, is a recognized basic right in international law, including by Articles 5(d)(v) and 5(e)(iii) of the ICERD.<sup>19</sup> In **CO No. 20** in 2012, the UN Committee expressed its concern regarding Israel's use of demolitions, "notably of homes and other structures, and the increasing difficulties faced by

<sup>13</sup> Article 4, ICERD, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>.

<sup>14</sup> Maariv (Hebrew), at: <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-580229>.

<sup>15</sup> Adalah, "Will Israeli public security minister face criminal probe for racist incitement against Arab citizens?" 12 February 2017, at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9035>.

<sup>16</sup> Adalah, "In wake of Haaretz expose on Umm al-Hiran, Adalah sends urgent demands to AG", 12 June 2019, at: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9544>.

<sup>17</sup> Globes (Hebrew), at: <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001239628>.

<sup>18</sup> Kan (Hebrew), at: <https://www.kan.org.il/item/?itemid=19861>.

<sup>19</sup> Article 5, ICERD, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>.

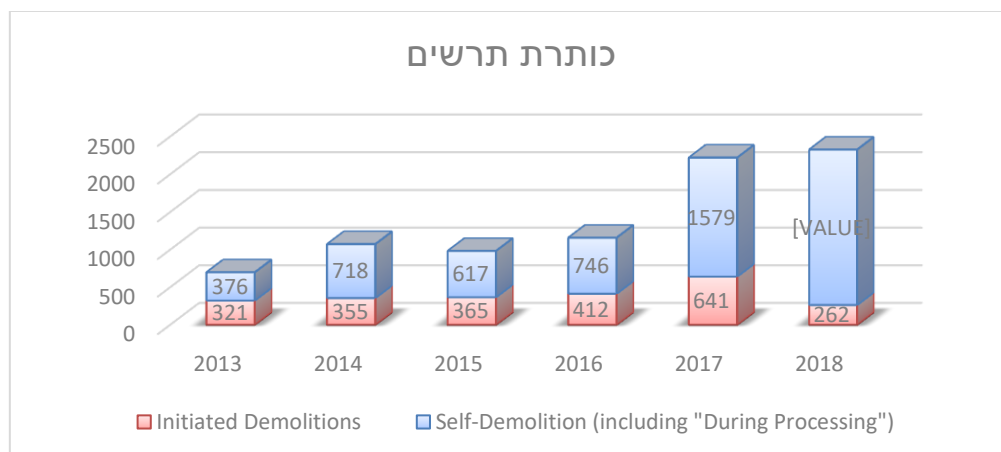
members of these communities [Bedouin] in gaining access on a basis of equality with Jewish inhabitants to land, [and] housing". The Committee recommended that Israel ensure the Bedouin population has equal access to housing and "satisfactorily" address the problems faced by the Bedouin community, especially regarding the loss of Bedouin land and access to new land.

The Israeli government has **completely ignored this recommendation**. As noted in the State's report to the Committee, the government is instead "encouraging movement to regulated localities", claiming that it is providing "unique financial benefits" which include "provision of land plots for free or at very low cost, and compensation for the demolition of unauthorized structures".<sup>20</sup> These are measures aimed at facilitating the population transfer of Bedouin citizens into concentrated, restricted areas.

Israel's demolition policy in the Naqab specifically targets the Bedouin population and **systematically violates their rights**, even in its most narrow interpretation. Tens of thousands of Bedouins in the Naqab currently live in homes that are subject to demolition orders, in large part due to the planning authorities' persistent refusal to issue building permits in their villages. For decades they have suffered from a severe housing shortage without adequate response, while the State of Israel instead promotes the establishment of new Jewish settlements in the Naqab – some of them at the direct expense of Bedouin villages<sup>21</sup> – as well as national "development" projects.<sup>22</sup> All these measures are key tools of forced displacement of the Bedouin.

Israel's Southern Administration for the Coordination of Enforcement of Land Laws (hereinafter: Southern Administration) **classifies demolitions into three types**: "initiated demolitions", which are executed by enforcement authorities accompanied by the police; "self-demolitions", which are executed by the structure's owners; and demolitions "performed in procedure", which are done by owners while the administrative details of obtaining a demolition order is still in process.<sup>23</sup>

*Table: "Initiated" Demolitions vs. "Self-Demolitions", 2018*



Since the Committee's 2012 review of Israel, the annual number of home demolitions against Bedouin citizens in the Naqab has tripled from 697 in 2013 to 2,326 in 2018 – **an increase of 333%**.

<sup>20</sup> State of Israel report to the Committee, p. 23-24, para. 209.

<sup>21</sup> See for example the case of Bedouin village Umm al-Hīrān. See also Adalah, "Israel's destruction of Umm al-Hiran reminiscent of darkest of regimes such as apartheid-era South Africa", 11 April 2018, at: <https://tinyurl.com/yas5ku3y><https://tinyurl.com/y7n9l4fz>.

<sup>22</sup> See NCF's report: "Mechanisms for dispossession and intimidation: Demolition policy in the Arab Bedouin communities in the Negev/Naqab", June 2019: <https://tinyurl.com/yxht2wfw>.

<sup>23</sup> NCF, "Mechanisms for dispossession," p.10.

The number of "initiated" demolitions (those carried out by the enforcement authorities) increased between 2013 and 2017 from 321 to 641 demolitions, but there was also a dramatic decline of initiated demolitions between 2017 and 2018, from 641 to 262 demolitions. Thus, in only one year (2017-2018), the number of demolitions carried out by the authorities decreased by 244%, although the total number of demolitions in those years increased from 2,200 to 2,326 at the end of 2018.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, the number of "self-demolitions" (by owners) **heavily increased from 376 in 2013 to 2,064 demolitions** in 2018, or by 549%.<sup>25</sup> In total, self-demolitions constituted 89% of all demolitions in 2018 (an increase of 18% from 2017). These statistics reflect a harsh official policy of increased pressure on Bedouin residents to destroy their own homes through a constant presence of law enforcement officials and demolition teams; distribution of demolition orders; threats of heavy financial fines; aerial photography of villages by drones; and threats that are vaguely disguised as "negotiations" on the part of representatives of the Authority for the Development and Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev (hereinafter: Bedouin Authority). The government's increased pressure serves to coerce and/or force Bedouin living in unrecognized villages to move to recognized townships and villages.<sup>26</sup>

Following a Freedom of Information Act request by NCF, the Southern Administration released demolition statistics for the years of 2015 to 2018. In 2015 and 2016, some 417 houses were demolished; in 2016 and 2017, the number rose to 536 houses (an increase of more than 28%), and then **rose again** in 2018 to 604 (another increase of approximately 13%).<sup>27</sup>

Although the authorities are well-aware of the **severe trauma of home demolitions** on Bedouin families, they do not provide physical and/or mental health treatment to those who have lost their homes via state-sanctioned demolitions or self-demolitions. Bedouin citizens are instead left to cope with the effects and trauma alone and without assistance from welfare services.

In March 2019, NCF, the Human Rights Defenders Fund, and Adalah **submitted information** regarding home demolitions, forced evictions and the persecution of a Bedouin human rights defender to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues and other special procedures' mandate holders. The organizations further highlighted an announcement in January 2019 by the Bedouin Authority to forcibly "evacuate" 36,000 Bedouin citizens in order to build or expand a highway, a weapons testing facility, a military firing zone, a high voltage electricity line, and a phosphate mine.<sup>28</sup>

Following our interventions, six UN Special Rapporteurs, in a communication to the Israeli government (1 May 2019), **expressed serious concern** regarding a "significant number of demolitions of Bedouin livelihood structures and homes in the Naqab region ... and which have led to forced evictions and relocations of Bedouin communities, with no guarantees for return".<sup>29</sup> They added: "These enforced demolitions and evictions, some of which were allegedly carried out without sufficient prior notice, and other requirements of international human rights law as noted above, exacerbate the overall sentiment within the Bedouin minority of a continued and mounting

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.21.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p.22.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p.12.

<sup>28</sup> NCF and Adalah, "UN human rights experts raise grave concerns about Israel's forced displacement of Bedouin, 11 July 2019, at: <https://www.dukium.org/un-human-rights-experts-raise-grave-concerns-about-israels-planned-forced-displacement-of-bedouin-in-the-naqab-negev/>

<sup>29</sup> Mandates of the Special Rapporteurs in the field of cultural rights; on adequate housing; on the situation of human rights defenders; on the human rights of internally displaced persons; on minority issues and on contemporary forms of racism. See: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24545>.

persecution, with serious adverse effects on the rights of persons belonging to the Bedouin minority."<sup>30</sup> Israel did not respond.

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<sup>30</sup> 01 May 2019, Israel, JAL, ISR 6/2019, p.6: <https://tinyurl.com/y5qvulcs>. The issue of forced evictions and demolitions was also raised previously by the SP mandate in 2014. Israel chose not to respond to the serious concerns expressed in both letters so far. ISR 10/2014 of 14 October 2014, at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5nu4b3d>.

### IN FOCUS: The case of Al-'Arāgīb

Al-'Arāgīb is located west of Road 40, between Lehavim and Goral junctions, in the midst of a large afforestation project by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). The area has seen the creation of a number of Bedouin tribal encampments since the Ottoman rule. The land was purchased by the Al-Turi tribe from the I-Ukbi tribe in the early 20th century, and the village residents were living off the land, by growing olive trees, grapes, barley, wheat, watermelon, and grazing livestock. The residents were reportedly paying taxes to the Ottoman and British authorities during this time.

In 1953, the Israeli government ordered the residents of Al-'Arāgīb to temporarily vacate the village for six months, in order to use the land for military purposes. However, they were **prevented from returning to their village**. In the 1970s, the government launched a land arrangement program that gave the Bedouin the option to file land ownership claims in the northern Naqab, and residents of Al-'Arāgīb filed a claim for 90 hectares of land. However, all Bedouin land claims were frozen for over 30 years, until the government began filing counterclaims. Since 2007, all of Al-'Arāgīb's pending cases are handled by the Be'er Sheva District Court.

On 27 June 2010, Al-'Arāgīb was completely destroyed by state authorities, with the presence of inspectors from the National Unit for Enforcing Planning and Construction Laws; special units of the police; Green Patrol inspectors of the Office of Environmental Protection; and inspectors from the Division for Land Security of the Israel Land Authority, accompanying the machines carrying out the demolition. Since 2010, structures built on this area have reportedly been **demolished 158 times**, with the last demolition having occurred on 8 September 2019.

In 2013, the Israeli Prosecution Unit filed two indictments against Sheikh Sayah Al-Turi, the leader of Al-'Arāgīb, on allegations of trespassing and unlawful entry onto public land. On 6 September 2017, following a four-year trial, Mr. Al-Turi was convicted by the Be'er Sheva District Court of 19 charges of trespassing, 19 charges of unlawful entry onto public land and one charge of violation of an order issued by a public official. He was sentenced to ten months imprisonment. This marked the first time a person was **sentenced to prison on the charge of trespassing**, which mark a serious precedent by the courts. Sheikh Sayah also received a probation of five months and a fine of 36,000 ILS. Sayah was detained in Maasiyahu Prison from the 25 December 2018 until his early release on the 23 July 2019.

In addition to criminal indictments, there has been a separate civil action filed by the State to the Be'er Sheva Magistrates' Court against Sheikh Sayah in 2011. The Court requested Sayah and five other defendants to cover demolition, eviction and trial costs of NIS 360,000 for the first eight demolitions of the village (since July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010). Other 28 defendants that were charged with the same offenses came to an arrangement with the court and paid several thousand shekels each. Sayah and the five other defendants filed an appeal with the District Court, however, on August 6, 2019, their appeal was rejected. The Court fully accepted the State's position and instructed the defendants to pay NIS 1,600,000 for recurring evictions and demolition costs. This verdict **sets a serious precedent** in terms of both the amount and the established legal procedures.

Since the release of Sheikh Sayah, the authorities have been harassing the residents of Al-'Arāgīb on a daily basis, detaining both women and children and demolishing wooden sheds and compensating building materials and personal belongings. According to the residents, in one of the recent demolitions, the inspectors also destroyed a stone plaque in memory of several villagers who were killed after the 1948 war. The imprisonment of Sheikh Sayah and persecution of other human rights defenders for offenses of trespassing and the imposition of prison sentences for these offenses could lead to the **criminalization of thousands of Bedouin citizens** living in the Naqab who hold a similar status.



### ***(b) Development-induced displacement***

Israeli Government Resolution No. 2397 (Government Plan for the Empowerment and Socio-Economic Strengthening of the Bedouin Localities in the Negev for the Years 2017-2021) (hereinafter: Five-Year Plan) ostensibly allocates NIS 3 billion (US \$855 million) for the development of Bedouin townships and villages.<sup>31</sup> However, it in fact **conditions state funding** on the execution of evictions and home demolitions in the 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages, which are almost entirely excluded from the benefits of the plan.

The Five-Year Plan includes a section on “law enforcement” that authorizes the State to “protect state lands” and “prevent illegal expansion” in order to “decrease areas of land on which illegal construction exists.” This section was added after several government ministers refused to approve the Plan without including measures to ensure the evacuation and demolition of the unrecognized villages. The resolution thus effectively conditions economic development on the **implementation of policies of forced displacement**, allocating part of its budget to this purpose.

This allocation includes NIS 30 million (over US \$8.5 million) per year for the purpose of planting trees in what it refers to as “evacuated state lands”, on which the unrecognized Bedouin villages exist, to **prevent the return of their inhabitants**. The Five-Year Plan allocates a further NIS 32 million for increased law enforcement personnel and NIS 10.5 million for additional personnel in the National Unit for Planning and Construction Law Enforcement and local planning committees, in order to tackle “illegal construction” by the Bedouin population.

The Five-Year Plan offers **no possibility for recognition** of the unrecognized villages, as it instructs the Bedouin Authority to prioritize evacuating the Bedouin communities living in the unrecognized villages. The Plan also instructs the Ministry of Interior and law enforcement bodies to create a “law enforcement plan” based on Government Resolution 3707 from 2011, through which the government adopted the “Prawer-Begin Plan” for the forced displacement and destruction of all the unrecognized villages. This plan was canceled in December 2013 following major protests and local and international opposition, thereby continuing it via other means. Thus, while Israel is promoting this Five-Year Plan as a “socio-economic development plan”, it is, in fact, aimed at the forced displacement and dispossession of the Bedouin from their land and homes in the Naqab.

Additional examples of development-induced displacement include:

**Industrial Zone:** A plan for the “Ramat Beka Special Industrial Zone” threatens to forcibly displace thousands of Bedouin from their land.<sup>32</sup> The plan involves the relocation of a massive testing facility operated by Israel’s state-owned weapons manufacturer to the Negev/Naqab in an area home to multiple Bedouin communities. It covers a vast area of 112,838 dunams and aims to move military industries with safety or environmental risks away from the center of Israel. 44% of the area will be used for experiments in “explosives, vehicles, chemicals ...”, and the plan will expose thousands of Bedouin residents to health risks.<sup>33</sup> If passed, the plan would impose building and development

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<sup>31</sup> Government Resolution No. 2397, 12 February 2017, Program for Socio-Economic Development of the Bedouin Population in the Negev (in Hebrew); Annex I to Israel’s 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Ramat Beka Special Industrial Zone, Local Master Plan 621-0479709.

<sup>33</sup> See also an objection submitted on 26 September 2018 to the planning authorities against the plan by Adalah and Bimkom (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y7lrtgvu>. The Southern District Planning Committee rejected the objection on 16 January 2019, and the organizations are currently considering an appeal.

restrictions on more than 1,200 structures, including homes, in the affected villages, and is likely to result in the forced displacement of residents of the area.<sup>34</sup>

**Highway:** The planned extension of Road 6, a major north-south highway,<sup>35</sup> is expected to result in the destruction of around 600 structures in at least nine unrecognized Bedouin villages, home to thousands of Bedouin.<sup>36</sup> According to media reports, the authorities recently began planning the evacuation of about 1,000 families living in the affected area.<sup>37</sup> Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Uri Ariel has stated, “The Government is committed to demonstrating governance in the Negev, and the extension of Highway 6 southward will bring impetus to the Negev and return huge areas to the state,” providing a clear indication that the government is deliberately using the route of the planned extension to forcibly displace Bedouin families.

**Railways:** Two new railways lines – the Arad-Beer Sheva railway and the Dimona-Yeroham railway – will swallow up extensive tracts of land and have been planned to cut through several Bedouin villages.<sup>38</sup> The railways will require the confiscation of thousands of dunams of land and the demolition of homes and will create pollution and noise nuisance. Dozens of homes are also placed within “restricted zones” in which future development will not be permitted, or within an “affected area” where residents will be severely influenced by pollution.<sup>39</sup>

**Phosphate mine:** A plan to allow for the mining of phosphate in an area directly adjacent to the Bedouin village of al-Fur’ah requires the demolition of several homes in the village and will pose a serious health risk to residents who live in the proximity of the minefield.<sup>40</sup> The area of the planned mine contains 1,426 buildings, and another 569 buildings are located in the surrounded restricted area demarcated in the plan. The plan requires the evacuation of all these structures, and 556 are under the direct threat of immediate evacuation. Adalah, together with 168 al-Fur’ah residents, the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages of Negev, ACRI, Bimkom - Planners for Planning Rights, and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I) filed a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court against this dangerous phosphate mine in 21 January 2019. The case is pending.

### ***(c) Legislative mechanisms of displacement***

**Article 7 of The Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People.** Article 7 of this new Basic Law, enacted in July 2018,<sup>41</sup> stipulates that the development of Jewish settlement is a “national value”, and that the state must act to encourage, promote and consolidate it.<sup>42</sup> The law institutes

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<sup>34</sup> See Adalah, “Israeli military industries moving massive testing facility to south, 1,200 Bedouin structures at risk of forced displacement,” 2 December 2018: <https://tinyurl.com/y7pcky2u>.

<sup>35</sup> The extension consists of Plan TAMA 31/A/21/2 (from Lahavim to Shoket), Plan TAMA 31/A/21/3 (from Shoket to Nevatim), and Plan TAMA 31/A/21/4 (from Nevatim to the Negev Junction).

<sup>36</sup> Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights, “Plan for Road 6 – South,” April 2010 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/ycvqkweq>.

<sup>37</sup> Ilana Curiel, “Thanks to Road 6, the process of evacuating a thousand Bedouin families in the Negev has begun,” Ynet News, 3 December 2018 (in Hebrew).

<sup>38</sup> Dimona-Yeroham Railway, Local Master Plan 607-0193185; Arad Railway, Local Master Plan 652- 0203216.

<sup>39</sup> See also Adalah, “Adalah, Bimkom reject plans for Arad train line that will harm 50,000 area Bedouin residents,” 21 August 2017: <https://tinyurl.com/y7n9l4fz>; Adalah, “Planned Dimona-Yeruham train line will cause severe harm to local Bedouin residents,” 9 October 2017: <https://tinyurl.com/y9r88bcm>.

<sup>40</sup> Phosphate Mine, National Master Plan 14/B.

<sup>41</sup> Adalah filed a petition against the Basic Law on 7 August 2018) to the Israeli Supreme Court on behalf of all of the Arab political leadership in Israel – the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, the National Committee of Arab Mayors, the Joint List parliamentary faction. HCJ 5866/18, The High Follow-Up Committee, et al. v. The Knesset, et al. (case pending).

<sup>42</sup> For an English translation of the law, see: <http://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/BasicLawNationState.pdf>.

ethnic segregation as a new legal norm throughout the Land of Israel (Article 1). Within the Green Line, the law is likely to be used to establish exclusively Jewish towns in areas where Arab citizens are most concentrated, including in the Naqab.

The law also legitimizes discriminatory land policies, such as admissions committees that filter non-Jewish families and individuals out of small towns throughout the state, and the operation of quasi-governmental organizations such as the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish National Fund in lieu of state authorities, exclusively and explicitly for the benefit of Jewish individuals. It could also give constitutional justification to discriminatory budgeting policies that channel public funds to Jewish communities and individuals as incentives to relocate to the Naqab, in order to secure a Jewish demographic majority.

**The Kaminitz Law:** The Kaminitz Law was enacted in April 2017 to increase the “enforcement and penalization of planning and building offenses.” The law’s main objectives are: (1) To concentrate enforcement of land planning powers into the hands of a national body; (2) To expand the use of the state’s administrative powers to implement demolition and eviction orders and limit judicial review; and (3) To markedly increase the use and severity of financial penalties for offenses under the law. In June 2018, the Justice Ministry approved administrative regulations determining the sum of fines imposed for violations of the Planning and Construction Law. The sum of the fines set is unprecedented and may amount up to NIS 300,000.<sup>43</sup> In addition, where a demolition is carried out, homeowners may additionally be subject to criminal charges.

The law harms Bedouin citizens of Israel as it disregards the systematic rejection of their historical claims to their ancestral land, as well as decades of forced displacement, dispossession and discrimination in state land planning and allocation against them, which has left them unable to comply with the law. The law is intended as a tool of home demolitions in the Bedouin villages, and in Arab towns, villages and neighborhoods throughout Israel and East Jerusalem. All of the homes in the 35 unrecognized villages in the Naqab are threatened with demolition and their owners with dispossession under the law.<sup>44</sup>

#### **IV. DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT | Article 5(e)(i)**

The following section addresses several violations by Israel of the Bedouin citizens’ rights according to Article 5(e)(i) of the ICERD, which protects “The rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favorable remuneration”.<sup>45</sup>

##### ***(a) Failure to collect data***

In its previous **COs No. 19-20** in 2012, the Committee recommended that the State of Israel “ensure equal enjoyment of economic and social rights for non-Jewish minorities,” focusing on the right to work and the right to education. However, data shows that the gaps in employment rates between the Jewish population and the Bedouin population in the Southern region are still large and indicate that government policy directed towards the Bedouin population in the Naqab is failing.<sup>46</sup> These are

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<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Justice, Administrative Offenses Regulations (Administrative Penalty - Planning and Construction), 12 April 2018 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/yakjuhwb>.

<sup>44</sup> See also Adalah, Position Paper on the Kaminitz Law, March 2017: <https://tinyurl.com/ybvg4uhk>.

<sup>45</sup> Article 5, ICERD, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>.

<sup>46</sup> The information in this section is mainly based on official data from the State of Israel as provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics, reports by the Knesset's Data and Research Center, and reports from research

largely due to structural issues that remain consistently unaddressed by Israeli government programs regardless of their budget sizes, including Resolution 3708 as noted in the State's report to the UN Committee.<sup>47</sup>

Notably, the State's **collection of data** on the Bedouin population of the Naqab is incomplete, especially regarding information pertaining to unrecognized villages. Since the number of Bedouin living in the unrecognized villages is not accurately reflected in national surveys, figures showing employment rates among Bedouin in the Naqab is limited to those living in recognized localities and excludes more than 90,000 people living in unrecognized villages. It is therefore difficult to present a full picture of the employment situation or to have categorization of the data by group population, gender, age and location of residence. Not collecting data on a regular basis is one of the State's expressions of policy that **intentionally neglects the Bedouin population**.

In 2010, the Israeli government set national goals for the OECD to promote employment among the Arab population based on the recommendations of the Eckstein Committee. A goal was set to raise the employment rate of Arab women in Israel to 41% by 2020.<sup>48</sup> No special objective has been set for Bedouin women from the Naqab, although they **face additional barriers** and are amongst the most disadvantaged populations in Israel. Achieving this goal on a national level is in progress, at least according to data presented by the State of Israel.

In contrast, the employment rate of Bedouin women in the Naqab (ages 25-64) is approximately 24% (17% lower than the goal set for all Arab women),<sup>49</sup> **far from the national target**. Due to the fact that Israel does not keep categorized data on the unrecognized villages, we can assume that the unemployment rate among Bedouin in the Naqab is even higher. Moreover, the Five-Year Plan's program to increase employment among Bedouin women in the Naqab excludes nearly all women from unrecognized Bedouin villages. These women are regularly denied access to basic State services, which makes it almost impossible for them to take significant part in the labor force.

During a discussion in the Knesset's Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality (October 2017), Member of Knesset Aida Touma-Suleiman stated that the Five-Year Plan for the Bedouin society in the Naqab has **failed to increase women's employment**. It was noted that while the target set for the program was an 18% increase by 2020, the employment rate at the time of the discussion increased by only 1%. The MK urged the government and its officials to examine the causes of the failure, given that millions of shekels have been invested without any substantial results.<sup>50</sup>

#### ***(b) Lack of industrial zones, public transportation***

The short supply of job opportunities in Bedouin localities and the severe shortage of local commerce, craft and industrial parks is one of the **major barriers** to the integration of Bedouin women in the labor market. In Annex II of the State of Israel's Report to the UN Committee (pp. 29-

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institutions that examined the employment issue of the Arab society in Israel in general and the Bedouin society in particular.

<sup>47</sup> State of Israel report to the Committee, p. 20, para.169.

<sup>48</sup> Government Resolution No. 1994, 15 July 2010, *Setting employment targets for 2010 – 2020* (in Hebrew), at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybk9mmh6>.

<sup>49</sup> Sikkuy and The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, "The obstacles to accessible public transportation in dispersed communities in the Negev: Position paper", submitted to the Economic Committee of the Knesset on 12.02.2018 (in Hebrew), at: <https://tinyurl.com/y93t2goe>.

<sup>50</sup> Minutes of Session No. 192 of Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, Knesset 20,31 October 2017 (in Hebrew), at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5j4c5>.

31), Israel provides partial information about the establishment and development of industrial parks in local Bedouin authorities and the various development plans.

With regard to an industrial zone in Abu Grīnāt, as of 2018, only 80 dunams were developed and 19 were marketed. As of now, the entire process has been halted due to ownership claims over the designated land and the industrial zone **is hardly functioning**. As for the industrial zone in the township of Šgīb as-Salām (Segev Shalom), only 46 plots were developed during the period of the first Five-Year Plan (2012-2016) and only six of them were marketed. After a seven-year period, the goal of developing and marketing 70 dunams for the township was unrealized.

The Bedouin township of Ar'arah Ba-Negev and the newly-recognized village of Bīr Haddāj provide further evidence of the State's failure to develop industrial areas. In these two communities, where 200 dunams were allocated for development, only a few were marketed. The cumulative significance is that, with the exception of the "Idan Ha-Negev" industrial park, none of the other industrial zones met their goals seven years after the first Five-Year Plan was issued. This failure has caused **significant harm to the advancement of employment** among Bedouin in general, and Bedouin women in particular that are in need of workplaces in close proximity to their communities.

In addition, much of the economic development in the recognized townships and villages as promised by Government Resolution 2397 for the years 2017 and 2018 was not fully implemented. According to a report released in March 2019 by the Bedouin Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture, **only 20% of the Plan was implemented** in the first two years. Out of 28 implementation plans in 2018, no actions were taken in eight of them, including plans for mother and child health clinics; industrial support; occupational ventures; developing commercial centers; and strengthening human capital. Additionally, only 31% percent of the budget was used in the first two years, despite the minimum target being set at 40%. Eight government offices did not report on the results of the Plan's implementation in these years.

The operation of **accessible public transportation** to industrial zones and employment areas is integral to promoting Bedouin (and especially Bedouin women) participation in the labour market. Although there has been some positive improvement in public transportation in general over the last decade, as of today, only seven townships and four of the eleven recognized villages have relatively sufficient public transportation services. For example, in Umm Batīn, a village that was recognized by the State in 1999, there is no public transportation in the village. In Bīr Haddāj, a village of more than 6,000 people, buses only enter as far as the school. The same applies to other recognized villages such as Abu Grīnāt, and Sa'wah/Mūlada'h.

In the other 35 unrecognized villages, there are **no regular public transportation services**.<sup>51</sup> In the absence of local public transportation services, residents of the Bedouin villages (recognized and unrecognized alike) are forced to rely on buses that stop alongside intercity highways where many stations lack shelter and even pavements, thus presenting obvious safety hazards. In many cases, there is no safe passage to and from the station and passengers are forced to risk their lives to cross intercity highways.<sup>52</sup>

## **V. DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION | *Articles 5(e)(v)***

In **COs No. 19-20** in 2012, the Committee expressed concern over the continued low-level of education of Bedouin women and recommended that the State increase its efforts to ensure equal access to education, among other social and economic rights. This concern, which relates to the right

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<sup>51</sup> Sikkuy and RCUV, The obstacles to accessible public transportation in dispersed communities in the Negev, at: <https://tinyurl.com/y93t2goe>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

to education as protected by Article 5(e)(v),<sup>53</sup> remains relevant and should also be extended to Bedouin men and boys, who often score lower in terms of educational attainment than Bedouin girls.

Although this issue has improved in recent years,<sup>54</sup> numerous obstacles remain in place that deny Bedouin children in the Naqab equal rights and access to education compared to Jewish children. Decades of lack of state investment in Bedouin education has taken a heavy toll. Despite lower levels of educational achievement among Arab students at all stages of education – Israel has the largest gaps in educational achievement of all OECD countries, with Arab children scoring on average 133 fewer points than Jewish students in the 2012 PISA tests<sup>55</sup> – investment in Arab schooling is **less than Israeli Jewish children**.

The investment gap between Arab and Jewish students **increases over the course of a child's educational career**, at 23.6% in favor of Israeli Jewish students among low-achieving elementary school children, rising to 48.5% at junior high school level, and 67.6% at high school level.<sup>56</sup> These gaps are even more pronounced in the case of Bedouin school children, though the State does not consistently publish disaggregated data about this population.

#### ***(a) Classroom shortage, overcrowding***

Due to the State's insufficient provision of resources, there is currently a **severe shortage of classrooms** for the Bedouins in the Naqab. In the 2017-2018 academic year, there were approximately 96,000 students in the Bedouin education system in the Naqab.<sup>57</sup> In the same year, the average number of students in Bedouin classrooms was lower than the number in the national education system. However, the average number of students in kindergarten classrooms has increased in recent years and is higher than the average in the national education system.<sup>58</sup>

According to a 2017 Knesset report, there is a major lack of investment in Bedouin schools, which has resulted in widespread sub-standard educational facilities. It states that there is an **acute shortage of kindergarten classrooms** in the unrecognized Bedouin villages and a low rate of preschool attendance within the Bedouin education system in the Naqab. The Ministry of Education (MoE) estimated in 2017 a need for an additional 1,236 schools and kindergarten classrooms in the Bedouin townships and villages.<sup>59</sup> However, the State allocated funds for only 331 classrooms in 2017.<sup>60</sup>

The total budget allocated by the MoE to build classrooms in the Bedouin education system between 2011-2017 was about NIS 918 million. Of this budget, only NIS 564.4 million was transferred to the local Bedouin authorities to build classrooms whose construction has already been completed.<sup>61</sup> Although there was some increase in the number of classrooms built, only about **half of the**

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<sup>53</sup> Article 5, ICERD, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>.

<sup>54</sup> State of Israel report to the Committee, p. 31, para. 277.

<sup>55</sup> Yarden Skop, "Israel Has Largest Gaps in Student Achievement of All OECD Countries, Study Shows", Haaretz, 2 April 2014: <https://tinyurl.com/yd8x9sep>.

<sup>56</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "Data on the allocation of the Ministry of Education's budget to schools by sector", 17 December 2015, pp. 7, 10, 13 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y3amw82c> (Data excludes Jewish religious schools).

<sup>57</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "The Bedouin education in the Negev 2018: Chosen figures", 18 December 2018, p.3 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y9pw2uyu>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>59</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "Report on Bedouin Education in the Negev," 30 October 2017 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/yxtk4mkq>.

<sup>60</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "The Bedouin education in the Negev 2018: Chosen figures", 18 December 2018, p.5 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y9pw2uyu>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

**classrooms that were budgeted** have since been constructed. Moreover, while the new Five-Year Plan for the Bedouin community allocates NIS 1.18 billion (about US \$331 million) for school-related construction, it remains to be seen how much of this money will be spent and to what extent it will ease overcrowding.<sup>62</sup>

### ***(b) Inadequate provision of preschools***

In dozens of Bedouin villages, three and four-year-old children have no preschool frameworks, in violation of Israel's Compulsory Education Law – 1949.<sup>63</sup> According to the Knesset, 4,843 Bedouin children in the 3-5 year age bracket had no access to preschool education in the 2016/2017 academic year, which equates to 21% of all Bedouin children of age in the Naqab; 70% of these children live in unrecognized villages.<sup>64</sup> The denial of preschool education is likely to have **lifelong detrimental effects** on the children, and the State's failure to implement the Compulsory Education Law perpetuates inequality of opportunity for Bedouin children.

In 2018, after years of foot-dragging, the State provided transportation to approximately 95 preschool children from the three unrecognized villages of as-Sirrah, al-Jurf and Umm Nmīlah in the Naqab to preschools for the first time. The development came after a motion of contempt of court filed by Adalah in February 2018 based on its earlier litigation before the Be'er Sheva District Court.<sup>65</sup> Although the State raised no principle objection to the provision of transportation, the court did not order the State to provide it for all preschool-aged Bedouin children in the Naqab without access to early-life education which they estimated at around 5,000 children, therefore **requiring further litigation** to be brought on behalf of children in similarly-situated villages.

### ***(c) High dropout rates, low educational achievement***

As a result of the structural discrimination that disadvantages Bedouin education from daycare to high school, the dropout rate among Bedouin children is a critical concern. A Knesset report found that the dropout rates among the Bedouin are far higher than among other population groups: at age 17 the Bedouin dropout rate in 2015 was 30%, compared to 13% among all Arab children and 5% among all pupils in Israel in this age group.<sup>66</sup> In the 2015-2016 academic year, 11% of all Bedouin children aged 3-17 in the Naqab were not in any MoE school.<sup>67</sup> This is an **alarmingly high figure** which shows the ineffectiveness of the State's efforts to improve education for Bedouin citizens. Despite the severity and disproportionality of the problem in Bedouin communities, only 25 out of 679 attendance officers in Israel charged with preventing dropout rates operate in Bedouin localities.<sup>68</sup>

While an increasing percentage of students in Israel have successfully completed the matriculation requirements at the end of secondary education (12th grade) in recent years, the percentage of Bedouin school children who achieved this level of educational attainment remains low, and the gap between Bedouin and other children **have grown over time**. In the 2016-2017 academic year, only

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<sup>62</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "The Bedouin education in the Negev 2018: Chosen figures", 18 December 2018, p.5 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y9pw2uyy>.

<sup>63</sup> Compulsory Education Law – 1949 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y32dezyz>.

<sup>64</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "Report on Bedouin Education in the Negev," 30 October 2017, p. 17 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/yxrk4mkq>.

<sup>65</sup> Beer Sheva District Court 36246-12-17, Al-Nasasra v. the Education Ministry, 10 January 2018 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y6y4kkhl>.

<sup>66</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "The Bedouin education in the Negev 2018: Chosen figures", 18 December 2018, p.15 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y9pw2uyy>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 30

<sup>68</sup> State of Israel report to the Committee, p. 27, para. 245.

31.3% of Bedouin pupils in the Naqab who completed 12th grade achieved the matriculation results needed to meet university entrance requirements, compared to 62.8% among the general population, i.e. half the latter rate.<sup>69</sup>

#### IN FOCUS: Bedouin women's education

In Para. 48 of the State of Israel's Periodic Report to the Committee, the government mentions that the MoE "operates seminars and classes for education completion". However, **no budget was allocated** to continue the program after the end of 2017. The Completion of Education Program for Adults was aimed to provide basic skills for women and men who did not complete 12 years of education. The program operated in the Bedouin communities within the scheme and under the budget of the previous Five-Year Plan (2012-2016). The total budget of the program was only NIS 2.5 million (approx. \$675,000). Within its scheme, 25 classrooms were operated with 450 students attending each year (95% of which were women and 54% were above the age of 30).

The MoE reasoning was the need to "prioritize" under a limited budget. Nevertheless, according to the figures published by the Citizen's Empowerment Center in Israel, more than half of the budget for the program over the years **had not been utilized** (a total of only 62% in three years).<sup>1</sup> The total unused budget reached NIS 20,664 million from 2015-2017, despite the fact that the Bedouin education system is suffering from neglect and lack of resources. In addition, NCF learned from a trusted government source that the MoE used only 35% of its budget for the new Five-Year Plan in the years 2017-2018. Thus, the Ministry's rationale for cutting the program and its funding due to "priority reasons and limited budget" seems questionable.

Following a national campaign to ensure the continuation of the program, some of the budget (NIS 2 million) was reinstated and guaranteed until the end of 2019. The issue was discussed at the Knesset Education Committee in November 2018, at which time it was recommended to the MoE to guarantee the financing of the program and to expand it over time. During deliberations in the Knesset, it was revealed that the budget promised until the end of 2019 **covered funding for only 15 classes** that are to operate in the ten Bedouin municipalities in the Naqab. A few months later, in a response to a freedom of information request by NCF, the MoE admitted that in fact, only NIS 510,000 of the budget were used for operating only nine classes in 2018.

As stated above, the cost of the program is minimal in light of the vital value it produced each year for more than 450 Bedouin residents of the Naqab, the vast majority of whom are women. The program is **especially valuable for illiterate Bedouin women** that have suffered from years of oppression and discrimination. It allows them to participate in daily activities such as: traveling by bus, accompanying their children to the doctor, performing simple calculations at the supermarket, and more.

The education barrier is critical and impairs employment prospects. Women who received a matriculation certificate and succeeded in completing studies in the higher education system usually do not find it difficult to find employment. On the other hand, women who have not completed a high school education find it difficult to find permanent employment at fair wages and are forced into part-time or temporary work in occupations that do not require special education or skills. Thus, the State of Israel **must ensure the continuation of the program** and even expand its operation.

<sup>69</sup> Knesset Research and Information Center, "Report on Bedouin Education in the Negev," 30 October 2017, p. 25 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/yxtk4mkg>.



The **Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF)** was established in 1997 to provide a place for Arab-Jewish collaborative efforts in the struggle for civil equality and the advancement of a shared society, mutual tolerance and coexistence in the Negev/Naqab. NCF is unique in being the only Arab-Jewish organization that remains focused solely on the problems confronting the Negev. NCF considers that the State of Israel fails to respect, protect and fulfill its human rights obligations, without discrimination, towards the Arab Bedouin citizens in the Negev. As a result, NCF has set as one of its goals the achievement of full civil rights and equality for all people who make the Negev their home.

**Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel** is an independent human rights organization and legal center, founded in 1996. Its mission is to promote human rights in Israel in general and the rights of the Palestinian minority, in particular, including the rights of the Arab Bedouin in the Naqab/Negev. Adalah also works to defend the rights of Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) under international humanitarian law and human rights law. Adalah is the only Palestinian legal center working to protect the rights of Palestinians in Israel and the OPT before Israeli courts.