



The Negev Coexistence Forum Newsletter

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A word from the editor

This is the 20th Newsletter of the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality. As in previous issues, this newsletter presents a summary of events that have occurred in the Negev in recent months. We hope that this newsletter, as previous issues, will help you keep informed of events taking place in the Negev.

In the last months many house demolition orders were issued and many houses were demolished in the Negev. The Praver-Begin Plan continues to advance and the part concerning the monetary and land compensation passed first reading in the Knesset. Presently the proposed law is being prepared by the Knesset Committee of Internal Affairs and the Environment headed by MK Miri Regev, for the second and third readings. NCF regards the proposed law as a racist, anti-democratic and short sighted act that will prove irreparably disastrous and calls on the Government to withdraw it. NCF calls on the Government to recognize the unrecognized villages, to acknowledge the land rights of their residents and to reach an agreed solution with the Bedouin citizens of the Negev.

Visit our website, Facebook, and Twitter to keep informed of current events and activities organized by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality. We wish to thank the many volunteers who support the NCF's activities and those who have shared their thoughts and efforts to help prepare and distribute this newsletter.

The Government's Plan for the Dispossession of the Bedouin Population from its lands, the Demolition of its Historic Villages and its forced resettlement in Townships _____ Haia Noach

The Government plan, known as the Praver Begin Plan, (hereafter the Plan) is a plan for the dispossession of the Bedouin population from its lands, the demolition of its historical villages and the forced resettlement of its population in Government sponsored townships. Allegedly this plan is designed to implement the recommendations of Judge Eliezer Goldberg's committee of 2008, recommendations that were unsatisfying for the Bedouin community. In fact the Praver-Begin Plan turns the clock back and its implementation will bring about the demolition of most of the unrecognized villages and the transfer of tens of thousands of their residents to urban centers and townships that even now are considered among the most impoverished and underdeveloped places in Israel.

Ehud Praver, who headed the committee that developed the Plan, was the Deputy Chief of the Council for National Security and head of the Department for Policy in the Office of the Prime Minister. Mr. Praver presented the

plan for the first time at the Herzliya Conference in 2006, claiming that the rationale for the "solution to the Bedouin problem" was inspired by the plan for the disengagement from Gaza.



The area for land exchange according to the Law for Regulating the Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev

The Plan, which was approved by the Government in September 2011, and passed its first reading as a proposed law in June 2013 has three components: land exchange and regulation (proposed law), planning and development.

The proposed Law specifies the compensations, arrangements and allotment of land from Tlalim Junction

in the south to Lehavim Junction east of route 40, and from Eshel-Hanasi Junction to Kama Junction east of route 264 and north of Route 310. Compensation may be given in the area of the original

land owned, although the State is not bound to this arrangement. In any case, compensation will be no greater than 50% of the original plot that people used for agriculture or residence at the time they submitted the land claims. The assumption is that the compensation in land will amount to maximum 100,000 dunams (approx. 24,700 acres) compared to the total land claimed by the Bedouin: 600,000 dunams (approx. 148,263 acres).

The planning section is based on the partial master plan for the Be'er-Sheva metropolis – TMM 14/4 change no. 23. This was approved in 2012 and outlines the development goals of the area. These include forests, roads, new settlements and more to be built in place of Bedouin villages and to a large extent at their expense. The plan allocates limited "search areas" for new Bedouin villages,

usually around Nevatim air-base in the area between Route 80 and 31 in the east and south, and Route 25 west and north of Nevatim air base. The government's decision states: "... to make clear beyond any doubt, no alternative lands will be given and no [Bedouin] village will be planned west of road 40, except for the triangle of north Rahat and the Bir-Hadag area..."

The economic section includes "a five year plan for promoting the growth and the economic development of the Bedouin population of the Negev" (8). The plan allocates 1.2 billion shekels over 5 years for the development of the Bedouin towns that will absorb Bedouin from the unrecognized villages as well as for other purposes. For example, one sixth of the plans' budget, 215 million shekels, is designated for expanding the law enforcement by the Ministry of Public Security, namely, recruiting hundreds of extra policeman to implement the evacuation of Bedouin from their villages. Under the sponsorship of the Praver plan funds are also allocated for

projects that are not exclusively for the benefit of the Bedouin population.

This is the second time a law designated exclusively for the Bedouin population has been legislated in Israel. The first time was on the occasion of the eviction of the village of Tel Malchata when, in the early 1980s, 5,000 people were evicted from the area designated for the Nevatim army air base and transferred to the townships Kuseifa and Arara. This law was called "The peace law".

This policy of dispossession has been common to all Israeli governments as can be seen from government decisions, and implementation of daily practices such as home demolitions, denial of services and water or forestation. It is not by chance that already in 2005, before the Plan became public, the Wikileaks documents indicate: "...In the Negev, the plan involves an initiative of various ministries for the Bedouins in the Negev and will include a transfer of about 65,000 Bedouins who live in unrecognized villages between Be'er-

Sheva and Dimona...".

The Praver Begin Plan waves a whip of destruction and expulsion over the heads of the residents of the unrecognized villages – citizens of the state of Israel – by not allowing them to build their houses lawfully due to the lack of governmental planning policy in their villages. House demolitions are part of the government's foolish attempt to "concentrate" by force all the Bedouin residents of the Negev in underdeveloped and discriminated townships in order to vacate lands for Jewish rural settlements, which are already in abundance in the Negev or to forests, army bases and more. It has to be said that this policy is racist, with no prospect of implementation, and one which harms the life fabric of the people of the Negev. The government has to retreat from the plan and if it doesn't we all should attempt to stop it in order to live a life of normalcy and equality.

A Review of News in the Negev

April April 2nd - the cycling tour for the recognition of Bedouin unrecognized villages began. The tour was organized by NCF and the Regional Council of the Bedouin Unrecognized Villages (RCUV). The tour lasted for five days, in which the bikers and walkers, Belgian, Arab and Jewish Israeli activists, passed through 15 Bedouin unrecognized villages and expressed their support of the residents and protested against the government's policies toward them. The participants were hosted overnight in the villages and held cultural and singing events in cooperation with their hosts. On April 6th, the tour ended with a big event in the village of Al-Arakib.



Cycling for recognition, cycling tour between the Bedouin unrecognized villages in the Negev, April 2013

April 10th - Knesset Member (MK) Omer Bar-Lev of the Labour Party came to the Negev in order to learn about the issue of the Israeli lands policy and to promote a change in the situation. Bar-Lev met with members of NCF in its offices, where he heard about the history of the Negev area, about ongoing Israeli policy toward its Bedouin citizens and about the Praver-Begin plan. Then, he met Atiya Al-Assam, head of the Regional Council of the Bedouin Unrecognized Villages (RCUV), visited the village of Hasham-Zane

and learned about the State's plan to pave the extension to Route 6 through the center of the village, and about the alternative plan for the Bedouin villages.

April 11th - NCF held a house meeting in Jerusalem about the policy of the State of Israel at the Negev, and about the Praver-Begin Plan. 20 activists arrived in order to join the struggle against the Plan.

We presented the historical and political processes which formed the Negev area for the last 65 years – the urbanization and population concentration policy, and its juridical, political, geographical and social aspects,

and focused on "The Plan for the Regulation of Bedouin settlement in the Negev".

April 27th - human rights violations documentation workshop was held at the Bedouin unrecognized village of Al-Zarnug, as part of a joint project of NCF and "Adalah" - The Legal Center for the Rights of the Arab Minority in Israel, supported by the European Union. 15 women, residents of the village, participated in the workshop, whose aim was to give the residents of the unrecognized villages the means to document and protect

their rights. NCF coordinators, Ratb Abu-Krinat and Michal Rotem each led a section and taught about cooperation, maximizing struggle success and organizing the village to protest; documentation, new media and working with the press - all this in order to promote the struggle and raise awareness. Attorney Souhad Bishara of "Adalah" led a section about human rights violations and the ways to protect against them.

April 30 - a meeting about the Beer Sheva Metropolitan Plan was held at the Multaka-Mifgash, led by Planner Nili Baruch of Bimkom. The meeting focused on the impact of the Plan on the unrecognized villages. The participants were representatives of the Bedouin unrecognized villages committees, representatives of the Regional Council of the Bedouin Unrecognized Villages and NCF's staff.

May May 6th, the memorandum of the law for the regularization of the Bedouin settlement in the Negev (Praver Plan) was approved by the Ministers' Committee of legislation.

On May 6th, a demonstration was held in front of the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, during the meeting of the Committee whose members voted in favor of the Praver-Begin Plan implementation bill. Despite being planned at short notice, approximately 200 protesters, Bedouin from the Negev alongside other activists, participated and called for the withdrawal of the bill.

What's new in the Negev (cont.)

May 8th - a major conference was held in Be'er-Sheva, organized by the Coalition for Justice and Equality for the Bedouin in the Negev in cooperation with the Regional Council of the Bedouin Unrecognized Villages. Among the various speakers at the conference were Hanan Al-Sana of "Sidreh", Attorney Rawia Aburabia of "The Association for Civil Rights in Israel" (ACRI) and Haia Noach, NCF's executive director - all spoke against the Praver Plan. During the conference, the attendees discussed how to continue the struggle against the already approved Plan.

May 8th - NCF held a house meeting in Be'er-Sheva, with Khalil Al-Amour, member of NCF's secretariat, and Ofer Dagan, NCF's field coordinator. 15 participants, Jews and Arabs, attended the meeting and learned about the Bedouin villages in the Negev and the State's policy in this area.

On May 8th, following the approval of Praver-Begin Plan bill by the Ministers' Committee of legislation, NCF published a position paper on this issue. The position paper presented the changes made by the committee to the proposed bill, the different ways through which the bill will negatively affect the Bedouin community in the Negev and the ways that the implementation of the plan will affect the whole Negev area.

May 18th - a solidarity visit to the village Atir took place, following massive home demolitions in the village. On Thursday of that week hundreds of policemen and Israel Land Authority personnel arrived at the village, blocked all entrances and didn't allow the residents to get to their homes until 13:00. During the day about 10 homes and buildings were demolished and 600 trees uprooted. As a result, tens of men, women and children left without a roof over their heads. About 30 activists participated in the solidarity visit, documented the ruins and visited the protest tent that the residents built.

May 25th - protest actions against the Praver Plan took place throughout the Negev. It started with a march in Rahat, and then protest actions in the unrecognized village of Atir, which has been suffering constant home demolitions in the last couple of months.

Solidarity visit at the Bedouin unrecognized village of Atir, following a demolition of 10 houses in the village earlier that week, May 18, 2013



May 26th - following the split of Abu-Basma regional council into two new regional councils - Al Kasum and Neve-Midbar - the NGOs "Adalah" and "ACRI" wrote to the Minister of Interior Gideon Sa'ar demanding that elections will be held in both councils. Since the establishment of Abu-Basma on 28.12.2003 and until its split into two councils, no democratic elections have taken place there, in spite of the ruling of the Israeli Supreme Court that free elections must be held by December 4th 2013.

May 27th - at the end of a vigil in Beer Sheva against the Praver-Begin Plan, two activists, employees of NCF, were detained for questioning. This in spite of the attorney general's instructions that there is no need for police approval for a vigil. They were released after few hours.

May 28th - members of NCF secretariat sent a letter to the Prime Minister demanding to shelve the Praver-Begin Plan. The letter explained that the plan will deepen the problems in the Negev since it is a racist plan excluding the Bedouin population from the Israeli civil community and increasing the already existing gaps between the communities in the Negev.

May 30th - members of the international advocacy group of NCF together with NCF's director met the Belgian ambassador to Israel. The ambassador was updated regarding the situation in the Negev and especially about the Praver-Begin Plan.

June In June the Ministry of Transportation completed the building of a junction leading to the school in the Bedouin village of Al-Furah. As early as 2005 "Adallah" appealed to the High Court of Justice and demanded the paving of a road and the building of a junction that will connect the school to the main road (road 31). The Ministry of Transport undertook to do it shortly and the court rejected the plea. The Ministry of Transport didn't fulfill its commitment and in 2011 "Adalah" pleaded again and asked the implementation of the court decision. Following the completion of the road in 2012, in June 2013 the junction was completed as well.

June 3rd - a discussion on the Praver-Begin Law took place in the "Multaka-Mifgash". The event was organized by ACRI, "Adalah" and NCF. Attorneys Rawia Abu Rabia, lawyer of ACRI" and Aram Mahamid of "Adalah" presented the proposed law and its implications for the



Weekly protest against Praver Plan in Be'er-Sheva, May 20 2013

Bedouin population of the Negev. Abu Qwider from NCF led the subsequent discussion.

On June 12th, "The Association for Civil Rights in Israel", together with "Bimkom- Planners for Planning Rights", filed objections to the plan for a new settlement in Ramat Ziporim to which residents from the unrecognized villages Abda and Hava Triangle will be transferred against their will.

On June 12th, ACRI, together with "Bimkom" filed an objection, on behalf of the unrecognized village of Wadi Al Na'am, to the expansion plan of the township of Sequib A-Salam (Segev Shalom). According to the plan the residents of 3 unrecognized villages - Wadi Al Na'am, A-Sir and Wadi Al Mashash, a population of about 14,000 people - will be transferred to the township. .

On June 24th the Praver-Begin law proposal was given its first reading. After speeches by Knesset members, including Arab Knesset members who tore up the proposal and spoke against it, 43 MK's voted for it while 40 voted against. The law proposal was sent to the Knesset's interior committee, headed by MK Miri Regev, for the continuation of the legislation process.

On June 26th the photography exhibition "Recognized" opened in Jaffa in the Arab-Jewish Theatre. The exhibition presents photographs taken by children from the unrecognized village A-Sir, which is located near the Beer-Sheva prison. The children participated in the photography project run by NCF in cooperation with the village committee under the guidance of professional photographers who volunteered to teach the children. During the workshop, which took place in January 2013, the children acquired photographic skills and documented their life in the village. At the opening event the speakers were: Ms. Mika Hartman, representative of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation which funded the project, Hssein El Majirat - committee chairman of A-Sir, Yosra Abu Kaf, coordinator of the project on behalf of NCF, Tomer Apelbaum, a photographer who volunteered to work in the project, Anas Abu Da'abes, a journalist from the Negev and Gadi Elgazi from Hithabrut-Tarabut organization.

What's new in the Negev (cont.)

On June 27th a briefing on the situation in the Negev was held at the residence of the Swiss ambassador to Israel. Representatives from various embassies and representatives from the European Union participated in the meeting. The briefing was done by Suhad Bishara and Nadia Ben Yosef, lawyers from "Adalah", Karen Kaufman, from ACRI and Amir Abu Qwider from NCF.

July July 5th - the photography exhibition "Recognized", photographs taken by the children of the Bedouin unrecognized village A-Sir, opened at the Naam Center in Lod.

On July 7th a conference on the plan to establish 10 villages on the outskirts of Arad was held in Beer-Sheva. The conference was organized by a coalition of organizations of which NCF is a member. Academics and professionals explained the environmental, social and political problems related to the decision to establish 10 new villages in the Negev.

July 11th - a guided tour was given to Knesset Member (MK) Ruth Kalderon (Yesh Atid) to the unrecognized village Wadi Al Na'am and to the township Sequib A-Salam. MK Kalderon is the only coalition member who came to a tour in the Negev. She expressed interest in being involved and in bringing all parties concerned to a process of dialogue.

July 14th - the district court in Beer-Sheva rejected the appeal of ACRI together with the residents of the unrecognized village of Saawa concerning the decision to carry out house demolition orders in the village by March 2013. The court's decision was that although Saawa village has existed in its location prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, the demolition orders which were issued in 2007 will be carried out after August 15, 2013, at the end of the Ramadan Fast. The court stated that accepting the appeal will cause chaos and nullify judicial demolition orders.

July 15 - a general strike and protests against the Praver-Begin Plan took place throughout Israel. Hundreds of people participated in a protest march in Beer-Sheva and 14 people were detained, with the police requesting the extension of detention. Only after re-appealing against this action, the detainees were released to house arrest for a few days. However, the police issued indictment against

5 of the detainees.

July 22nd - NCF held its annual Iftar meal, the meal that ends each day of fasting during Ramadan. Tens of activists, representatives of villages and members of other organizations participated in the event. After the breaking of the fast a presentation of NCF's last year activity was screened.

On July 23rd "Adalah" appealed to the High Court of Justice demanding that 7 schools in the Negev be connected to the electrical power grid. Presently these schools get their electricity through generators that operate for only a few hours each day and therefore do not meet the needs of the school.

July 24th - NCF and "Adalah" conducted a tour for 25 foreign journalists from TV stations, newspapers and the internet. The journalists visited the villages A-Sir, Atir and Um El Hiran and witnessed the devastating implications of the Praver plan. Following the tour a summing up meeting was held in Hura with Prof. Oren Yiftachel, Attorney Rawia Aburabia, Khalil Alamour, Haia Noach and Dr. Thabat Abu Rass.

July 27th - the residents of Al Araqib marked three years since the massive demolition of their village. The event began with a protest march in Rahat which was attended by 200 residents and activists and ended in joint Iftar meal at Al Araqib.

August 1st - protests against the Praver-Begin Plan were held throughout the country. About 1,000 people participated in the main demonstration at Lehavim junction. The protesters called for the cancellation of the Praver-Begin plan. Two young people were detained and released the following day.

August 22nd - a discussion on the struggle against the Praver-Begin Plan was held in "Bar Kayma" in Tel Aviv. The event that was organized by "Recognition Forum" presented the governmental plan and the struggle against it by: Atiya El Assam-chairman of the council for the unrecognized villages, Sana Ibn Bari-lawyer from "Itach-Maachi" (Women Lawyers for Civil Rights),

Michal Rotem-NCF and Yaacov Manor -"Recognition Forum".

August 25th - NCF held a house meeting at the Urban Community "Aluma" in Jerusalem, where the participants were introduced to the state policy toward the Arab-Bedouin of the Negev over the course of the years, and



the actual meaning of the new "Praver-Begin Bill". The meeting was guided by Ofer Dagan, NCF's field coordinator.

On August 26th, after a demolition of Al Araqib, four residents were detained, including Sheikh Siah A-Turi, under the pretext of trespassing and disobedience. The four were released the following night and set up a protest tent in front of Rahat police station, since they were not allowed to return to their village. On Friday of that week the judge, in spite of the police demands, ruled that they will be released without restrictions.

August 27th - "Zochrot Association" organized an event on the subject of land rights and the Arab Bedouins of the Negev, which included also a discussion of the Praver-Begin Plan. Dr. Mansur Nasasra talked about the historical land rights of the Arab Bedouins of the Negev and presented documents that prove land ownership. Dr. Awad Abu Freih presented the community's struggle against the Praver-Begin Plan and Haia Noach, director of NCF, talked about the plan and its various aspects.

August 31st - a large demonstration against the Praver-Begin Plan was held in Tel Aviv. The demonstration started in the area of "Habima Theatre" and from there thousands of participants marched to Gan Meir. The speakers stressed their objection to the plan and asked for a fair solution that would be accepted by the Bedouin residences of the Negev-Naqab.

September September 12th - following the police appeal on the release terms of the four Al Araqib residents that were arrested on 26th August, a hearing was held in the district court of Beer Sheva. Judge Slutki ruled that the residents will not be kept away from the village but they were forbidden from building there.



What's new in the Negev (cont.)

On September 10th the photography exhibition "Recognized" opened in the Mossawa Centre in Haifa. Hanan Al Sana, Amos Gwartz, Lawyer Schachde Ibn Bari and Thabat Abu Rass attended the opening evening. The exhibition remained open in Haifa until the end of September.

September 19th - "Recognition Forum", "Hithabrut-Tarabut" and NCF organized a solidarity visit to Al Araqib following continuous demolitions in the village and the detention of four of its residents. About 20 activists built a peace Sukkah on the occasion of the holiday of Sukkoth.



In the last year NCF conducted tens of tours for groups from Israel and abroad as well as for journalists, photographers and directors who expressed interest in the subject of the

Bedouins in the Negev, especially in view of the Praver-Begin Plan and its future effect on the Negev-Naqab.

International Advocacy

On August 1st, NCF was appointed as a consultative NGO to the UN. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), decided to adopt the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to grant Special Consultation status to the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality. This status enables an NGO to actively engage with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, as well as with the United Nations Secretariat, programs, funds and agencies in a number of ways. The consultative status with ECOSOC includes privileges as well as obligations to the Council. On June, Attorney Schachde Ibn Bari represented NCF at the EU Human Rights Council discussions in Brussels. During the visit, Attorney Ibn Bari briefed the council about the Praver-Begin Plan and the variety of potential problems it would generate, and about the inequality between Arabs and Jews in Israel. During the month of July, Khalil Alamour, NCF's secretariat member

and a member of the committee of the Bedouin unrecognized village of Asira, participated in the annual conference of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva. During his visit, Alamour presented NCF's statement regarding the Plan and the ongoing legislation process. He held a presentation about the Plan for the participants of the conference, representatives of and experts on



Prof. James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people and Khalil Alamour during the conference in Geneva, July 2013

indigenous people from all around the world. He also held two important private meetings, one with Prof. James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, and the other with Anna Magdalena Rosch, the Austrian Parliament's representative at the UN. Alamour asked them both to join the struggle against the plan. In addition, Alamour had meetings with members of different organizations, journalists and officials from the Swiss Foreign Affairs ministry, and briefed them about the Plan and the situation in the Negev-Naqab in general.

Over the last years, NCF sent representatives to a variety of conferences and discussions of the UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues. The Arab-Bedouin of the Negev were recognized by the UN as indigenous people. The UN special rapporteur's official requests to visit the Negev have again and again been denied by the Israeli authorities.

Please recognize - Nafcha Triangle

The village Nafcha Triangle is located near Nafcha prison, 60 km south of Beer Sheva and 15 km north of Mitzpe Ramon, east of Route 40. In the early 80s, following the demand of the Green Patrol inspectors, some families of the Sarahin tribe came to live in the Nafcha Triangle, an area which was not considered a firing zone or nature reserve. Since then the village grew, and about 200 people live there nowadays. A winding, partially paved road from the prison leads to the village. Since the village is close to the route of "Shvil Israel" it offers hosting facilities, including accommodation,

to the people walking the "shvil". Like most unrecognized villages, Nafcha Triangle is not connected to electricity and only one water pipe serves all its residents. The dry olive grove at the entrance of the village is an evidence to the high price of water the village is charged with. The residents complain repeatedly regarding their inability to engage in agriculture in view of the high price of water. Their situation is in sharp contrast to that of the ranch of a single Jewish family, whose large green trees are nearby. Lately some home demolitions occurred



in the village which had great effect on the children. In September, after receiving a demolition order, a house was dismantled by its owner in order to minimize the mental damage to the children.

A variety of events were held at the Multaka-Mifgash, Negev Coexistence Forum's Arab-Jewish cultural center, during the past months. On April, there was a screening of the movie 'Once I Entered a Garden' and then a discussion with the director Avi Mugarbi; a screening of the movie 'My Neighbourhood' and then a talk with Moriel Rothman of Just Vision, the organization that produced the movie. On May, we held a meeting on the occasion of Nakba day, in which Noga Kadman discussed her book 'On the Side of the Road and on the Margins of Consciousness - Depopulated Palestinian Villages of 1948 in the Israeli discourse'. In June, the Multaka-Mifgash hosted the photo-exhibition 'Baqon' (staying), a collection of photographs taken by Aiob Abo-Madegam in a variety of Bedouin villages, which included also photographs of demolition of the village of Al-Arakib. At the opening night there was a talk with the photographer. The movie 'Turbulence' was screened at the Multaka-Mifgash, followed by a talk with its producers, Roni Livne, the director, and Dr. Ariel Livne, the researcher. On July, we held a screening of the movie 'The Lab', followed by a discussion with the director, Yotam Feldman.

Multaka-Mifgash Activities - an Arab-Jewish Culture House in the Negev



Workshop about the Be'er-Sheva Metropolis outline plan at the Multaka-Mifgash, April 30, 2013

House Demolitions and Demolition Orders Distribution

The list of house demolitions and demolition orders distribution is partial, since it is based only on data gathered by NCF, and because it does not include families who, due to lack of choice, demolished their houses on their own, given the authorities' threats and the need to save some of the construction materials and personal belongings.



Membership and Participation in the Forum

The Forum was first established and still exists as an organization dependent on volunteers and voluntarism: citizens who understand that without community action and intervention, government policies in the Negev lead to injustice, discrimination and a depressing future for the Negev and the country as a whole. The Forum's goals are to push equal rights further and forward and to promote tolerance and coexistence in the Negev.

We invite you to join us to help advance the goals of the Forum as they are outlined in this newsletter. If you are interested in doing so you can participate in any of these above-mentioned activities, even those already underway. The Forum is open and pleased to receive ideas and new initiatives for additional activities.

In addition, the Forum needs volunteers to carry out specific roles such as:

- 1) To develop and maintain the Forum's website.
- 2) To translate texts from Hebrew to Arabic and English and in the opposite directions.
- 3) Editor for the Forum Newsletter.
- 4) Members for the Multaka-Mifgash steering committee.
- 5) Investigating ethnic based discrimination in working places, services etc.
- 6) For spokespersons and public relations persons to face the media and general public.
- 7) To co-ordinate volunteers activities.
- 8) To co-ordinate Knesset lobbying activities.

We would appreciate your support of NCF activities. Please send checks to POB. 130, Omer, 84965.

Those who wish to join the Negev Coexistence Forum are encouraged to pay a membership fee as follows: Individuals - 40 NIS, families - 60 NIS, students and others who wish to pay a reduced fee - 20 NIS.

* Further information regarding the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality can be obtained by contacting one of the contacts at the bottom of the page, or through the Internet at www.dukium.org.

* We shall be pleased to receive the addresses of potential readers of the newsletter, or ideas for other items considered suitable to be included in the newsletter.

* If you no longer desire to receive this newsletter please inform us.

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality is an independent non-party organization that was established in 1997 by Arabs and Jews - Israeli citizens who live in the Negev-Naqab. The Forum's aim is to provide a framework for Jewish-Arab co-operation as a basis for a common struggle for equal civil rights and to promote tolerance and coexistence in the Negev. The Forum's activities are carried out on a voluntary basis, or funded exclusively by private foundations, in particular The New Israel Fund, and donations. These include meetings and social events between the communities, information drives, environment justice campaigns, recognition of the unrecognized Bedouin villages of the Negev, the struggle for employment equality in the Negev and other similar activities.

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