

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

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Accessinility of public and private services in Arab localities,
and institutionalized discrimination against Arab public
sector employees in the Negev

A contemporary outlook

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Contents

Abstract	2
Introduction	4
Methodology	10
Report findings and analysis	11
Current socio-economic conditions in Negev localities.....	11
Comparing levels of density.....	12
Measuring accessibility to governmental services	13
On-line information and forms.....	17
Accessibility to private and public services	19
Employment	23
The <i>Idan HaNegev</i> industrial zone.....	24
<i>Rayan</i> Employment Centers.....	25
Employing workers in state apparatuses – an annual follow-up	25
Conclusion	27
Recommendations	29

Abstract

In commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality has published this report surveying the access to public, private and governmental services in the Negev's Bedouin townships, as well as employment of Arabs in state apparatuses in the Negev. In light of state claims that relocation to permanent residences will benefit the Bedouin population of the Negev and afford higher levels of service, this year's report compares the services offered in proximal Bedouin and Jewish localities – with grim results. With the exception of the city of Rahat, there are no employment offices in Bedouin localities despite exceptionally high unemployment. Furthermore, beyond Rahat – where only limited services are offered – none of the Bedouin localities feature any service of the Ministry of Interior. National Insurance services are provided on a limited basis in four of the localities, while in two of the townships – Tel al-Saba and Laqieh – no such services are offered. Conversely, even the smallest Jewish locality in the Negev, namely Mitzpe Ramon, hosts a full-service office of the National Insurance Institute. Additionally, none of the Bedouin localities has an office for public housing or rent assistance services. Indeed, despite criteria set by the Ministry of Housing, none of the Negev's Arab locales – except Rahat – is considered eligible for rent assistance. In contrast, all of the surveyed Jewish localities, including even the most well-off settlements not studied in this report (such as Lehavim), appear on the list of eligible localities.

Regarding accessibility of public transportation, improvement is discernable in terms of the number of bus routes and diversity of destinations. Nonetheless, the number of buses available in Arab localities in the Negev is much lower than in their Jewish counterparts. In a number of Bedouin townships, there has been some improvement of Bezeq's landline phone infrastructure. However, a malfunction resulted in the disconnection of service to the entire community of Tel al-Saba for over a year. Similarly, in the Abu Basma regional council, no Bezeq infrastructure exists at all. Likewise, except for one regular and one express branch in Rahat, none of the Bedouin townships is host to any banking services.

Finally, data taken from Israel's Civil Services Commission concerning employment of Arabs in state service apparatuses belie a stark gap between 2011 actualities and targets set for 2012.



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Introduction

This is the fourth report of the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, published in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, that surveys institutionalized discrimination against Bedouins in the Negev. The report's focus is threefold:

1. Bedouin townships' accessibility to governmental and private services and public institutions
2. Contemporary employment prospects among the Arabs in the Negev
3. Number of Arab citizens in the Negev employed in state apparatuses

Arab Bedouin are indigenous to the Negev and have inhabited the region for decades. In 1948, the Bedouin population of the Negev numbered between 60,000 to 90,000; some researchers estimate this number to be even higher. During the 1948 war, most of this population fled or was expelled towards Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula. By the end of the war, only 11,000 Arab Bedouins remained in the Negev. Eviction of the remaining communities began in the immediate aftermath of the war; residents were concentrated by the Israeli military regime within the *Sayag* – an area of some 1,000 to 1,300 square meters in the east of the Negev, which had constituted about 20 percent of the Bedouins' land until 1948.¹ Lands in the *Sayag* area were less fertile than those cultivated by Bedouin communities in the northwestern Negev prior to the war. Yet these were expropriated by the state in order to establish Jewish settlements; no Bedouin remained in the northern or western regions of the Negev beyond the 1950s.

The first Bedouin township, Tel al-Saba, was established in 1966. By the end of the 1990s, the township of Rahat and five additional localities had been erected with the aim of concentrating Bedouin populations within dense urban centers. All of these communities were established without sufficient infrastructure and with almost no employment opportunities for the rural and agrarian populations they contained. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (herein, CBS), the area surrounding

¹ Porat H., 2007. *The Bedouins in the Negev between nomadism and urbanism 1948 – 1973*. The Negev Center for Regional Development, Ben-Gurion University, p. 13. [Hebrew]

the city of Be'er Sheva was populated by 634,000 residents in 2011, of whom 204,700 were Arab Bedouins.² Bedouin communities are now dispersed between the city of Rahat, six additional townships, the Tarabin village, nine recently recognized localities and 35 unrecognized villages. The government of Israel must be held accountable for ensuring adequate representation of Bedouin citizens in governmental offices in the Negev. In addition to a civil and moral obligation, it is a necessary means to integrate and strengthen this highly disenfranchised community. The government is likewise obligated to ensure commensurate provision of governmental, private and public services.

Amidst the approval of the governmental plan, *the Begin Outline*,³ we chose this year to supplement our previous reports by surveying the accessibility and breadth of services provided to the Bedouin populations in the townships of Shqueb al-Salam, Qseifeh, Hura, Laqieh, Tel al-Saba, Ar'ara al-Naqab and Rahat, as well as the localities of the Abu Basma regional council, which we have surveyed in the past. As with past reports, the following analysis also explores employment of Arabs citizens in the governmental offices of the Southern district.

The government's central claim regarding the concentration of Bedouins into contrived townships is that the relocation of these citizens would facilitate modernization and provision of services for improved standards of living. This report tests the validity of such arguments through a comparative survey of the accessibility of governmental services (i.e. employment offices, national insurance branches, etc.), private-business services, and public other institutions (financial, postal and media services).

In mid-1960s, the state began implementing a policy of Bedouin urbanization, planning seven "semi-urban" townships to house the entire Bedouin population. According to Avino'am Meir,⁴ this process led to the radical transformation of all aspects of life for the

² Israeli CBS, *The Statistical Abstract of Israel 2012*, published March 7, 2013. Data is taken from table 2.10, see online: http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton63/st02_10x.pdf.

³ Begin, B. (2013). Regulating the Bedouin settlement in the Negev: summation of the bill's public hearing from 23.1.13, see online:

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/MediaCenter/SecretaryAnnouncements/Documents/bedu270113.pdf>

⁴ Meir, Avinoam. 1987." Nomads, Development and Health: Delivering Public Health Services to the Bedouin in Israel". *Geografiska Annaler, Series B. Human Geography*, Vol. 69, No. 2.

Negev's Bedouin community. The process was prompted by a number of factors. Oren Yiftachel, for example, argues that the urbanization program stemmed from Israel's aspirations to 'Judaize' the Negev and consolidate the Bedouin population within a smaller territory.⁵ Others consider the urbanization policy an indivisible part of the state's attempt to enforce 'modernization' of Arab Bedouins.

Urbanization enables the state to concentrate a large number of Bedouins within delimited urban centers. The plan's protagonists argue it will enable Israel to better provide for the Bedouin's needs through improved infrastructure and public services. However, such claims fail to hold water when examined against the realities of life within these contrived localities. Ismail Abu-Saad posits that Bedouin townships were not provided with sufficient resources for sustainable development, rendering them dependent upon the Israeli economy and perpetuating their socio-economic marginalization.⁶ A report issued by the Goldberg Committee, headed by former Supreme Court Justice Eliezer Goldberg, describes living conditions within the townships. "The recognized towns were left in a state of hardship and neglect. The unemployment rate in these localities is substantially higher than the national average; the Bedouin towns were established with minimal development potential; no sewage infrastructure was installed, roads were paved at half-width, drainage is above-ground; no public or open spaces were developed and the number of public institutions therein is very low. Since their establishment, these towns have seen no significant improvement in the levels of development or infrastructure."⁷

The reality of the townships as depicted in the Goldberg report attests to the fact that the rhetorical ideals of development, modernization and service provision ostensibly at the heart of the urbanization policy are secondary to Israel's aspiration to control the Bedouin

⁵ Yiftachel, O. (2003) 'Bedouin-Arabs and the Israeli Settler State', in Champagne, D. and I. abu-Saad (eds), *Indigenous People between Autonomy and Globalization*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

⁶ Abu-Saad, I. (2008) 'Spatial Transformation and Indigenous Resistance: The Urbanization of the Palestinian Bedouin in Southern Israel' in *American Behavioral Scientist* 51(12)

⁷ The Goldberg Report for the regulation of the Bedouin settlement in the Negev, January 2009, page -24. See on-line, Israeli Ministry of Housing: http://www.moch.gov.il/odot/rashut_beduin/Pages/goldberg.aspx.

population in the Negev in order to reserve as much land as possible for future Jewish settlement.

A governmental decision from 2007 designated 2012 as the target year for actualizing appropriate representation of Arabs in the public sector.⁸ According to the resolution, entitled, “Appropriate representation for Arab, Druze and Adyghe people in public services,” by the end of 2012, members of these groups were to constitute 10% of state service employees.⁹ It is noteworthy that the initial target year of 2010 was pushed back for lack of practical implementation.

In 2008, a parliamentary committee headed by Member of Knesset Ahmed Tibi was established to address the integration of Arab workers within the public sector. On January 25, 2009 the Israeli government allocated 800 additional positions in order to implement the government decision from 2007.¹⁰ Despite this decision and the designation of new positions, the 2011 annual report of the Israeli Civil Services Commission shows an increase of only 0.26% in the number of Arab, Druze and Adyghe employees in the public service in relation to 2010. Namely, while there was a minor increase in the number of Arab employees, their overall rate in the public service was a mere 7.78% in 2011.¹¹ There is no doubt, therefore, that the government cannot actualize its own goal of 10% representation this year, unless it undertakes an exceptional and immediate recruitment effort.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor (currently the Ministry of Economy) states that wrongful discrimination in the domain of labor constitutes, “Differential treatment of a person on grounds of: gender, sexual orientation, personal status, age, pregnancy, fertility treatment, parenthood, IVF treatment, race, religion, nationality, country of origin, worldview, party affiliation or

⁸ Government decision number 2579 from 11.11.2007. See on-line:

<http://www.pm.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2009/01/des4436.htm>.

⁹ See supra note 8, on-line: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2007/11/des2579.htm>.

¹⁰ *Ha'aretz*, 26.1.2009. *The Government will designate 800 positions in the public service for Arabs*. See on line: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/objects/pages/PrintArticle.jhtml?itemNo=1058722>.

¹¹ The Israeli Civil Services Commission, senior department for planning and supervision (2012). Annual 2011 report, *Appropriate representation of the Arab population, including Druze and Adyghe people in the public service*.

reserve service.”¹² In order to prevent such discrimination, the issue of minority employment was examined against the principle of appropriate representation.

“Appropriate representation” entails ensuring minority participation in the public sphere using methods of “representative bureaucracy,” namely, ensuring the absorption of minorities into the public service proportional to their relative representation in the overall population. The government – as the largest employer in the Israeli economy – is expected to lead by example by endorsing the principle of “appropriate representation” for minorities and encouraging the private sector to incorporate and implement this principle.¹³

Inconsistent with such principles, contemporary state institutions are entrenched with structural racism. Entailing the privileged granting social rights to particular groups, structural racism is especially pronounced in systems that endorse policies, institutional customs, cultural representation and other norms that perpetuate racial inequality. In such a reality, laws and institutions are not required to be overtly racist in order to exclude certain social groups; rather, it may be sufficient merely to perpetuate historically disparate circumstances.¹⁴ This condition manifests in the underrepresentation of Israel’s Arab population in general and the Negev’s Bedouin communities in particular, especially with regards to their employment in state institutions.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD, 1966) defines racial discrimination as, “[...] Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”¹⁵ Israel has been a signatory to the

¹² See on line: <http://www.moital.gov.il/NR/exeres/468BEBFD-1E8B-4BDD-A8A3-5EC614FB15BD.htm>

¹³ Policy paper, *Promoting equitable representation of the Arab minority in the public sector*, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, see: <http://public-policy.huji.ac.il/upload/k.pdf>.

¹⁴ Wiley, Maya. *Structural Racism and Multi-Racial Coalition Building*. Institute of Race and Poverty. November 2003.

¹⁵ See on-line: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>.

Convention since 1966, which was subsequently ratified by the Israeli Knesset in 1979. Yet discrimination against Arab citizens in the Negev prevails, manifesting not only in unequal employment in the public sector, but also in restricted access to governmental, business, health and other public services.

The following report compares a range of governmental, business and various public services offered in the Bedouin townships and Jewish settlements in the Negev. Furthermore, the report examines the ratio of Arabs employed in the public sector in the Negev in relation to their overall percentage of the region's population.

Methodology

Data collection for the report relied on a number of methods:

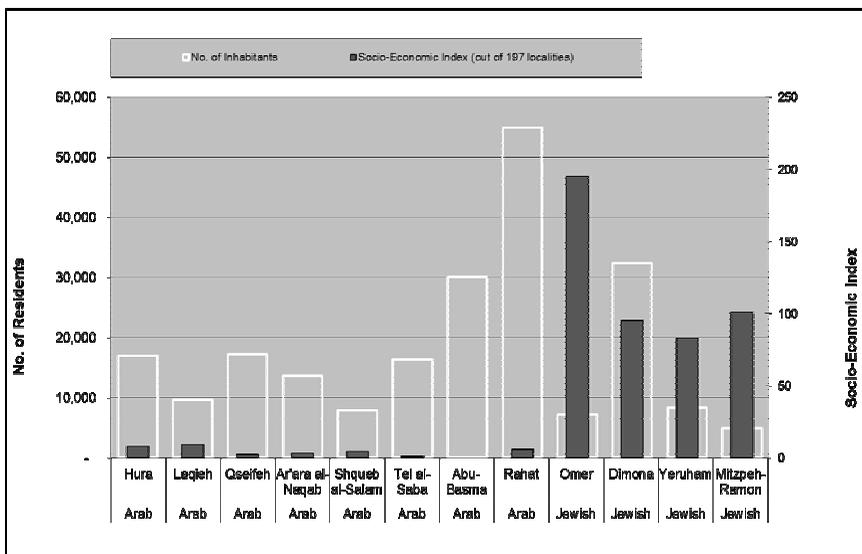
Statistics and other information about public, private and governmental services were gathered from governmental websites and other online resources. The data was then compared to information collected through interviews with residents and public employees in the targeted locales. Specifically, interviewees indicated the level of communal satisfaction with available services. Finally, Mr. Moshe Powel, Director of the planned industrial zone, *Idan Ha'Negev*, was interviewed by telephone.

Data concerning employment of Arabs by the state was collated from a report authored by the Israeli Civil Services Commission.

Report Findings and Analysis

Current socio-economic conditions in Negev localities

Graph 1: Designation, population and socio-economic indicators of sampled localities¹⁶

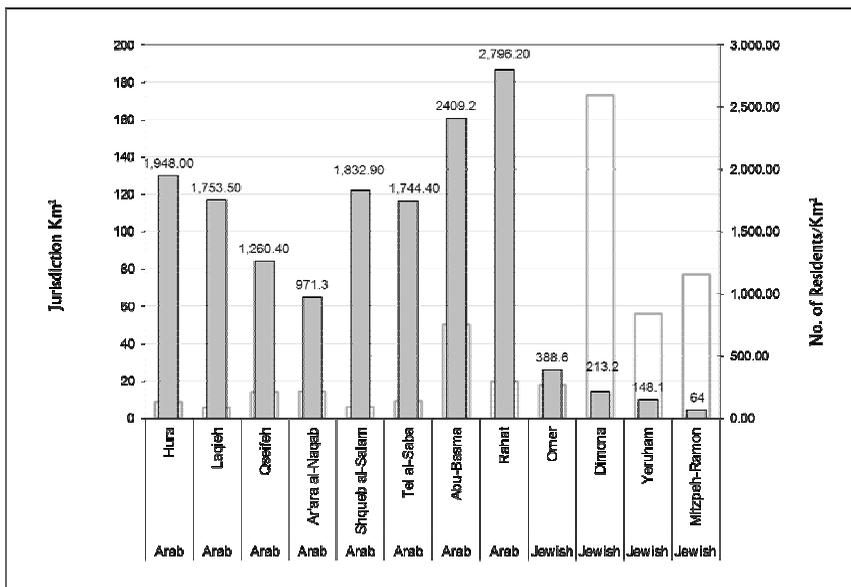


The graph presents the number of residents and socio-economic status of each locality according to cluster. Interestingly, all of the Arab localities are within Cluster 1, demonstrating the lowest socio-economic indicators. Tel Shave is located at the lowest point on the scale, whereas the adjacent Jewish settlement of Omer is located in Cluster 10 and rated third overall on the national socio-economic scale. Indeed, of nine localities located in Cluster 1, seven are Bedouin.

¹⁶ Israeli CBS, Annual Statistics 2007, on-line:
<http://www.pmo.gov.il/about/Projects/Documents/moatsotmekomi231209.pdf>.

Comparing levels of density

Graph 2: Relative population density by square kilometer¹⁷



Graph 2 exhibits the proportion between locale area by jurisdiction and number of residents. The graph shows a significant difference between the relative population density in Arab and Jewish localities. Rahat, with a relative density of 2,796.2 people per square kilometer, is home to over 25 percent of the Negev's Bedouin population and the most crowded local authority among the sampled localities. Conversely, all of the Jewish settlements exhibit relatively low population density. Indeed, Rahat's jurisdiction is equal to that of Omer, yet Rahat has eight times the population. Ostensibly, a larger jurisdiction should indicate broader revenue potential, namely, through sites that contribute to local council tax base (i.e. via industrial zones). In the Bedouin localities, larger jurisdiction is accompanied by high population density and dire housing conditions. Consequently, two

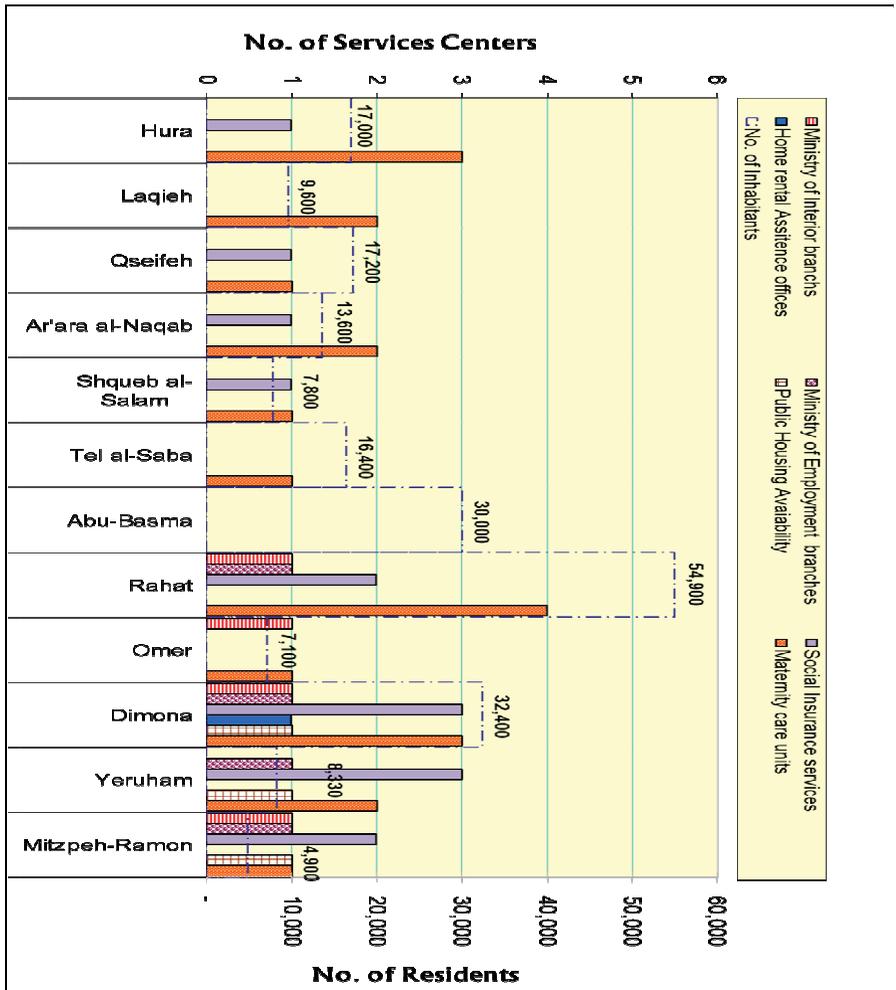
¹⁷ Israeli CBS, Annual Statistics 2012, on-line: http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton63/st02_15.pdf

committees were recently formed to discuss expansion of the jurisdictions of Rahat and Laqieh.¹⁸ These committees, having received the full consent and cooperation of the nearby communities, allocated an additional 6,938 and 1,370 dunam to Rahat and Laqieh, respectively, for purposes of construction and development. These expansions are not reflected within the present data set.

¹⁸ See: Altering Rahat's Borders – Bnei Shimon regional council, [Request to form a borders' committee](http://mavat.moin.gov.il/MavatPS/Forms/SV4.aspx?tid=4&pid=99000264993) (from 11.3.13), on-line: <http://mavat.moin.gov.il/MavatPS/Forms/SV4.aspx?tid=4&pid=99000264993>. See also: Altering Lakiyya's Borders, [An investigation committee for the joint border of Bnei Shimon regional council and Lakiyya local council – meeting number 2](http://mavat.moin.gov.il/MavatPS/Forms/SV9.1.aspx?tid=95&esid=1) (from 20.1.13), on-line: <http://mavat.moin.gov.il/MavatPS/Forms/SV9.1.aspx?tid=95&esid=1>.

Measuring accessibility to governmental services

Graph 3: Governmental services in the Negev local authorities¹⁹



¹⁹ Data presented herein was gathered from the following websites:
 The Israeli National Insurance - <http://www.btl.gov.il/snifim/Pages/default.aspx>
 The Ministry of Interior - <http://www.moin.gov.il/Pages/default.aspx>
 The Ministry of Construction and Housing - <http://www.moch.gov.il/Pages/HomePage.aspx>
 The Israeli Employment Bureau - <http://www.taasuka.gov.il/Taasuka/About/EmploymentBureaus.htm>
 All websites were accessed last on March 19, 2013.

Graph 3 presents the governmental services available in a number of localities throughout the Negev. The graph depicts accessibility of services such as employment assistance, offices of the Ministry of the Interior and branches for rent aid. Existing services are marked (1) and unavailable services are marked as (0). With regards to the National Insurance Institute, we also examined the scope of service provision, namely, the branch office hours. The data is presented as follows: the value (1) represents up to nine weekly office hours; value (2) represents between 10-15 weekly office hours; and value (3) represents 15-20 weekly office hours. To complete the picture, we also present information about the size of the population in each locality. Rahat, the largest township in the study, is the only Bedouin locality wherein all of the surveyed services are offered.

The graph illustrates a dire lack of public services in all Bedouin townships. For instance, none of these localities hosts an Employment Bureau office. Conversely, all Jewish locals, even the smallest – Mitzpe Ramon, whose population numbers a mere 4,900 residents – feature such services. This discrepancy is all the more striking considering the fact that unemployment rates in Bedouin localities, reaching 28%, are among the highest in the country. As a result of the lack of placement services in their townships, residents are compelled to commute to the nearby Jewish towns of Arad, Be'er Sheva and Dimona in order to register for unemployment benefits and receive allocations from the National Insurance Institute.

As part of a governmental scheme to address the needs of the Bedouin population in the Negev, a decision was signed in November 2006 to open additional non-governmental placement offices. The *Rayan Centers*, as they are known, offer professional consultation and guidance, following which registered residents may enroll in professional training courses and be absorbed within the labor market. Upon closer examination of the *Rayan Centers*, however, we discovered that in three of the townships – Hura, Shqueb al-Salam and Rahat – no branch offices exist. Furthermore, these centers do not fulfill a governmental role in terms of registration for unemployment or claiming of social benefits.

Regarding availability of National Insurance services, the picture is slightly more complex. Apart from Lakiyya and Tel al-Saba, all of the surveyed localities have some level of service. Yet there are significant differences between branches in terms of weekly office hours. In the Jewish towns Yeruham and Dimona, for example, National Insurance Institute branches are open 15.5 and 17.5 hours per week, respectively. The Rahat office is open to the public 20 hours per week and the Mitzpe Ramon branch 10 hours per week. Nonetheless, as number of residents in each locality varies dramatically, so too must the quality of service. In the Yeruham office, for example, office hours per resident are 1:538, while in Rahat, the proportion is 1:4575. The lack of sufficient office hours in the Arab localities translates into immense pressure on the clerks, leaving many residents to seek assistance in less crowded branches in other towns.

In the Bedouin townships Hura, Shqueb al-Salam, Ar'ara al-Naqab and Qseifeh, National Insurance services are provided via mobile units known as, '*Snifit*.' These units, operating twice weekly in each locality for a total of four hours per visit, offer only limited services, including receipt and authorization of forms, pending claim inquiries, payments, filing new claims, and submitting documentation. Those who require other services are required to contact permanent branches.

Yet another expression of the inequality in service provision in the Negev pertains to eligibility for public housing. While all of the Bedouin townships are located in Cluster 1 on the socio-economic scale of the Israeli CBS, none of these localities is provided with public housing. Conversely, all of the nearby Jewish localities offer public housing benefits and unlike the Bedouin townships, all are host to a Ministry of Construction and Housing branch for 'rent assistance.' In fact, Rahat is the only Bedouin locale considered eligible for rent aid as eligibility conditions set by the Ministry of Construction and Housing include existence of a real estate market wherein over 5% of apartments are offered for rent and the total population is higher than 1000 residents. While one can assume that many individual residents may otherwise meet the criteria for rent assistance, only Rahat fulfils this first eligibility condition, rendering entire populations ineligible for rent assistance. The government thus violates the right of residents who are otherwise

eligible for aid to choose their places of living according to culture, occupation and family ties.²⁰

Online information and forms

One of the most conspicuous expressions of inequality, evident in this and past reports, is the inaccessibility of official forms in Arabic. Despite Arabic's legal status as an official language of the State of Israel, many forms used by governmental offices are not translated to Arabic. Consequently, Arab citizens who are not fluent in Hebrew are often denied access to public services.

For the purpose of this study, we surveyed official governmental websites for Arabic versions of official forms. We also compared the levels of information available on the Hebrew and Arabic versions of these websites.

Online governmental forms offer quick and contained solutions, save users the time and hardship of office visits. Availability of Arabic-language documentation may be considered a barometer of the government's willingness to attend to the needs of the Arab public on an equitable basis.

Findings varied between agencies. The website of the National Insurance Institute offers the same information in Hebrew and Arabic and the vast majority of its forms are available in Arabic, while the Ministry of Interior offers no Arabic-language versions online. Furthermore, there is a general paucity of information on its Arabic-language website and all menus and forms are solely in Hebrew.

The Israeli Employment Service provides no Arabic forms on its website. Though links to documents are in Arabic, the forms themselves are in Hebrew. The website hosts a range of useful information in Arabic, but most of site's interactive functionality is offered in Hebrew only.

²⁰ Gan-Mor, G. (2008). "Israel's violation of the right to housing through the real estate market." The Association for Civil Right in Israel (ACRI), on-line: <http://www.acri.org.il/he/?p=1916>.

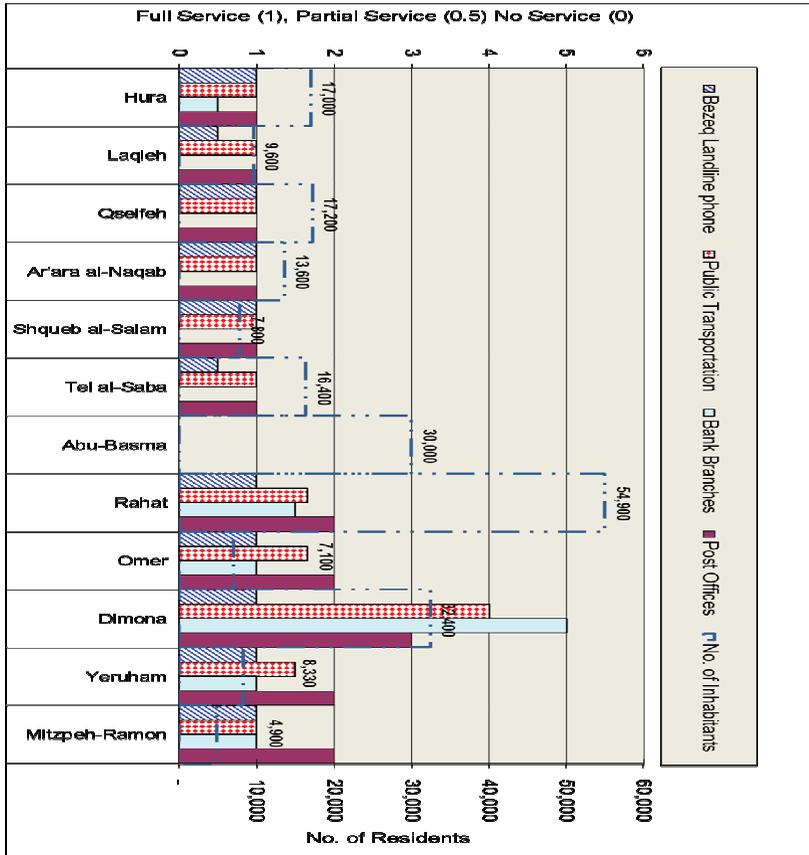
Likewise, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Health provide no Arabic forms and the Arabic versions of both websites are superficial, offering general information only.

Finally, the Ministry of Construction and Housing does not offer Arabic-language forms. While the drop-down menus are in Arabic, links lead only to Hebrew-language documents. Nonetheless, the Arabic website is nearly identical to its Hebrew counterpart and provides a great deal of information for Arabic speakers.

Accessibility of private and public services

Graph 4 presents the public and private services available in the surveyed localities alongside population. We examined postal, banking, public transportation and Bezeq (Israel's principal landline phone provider) services.

Graph 4: Accessibility to private and public services in various Negev localities²¹



²¹ Data was taken from the following:

Israel Postal Services website: <http://www.israelpost.co.il/modiim.nsf/searchunits>

Public transportation information website:

<http://www.bus.co.il/otobusim/Front2007/homepage.asp?Design=2007>.

Both websites were last accessed on 19.3.13.

Postal Services

Postal service providers are separated into two categories according to available services; (1) postal agency and (2) postal office. The scope of services available in a postal agency is more limited than in a postal office. Other than Rahat, all of the Bedouin townships host a postal agency only. The regional council of Abu Basma has neither an agency nor office postal branch. In contrast, every one of the Jewish localities has a full service postal office and in the Jewish city of Dimona, there is also a postal agency in addition to the office. Consequently, many Bedouin residents are compelled to rent mailboxes in nearby Jewish communities.

Despite Rahat's size, it has only one active postal office with a maximum of three service windows operating at any given time. Limited service provision makes it harder for residents to receive efficient postal services and many complain about the extreme work load of the branch. Demonstratively, towards the end of office hours, the last to arrive often leave without having been attended to by a clerk. As a result, Arab residents often opt for postal services in neighboring Jewish settlements such as Lehavim, Be'er Sheva and Ofakim.

The lack of postal services constitutes a major problem in the city of Rahat. This past year, a letter was sent by the local NGO *Kifa* to the (former) Minister of Communication regarding this deficiency. The letter, sent on June 7, 2012, explicates the consequential harm being done to Rahat's local economy. Waiting times for service provision, the letter asserts, are often in excess of an hour and due to the size of the office, patrons are often forced to wait outdoors in harsh weather conditions. The location of the branch is problematic as well, with some neighborhoods over three kilometers away. The local branch, *Kifa* argues, fails to meet the minimum conditions set by the Ministry itself concerning waiting times and maximal distance from patrons' homes. Though a postal agency planned to open this year in Rahat may attenuate some of these difficulties, the proportion of local residents to office hours will nonetheless persist as the highest in the region.

Banking Services

The distribution of banking services is yet another example of inequality between Jewish and Arab localities in the Negev. The graph enumerates two types of bank branches: (1) regular and (2) express branches. Excluding Rahat, none of the Bedouin townships has a regular bank branch. The township of Hura hosts an unstaffed express branch of Bank Hapoalim that offers deposit and withdrawal services via two automated teller machines. In the rest of the townships, banking services are offered only through agencies of the Israeli postal service. Conversely, all of the examined Jewish towns have at least one regular bank branch. In fact, even in the smallest settlements – Mitzpe Ramon and Omer – banks provide the full spectrum of services, including cashier services and personal banking.

Bezeq landline phone services

In our previous report, we discussed the persistent malfunction of landline phone infrastructure operated by Bezeq Company in Tel al-Saba. Residents report that the problem has still not been fixed. Rather, Bezeq offers connectivity through individual household antennae. Likewise in Rahat, entire neighborhoods report having been disconnected from the central grid. Time and again, conversations with residents reveal that many service providers, including Bezeq, refrain from entering Bedouin townships without the accompaniment of security forces. Consequently, customers in these areas are forced to wait for extended periods to have malfunctions repaired and cannot access the timely services offered to their Jewish neighbors. In contrast, all Jewish settlements have fully functioning Bezeq infrastructure.

Public Transportation

Efficient public transportation suited to the particular needs of the local population is an essential element of employment and economic growth. Public transportation therefore plays a key role in economically disenfranchised locales.

In our examination of public transportation, we counted the number of buses departing from adjacent localities to Be'er Sheva – the Negev's main economic hub – between the hours of 7:00-9:00am, when the majority of employees commute to work. The data is

presented on the graph as follows: within the two-hour span, value (1) represents four departures; value (2) represents eight departures and so forth, with value (4) the highest on the graph. We examined only the bus lines that actually enter the townships. Inter-city buses that collect passengers at external junctions were excluded, as to reach these stops one must complete an additional trip – via either private or public transportation – rendering this option prohibitive for most residents.

The survey illustrates a high positive correlation between population and number of public buses departing each morning. As the largest township, Rahat offers the most departures, with seven buses departing between the hours of 7:00am-9:00am daily. Four buses depart from each of the other townships, namely one every 30 minutes during peak hours.

A comparison of Jewish and Arab localities reveals a gap concerning local population and number of bus departures. To wit, in the examined hours, 15 buses leave the Jewish city of Dimona, while from the larger Rahat, there are less than half that number. A similar situation exists between the Jewish community of Omer and the nearby township of Tel Shave, which has nearly twice the population.

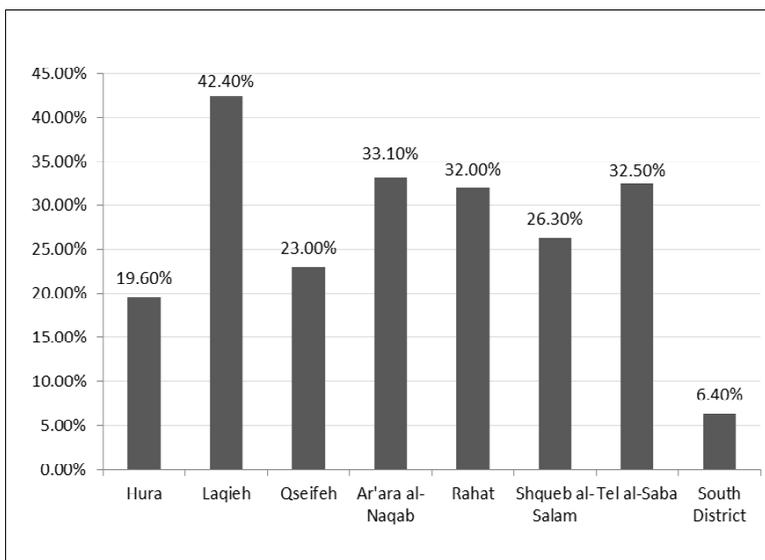
The scarcity of public transportation exerts additional pressure on existing rush hour bus lines. As a result, private taxi companies have stepped in to supplement insufficient public services.

Notably, past reports demonstrate significant improvements in public transportation services offered to Bedouin townships, including greater bus frequency, additional lines and expanded destinations. Nonetheless, these services still fail to meet the needs of the local Bedouin population.

Internal public transportation exists only in Rahat and is managed by the ‘Galim’ company. Note: due to its split layout, no data was gathered regarding public transportation within the Abu Basma regional council.

Employment

Graph 5: Unemployment in the Negev Bedouin townships, January 2013²²



The Bedouin society in the Negev suffers grave unemployment. The townships – all located on the lowest tier of Israel’s socio-economic scale (Cluster 1) – exhibit some of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Furthermore, Bedouins are often employed in unskilled, low-wage jobs, with little benefit to the broader socio-economic security of their localities. The labor market within the Bedouin society is comprised primarily of non-professional industrial work at the minimum wage. Demonstratively, the industrial zones in Qseifeh, Shqueb al-Salam and Hura mainly host small and independent businesses that do not necessitate professional training, including a poultry abattoir and metal collection sites.

²² Data was gathered from the Israeli CBS Annual Statistics 2012: http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton63/st12_24.pdf and The Employment Bureau, unemployment data, by locality, January 2013: <http://www.taasuka.gov.il/Taasuka/Employment+Statics/2013/january2013.htm>

Idan Ha'Negev Industrial Zone

Idan Ha'Negev is a cooperative initiative of the Bnei Shimon regional council, Rahat Municipality and Lehavim local council to establish an industrial zone near the Lehavim junction. The plan aims to relieve unemployment in the Negev and encourage the relocation of businesses to the region.

In 2006, following an agreement between all of the local authorities four years earlier, authorities approved a master plan for construction. The industrial zone is to be established on 4,500 dunam, circumventing Road 310 from both north and south. According to the plans, the industrial zone will be the largest in Israel and feature primarily low-tech and labor-intensive enterprises, including factories for Kal Gal, Soda Stream, food processing, and the Betzalel Printing House. In addition, the zone will host a multi-cultural, Arabic-Hebrew college and a hospital. In order to address dire unemployment in the region, businesses must meet certain preconditions to gain placement in the industrial zone and benefit from lower associated taxation, including a minimum employment ratio of six laborers per dunam. According to Moshe Powel, the current director of the initiative and former head of the Bnei Shimon regional council, the industrial zone will be fully occupied by 2026. As part of this process, machinists and other assembly-line workers will receive professional training in a joint effort with the Employment Bureau.

Though the plan is predominantly budgeted through a governmental scheme to encourage Bedouin employment, between 2006 and 2012 significant delays were imposed due to the withholding of finances by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Tax income is slated to be shared by Rahat (which will receive 44% of tax revenues), the Bnei Shimon regional council (39%) and Lehavim (17%). Indeed, while the initiative was ostensibly designed to increase Bedouin employment, two well-off Jewish localities stand to profit as well. Planned distribution of tax income represents an injustice to the disenfranchised Bedouin localities. Furthermore, the decision to court low-tech industry will likely preserve low income levels and other economic hardships within the townships.

The *Rayan* Employment Centers

The *Rayan* centers for professional training and placement comprise another governmental method to promote employment among Bedouin communities. Currently, these centers exist in three of the townships: Hura, Shqueb al-Salam and Rahat. The centers, which aid the local population to find employment, operate under the patronage of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). The centers offer guidance in all phases of employment, from consultation and employee/employer compatibility analysis to professional training courses and work placement. Advantages of the *Rayan* Centers include operation within local authority community centers and local management.²³ In a conversation with an employee of one of the centers, we learned that in addition to offering technical services, *Rayan* also provides professional consultation usually based on intimate familiarity with job seekers. In other words, the *Rayan* Centers operate as non-for-profit manpower companies and have contributed significantly to communal development. It is noteworthy, however, that the need for such centers stems from a complete absence of the governmental Employment Bureau in the Bedouin townships.. Presence of the *Rayan* Centers are yet another example of the systemic state neglect of Bedouin communities and transfer of responsibility to non-governmental organizations.

Employment in state services – an annual follow-up

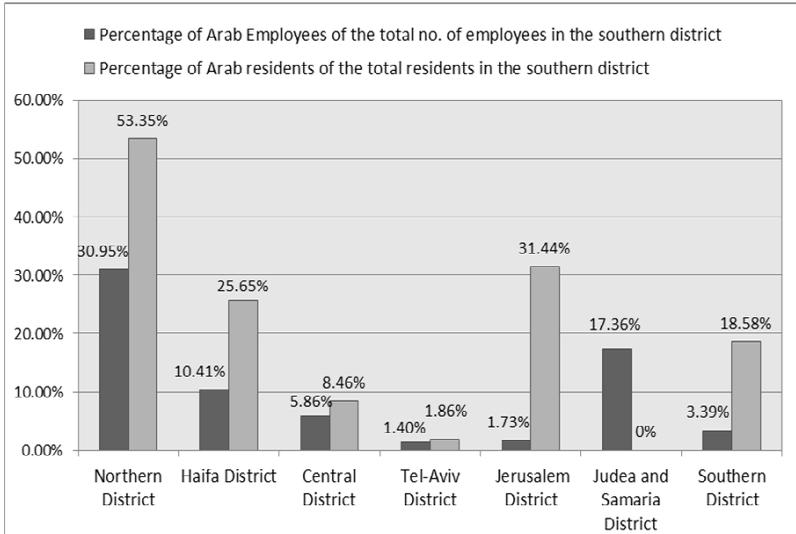
To promote equal representation of Arabic speakers in state services, Resolution 2579 (2007) set a governmental target of 10% Arab, Druze and Adyghe public-sector employees by the year 2012. The Planning and Evaluation Department conducts annual follow-up on the progress of this decision and in the past few years, the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality has promoted Arab integration within state institutions in the Negev.

The latest report of the Planning and Evaluation Department (2011 data) reveals sluggish absorption of Arab employees; while Arabs constitute 18.58% of the southern district's overall population, a meager 4% of state employees in the district, 185 workers in total, are Arab. Underrepresentation of the Negev's Arab population in the public service is

²³ *Rayan* website: <http://www.rayan.org.il/?CategoryID=401&ArticleID=139>. Accessed last on 19.3.13.

representative of broader national trends (see graph 6 below). In 2011, a slight increase (0.3%) was recorded over 2010 figures.²⁴ This increase is particularly low considering national absorption rates of Arab employees, who constitute 7.78% of state employees overall. Both figures – regional and national – attest to the unfeasibility of the target of 10% representation by 2012.

Graph 6: Arab employment in state services by percentage of the overall population



²⁴ Israel's Civil Service Commission (2012), Fair representation of Arabs, including Druze and Adyghe people in state services, Annual report 2011.

Conclusion

This report exposes stagnation in each of the examined fields; access to governmental services in the Bedouin townships has not improved in recent years. The same is true for Arab unemployment, which continues to be higher than both the regional and national averages. Finally, there is no significant improvement concerning the integration of Arab employees within the public sector.

Yet we are compelled to dispel the notion that the gaps between Jewish and Arab communities in the Negev are being preserved at consistent levels – the data presented in this report attests to a broadening disparity between these societies due to differential population growth. The Arab population is expanding significantly faster than its Jewish counterpart, without improvements to the provision of services in contrived Bedouin townships.

Such conspicuous inequality is the culmination of years of neglect. Like other communities, the Bedouin of the Negev are daily in need of state services. Economic data clearly illustrates that the dire situation of the Bedouin population is indeed an outcome of governmental disregard, manifesting among other policies in the government's decision not to open employment centers in Bedouin towns, despite exceptional rates of unemployment. This policy sustains Arab Bedouins as the most disenfranchised community among Israel's citizens.

In addition, unequal distribution of public and private services damages the economies of the Bedouin townships, contributing in turn to their persisting socio-economic marginalization. That Rahat is the only one of seven townships with a fully operational bank branch testifies to a stark gap between the Arab and Jewish communities.

Finally, our findings concerning the integration of Arab employees within state services demonstrate the government's failure to meet its own goals. Since first addressed policy, changes in the absorption of Arab employees have been minor, with a paltry increase that has failed to resolve their stark underrepresentation.

Indeed, the data resounds against state's plans to continue concentrating residents of the unrecognized Bedouin villages into townships. The lack of services, poor infrastructure and high unemployment demonstrate that as proposed by the Begin-Paver Plan, these localities are an untenable and unsustainable response to the disenfranchisement of the Negev Bedouin. With on-going neglect of the authorities, these contrived localities fail today to meet the basic needs of their residents; population growth will only aggravate the situation further.

The condition of the Bedouin townships and recognized villages is worrisome and testifies to the existence of a deeply rooted, institutionalized, ethnic-based discrimination against the Bedouin community of the Negev. This discrimination manifests, inter alia, in the unequal allocation of public resources between Jewish and Arab localities, preservation of the socio-economic vulnerability of the region's Bedouin population, and prevention of their earnest social incorporation.

Recommendations

- Rather than bolster its exclusion, action must be taken to promote inclusion of the Negev's Bedouin population. Such steps may include affirmative action.
- Governmental service in Bedouin towns – i.e. employment offices, national insurance branches, etc. – must be enhanced immediately in order to make services accessible to Bedouin residents on par with Jewish localities.
- Private companies should be incentivized to develop commercial services in Bedouin localities, such as banking and other needed services.
- The scope of business activity and development of industrial zones inside the Bedouin townships must be broadened in order to improve residents' access to services and create employment opportunities for Bedouin communities.
- Governmental, public, business and health services must be significantly enhanced in the villages of the Abu-Basma regional council. Furthermore, infrastructure within the villages must be further developed, alongside the introduction of industrial areas and new working places within the council's jurisdiction.
- All stakeholders must collaborate to ensure adequate representation of the Bedouin population in the public services of the southern district by increasing the number of Arab employees and promoting their inclusion within key positions.
- Gaps in governmental and commercial services offered to Arab and Jewish localities must be narrowed through the enhancement of services in the Bedouin townships.



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