



Joint NGO Report: UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Re: List of Issues for the State of Israel

**Violations of the ICESCR by Israel against the Arab Bedouin in
the Negev/Naqab desert**

Submitted by:

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

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1. Background

The Bedouin are an indigenous group that has been living in the Negev/Naqab for centuries, long before the establishment of the State of Israel (SoI) in 1948. Today, about 258,500 Bedouin citizens of Israel live in the Negev/Naqab in three types of settlements: government-planned townships, recognized villages, and villages that the SoI refuses to recognize (unrecognized villages).¹

There are 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev/Naqab that the SoI refers to either as the “dispersion” or as “illegal villages”, and to their inhabitants as “trespassers” on state land and “criminals”. Some of these areas contain historical villages that existed long before the establishment of the SoI, while others were created after the Israeli military regime forcibly transferred their inhabitants into the *Siyāj* area during the 1950s.

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), as of 2017, more than 28% of the Bedouin population (around 72,000 people) live in unrecognized villages.² These villages do not appear on any official maps. Most unrecognized villages contain no health, educational facilities or basic 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 cannot register to participate in municipal elections.

From the 1970s, the SoI established seven government-planned Bedouin townships, as part of an ongoing non-consensual and non-participatory process of urbanization. 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 Bedouin community in the Negev/Naqab resides in these towns, about 186,400 people.³

The SoI 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 villages that remain unrecognized. The residents of most recognized villages continue to be denied access to basic state services, including water, electricity, sewage disposal, and paved roads, 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.⁴

Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel and the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) believe that the Bedouin in the Negev/Naqab are the most vulnerable sub-group of the marginalized Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The gross discrimination against them by the SoI should therefore be reflected in the Committee’s questions, observations and recommendations. However, while deserving of special attention due to their particularly low standard of living, the two organizations emphasize that members of the Bedouin community in the Negev/Naqab are not a separate national or ethnic grouping, but an integral part of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel and the Palestinian people as whole, one that has a distinct way of life and other special characteristics.

2. Data Collection and Use of Statistics

Israel frequently and systematically fails to collect specific, detailed data on Bedouin citizens of Israel, leaving them absent from many relevant surveys, statistical reports and other sources of data. The data collected by the CBS has not included the Bedouin in its expenditure surveys between 2012 and 2016, for example. Often,



¹ CBS, Localities and Population, by District, Sub-District, Religion and Population Group (2.15), 31 December 2017.

² CBS, Total population estimations in localities, their population and other information, 2017.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

the state mentions the Bedouin only as part of the larger category of Arab citizens of Israel, and state sources may decide to include or exclude the Bedouin from different volumes of their regular statistical reports, leading to gaps and inconsistencies. The lack of specific disaggregated data on the Bedouin masks their exceptionally disadvantaged position within this larger group. The state's inconsistent and incomplete data-gathering on the Bedouin as a whole, and those in the unrecognized villages more specifically, adds to the exclusion of the Bedouin, as it impedes effective policy-making by the SoI to protect and promote their human rights. The SoI's report reflects this practice, as the data provided on the Bedouin is patchy, broad, or non-existent.

For example, in a section on "Additional Steps for the Promotion of the Arab Population in the Labour Market", Israel reports that, "In October 2016, 10% of all Civil Service employees were Arabs, including Bedouins, Druze and Circassians".⁵ In this case, the lack of specific data on the Bedouin – and also Bedouin women – masks the fact that they are even more poorly represented in the civil service than the other Arab sub-groups. Data on the Bedouin are also lacking in the highly relevant sections covering Article 12 (health), including subsections on child and maternal health, life expectancy, sanitation, and immunization programs.

Similarly, a Knesset report on the MoE's Budget for 2019, e.g. made no mention of the Bedouin, even in such key areas as matriculation (*Bagrut*) examination, the allocation of public funds to the various educational systems, and classroom over-crowding.⁶ Instead, the Bedouin were subsumed within the wider category of "Arab citizens". Moreover, the Bedouin living in the unrecognized villages in the Negev/Naqab are deliberately excluded from state-published statistics: the National Insurance Institute, for instance, does not gather data on the Bedouin in the unrecognized villages.

In this NGO report, the Committee will see various statistics on the Bedouin, some of it taken from the few existing state sources, others from reliable non-governmental sources, and still others collected by the submitting organizations themselves. Adalah and NCF recommend that the Committee ask the state to provide detailed, disaggregated data about the Bedouin, including residents of the unrecognized villages, in all relevant subject areas under the Covenant.

3. High Incidence of Poverty, Article 11

A staggering two-thirds of Bedouin citizens of Israel residing in the Negev/Naqab live below the poverty line, three times more than Jewish Israelis. Israel has no plan to alleviate poverty among the Bedouin.

In its 2011 Concluding Observations (COs) to the SoI, the Committee expressed concern about high levels of poverty, recommending that Israel focus its efforts on the Arab minority, among other disadvantaged groups (CO 24). The Arab Bedouin in the Negev/Naqab, members of this group, have the highest levels of poverty. According to the CBS, the Bedouin Regional Councils of Neve Midbar and al-Qassoum are ranked at the bottom of its ten-point socio-economic index, scoring the lowest possible ranking of 1.⁷ All seven government-planned Bedouin townships also received a ranking of 1.⁸

In 2017, the Israeli National Insurance Institute (NII) published data on Bedouin in the Negev/Naqab in its yearly report on poverty for the first time in four years.⁹ It reports that the poverty rate among Bedouin families was 58.5% in 2016, compared to 13.3% among Israeli Jewish families and 48.7% among non-Bedouin Arab families. Among Bedouin individuals the poverty rate stood at 63.4%, and among Bedouin children at 68.2%. These figures compare to rates of 17.4% and 23.9% among Jewish Israelis living in the south, respectively. Thus, according to this official data, a staggering two-thirds of Bedouin families, individuals and children were living beneath the poverty line in 2016.

⁵ Annex I to the SoI's 4th Periodic Report to the CESC, p. 15.

⁶ Knesset's Research and Information Center, "Description and Analysis of the Ministry of Education's Budget for 2019," 26 February 2018 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y8ydkto2>

⁷ CBS, "Local Authorities in Ascending Order of the Socio-Economic Index, 2015," Table 1.

⁸ Ibid. Tal as-Saba' (Tel-Sheva), Šgīb as-Salām (Shegev Shalom), Ar'arah Ba-Negev (Ar'ara), Hūrah (Hura), Ksīfih (Kuseife), Lagiyyih (Lakiya), and Rahat.

⁹ NII, "Report on Social Gaps in Israel – 2016," December 2017, p. 18 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y7nw65tr>

These alarming figures significantly *underestimate* poverty levels among the Bedouin, since the most impoverished group, the 72,000-people living in unrecognized villages, were not included in the NII's survey, as a matter of policy. The NII claims in the introduction to the report that it is too difficult to conduct statistical surveys in these areas, and the figures cited therefore cover only the recognized townships and villages. In its 4th Periodic Report to the Committee (2018), the SoI chose to neglect this data. It refers to the Bedouin only as an explanation for an increase in poverty among Arab citizens in general, without detailing rates of poverty among the Bedouin. Israel's report contains no information about steps it is taking to alleviate poverty among the Bedouin, e.g. within a section on "National Action Plan to Combat Poverty" (Annex I).

In 2018, the NII published the latest edition of its poverty report, in which it reverted to its practice of *omitting specific data on the Bedouin*, even those living in the recognized towns and villages.¹⁰ The only disaggregated data on the Bedouin appears in an indicative graph in the annexes from which it is not possible to extract specific numbers, under the category of "recognized Bedouin",¹¹ and in an annex that provides statistics about poverty among Palestinian citizens of Israel with/without the Bedouin.¹² This omission is a strong indication that the state is not tackling poverty rates among the Bedouin in a serious or transparent manner.

4. Forced Evictions, Right to Adequate Housing, Links to Ancestral Land, Articles 1, 11, 12, 13, 15

In its 2011 COs, the Committee expressed concern about the relocation of residents of the Bedouin villages and the negative effect on their cultural rights and their links to their traditional and ancestral land (CO 37). The Committee also raised concerns about the Praver-Begin Plan for the forced displacement of the unrecognized Bedouin villages (CO 27). The latter plan has been frozen since 2013; however, the state continues to pursue its goal of evacuating and dispossessing the Bedouin from their ancestral land and concentrating them in the crowded and poorly-planned Bedouin townships and in the recognized villages, which remain largely unplanned two decades after gaining recognition. It is doing so using different legislative and planning mechanisms, and by continuing to implement its policy of house demolitions.

4.1. The "Five-Year Development Plan" as a Mechanism of Forced Displacement

In its 4th Periodic Report, the SoI refers the Committee to its current Five-Year Plan for the Empowerment and Socio-Economic Strengthening of the Bedouin Localities in the Negev for the Years 2017-2021 (Government Resolution No. 2397).¹³ While ostensibly a plan for the development of Bedouin towns and villages, it in fact conditions state funding on the execution of forced displacements and home demolitions in the 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages, which are excluded from the benefits of the plan. The plan plays a major part in the state's efforts to forcibly transfer residents of unrecognized village and concentrate the Bedouin on a minimal amount of land in the recognized townships and villages.

The Israeli government approved the first five-year plan for the social and economic development of the Bedouin population in the Negev/Naqab (Government Resolution No. 3708) in September 2011.¹⁴ The overall budget of the plan amounted to NIS 1.26 Billion.¹⁵ However, many of the projects (especially those related to agriculture and the completion of construction of housing and sewage infrastructure) have been implemented only in part, which raises concerns over the implementation of the current Five-Year Plan.

The plan includes a section on "law enforcement" (Article 13) that authorizes the state to "protect state lands" and "prevent illegal expansion" in order to "decrease areas of land on which illegal construction exists."¹⁶

¹⁰ NII, "Report on Social Gaps in Israel – 2017," December 2018, (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/ycp6mzjr>

¹¹ Ibid., p. 69.

¹² Ibid., p. 73.

¹³ Government Resolution No. 2397, 3 March 2017; Annex I to Israel's 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, p. 19.

¹⁴ Government Resolution No. 3708, 11 September 2011.

¹⁵ Citizen's Empowerment Center in Israel, *Follow-up Report: A program to promote economic growth and development of the Negev Bedouin population on the basis of Government Decision No. 3708 dated September 9, 2011*, 2017 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y98uv5zs>

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

This section was added after several government ministers refused to approve the plan without the addition of measures to ensure the evacuation and demolition of the unrecognized villages.¹⁷ Article 10 details the planned infrastructural development of the Five-Year Plan,¹⁸ making it clear that budget allocation is aimed at the “regularization of settlement”.¹⁹ In addition, the plan provides for the marketing of at least 25,000 housing units in recognized Bedouin local councils,²⁰ and for a newly-established team that is focused solely on dealing with issues of compensation for Bedouin who claim ownership over land that they wish to evacuate in the future. Their role will be to find solutions for large-scale Bedouin land claims and set a governmental regularization policy for the Bedouin community for the next ten years.²¹

The plan thus effectively ties economic development to the implementation of forced displacement, allocating part of its budget to this purpose, including NIS 30 million (over US \$8.5 million) per year for planting trees in “evacuated state lands”, on which the unrecognized Bedouin villages presently stand, to prevent the return of their inhabitants. The plan allocates a further NIS 32 million for additional 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.

The Five-Year Plan instructs the Authority for Development and Settlement of Bedouin in the Negev (Authority for Development and Settlement) to prioritize evacuating the Bedouin communities living in the unrecognized villages, with no provision whatsoever for possible recognition of those villages. The plan also instructs the Ministry of Interior and law enforcement bodies to create a “law enforcement plan” based on Government Resolution No. 3707, better known as the now cancelled Prawer-Begin Plan, which included plans for the forced displacement and destruction of all the unrecognized villages.

4.2. Legislative Mechanisms

- *Article 7 of The Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People*²²

Article 7 of this new Basic Law, enacted in July 2018, stipulates that the development of Jewish settlement is a “national value”, and that the state must act to encourage, promote and consolidate it.²³ The law institutes 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 Negev/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 Negev/Naqab, in order to secure a Jewish demographic majority.

- *The Kaminitz Law*

The Kaminitz Law was enacted on 6 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

¹⁷ Meirav Arlosoroff, “Gallant and Yariv Levin postponed approval of the government Bedouin plan – NIS 3 billion over five years”, *Haaretz*, 15 January 2017 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/ydahanny>

¹⁸ Government Resolution No. 2397, 12 February 2017, Article 10.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, Article 10a.

²⁰ *Ibid*, Article 10b.

²¹ *Ibid*, Article 10c.

²² Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel 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).

²³ For an English translation of the law, see: <http://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/BasicLawNationState.pdf>

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 300,000.²⁴ In addition, where a demolition is carried out, homeowners may additionally be subject to criminal charges.²⁵

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 Negev/Naqab are threatened with demolition and their owners with dispossession under the law.²⁶

4.3. Planning Mechanisms

- *The “Ramat Beka Special Industrial Zone”*

A plan for the “Ramat Beka Special Industrial Zone” threatens to forcibly displace thousands of Bedouin from their land.²⁷ 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 ...”,²⁸ and the plan will expose thousands of Bedouin residents to health risks. If passed, the plan would impose building and development 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.²⁹

- *Extension of Road 6*

The planned extension of Road 6, a major north-south highway,³⁰ is expected to result in the destruction of around 600 structures in at least nine unrecognized Bedouin villages, home to thousands of Bedouin.³¹ According to media reports, the authorities recently began planning the evacuation of about 1,000 families living in the affected area.³² 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.

- *Other plans necessitating the forced displacement of Bedouin*

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.³³ 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

²⁴ Ministry of Justice, Administrative Offenses Regulations (Administrative Penalty - Planning and Construction), 12 April 2018 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/yakjuhw>

²⁵ Article 230 of the Kaminitz Law.

²⁶ See also Adalah, Position Paper on the Kaminitz Law, March 2017: <https://tinyurl.com/ybvg4uhk>

²⁷ Ramat Beka Special Industrial Zone, Local Master Plan 621-0479709.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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>

³⁰ 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).

³¹ Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights, “Plan for Road 6 – South,” April 2010 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/ycvqkweq>

³² 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).

³³ Dimona-Yeroham Railway, Local Master Plan 607-0193185; Arad Railway, Local Master Plan 652- 0203216.

will not be permitted, or within an “affected area” where residents will be severely influenced by pollution.³⁴ Additionally, a plan to allow for the mining of phosphate in an area directly adjacent to the Bedouin village of al-Fur‘ah³⁵ 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. 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.

4.4. Zoning and Housing

The Sol’s 4th Periodic Report states that, based on a study conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, it has formulated recommendations for the expansion of existing Bedouin townships, the establishment of new towns/villages, and the recognition of some unrecognized Bedouin villages. It further states that it has recruited planning companies to conduct feasibility studies in cooperation with the residents of what it refers to as “clusters in the Bedouin diaspora”, i.e. the unrecognized Bedouin villages, and describes this process, which it claims to have “special emphasis on the participation of the Bedouin population”, as “unprecedented in Israel” (p. 35).

In reality, teams from the Bedouin Development Authority (BDA) visit villages and enter into negotiations with residents only to discuss terms of their forced displacement to the Bedouin townships, e.g. the location of new plots and amount of compensation. Displacement itself is a foregone conclusion and not subject to negotiation. The state refers to its policy under the rubric of “modernization” and “urbanization”. In the townships, the Bedouin cannot continue to live a rural lifestyle, consistent with their cultural norms. Therefore, these dealings cannot, in any sense, be called participatory.

An example is the unrecognized village of Umm al-Hīrān. After a 15-year legal struggle against their eviction from the village, in April 2018, under extreme pressure from the authorities, most residents signed an agreement to abandon their village and to relocate to the township of Hūrah.³⁶ The negotiations took place in an extremely coercive environment and in the presence of police forces in and around the village, and against the background of last year’s brutal police killing of a local man during a demolition operation in the village.³⁷

Further, the Sol claims that it is offering “unique financial benefits” to Bedouin who leave the unrecognized villages, including “provision of land plots for free or at very low cost and compensation for the demolition of unauthorized structures” (p. 35). However, as data from the Israel Land Authority shows, the amount of compensation available is low, and certainly inadequate for displaced Bedouin to be able to pursue an agricultural way of life.³⁸ Further, the townships to which they are being moved are ranked at the lowest level of the state’s socio-economic scale, overcrowded and poor, and their planning by the state is inappropriate to the traditional Bedouin rural lifestyle.

The Sol’s report notes that 18 Bedouin township and villages have approved “outline plans” that all “include infrastructure such as schools, health clinics, running water, electricity, roads, pavements, etc.”, adding that planning is in process for six unnamed villages.³⁹ *Adalah and NCF urge the Committee to ask Israel to provide detailed data about the extent to which these plans have been implemented on the ground to date, and about the scope of infrastructure that exists, particularly in the recognized villages, many of which remain without basic infrastructure and services close to two decades after recognition.*

³⁴ 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>

³⁵ Phosphate Mine, National Master Plan 14/B.

³⁶ See also Adalah, “Israel’s destruction of Umm al-Hiran reminiscent of darkest of regimes such as apartheid-era South Africa,” 11 April 2018: <https://tinyurl.com/yas5ku3y>

³⁷ See also Adalah, “Closure of probe into Umm al-Hiran killing: Green light to continued deadly police violence against Arab citizens,” 27 December 2017: <https://tinyurl.com/yd2558dj>

³⁸ ILA Decision 1574 dated 10 October 2018 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/yad7pqou>

³⁹ Annex I to the Sol’s 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, p. 74.

The SoI's report also discusses "development plans" in several Bedouin townships, citing the example of Rahat, which it emphasizes is to be tripled in size.⁴⁰ Adalah and the NCF contend that these expansion plans are intended largely for the intake of Bedouin displaced from the unrecognized villages, and are not a generous development project, as portrayed by the state. The organizations also criticize the dramatic expansion of what are essentially failing towns, all ranked 1 out of 10 on the state's socio-economic index.

4.5 Home Demolitions



Tens of thousands of Bedouin citizens in the Negev/Naqab are living in homes that are subject to demolition orders, usually because the planning authorities refuse to issue building permits in their villages. The demolition policy is a major tool of forced displacement used by the SoI against the Bedouin.

In reference to Annex I of the SoI's report to the CESCRC on demolition of structures it deems "illegal" (pp. 74-75), Adalah and NCF argue that the state's laws are discriminatory and do not comply with Article 11 of the Covenant and the fundamental right to adequate standard of living. The SoI's description of the Bedouin's ancestral land as "state land" (p. 75) entails a complete rejection of the Bedouin's land ownership claims and their historical connection to the land.

In 2017, the SoI invested significant public funds in planning enforcement and demolition,⁴¹ fueling a huge increase in the number of structures that were demolished. The data presented here is based on figures from the Southern Administration for Coordinating the Enforcement of Land Laws (Southern Administration), acquired by NCF through Freedom of Information Act requests.

The number of demolitions in 2017 reached a record high of 2,220 structures, representing a 90% increase in the number of structures demolished relative to 2016 (1,158 demolitions).⁴² Moreover, it would appear that some of the data provided by the SoI is inconsistent: in an article published in the *Israel Today* newspaper on 24 December 2018, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development stated that 2,523 structures had been demolished in 2017, as opposed to the 2,220 reported by the Southern Administration.⁴³

The authorities have a number of classifications for demolitions. "**Initiated**" demolitions are carried out by the authorities in a concerted operation, in which inspectors, accompanied by bulldozers and large forces from the police's dedicated Yoav Unit, enter villages in order to demolish structures. In reference to the SoI's report (p.75), "**self-demolitions**" are demolitions carried out by the building owners and count for more than 70% of the demolitions.

The reasons for this type of demolition are numerous and are a direct result of the violence used as part of the SoI's policy of demolition: in order to avoid trauma; to evade criminal sanctions that may be imposed on the owners; in hopes of saving personal equipment and building materials; in response to threats by the authorities to sue the owners for the costs of the demolition, etc. The state fails to mention the violent measures its authorities employ in its 4th Periodic Report as a cause of "self-demolitions".

The data presented in Figure 1 (below) indicates a dramatic increase in self-demolitions, which is a result of the increased enforcement of heavy fines for demolitions carried out by the authorities. Demolitions by the authorities involve enormous pressure through the heavy presence of enforcement and demolition units, aimed at achieving the forced displacement of Bedouin citizens from the unrecognized villages. On average, the various enforcement authorities are employed in demolition-related activities on four days out of any given week. The usual demolition scenario entails a long convoy of inspectors' vehicles, and patrol cars from the Yoav Unit and the regular police. The process has enormous socio-psychological effects on the community.

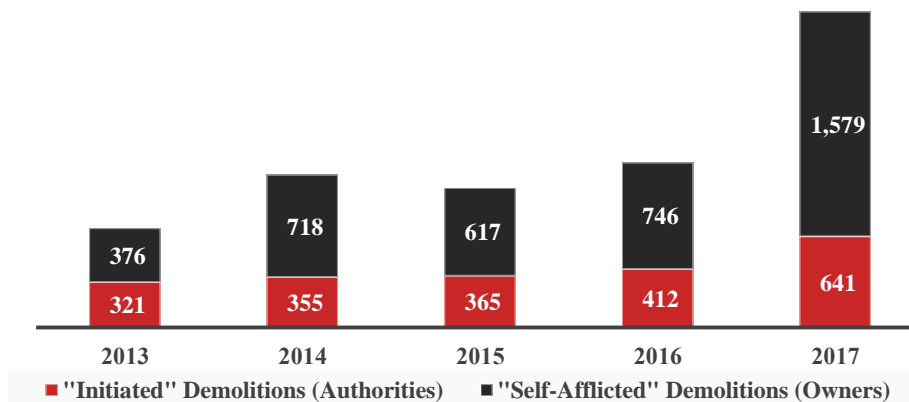
⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Government Resolution No. 2397, 12.02.2017, Articles 13-14.

⁴² Ministry of Public Security, "A copy of the Southern Administration of Land Laws Enforcement: The summary of the 2017 work year for the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality", 19 February 2018.

⁴³ Ariel Kahana. "Inverter: A decline in illegal construction in the Negev", *Israel Today*, 24 December 2018 (in Hebrew).

Figure 1: “Initiated” demolitions vs. “Self-Demolitions” in the Negev/Naqab, 2017⁴⁴



According to the Southern Administration’s figures, “self-demolitions” include structures that were demolished **“in-procedure”**, i.e. demolitions carried out by the owners before any demolition order was issued and submitted for execution. **Demolitions carried out without a demolition order account for approximately 21% of all demolitions in the Bedouin communities in the Negev/Naqab.**

While the SoI claims that, “Only about 7-10% of the demolished structures were inhabited” (p. 75 of Annex I), Adalah and NCF believe based on their fieldwork that this figure is much higher. However, it is impossible to know exactly how many structures were used for dwellings because the Southern Administration does not provide such information in any of its public reports. Moreover, it classifies about 33% of the demolitions as “other”, without any explanatory information. Adalah and NCF therefore urge the Committee to ask the SoI to provide specific data on home demolitions in the Bedouin communities in the Negev/Naqab.

5. Denial of Access to Safe Drinking Water and Adequate Sanitation, Articles 11, 12

Access to water in the Bedouin villages is minimal to nonexistent as residents are largely provided with insufficient, poor quality and over-priced water. These three criteria – quality, quantity and price – constitute the basis of the internationally recognized human right to water. Based on these criteria, residents of unrecognized villages and some of the recognized villages are being denied the right to water.

5.1. Water

Annex I to the SoI’s Report does not include information about access to water among the Bedouin within designated sections on *Adequate and Affordable Access to Safe Water*, *Affordability of Water Services*, *Monitoring the Quality of Water*, or *Education regarding the Use of Water*,⁴⁵ despite the fact that the Bedouin in the Negev/Naqab, and particularly those living in unrecognized villages, are the population group most affected by a lack of access to safe, affordable drinking water. None of the unrecognized Bedouin villages is connected to the national water network.

In the past – and in many of the unrecognized villages today – residents have been compelled to purchase and transport water from private suppliers, in what is an extremely expensive and time-consuming process. The SoI is bound by a 2011 ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court that all citizens of Israel, regardless of their legal status, possess the right to “minimal access” to water (though the court did not clarify what constituted minimal access).⁴⁶ As a result, villages have been allocated a Mekorot (Israel’s National Water Company)

⁴⁴ Ministry of Public Security, “A copy of the Southern Administration of Land Laws Enforcement: The summary of the 2017 work year for the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality”, 19 February 2018.

⁴⁵ Annex I to the SoI’s 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, pp. 66-70.

⁴⁶ (Supreme Court, Civil Appeal) C.A. 9535/06, *Abdullah Abu Musa’ed, et al. v. The Water Commissioner and the Israel Lands Administration* (decision delivered 5 June 2011) (petition brought by Adalah on behalf of the villagers).

water access node and are connected via the main transportation routes throughout the Negev/Naqab. In February 2013, however, the court rejected a petition to connect Umm al-Hīrān to the national water network, ruling that the village's current source of water – bought from a private citizen 4 kilometers away and at exorbitantly high prices – constituted “sufficient access”.⁴⁷ The decision contradicted the court's earlier 2011 ruling. In effect, the court did not recognize the petitioners' right to be provided with water by the state, due to their residence in an unrecognized Bedouin village, thereby sanctioning the violation of their basic rights.

Unlike elsewhere in Israel, residents of unrecognized villages are liable for all expenses pertaining to all infrastructural construction of the water system and its upkeep, including the treatment of water leaks and other failures in infrastructure. Moreover, water quality is unregulated by the SoI, and residents are exposed to diseases and other threats to their health that may accumulate in their unsupervised water system. However, the full ramifications of poor water quality on residents' health have yet to be thoroughly researched.

Despite these shortcomings, the billing rate for domestic use of water in the unrecognized villages is one of the highest in Israel, far exceeding rates in proximate townships and local councils, and does not include sewage services (unlike in surrounding localities). Residents of unrecognized villages pay the water rate of a ‘non-supplier user’ directly to Mekorot. Adding to the problem, residents report large differences between the readings of their private water meters and those in their water bills from Mekorot. In the unrecognized village of az-Zarnūg, for instance, it was reported that there were discrepancies of up to 1,000 cubic meters per month. High rates and low accessibility generally preclude the use of water for agricultural purposes, a traditional occupation in the Bedouin villages.



In 2011, the water rate for unrecognized villages was 5.36 NIS per cubic meter.⁴⁸ By 2018, the water rate for ‘non-supplier user’ had risen to 8.085-8.787 (depending on the amount of water supplied per year).⁴⁹ In a period of seven years, the water rate rose by about 64%. As a result, Bedouin residing in the unrecognized villages pay roughly 33% more for water per cubic meter in comparison with the rest of the population.

5.2. Sanitation

Annex I of the SoI's 4th Periodic Report discusses Government Resolution No. 546,⁵⁰ which was accepted in 2013 and allocated NIS 40 Million to a waste management programme in the Bedouin communities (p. 43). It does not, however, provide any information on the implementation of this resolution or its evaluation by professional bodies. While it was promoted as a comprehensive means to improve access to sanitation for the Bedouin population in the Negev/Naqab, it has failed to fulfil the need of the population on the ground.



NCF conducted some research with local researchers and community members and found that in Umm Batīn, a recognized Bedouin village, only a few households have received refuse bins for waste disposal, leaving the rest to dispose of their waste in the nearest dry river, Wad al Khalil, or along the roadside. Moreover, residents who did receive a bin reported that there was no regular collection and removal of waste from the villages and as a result, they are forced to burn their rubbish inside the containers. In addition, the SoI failed to mention that the programme was budgeted for only several years and, as of 2019, local and regional authorities will need to provide the funding for the continuation of the programme, which is likely to seriously compromised or made impossible by the impoverished state of the Bedouin local authorities. Furthermore, this programme

⁴⁷ (Supreme Court, Civil Appeal) CA 2541/12 *Salib Abu al-Qian v. The Government Authority for Water and Sewage* (decision delivered 20 February 2013). See also Adalah, “Supreme Court refuses water to unrecognized Bedouin village Umm el-Hieran,” 25 February 2013: <https://tinyurl.com/y9qpntqn>

⁴⁸ Israel's Water Authority, *Water and Sewage Rates Book* (Mekorot, Local Suppliers and Corporations), 1 July 2011, Table 1 (3.1.3.1), p. 4.

⁴⁹ Israel's Water Authority, *Water and Sewage Rates Book* (Mekorot, Local Suppliers and Corporations), 1 January 2018. *Water Rates Provided by Mekorot* (3.1.3.2 A, B, C), pp.16-17.

⁵⁰ Government Resolution No. 546, 14 July 2013.

dealt only with household waste management, while ignoring other issues of waste management such as the collection of building materials.

The majority of Bedouin villages (both recognized and unrecognized) are not connected to a sewage disposal infrastructure. In the recognized village of Drijāt, for instance, a sewage treatment plant was established three-to-four years ago. However, residents report that only half of the villagers' homes are directly connected to the plant, while a large part of the village is not connected to any infrastructure whatsoever. This facility was intended to provide services to two other large recognized villages, but it is unclear whether their residents are currently connected to any sewage disposal system.

6. Unequal Enjoyment of the Right to Education, Articles 13, 14

6.1. Inadequate Investment in Education

In its 2011 COs, the Committee expressed concern over the unequal treatment of Bedouin women and girls with regard, *inter alia*, to education, especially those living in the unrecognized villages (CO 30). This concern remains relevant, and should also be extended to Bedouin boys, who frequently score lower in terms of educational attainment than Bedouin girls.

Decades of lack of state investment in Arab Bedouin education have 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 student in the 2012 PISA tests⁵¹ – investment in their schooling is less than higher-achieving Israeli Jewish children. In Israeli Jewish schools, students with lower levels of educational achievement receive extra funding; in Arab schools, however, students of different educational levels receive very similar amounts of funding. The gaps in investment between Arab and Jewish students increases over the course of their education, 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.⁵² These gaps are even more pronounced in the case of Bedouin school children, though the state does not consistently publish disaggregated data about them.

6.2. Shortage of Classrooms and Overcrowding

In its CO No. 33, the Committee recommended that the SoI take measures to address the severe shortage of classrooms in Arab schools. Israel's report discusses investment in Bedouin education through its current Five-Year Plan and through a separate budget allocated for the construction and refurbishment of classrooms.⁵³ However, experience shows that budgeted state funds are not fully disbursed. Adalah and NCF encourage the Committee to ask Israel to provide data about funds budgeted and spent, and what if any affirmative measures are being taken to drastically improve educational opportunities for Bedouin children.

According to a Knesset report, there is a major lack of investment in Bedouin schools, which has resulted in widespread, severe overcrowding and sub-standard educational facilities.⁵⁴ The report states that there is an "acute lack of school buildings" and describes the existing infrastructure as "poor".⁵⁵ The Ministry of Education (MoE) estimated a need for an additional 1,200 schools and kindergarten classrooms in the Bedouin towns and villages (as of 2017).⁵⁶ However, of the state funds that were allocated for the construction

⁵¹ Yarden Skop, "Israel Has Largest Gaps in Student Achievement of All OECD Countries, Study Shows", *Haaretz*, 2 April 2014: <https://tinyurl.com/yd8x9sep>

⁵² 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). Data excludes Jewish religious schools.

⁵³ Annex I to the SoI's 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, p. 107.

⁵⁴ Knesset Research and Information Center, "Report on Bedouin Education in the Negev," 30 October 2017 (in Hebrew).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

of classrooms during the years 2011-2016, only 39.3% (351 of 893) were actually built.⁵⁷ During the same period, only six new kindergarten classes were constructed in all Bedouin villages within the regional councils of Neve Midbar and Al-Qasoum, despite the allocation of a budget for 28 kindergarten classes.⁵⁸

Significantly, inadequate school facilities for Bedouin children is growing over time, with the MoE identifying a lack of 241 school classrooms in 2011, a number that had risen to 629 in 2016.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, in 2016 the MoE budgeted for just 115 classrooms in Bedouin schools (18%).⁶⁰ While the current Five-Year Plan for the Bedouin allocates NIS 1.18 billion (about US \$31 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.⁶¹

6.3. Persistently High Dropout Rates

In 2011, the Committee noted the high dropout rates among Bedouin children (CO 33) and dropping out remains a critical concern. The Bedouin village of al-Fur'ah, for instance, has no local high school and has high dropout rates as a direct result. According to a 2014 survey by Adalah of 375 children enrolled in the village's middle school (at 9th grade), only 205 subsequently attended high schools in neighboring towns (at 10th grade), i.e. the dropout rate stands at 45%. In addition, others drop out before the 9th grade.

A Knesset report found that the drop-out rates among the Bedouin are far higher than among other population groups: at age 17 the Bedouin dropout rate stood at 30% (in 2015), compared to 13% among all Arab children and 5% among all pupils in Israel in this age group.⁶² In the 2015-2016 academic year, 11% of all Bedouin children aged 3-17 in the Negev/Naqab were not in any MoE school, an alarmingly high figure which shows the lack of effectiveness of the state's efforts to date to improve education for Bedouin citizens.⁶³

6.4. Low, Stagnant Levels of Educational Achievement, Low Matriculation Rates

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 gaps between Bedouin and other children have grown over time. In the 2016-2017 academic year, only 31.3% of Bedouin pupils in the Negev/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.⁶⁴

6.5. Inadequate Provision of Preschool Education

While almost all Israeli Jewish children begin school at age three, high numbers of Bedouin children living in the Negev/Naqab, have no preschool facilities. In dozens of Bedouin villages, three- and four-year-old children go without any preschool education, in violation of the Compulsory Education Law – 1949. 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 that age in the Negev/Naqab. 70% of these children live in unrecognized villages.⁶⁵ 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 in education for Bedouin children.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁶⁰ 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>

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶² Ibid., p. 30.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶⁴ Knesset Research and Information Center, "Report on Bedouin Education in the Negev," 30 October 2017, p. 25.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

In 2018, after many months of foot-dragging the state provided transportation to approximately 95 preschool children from the three unrecognized villages of as-Sirrah, al-Jaraf and Umm Nmilahin the Negev/Naqab to preschools for the first time. The development came in response to a contempt of court motion filed by Adalah in February 2018 based on its earlier litigation before the Beer Sheva District Court.⁶⁶ Although the SoI raised no principle objection to the provision of transportation, the court did not order the state to transportation for all preschool-aged Bedouin children in the Negev/Naqab without access to early-life education, which they estimated at around 5,000 children, requiring further litigation to be brought on behalf of children in similarly-situated villages.

6.6. Bedouin Women

In Annex I of its 4th Periodic Report to the Committee (p. 17), the SoI notes that the MoE runs an educational programme for Bedouin women. The **Completion of Education Programme for Adults** was aimed to provide basic skills for women and men who did not complete 12 years of education. The programme operated in the Bedouin communities within the scheme and under the budget of the previous Five-Year Plan (2012-2016), and its total budget 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). However, no budget was allocated in the current Five-Year Plan (2017-2021), and the MoE did not budget it separately.

Following a national campaign led by NCF in 2018, NIS 2 million were allocated for the programme, which now operates only about 15 classes in 10 Bedouin local authorities. This budget was only promised until the end of 2019. The Knesset Education Committee discussed this issue in November 2018 and recommended that the MoE guarantee, or even increase, future funding of the programme. This programme is essential for Bedouin women who did not receive access to basic education or had to drop-out at an early age. The programme can significantly improve a Bedouin woman's chances to integrate into the labour market.

7. Infant Mortality Rates and Denial of Access to Healthcare, Article 12

The infant mortality rate among Bedouin was 11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014, a rate that is five times more than that of 2.2 deaths among Jewish Israelis (in 2016). Israel must work intensively to reduce this rate by providing accessible health care to Bedouin women in the Negev/Naqab.

In its 2011 COs to Israel, the Committee expressed concern about infant and maternal mortality rates among Palestinian citizens in Israel, including the Bedouin, and urged Israel to “intensify its efforts” to lower these rates (CO 31).

Today, however, there are still few medical clinics for this community to provide basic health services, including “Mother and Child Clinics” specializing in pre- and post-natal healthcare. Several clinics have been arbitrarily closed and reopened only after repeated legal interventions.⁶⁷ Neither emergency medical services nor public transport connects to or accesses the unrecognized villages. Almost no specialists, e.g. gynecologists or pediatricians, work in the Bedouin townships and villages, and Bedouin families must often travel long distances for specialist care. These structural barriers, among other factors, are major contributors to the very high infant mortality rate that continues to face the Bedouin in the Negev/Naqab.

In its 4th Periodic Report to the Committee, Israel reports that the infant mortality rate among Bedouin was 11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014, a rate that is comparable to that in many of the poorest countries, and contrasts with a rate of 3.1 deaths per 1,000 live births among the general population (in 2016), and 2.2 deaths

⁶⁶ Beer Sheva District Court 36246-12-17, *Al-Nasasra v. The Education Ministry*.

⁶⁷ See for example, Adalah, “Health Ministry Reopens Mother & Child Clinic in Unrecognized Village of Wadi al-Nam,” 24 Nov 2011: <https://tinyurl.com/ya5uc8ma>

among the Israeli Jewish population (in 2016).⁶⁸ In discussing “Efforts to decrease infant mortality in minority populations”,⁶⁹ Israel does not report on the lack of accessible healthcare for the Bedouin, and its statistics further reveal that it is not closely monitoring this important indicator among the Bedouin, citing older figures for this group than for other groups, despite the Bedouins far higher infant mortality rates. Additionally, the cited rate of 11 deaths per 1,000 live births may underestimate the problem, since the rate was 12 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2014 according to other state sources such as the National Council for the Child.⁷⁰

The SoI’s report contains scarce information about steps that it is taking to reduce infant mortality rates among the Bedouin. It notes that additional screening tests for pregnant women have been added to the state health care basket, however, the lack of accessible healthcare means that this testing remains out of the reach of many women.⁷¹ The frequency of pregnancy checks varies significantly between recognized and unrecognized localities. In the latter pregnant women reportedly have their first prenatal check only during the second trimester (avg. 17 weeks’ gestation). In the recognized townships and villages, the first check on average takes place during the critical first trimester.⁷² Thus, while the addition of such tests is a positive step, the state must work to improve access to healthcare to bring down rates of infant mortality among the Bedouin.

8. Obstacles to Employment for Arab Bedouin Women, Articles 3, 6, 7, 11

In its previous COs (9, 13, 14 and 30), the Committee expressed concern regarding the continuing barriers to employment faced by the Arab population; the high unemployment rates; wage disparities among Arab men and women as well as between the Arab population and the Jewish population; and the unequal treatment of Bedouin women and girls with regard to employment.

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. No special objective has been set for Bedouin women from the Negev/Naqab, although they face additional barriers and are amongst the most disadvantaged population in Israel. Achieving the goal on the national level is in progress, at least according to data presented by the SoI. In contrast, the employment rate of Bedouin women in the Negev/Naqab is low at approximately 24% only,⁷³ far from the national target.

About 62% of Bedouin women aged over 25 have acquired only 11 years of education and did not qualify for a matriculation certificate. As a consequence, Bedouin women are usually employed in temporary jobs for low wages, at best, and without social benefits. True promotion of employment of Bedouin women is still far from reality and will require a concerted effort on the part of the SoI.

⁶⁸ Annex I to the SoI’s 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, pp. 82-83

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 83.

⁷⁰ National Council for the Child, “Data Compilation from the Annual Report ‘Children in Israel – 2015’,” January 2016, p. 22 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/ydxs3l6q>

⁷¹ Annex I to the SoI’s 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, p. 83.

⁷² Diana Bahor-Nir, “The first Bedouin gynecologist begins a revolution”, *Calcalist*, 11 November 2016 (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/ycxzgp5l>

⁷³ 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”, 12.02.2018. Submitted to the Economic Committee of the Knesset (in Hebrew): <https://tinyurl.com/y93t2goe>

8.1. Employment Centers

In reference to Annex I of the SoI's 4th Periodic Report, it is noted that "between 2012 and 2014, they handled 4,538 applicants, 2,813 of whom found employment."⁷⁴ However, the numbers reported by the Mayers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (which was responsible for assessing the previous Plan for Development) are 22% lower and indicate that only 3,705 people participated in programmes provided by employment centers (Ryan centers). Their analysis refers to participants who met two conditions: there is a record of subscription to the programme and the employment status is reported at least two months after joining the programme. This definition is not compatible with that used by the programme team.



Only 18% of the Bedouin women who joined programmes provided by the Ryan centers were women with less than 11 years of education. This points to the fact that these centers do not provide meaningful response to a high portion of Bedouin women (about 62%). Moreover, women seeking employment are offered only entry-level jobs at a very low income or employment in contracting work. In addition, there are not enough professional courses for follow-up education, which may, over time, affect the earning potential and social conditions that accompany the work. For Bedouin women residing in unrecognized villages, the situation is even more dire, as additional barriers prevent them from accessing services provided by the Ryan centers.

8.2. Industrial Parks

Another barrier to the integration of Bedouin women in the labour market is the short supply of job opportunities in Bedouin localities and the severe shortage of local commerce, craft and industrial parks.

In Annex I of the SoI Report to the Committee (p.18), the SoI intentionally provides partial information about the establishment and development of industrial parks in Bedouin authorities and the various development plans. In regard to the industrial zone in Abu Grīnāt, only 80 dunam were developed and 19 were marketed. As of now, the entire process has been halted due to ownership claims over the designated land. As for the industrial zone in the township of Šgīb as-Salām (Segev Shalom), only 46 plots were developed and during the period of the first Five-Year Plan for Development (2012-2016) only six of them were marketed.

After a seven-year period, the goal set for the development and marketing of 70 dunam was not met. More examples for the failure of the SoI in developing industrial areas for the Bedouin communities can be seen in Ar'arah Ba-Negev, and Bīr Haddāj. In the two regional councils, where 200 dunam 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 women in need of workplaces adjacent to their communities.

8.3. Improving Public Transportation

The operation of accessible public transportation is integral to promoting Bedouin women's participation in the labour market. However, as of today, only seven townships and four of the 11 recognized villages have relatively complete public transport services. In the other 35 villages, in which reside about 72,000 Bedouin citizens, there are no regular public transport services at all.⁷⁵

According to the Ministry of Transport and Road Safety (MoT), legal procedures preclude the operation of public transportation on anything other than paved roads, and it therefore cannot permit the operation of public transportation in Bedouin villages without access roads. However, while the MoT refrains from

⁷⁴ Annex I to the SoI's 4th Periodic Report to the CESCR, p.17.

⁷⁵ 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*, 12.02.2018. Submitted to the Economic Committee of the Knesset.

operating a regular bus service on dirt roads, the MoE does operate transportation services for students on buses that use the same roads, despite the fact that the MoE's procedures also preclude the use of dirt roads for transportation.⁷⁶



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, which creates a safety hazard. 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.⁷⁷

8.4. Daycare Facilities

As stated in Israel's State Comptroller Report: State Actions to Encourage Integration of the Arab population in Employment (2016),⁷⁸ the severe shortage of daycare facilities (0-3 years old) in Bedouin communities constitutes as a huge barrier for Bedouin women who wish to integrate into the labour market. In the years 2014-2015, only five daycare centers operated in four Bedouin localities. Today, there are only 12 daycare centers in six Bedouin localities, serving 815 children, who constitute about just 2% of all Bedouin children in the Negev/Naqab aged 0-3.⁷⁹ In addition, there are 236 nurseries in Bedouin communities, serving 1,120 children, who account for just 3% of all Bedouin children in the age group. In total, only about 5% of the children in Bedouin communities (ages 0-3) are in daycare facilities supervised by the SoI, compared with 27% of children in Jewish localities.

To the best of our knowledge, in the Bedouin regional councils of Neve Midbar and Al- Qassoum there are no daycare centers at all, in spite of the fact that they provide services to about 30,000 people (including residents of unrecognized villages). This situation is in stark contrast to the SoI's commitment and obligation to increase Bedouin women's participation in the employment force.

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) was established in 1997 to provide a place for Jewish-Arab collaborative efforts in the struggle for civil equality and the advancement of 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/Naqab. 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/Naqab. 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/Naqab 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. 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.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ State Comptroller Report: State Actions to Encourage Integration of the Arab population in Employment, 2016, p. 11.

⁷⁹ Summary Report: Inter-ministerial Team to Address the Negative Implications of Polygamy, July 2018, p. 131