

**NGO Report to the UN Human Right Committee
in Advance of its
List of Issues for the State of Israel**

Violations of the ICCPR committed by the State of
Israel against the Arab Bedouin in the Southern
Negev-Naqab desert

Submitted by

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

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The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) was established in 1997 to provide a framework 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, the 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 November 1996. Its mission is to promote human rights in Israel in general and the rights of the Palestinian minority, citizens of Israel, in particular (around 1.5 million people, or 20% of the population). This work also includes promoting and defending the human rights of all individuals subject to the jurisdiction of the State of Israel, including Palestinian residents of the OPT. Adalah is the first Palestinian Arab-run legal center in Israel, and the sole Palestinian organization that works before Israeli courts to protect the human rights of Palestinians in Israel and in the OPT.

This NGO report sets forth for the Committee's consideration violations of the ICCPR committed by the State of Israel against the Arab Bedouin population in the Southern Negev-Naqab desert. It makes specific reference to the previous concluding observation issued by the Human Rights Committee in 2014, in which it expressed its concerns about Israel's conduct in relation to the Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab regarding issues of home demolitions, forced evictions and displacement, dispossession, discriminatory zoning and planning policies, limited access to basic services, and the lack of respect for the traditional Bedouin way of life, Bedouin ancestral land rights, and participation by the Bedouin in any relocation processes. The issues covered relate primarily to articles 2, 6, 12, 14, 17, 23, 25, 26 and 27 of the ICCPR.

The report begins by presenting a brief background about the Arab Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab, before discussing the following specific violations:

1. The Israeli Government's policy of home demolitions in Bedouin villages and towns;
2. The imminent demolition of the unrecognized Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran;
3. The Israeli Government's five-year plan for the Bedouin as a tool of forced displacement, eviction and demolition;
4. Discriminatory planning policies and practices and the denial of basic services;
5. The lack of infrastructure and basic services.

Background

The Arab Bedouin are an indigenous group that has been living in the Negev-Naqab for centuries, long before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Today, about 240,000 Bedouin citizens of Israel live in the Negev-Naqab¹ in three types of settlements: government-planned towns, recognized villages and unrecognized villages. The State of Israel has consistently refused to recognize the historical land claims of the Arab Bedouin.

There are 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev-Naqab that the State of Israel refers to either as the “dispersion” or as “illegal villages”, and to their inhabitants as “trespassers” on state land. Some of these areas are historical villages that existed since before the establishment of Israel, while others were created after the Israeli military government displaced their inhabitants during the 1950s. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), about 28% of the Bedouin community, or 70,000 people live in these villages.² In most of the unrecognized villages there are no schools, kindergartens or health clinics. They all lack infrastructure, including electricity, running water, paved roads and sewage disposal systems, and have no representation in the different local governmental bodies and their residents cannot register to participate in municipal elections. The residents of these villages live in severe hardship and poverty.

The state established seven government-planned Bedouin towns in the 1970s as part of an ongoing non-consensual and non-participatory process of urbanization. All seven Bedouin towns are characterized by poverty, deprivation, high unemployment, crime and social tension, as well as inadequate provision of state services. According to CBS data, 65% of the Bedouin community in the Negev resides in these towns, about 156,000 people.³

The State of Israel recognized 12 Bedouin villages via various government resolutions from 1999 onwards.⁴ The state hailed their recognition as a fundamental shift in official policy, which had previously focused exclusively on the option of forced urbanization. However, almost two decades later, there is no significant difference between these recognized Bedouin villages and the villages that remain unrecognized. The residents of most of the recognized villages continue to be denied access to basic state services, including water, electricity, sewage disposal, and paved roads. According to the CBS, only 6.6% of the Bedouin community resides in these villages, numbering around 160,000 people.⁵

1. The Israeli Government’s policy of home demolitions in Bedouin villages and towns

Since its 2014 concluding observations, in which the Committee expressed concern at demolitions, forced evictions and displacement of Bedouin citizens of Israel in the Negev-Naqab (CCPR/C/ISR/CO/4, para. 9), Israel has aggressively intensified its use of home demolitions against the Arab Bedouin community in the Negev-Naqab. The state has continued to use home demolitions as a tool of evicting families, and sometimes even whole villages, to urban towns, depriving them of their land and traditional community life. According to the Ministry of Public Security, **home demolitions carried out against the Arab Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab have tripled in just five years** (Chart 1).

¹ Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Localities and Population, by District, Sub-District, Religion and Population Group (2.16), published on 1 September 2016.

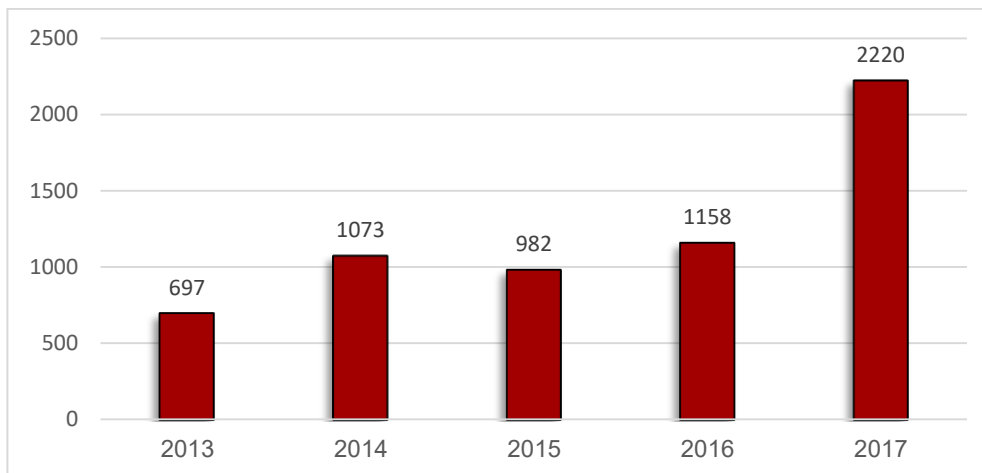
² CBS, Total population estimations in settlements by unified statistic regions and age, end of 2014.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The villages are Abu Qreinat, Abu Tlul, Al-Fur’a, Al-Sayyid, Bir Hadaj, Dreijat, Kuhleh, Makhoul, Mulada (Al-Atrash), Qasr al-Ser, Tarabin Al-Sane’, and Umm Batin.

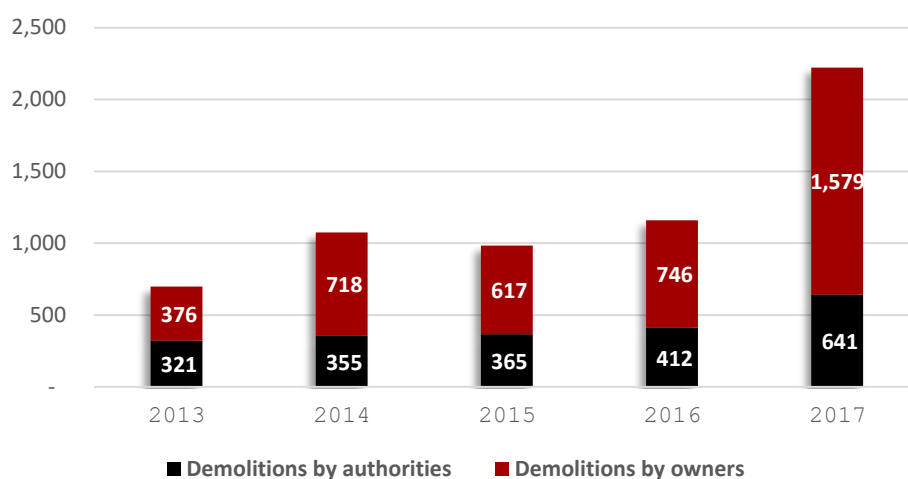
⁵ Supra note 2.

Chart 1. Home demolitions against Arab Bedouin, 2013-2017⁶



In an increasing number of cases, the owners of structures often execute home demolitions themselves, a practice the authorities refer to as “self-demolition”. In such cases, homeowners who have been served demolition orders by the Israeli authorities demolish the buildings themselves rather than to wait for the state to do so. They do so under pressure from the enforcement authorities, which threaten them with criminal sanctions and crippling monetary fines to cover the cost of a state-executed demolition. Demolishing one’s home is additionally a way for the Bedouin to avoid the trauma, police brutality and loss of property associated with the arrival of a large police force with bulldozers without prior warning. It allows them to save their belongings and construction materials, which is impossible when the authorities carry out the demolition. **As shown in Chart 2, the rate of “self-demolitions” has been rising steadily to comprise 71% of all demolitions in 2017 (compared to 54% in 2013).**

Chart 2. House demolitions of Bedouins according to type of demolition, 2013-2017⁷



Notably, all families residing in Bedouin localities are subject to the state’s discriminatory policy of house demolitions, and the fact that the government-planned towns and recognized villages have been approved by the state does not exempt their residents.

⁶ Data taken from reply to Freedom of Information Act Request from Ministry of Public Security, dated 20 February 2018.

⁷ The Southern Directorate of Land Law Enforcement – Annual Summaries of 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Although the Bill for the Regulation of the Bedouin Settlement in the Negev (Prawer-Begin Bill) was shelved in 2013, the main governmental body that was established as part of the bill to coordinate demolitions still continues to operate. The Southern Directorate of Land Law Enforcement (herein the Directorate) operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Security and its purpose is to make the process of demolitions in Bedouin towns and villages more efficient.⁸ It functions as the main body coordinating the demolitions between the various enforcement authorities,⁹ and it deals solely with the enforcement of land and planning laws within the Bedouin community. In addition, a special police combat unit (named 'Yoav') is dedicated to escorting the enforcement agencies when they execute evictions and demolitions against Bedouin citizens' homes.

The Authority for Development and Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev is a state body established to settle Bedouin land claims and regularize "permanent dwellings"¹⁰ for the Bedouin. The Authority works closely with the Directorate and other law enforcement bodies to pressure Bedouin citizens to "agree" to its terms via a procedure named "enforcement promoting regularization."¹¹ The state's enforcement bodies, in cooperation with the Authority, use the policy of home demolitions to threaten Arab Bedouin citizens of the state to enter into "regularization" procedures, resulting in their forced displacement, dispossession and the loss of their ancestral land. The fact that the enforcement of the planning and building laws is used as a tool to further the discriminatory policy of forced displacement exclusively towards the Bedouin community in the Negev-Naqab, and the existence of state bodies that are dedicated to enforcement of these laws with respect only to the Arab Bedouin community, is a violation of multiple articles of the convention, including articles 2, 12, 14, 17, 26.

The inequality before the law and before the courts in the enforcement of planning and construction laws in the Negev-Naqab is exemplified by a 2016 decision of the Be'er Sheva Magistrates' Court.¹² In this case, the judge ruled that an indictment against an Israeli Jewish citizen for unlawful building should be dismissed based on a claim of selective prosecution made by the defendant, who argued that an entire Jewish village named Azuz had been constructed illegally in the area in which he operated his hospitality business (the guest rooms of which were built without permits). An investigation by the National Unit for Building Inspection in the Southern District revealed that there had indeed been no enforcement of planning and building laws in the area of Azuz against Jewish citizens. The investigation further revealed that enforcement in the area targets Bedouin citizens only.¹³ By dismissing the indictment, the judge *de facto* approved the state's discrimination against the Bedouin regarding the right of equality before the courts and tribunals.

2. The imminent demolition of the unrecognized Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran

A matter of utmost urgency is the case of the unrecognized Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran, which has been slated for demolition and evacuation by the State of Israel between 15-29 April 2018.

Adalah and the NCF urge the Committee to call on Israel to cancel the demolition and evacuation of Umm al-Hiran and to resolve the historical land claims in a just manner that upholds the community's right to dignity, equality, and housing, free from discrimination.

⁸ Website of the Ministry of Public Security: Southern Directorate of Land Law Enforcement: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/units/unit_land_law_enforcement_negev

⁹ Three main enforcement authorities operate in the Negev-Naqab in the field of house demolitions: The Israel Land Authority's Division for Land Security; the Unit for Enforcement in Open Spaces, which is under the jurisdiction of Israel Nature and Parks Authority; and the National Unit for Building Inspection, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance.

¹⁰ Israeli Government resolution 1999, "The Establishment of the Authority for Regularization of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev", from 15 July 2007.

¹¹ The Southern Directorate of Land Law Enforcement – 2016 summary, p. 1.

¹² Case number 12-05-61006 (Be'er Sheva Magistrates' Court), *The State of Israel – Southern District Planning and Construction Committee v. Ram*, (decision delivered 4 January 2016).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The Israeli Government recently announced its intention to demolish the unrecognized Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in its entirety by the end of April 2018. On 21 March 2018, Israeli authorities posted demolition notices on every home in Umm al-Hiran, specifying that the authorities will carry out demolitions at some point between 15 April and 29 April 2018. The demolition of Umm al-Hiran would leave its approximately 350 residents – including many women, children and elderly people – homeless and at risk of harm during the demolition operation.

The last time the Israeli authorities attempted to demolish the village was in January 2017, when hundreds of police forces arrived in Umm al-Hiran in a military-like operation to carry out demolition orders on homes; eight homes and seven agricultural buildings were razed. During the violent demolition operation, a 50-year-old villager and mathematics teacher named Ya'akub Abu Al-Qi'an was shot dead by police who opened fire on his car. (For additional information on this killing case and the use of police brutality during the January 2017 demolition operation in Umm al-Hiran, please refer to an additional NGO report to the Committee submitted by Adalah).

The state's plans to demolish the village and build a Jewish village in its place stand in direct opposition to the Committee's 2014 concluding observations, in which it called on Israel to "Desist from any actions that may facilitate or result in ... forced displacement and dispossession of Bedouins residing in the Negev", and to "Ensure the participation of Bedouins in the Negev in any process concerning their relocation; ensure that any proposed plans for their relocation take due account of their traditional way of life ... their right to ancestral land ... the rights to be informed and consulted, to an effective remedy, and to the provision of adequate relocation sites" (para. 9).

Second forced displacement of the people of Umm al-Hiran

The state continues to refuse to officially recognize Umm al-Hiran and is targeting it for demolition and forced displacement, despite the fact that the Israeli Supreme Court (SCT) recognized that the residents were not illegal trespassers – as initially claimed by the state – but were moved there in 1956 by Israeli military order, after being displaced from their original village of Khirbet Zubaleh, which they had cultivated for centuries.¹⁴ The people of Umm al-Hiran have been living in the village for over 60 years and the current plan threatens to displace them for a second time. While recognizing that the villagers were not trespassers, the SCT nevertheless approved the state's plan in 2015 and 2016, making way for a new Jewish town called "Hiran" to be built on the ruins of Umm al-Hiran.¹⁵ Israeli construction workers are currently based at the hilltop on which Umm al-Hiran is built, where they have started initial work on building Hiran.

Discriminatory and illegitimate purpose for the demolition

The destruction of Umm al-Hiran and the forced displacement of its inhabitants is being carried out not for a compelling public purpose, but for the discriminatory and illegitimate purpose of establishing a new Jewish town called "Hiran" in its place. Contrary to the Supreme Court's ruling in 2015 that "The planned town will not prevent [those from Bedouin villages] from living there and anyone who wishes to live in Hiran is entitled to do so," and the state's repeated promises to the court that Hiran would accept all new residents regardless of religion or ethnic background,¹⁶ Hiran is, in fact, closed to non-Jewish residents and its population will be ethnically-based. According to a document uncovered by Adalah in August 2017, Hiran's cooperative association bylaws specify that **only Orthodox Jews** will be

¹⁴ (Supreme Court) Appeal 3094/11, *Ibrahim Farhoud Abu al-Qi'an, et al. v. The State of Israel* (decision delivered 5 May 2015). However, the court concluded that the state had merely allowed the Bedouin citizens to use the land, which was state land, and therefore the state could do with it as it wished.

¹⁵ (Supreme Court) Further Civil Hearing 3959/15, *Ibrahim Farhoud Abu al-Qi'an, et al. v. The State of Israel* (decision delivered 17 January 2016).

¹⁶ The state emphasized in response to an appeal filed against the planned demolition and evacuation of the village that, "Hiran is planned as general community into which any Israeli of any background or religion may integrate." (Supreme Court) Appeal 3094/11, *Ibrahim Farhoud Abu al-Qi'an, et al. v. The State of Israel*. (2015)

permitted to live in the new town, specifically ***“a Jewish Israeli citizen or permanent resident of Israel who observes the Torah and commandments according to Orthodox Jewish values...”***¹⁷

The lack of adequate housing and relocation sites

Moreover, the people of Umm al-Hiran have not been offered adequate housing or relocation sites, contrary to the Committee’s recommendations and to state’s contentions. Despite promises of housing in Hura, a neighboring government-planned Bedouin town, no such housing is available. The Mayor of Hura has repeatedly stated that “Zone 12” of the Bedouin town, which has been allocated by the state for the displaced people of Umm al-Hiran, is needed to allow for the natural growth of the population already living in the heavily overcrowded township.

The eviction of two families from Umm al-Hiran have conclusively disproved the state’s claims that an alternative housing solution was being provided for the villagers in Hura. One of the families, headed by Ahmad Abu Al-Qi’an, was moved to Hura onto an empty plot of land with no shelter or infrastructure. The other family, of Ya’akub Abu Al-Qi’an (the resident who was killed by police in January 2017), is still living in the village but in tents. The court denied the motion.

Alternatively, the state has proposed that the residents of Umm al-Hiran move into “temporary” housing for ten years in an area located under the municipal jurisdictions of Hura and Meitar. Due to its temporary nature, this project will not involve permanent residential structures, and there is no guarantee that the state will find found a suitable solution. This option was formulated without the participation or consent of Umm al-Hiran residents and would result in their forcible displacement to live for an extended period of time in housing that is not fit for purpose and does not have to comply with the building regulations, violating their rights to adequate housing, dignity and equality.¹⁸

3. The Israeli Government’s five-year plan for the Bedouin as a tool of forced displacement, eviction and demolition

Israel has repeatedly promoted its “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” as a major development plan designed to improve living conditions in Bedouin towns and villages in the Negev-Naqab. Ostensibly a five-year plan worth a total of NIS 3 billion (US \$855 million), it conditions the provision of state funding on the execution of forced displacements and home demotions in the 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages, which are also excluded from the benefits of the plan.¹⁹ The 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.”²⁰ This section was added after several government ministers refused to approve the plan without the addition of measures to ensure the destruction of the unrecognized villages.²¹

The resolution thus effectively conditions economic development on the implementation of policies of forced displacement, allocating part of its budget to this purpose, including 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 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

¹⁷ For the original document, see Adalah, “No non-Jews allowed”, 8 August 2017:

<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9186>

¹⁸ Adalah and Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights submitted an objection to the plan to Israel’s Southern District Planning and Building Committee on 14 November 2017, demanding that the District Committee advance a just housing solution agreed upon by the residents of Umm al-Hiran.

¹⁹ “Government Resolution 2397 – Socio-Economic Development Plan for Negev Bedouin: 2017-2021,” 3 March 2017, p. 2: <http://iataskforce.org/sites/default/files/resource/resource-1500.pdf>

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

²¹ Meirav Arlosoroff, “Gallant and Yariv Levin postponed approval of the government Bedouin plan – NIS 3 billion over five years” *Haaretz*, 15 January 2017 (Hebrew).

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 plan offers no possibility for recognition of the unrecognized villages, as it instructs the Bedouin Development Authority to prioritize evacuating the Bedouin communities living in the unrecognized villages. The plan also instructs the Interior Ministry and law enforcement bodies²² 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,²³ thereby continuing it via other means. Thus, while Israel is promoting this plan in the guise of a “socio-economic development plan”, it is, in fact, aimed at the forced displacement and dispossession of the Bedouin from their land and homes.

The UN CEDAW in its concluding observations on Israel from November 2017 expressed its concern that, “The five-year plan is accompanied by forced urbanization, evictions and displacements and the State party continues to demolish homes and schools in Bedouin communities such that Bedouins are forced to relocate” (CEDAW/C/ISR/CO/6, para. 54).

4. Discriminatory planning policies and practices

The Arab Bedouin community of the Negev-Naqab suffers from the cumulative effects of decades of discriminatory planning policies and practices. There are 144 recognized cities, towns and villages in the Negev-Naqab, of which 126 were established for Jewish citizens of Israel (in addition to around 60 expansive Jewish family farms located throughout the area).²⁴ Although Bedouin citizens living in the Negev-Naqab constitute around 34.5% of the area’s population (as of 2016),²⁵ there are just 18 recognized Bedouin towns and villages, or 12.5% of communities in the area.²⁶ Although the state claims that Jewish communities are designated for the general population, the Negev-Naqab population resides in almost complete segregation, due to a variety of mechanisms that work to ensure this spatial separation. Out of the 126 Jewish settlements, 38 are kibbutzim that use “admission committees” to decide who can become a member.²⁷ Another 77 cooperative and community Jewish settlements also operate admission committees.²⁸ Such admission committees act as a barrier against ethnic and class diversity and integration in many settlements. The effect of these admission committees is to implicitly and explicitly exclude the Bedouin community. These numbers reveal the significant and ongoing planning inequality among the Jewish and Arab communities in the Negev-Naqab, that began with the establishment of Israel. Instead of recognizing 35 unrecognized villages or establishing new settlements for the Bedouin community, subsequent Israeli governments persist in their policy of establishing new Jewish settlements²⁹ while completely disregarding the intense housing distress among the Bedouin community.

²² Including the Police “Yoav Unit” that was established especially to assist the evacuation of Palestinian Bedouins from the unrecognized villages and the demolition of their homes.

²³ Adalah, “Demolition and Eviction of Bedouin Citizens of Israel in the Naqab (Negev) - The Prawer Plan,”: <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7589>

²⁴ CBS, Table 2.16: Settlements and population by district, subdistrict, religion and population group, published on 1 September 2016.

²⁵ CBS, Localities and Population, by District, Sub-District, Religion and Population Group (2.16), published on 1 September 2016.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Data based on analyzing the list of settlements in the Be’er Sheva region as appears in the website of the Israeli CBS, 2016.

²⁸ Cooperative Associations Order, article 6b.

²⁹ In November 2015, the Israeli government approved the establishment of five new settlements in the Negev-Naqab, all of them for the Jewish population.

As noted, at least 28% of the Bedouin community resides in about 35 unrecognized villages. Due to their unrecognized status, the Bedouin residents cannot acquire building permits or obtain plans for housing, forcing them to build illegally and to live under the constant threat of home demolition and forced displacement. This problem continues in the 12 recognized Bedouin villages, too, since many of them still lack detailed outline plans that would allow for their residents to acquire building permits.³⁰ Thus, the residents of these recognized villages remain subject to similar forms of discrimination as those in unrecognized villages. The state authorities consider the building of new houses to accommodate a village's natural population growth, and even minor renovations and repairs carried out to existing houses, to be acts of illegal construction and are therefore subject to demolition. In contrast, the state retroactively legalizes homes built by Israeli Jewish citizens in the Negev-Naqab and continues to allow the construction of homes, even those built without permits or plans.³¹

The recognized village of Al-Fur'a (c. 6,000 residents) is still not fully planned. Twelve years after its recognition, the village still lacks a general outline plan, a fact that prevents any building or development from taking place, and basic infrastructure such as paved roads, water pipes, electricity and communication cables, sewerage, and any public service buildings. The village is also not assigned to any regional council, leaving its residents unable to register for services or to vote in local elections. They are ineligible to apply for building permits for their homes and there are no development plans in process to improve the future outlook of their community.³² While the state has stalled for years in planning the village, however, it has expedited infrastructural plans to build a railway line and phosphate mine, which would result in the confiscation of large swathes of village's land and result in the demolition of dozens of villagers' houses.

The refusal to recognize dozens of villages, coupled with the ongoing denial of basic services and the lack of complete, proper planning in the recognized villages and towns all combine to exert huge pressure of the Bedouin to relocate to the urban localities, which the state planned with a complete lack of regard or respect for the traditional Bedouin way of life. While Jewish citizens in the Negev-Naqab have the options to live in urban, semi-urban and agricultural localities, Bedouin, who are originally semi-nomadic people are being prevented from living in accordance with their traditional way of life on their ancestral land, in contradiction to the Convention and the Committee's 2014 concluding observation (para. 9 (d)).

5. The lack of infrastructure and basic services

All Bedouin localities in the Negev-Naqab suffer from poor infrastructure, lack of public services, and high poverty rates. According to the CBS, all Negev-Naqab Bedouin localities are ranked in the lowest socio-economic cluster, rank 1 of 10.³³ In comparison, no other Jewish locality in the Negev-Naqab ranks below cluster 3. The state's deliberate neglect of the seven government-planned townships has resulted in the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the country, high crime rates, and other socio-economic problems that make them undesirable to the residents of the rural Bedouin villages.³⁴

³⁰ State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel, "Annual Report 66c," pp. 958-959, 24 May 2016.

³¹ The Negev Individual Settlements-Negev Development Authority Law, Amendment No. 4 (2010) allows for the retroactive recognition of dozens of Jewish individual settlements/farms in the Naqab, which were established without permits and contrary to planning laws.

³² Adalah sent a letter on 23 June 2017 to the Southern District Planning and Building Committee, and to the Regional Planning and Building Committee of the Abu Basma Regional Council, demanding that they act to complete the planning procedures for the Al Fur'a. See Adalah's press release at:

<https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9142>

³³ Local authorities in Israel are divided into 10 socio-economic clusters, 1 being the lowest.

³⁴ Negev Coexistence Forum, "Accessibility of public and private services in Arab localities, and institutionalized discrimination against Arab public sector employees in the Negev," 2013: www.dukium.org/eng/wpcontent/uploads/2011/06/racial_discrimination_English_2013.pdf

A recent report of Israel's State Comptroller regarding the situation of the Negev-Naqab Bedouins showed that most recognized villages are not connected to the water system, the sewage disposal system, the electrical power grid or to means of communication. The report also found that almost no recognized village has paved roads, sidewalks or street lighting.³⁵ In addition, there is almost no public transportation: In only three of 12 recognized villages public transportation stops inside the village, while in all others the residents have to walk to the main road in order to catch a bus.³⁶ This is due to fact that in most villages the roads are unpaved or paved to a sub-par standard for public transportation. Compared to Jewish localities similar in size and socio-economic rank, Bedouin localities have unequal access to public transportation.³⁷ The lack of public transportation impairs the ability of children living in the unrecognized villages to access education outside their villages of residence. The state often disingenuously argues that it is difficult to provide services to these rural areas, even though it has consistently supplied Jewish citizens with services and infrastructure throughout the Negev-Naqab. The aim of this policy is to force the Bedouin to abandon their lands.

An area of particular concern is the violation of the right to water, including water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, agriculture and sanitation infrastructure.³⁸ None of the unrecognized Bedouin villages is properly connected to the national water network, and villagers access water in one of the following ways: via a third-party private supplier to whom they pay exorbitant rates to supply water to the village; from a central water point in the village; or from a central water point located in a neighboring village. The water is regularly stored in metal tanks and containers for days, exposed to inclement weather and the accumulation of algae, resulting in unsanitary conditions that pose a real health risk. Further, many of the recognized villages have only one central water connection station in their communities, and so residents are forced to lay pipelines and infrastructure at their own expense in order to bring water to their homes. The limited access to medical facilities in the Bedouin villages compounds this problem. There are few medical clinics in the Bedouin villages, and emergency medical services often refuse to enter them to transport patients to hospital on the claim that they are inaccessible.

These structural conditions, among other factors, are the main contributors to the very high infant mortality rates among the Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab. Overall, the rate of infant mortality among Arab citizens of Israel is 6.4 per 1000 live births, almost three times that among Israeli Jewish citizens, which stands at 2.2, according to state data for the year 2014.³⁹ It is six times higher among the Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab, where it reached 13.6 in 2010, according to Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, a rate that is comparable to that in many third-world countries.⁴⁰

³⁵ State Comptroller and Ombudsman of Israel, "Annual Report 66c," pp. 958-959, 24 May 2016, Table 4.

³⁶ Meyers-JDC-Brookdale, "Program to Promote Economic Growth and Development for the Bedouin Population in the South of Israel – First Report," August 2016: http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/714-16_English_summary_new-1.pdf (English executive summary).

³⁷ Adalya, "Strategic Plan for the Socioeconomic Development of the Negev's Bedouin Population," November 2015. <http://www.adalya.co.il/en/case-studies/Strategic-Plan-Socioeconomic-Development-Negev%E2%80%99s-B>

³⁸ Negev Coexistence Forum, "Damaging the Right to Water of the Residents of the Unrecognized Bedouin Villages", 10 December 2014: http://www.dukium.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/water_position_paper.pdf

³⁹ "In Israel, infant mortality rate 3 times higher among Arabs," *The Times of Israel*, 6 April 2016: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-israel-infant-mortality-rate-3-times-higher-among-arabs/>

⁴⁰ Dan Even, "Israeli Bedouin Women Lack Access to Prenatal Care," *Haaretz*, 24 April 2011: <http://www.haaretz.com/israeli-bedouin-women-lack-access-to-prenatal-care-1.357807>