



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

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Photo by Hala Abo FrieH, Umm Al Hiran

NEGEV COEXISTENCE FORUM FOR CIVIL EQUALITY

For a shared society in the Negev-Naqab where all residents live in dignity.

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PREFACE

It is my pleasure to present the Negev Coexistence Forum's Annual Report for 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, donors and supporters. Without each one of you, we would not have been able to carry out the tremendous work NCF is doing in the Negev.

2018 was a year of continued discrimination and exclusion by the State of Israel, especially in view of the Nation-State Law. This and other laws have deeply affected the public atmosphere, weakened democratic structures, and intensified the sense of exclusion and discrimination amongst Arab-Palestinian communities. It has also been a difficult year for civil and human rights activists and organizations, including NCF. Our board, staff and volunteers had to work under increased pressure.

NCF's 2018 heavy workload and intense work plan has been carried out successfully, while being under attack by right-wing actors, under the support of the Mayor of Beer Sheva Mr. Rubik Danilowitz. As part of their slander campaign, Mr. Danilowitz ordered NCF to evict the shelter, which was assigned to NCF by the municipality in 2006 to be used as an Arab-Jewish Cultural Center. The matter was taken to the District Court, where we lost the case. We then presented the case to the Supreme Court, which ruled in our favor. In December 2018 the Israeli Supreme Court decided that the Beer Sheva municipality should continue allocating the public shelter for the Arab-Jewish Cultural Centre under the principle of pluralism. The municipality was directed by the court not to interfere in the topics discussed at the center as long as these do not represent only one political party. Unfortunately, the municipality is not accepting the court's verdict and is pressuring NCF to evict the shelter by issuing a demand for the retroactive payment of taxes for the past seven years of activity in the sum of almost half-million NIS.

The legal battle with the municipality has taken its toll. We spent significant resources in dealing with this case. Despite this additional burden, NCF successfully achieved most of its objectives set for 2018.

I believe that the various projects carried out in 2018 have strengthened the Bedouin community. I also believe that we have contributed to amplifying the human rights discourse at the local, national and international levels. As an organization, we have grown stronger and are better prepared to cope with the increase of hostilities from state and non-state actors.

The situation in Israel is complicated and we must continue our efforts without succumbing to the current oppressive, increasingly authoritarian atmosphere in Israel. We have to aspire and strive for a better, cooperative, more equal, enabling and inclusive society. With your support, NCF will continue standing alongside the Bedouin communities in their struggle, amplifying their demands for equality, and supporting them in their resistance to the dispossession of their villages, heritage and traditional way of life. Today we dedicate this report to the families of Umm Al-Hiran.

With thanks,



Haia Noach, Executive Director

ABOUT US

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) is a grassroots organization established in 1997 by a group of Arab and Jewish residents of the Negev-Naqab who were alarmed by the government's discriminatory policies and practices towards its Arab-Bedouin citizens. Today, NCF is the only joint Arab-Jewish organization focused specifically on the Negev-Naqab and we emphatically call for justice for its Bedouin residents. Our **vision** is that all residents of the Negev-Naqab live in dignity and in a shared society, where all its residents enjoy their human rights, equality and justice. Our **mission** is to eliminate the state of Israel's civil, economic, social and cultural discrimination towards the Bedouin citizens in the Negev-Naqab by providing a framework for joint struggle for equality. NCF has two main **programs**:

1. Documentation and Bedouin Human Rights Defenders' Network: Together with Bedouin children, women and men, we document their every-day-life as well as home demolitions, arrests, demonstrations, and the daily impact of state neglect and discrimination. This program consists of three projects:

- “**Yusawiruna**”, the photography project for Bedouin women;
- “**Through a Child's Lens**”, Bedouin children learn to use photography to document their lives and tell their story;
- “**Recognized**” is a project that teaches women, activists and teenagers to use video documentation to tell a story for advocacy purposes.

All participants of this program build our **Bedouin Human Rights Defenders' Network**.

2. Human Rights Campaign and Advocacy: Our work with Bedouin communities on the ground and audio-visual documentation support our Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and advocacy efforts. Through this framework we aim to generate political pressure on the state of Israel to change its policies towards Bedouins. We do this by researching and delivering expert analysis on violations of human rights in the context of national and international law. In so doing, NCF gives exposure to the plight of Bedouin communities in the Negev-Naqab, within Israel and abroad, and brings the subject matter into public dialogue and political debate.

Both programs support each other: All research, documentation and audio-visual materials derived through the Documentation and Bedouin Human Rights Defenders' Network are used for advocacy purposes through our HRC framework. All advocacy efforts are informed by our work on the ground and through our close partnership with Bedouin communities. Based on the ‘Do No Harm’ principle, NCF carries out its work, at all times, to promote and protect the rights of residents in the Negev in close coordination with residents' groups, our strongest partners and allies.

In 2018, we particularly collaborated with Sidreh (Bedouin women organization), RCUV (the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages), Yadid Rahat and Sikkuy. NCF was also part of MAZON's network, working alongside Solidarity Film Festival and the Israel Social TV's project on Poverty, Hunger and Food Insecurity in Israeli Society. Furthermore, NCF works with Zazim, Adalah - the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, ACRI – Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Shatil, Amnesty International Israel, and Human Rights Defenders Fund, among others.

BACKGROUND

2018 was marked by significant political and social tensions in the region. In the Negev/Naqab, the State of Israel continued to violate the civil and human rights of the Bedouin communities, while pushing for significant (and discriminatory) development efforts.

In February 2017, the Israeli Government approved a five-year plan (2017-2021) for the Socio-Economic Development of Bedouin Communities in the Negev. The Plan will be implemented only in recognized localities, therefore, disregarding at least 70,000 citizens who reside in unrecognized villages. The dispossession of Bedouin communities in the region and their forced displacement to several townships goes hand-in-hand with efforts to 'develop' the Negev region. Such efforts include the establishment of new (mainly Jewish) settlements, the relocation of military bases to the region, the expansion of the Cross-Israel Highway as well as plans to pave new roads and railroads, and afforestation plans by the Jewish National Fund amongst other initiatives.

Nevertheless, development plans are not inclusive nor respectful of the traditional way of life of the Bedouin indigenous population in this region. Such plans are built on the forceful dispossession, eviction and urbanization of entire communities. The exclusion of already impoverished communities in development plans in the region will have a serious impact on this population.

Already, the Bedouin of the Negev struggle economically, living in some of the poorest localities in the country. The main factors underlying poverty among Bedouin are poor education and a lack of formal education, large families supported by a single, usually low-income earner, limited access to employment resources, high unemployment rates and a tendency to be locked in to menial professions and low-paid jobs. Those that are employed often face difficult working conditions sometimes earning less than the minimum wage. Especially affected are Bedouin women, who are primarily responsible for un-paid household work and childcare. Due to high illiteracy rates, many Bedouin women are unable to cope with situations requiring reading, writing and arithmetic.

Meanwhile, the forceful eviction of Bedouin residents from their lands and home demolitions continue. After 63 years living in **Umm al-Ḥīrān** and 15 years of struggle in courts, residents were coerced to sign an agreement with authorities to leave the village. While around 500 Bedouin citizens of Israel are preparing to be relocated to the already densely populated town of Hura, the new settlement of Hiran is being built to house exclusively Jewish citizens of Israel. Already this new settlement is being connected to main services (water, electricity, roads, sewage, etc.), which were denied to Bedouin residents in that same place for six decades.

In **Al-'Arāgīb**, the village was demolished for the 138th time in December 2018. In November 2018, in an outrageous decision, the Supreme Court rejected the request of Sheikh Sayah A-Turi, the village's leader, for an appeal. He has been sentenced to ten months in prison, five months' probation and 36,000 ILS fine. There is reason to believe that Sayah and his family have been singled out, because they have opted for a non-violent struggle for Bedouin rights in the Negev.

In general, the passing of the [Nation-State Law](#) in July 2018 was an important step in the wrong direction, undermining democratic structures in Israel while empowering militaristic, patriarchal and racist elements.

OUR WORK IN 2018

DOCUMENTATION & BEDOUIN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S NETWORKS

6,783 photos collected from women photographers, of which we archived 2,751 photos;
 8,439 photos collected from children, of which we archived 1,821 photos;
 2,000 photos collected from NCF's staff;
 152 photos used for advocacy purposes;
 65 photos posted in Facebook;
 45 photos posted in Instagram and Twitter;
 10-15 photos in our reports and newsletters.



YUSAWIRUNA: WOMEN'S PHOTOGRAPHY



Since 2014 NCF has provided workshops and training on photography to women in unrecognized and recognized villages. Participants use these skills to document their lives in the villages and the continual human rights violations perpetrated by the state. Participants receive a camera, which acts as a form of protection, empowering the user and deterring authorities, while the materials compiled are utilized for advocacy efforts.

In 2018, we had a total of **54 workshops in five villages with 34 women**. The women participated in three **Human Rights Defenders' Network** meetings in: Umm al-Ḥīrān, a meeting to mark Human Rights Day, and a tour to Jerusalem.

We are also very proud of the **exhibitions** of the women's photography in five occasions:

- January 18: exhibition in Hura to mark the first Memorial Day of Ya'aqub Abu al 'Qian, a Bedouin teacher executed by the police in 2017.
- March 30, Land Day: an exhibition took place at the community center in Rahat. Coordinator Bassma Abu Khuti gave presentation about the project and the meaning behind the photographs.
- October 4: exhibition at the Rahat Community Center during the Women Employment Conference in partnership with Sidreh and Yadid Rahat.
- December 10: exhibition on Women and Employment (paid and unpaid labor). Dr. Safa Aburabia gave a lecture about the voices from the Naqba.
- December 18: exhibition on the Negev Day in the Knesset. About 200 people viewed the pictures that were exhibited in one of the Knesset main corridors and in front of the Auditorium.

HerStory: The Personal Story of Amal

Amal is a 25-year-old Bedouin woman from 'Atir. She has been part of the project for 4 years. Amal is a very talented and motivated photographer of stills and video. She fell in love with the art of photography and her results are incredible. During the trainings Amal and the tutors watch documentary films, read literature and look through photo and art albums of great artists and photographers from around the world. Amal absorbs the information provided each workshop and applies it in her special, personal way. In the search for her unique creative voice and her own interests, Amal tries various ways of self-expression. Her first video work 'The Diary' - a short film that she created almost entirely within her house and thus creating a rich microcosm of her intimate world, is one of the best creations of the project.

Amal's next project is based on her exploration of the Japanese art. She is currently focusing on Haiku songs (a very short form of Japanese poetry in three phrases) and the photography of Dido Moriama (a Japanese photographer noted for his images depicting everyday life in an abstract and expressive way). The basic element of these is the deep and meticulous observation of daily life, objects that surround us, nature and small unnoticed changes that happen around us. Amal uses Haiku as her own means of expression. She started writing poems in her own way, combining the verse with the photography and video filming.

Amal is an extremely talented photographer. She's curious and eager to create and learn new ways of self-expression. We are proud of accompanying her in her outstanding creative process.



Photo by Amal Abu al-Qi'ān, Atir

A SPECIAL CASE: UMM AL-ḤĪRĀN

Bedouin women, especially in the village of Umm al-Ḥīrān were very active in documenting human rights abuses by the state of Israel and advocating for the rights of their community. While the situation in this village is one of despair and fear, women documented many of the encounters with the police. The photographs were sent to NCF before any other media had first-hand documentation of the situation. Participants will continue documenting life in the village as long as possible. Afterwards they will document the relocation process. Women also documented the construction of the new Jewish town of Hiran. Project participants from other villages have been uniting to support participants from Umm al-Ḥīrān in these confusing and difficult times. They have agreed on a joint venture: to document the life in the village and preserve the memory of the community in this location, before their eviction. As a result, a special memory album has been published and was dedicated to Ya'kub Abu al Kian, who was shot by the police forces.



Photo by 'Ā'ishah Abu al-Qi'ān, Umm Al-Hiran

THROUGH A CHILD'S LENS: CHILDREN'S PHOTOGRAPHY

Through a camera lens, children have the opportunity to document their lives, the stories in their villages, and human rights abuses they encounter. Children are empowered and encouraged to take an active role in their community's struggle for recognition. Children not only learn how to take pictures, they also learn how to tell their stories, to raise their voices, and to use photography as means to advocate for their community. Empowered with new skills and a camera, they are able to present the beauty, wealth and strength of their community and way of life, countering negative stereotypes about Bedouins.

In 2018, NCF and a professional filmmaker facilitated and coordinated a total of **36 photography workshops and monthly gatherings for 40 children age 8-13 in seven unrecognized villages**. The workshops focused on different aspects of photography as a tool for protecting human rights. Young participants were encouraged to use the cameras to tell the stories of their villages. During the monthly meetings, participants reviewed the photographs taken and received suggestions and tips, while continuing their training and understanding of photography as a human rights tool.



Photo by Marah Alnabari, Tal Arad.



Photo by Hanin Alazazmeh, Rakhamah.

THE CHILDREN OF UMM AL HIRAN

Children in the village of Umm al Hiran, which will be destroyed to make space to Hiran, walked around taking pictures. They took pictures of the houses that have not been demolished. The children expressed that they don't feel good in the village anymore and that they wish for a quieter life. Children also expressed their skepticism about taking pictures:

'What will it bring us? To take pictures?'

We talked about the importance of documenting what is happening to them and showing it to the whole world. The children mentioned that it is very difficult for them to have to move from their village as they love to live there. They have a lot of space and many places where they play after school. When they go to bed, they talk about the killing of Yaacob and police brutality. They are afraid that it could happen to them. They are scared of the weapons.

VIDEO DOCUMENTATION PROJECT: “RECOGNIZED”
In 2018, 15 video photographers took part in the “Recognized” project.

In 2018, 15 Bedouin women, men and youth from all over the Negev (al-‘Arāgīb, ‘Atīr, Bīr Haddāj, Umm al Hran, Drījāt, Rakhamah, az-Za‘arūrah, az-Zarnūg, Wādi an-Na‘am, al-Fur‘ah, and Tal ‘Arād) participated in the project. They took part in workshops and training on audio-visual documentation and used their skills to produce short-videos for advocacy purposes.

Participants worked on the filming, directing and production of short videos about their lives in the Bedouin villages, the abuse of their civil rights, their lands and their families. They documented the presence of authorities in their villages and stood guard to document cases of abuse or of home demolitions in real time. Our project coordinators kept in weekly contact with the participants. **A total of nine videos were shot and produced by the participants.** In addition, the new group from Um Al-Hiran is finalizing their video productions.

Most videos were screened during the **Kolnoa Darom Film Festival**, under threats from the Minister of Culture and Sports to cut the festival’s funding. A day before the event, in the middle of the night, Minister of Culture and Sports Miri Regev published a Facebook post calling out against the inclusion of an NCF event in the festival and against Sapir College’s hosting it. She claimed that NCF is inciting against the state and creating tensions between Arabs and Jews, and that she will personally make sure to check the funding of the festival for next year. NCF’s partners chose to stand alongside the project and host the event despite her threats.

The participation at the Kolnoa Darom festival was a highlight in our activity and the photographers were very proud and excited to present their work. The videos screened included:

- A video by Şabāḥ Abū Mdīgim, “Our Lives”, about al-‘Arāgīb;
- A video by Ghazal Ālzaīādīn about her grandma and her culture;
- A video by [Bilal Abu Jūdeh](#) of his brother demolishing his own house;
- A [video of Amal and Huda Abu al-Qi‘ān](#) about their village ‘Atir’ and the lack of access to public transport;
- A video by Yassin Al Nassasra, “The Disappearing Village” about lack of electricity in an unrecognized village;
- A video by Said Gaboa about the village of al Forah’
- A video by Bilal abu Bneaya about what it means to live near a power-station, while having no electricity.

Bilal, Ghazal and Şabāḥ spoke about their villages and the artistic choices behind their short films at the panel, which followed the screening. The videos of Bilal Abu Judeh and Ahlam & Huda Abu al-Qi-an were featured in NCF’s Facebook page and viewed by thousands. In addition, most of the videos were screened at the Multaqa-Mifgash and a Human Rights event and at Multaqa Mifgash.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN & ADVOCACY

- 1 village (Al Homrah) added “On the Map”, NCF’s online mapping initiative & information updated
- 2 reports published by NCF referenced by third parties on three occasions
- 3 position papers published
- 2 international advocacy trips
- 6 tours and 5 briefings to diplomats and members of the international community
- 8 requests for information filed
- 39 newsletters sent to a mailing list of 600 people
- 108 occasions in which our work was covered through different media outlets
- 700 individuals participated at lectures provided by NCF
- 800 individuals participated at NCF’s alternative Naqab tours

RESEARCH & REPORTS

A significant part of NCF’s work is based on its comprehensive and professional research on different issues. Project coordinators conduct regular analysis of events at the political level in consultation with partners. NCF regularly files requests for information from different government offices on relevant topics (such as the new Five-Year Plan for Development, home demolitions, employment centers, among others). Our online mapping initiative ‘On the Map’ is also constantly updated, adding more information on existing villages as well as increasing the number of villages included.

Based on this information, we publish reports and position papers, which have been referenced in several reports prepared by third parties such as the [IWGIA](#), the US State Department in their [2018 Human Rights Report](#), and the [Final Report of the Inter-Ministerial Team dealing with the negative implications of Polygamy](#) (in Hebrew).



Photo by Rimāl Abu al-Qi'ān, Umm Al-Hiran

REPORTS PUBLISHED

In March 2018, NCF launched a report about Bedouin women's access to employment and employment opportunities, focusing on institutionalized discrimination and impoverishment, in three languages. The report titled: "[Perspectives on Arab-Bedouin Women Employment in the Negev/Naqab](#)" was in fact a shorter version of a wider NCF study on the topic, presented partly in October in the Knesset Committee for the Status of Women and Gender Equality.

In November 2018, NCF published a report on "[House Demolitions as a Central Tool for the Dispossession and Concentration of the Bedouin Population in the Negev/Naqab: Update Data for 2017](#)". In 2017, an unprecedented number of structures were demolished (2,220 structures). The policy of house demolitions is a violent and aggressive policy and does not offer a solution to the 70,000 citizens living in unrecognized villages. The report presents updated data on the demolition policy among the Bedouin villages and the various trends that occurred in 2017.

POSITION PAPERS PUBLISHED

1. In January, NCF published a [position paper](#) about the largest unrecognized village, Wadi An-Naam. The paper presents the long battle between the State and the residents of the village, focusing on the resident's upcoming eviction from the village due to its proximity to the Neot Hovav industrial zone. Currently, the villagers are refusing to accept the State's offered plan to relocate them to a township for a small compensation. They aim to find a solution that will allow them to continue their agricultural way of life. The position paper was sent to 60 members of Knesset and will be used by residents of the village in their lobbying advocacy? and efforts in raising awareness.
2. In September, we published a [position paper](#) on Arab-Bedouin Women employment, which was used at a conference about poverty, and at the conference on Women's Employment in Rahat.
3. In October, NCF published a position paper on "The Israeli Governmental Program for Completing Basic Education for Adults in Negev Bedouin Communities". The program for completing basic education for adults in Bedouin communities in the Negev is intended to serve men and women who have either never studied or dropped out of elementary or high school and are interested in completing their missing education, adding to their knowledge, improving their status and integrating into the labor market. While the benefits of this program are substantial, the cost of the program is minimal. Nevertheless, no funding was provided in the current five-year plan (2017-2021) until a national campaign pushed the government to continue the funding, which was reinstated and guaranteed only until 2019. NCF was a leading part of this campaign and will continue working on this issue.

MEDIA

Our work has been covered through different media outlets on at least 108 occasions in Hebrew, Arabic and English. Media outlets included Haaretz, the Washington Post, the Jerusalem Post, News 1, Panet, Kul al Arab, among others.

In 2018, NCF continued to publish on **social media** relevant information and commentary as well as reports about the organization's different projects. NCF's Instagram account was launched in February 2018. On Facebook, Twitter and Instagram the organization's channels steadily grew by a few dozen followers. NCF's Facebook posts increased their reach from 500-800 in average to 1.6k-1.9k per post. Today, most posts reach over a thousand users.

In addition, we distributed a total of **39 newsletters** in English, Arabic and Hebrew to a mailing list of 600 subscribers, including: representatives of embassies and diplomats, human rights groups, academics, supporters, and the members of the general public in Israel and abroad.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

NCF's public outreach includes tours to unrecognized villages, solidarity visits, photo exhibitions and lectures to groups. In 2018, more **than 800 individuals participated at NCF's alternative Naqab tours**, including: the Israeli Scouts, Young Cadets, Arab civics' teachers, students from different high schools and universities and more. In addition, **NCF provided lectures to at least 700 individuals** about the unrecognized villages and joint Arab-Jewish activism for equality.



Photo by NCF Staff

Part of the organization's public outreach efforts were to **inspire dialogue and joint activism between neighboring Jewish and Bedouin localities** in the Negev-Naqab. In March, NCF participated at two encounters between residents of Revivim and Bir Haddaj. In addition, we visited the villages of Arad, Tel Arad and al Furah together with other local organizations to know about each other and initiate small joint projects, including Hebrew lessons and tourism with Bedouin women.

LOCAL LOBBY

We have been able to raise issues and bring questions to the Knesset floor and committees. **In 2018, NCF's team joined more than 30 different Knesset discussions and committee meetings on issues relevant to our work.** In all discussions and events, there was a significant and meaningful participation of Bedouin representatives (men and women).

The most meaningful collaboration in the Knesset was with MK Aida Touma Suliman, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women. MK Suliman hosted 7 in-depth discussions on how to promote the **employment of Bedouin women** and eliminate institutionalized barriers and discrimination.

Additional discussions on this topic took place at the Economic Affairs Committee and State Control Committee. In addition, the Adult Education Program was discussed at the Education Committee. Together with Sidreh and Yadid Rahat, we held a **Conference on Barriers and Opportunities for Bedouin Women's Employment** on October 4, with the participation of governmental representatives from relevant Ministries. The conference was attended by 100 people and enabled a dialogue between residents and high-ranking decision-makers and service providers.

MK Jouma Azbarga was also a vital partner for NCF, as he joined our annual Iftar dinner and filed parliamentary queries on NCF's behalf. MK Saeed Al-Khrumi worked alongside NCF in bringing to light the discrimination in **access to water** of the Bedouin residents of the Negev-Naqab. In collaboration with Salame Abu-Kaf, member of the local committee of Umm-Batin, NCF filed a complaint to the State Comptroller on the faulty access to water in the recognized village of Umm Batin. The complaint, which was filed in January, addresses the fact that despite the 2010 decision to connect all of the villages in the AL-Qasum Regional Council to the water grid, the villages still face challenges in accessing water at affordable prices.

We also filed a formal **complaint against MK Galant's racist remarks** to the Chairperson of the Knesset, the Ethics Committee and the Attorney General after he presented his 'Chetz Ladarom' plan. In presenting the plan, Galant labelled the entire Arab population of the Negev as an enemy group, claiming that: *"the illegal takeover of the Bedouin is eroding the Zionist sovereignty in the Negev which constitutes half of the territory of the State of Israel and is now in danger and there is a real fear of hostile*



Photo by NCF Staff

takeover. The illegal construction in the Bedouin expansion in the Negev and in the Be'er Sheba area in recent years has gone out of control. I see it as a duty and a right to lead the issue of Jewish settlement in the Negev. The establishment of new settlements is the heart of Zionism”.

While the complaint did not go far, it resulted in the renewing of the work of the **Coalition for Strengthening the Negev Cities**. The coalition is composed by NCF, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, Green Course, ACRI, BIMKOM. One of its actions was to oppose the plan to build 19 new Jewish-only settlements on lands that are claimed and in part actually inhabited by Bedouin citizens. In June the coalition submitted a position paper in Hebrew opposing the plan, while recommending the development of existing towns and villages instead of building new Jewish-only settlements:

“The establishments of small settlements for the rich, all of them exclusively for Jews, is an affront to the tens of thousands of Bedouins who have been fighting since the establishment of the state of Israel for their villages to be recognized.”

In July a protest was carried out in front of the National planning Council Sub-Committee’s discussion. Eventually, the majority of the plan was rejected, with only 2 of the planned settlements approved.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

In 2018, NCF had regular contact with representatives from 15 embassies; held 6 tours for diplomats; sent 5 briefings, 2 reports, 2 position papers, and several letters to UN Special Rapporteurs, diplomats, embassies, international organizations, and students.

In January 2018, Amir Abu-Qweider travelled on NCF’s behalf to the **UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** on Israel, in Geneva, following the submission of a shadow report in June 2017. The report, initiated by NCF, was submitted together with the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages, Alhuquq Center and Sidreh - Lakiya Negev Weaving. The report provides information and statistics about human rights of the Bedouins focusing on land and housing rights, planning inequality, home demolitions as well as economic and social rights. NCF met with representatives of different embassies, diplomats and representatives of international human rights organizations to brief them on the issues concerning the Bedouin communities. NCF also participated in a briefing with representatives of 11 embassies at the EU headquarters, co-organized alongside Adalah.

Throughout the year, NCF stayed in touch with the **UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People**, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. In July, Adv. Khalil Alamour traveled to the 11th session of the **Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva**, where he met Ms. Tauli-Corpuz.

Adv. Alamour, Board Member of NCF and residents of the unrecognized village of Alsira, have been particularly active on the international front. Adv. Alamour frequently participates in international forums, such as the Expert Mechanism for Indigenous Issues and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous People. He also represented NCF at sessions of the European Parliament and has met groups visiting Israel from the Catholique Committee Against Hunger (CCFD, France), the Israel Committee Against House Demolitions (UK) and others.

Photo by NCF Staff



In November 2018, NCF, and the Human Rights Defenders' Fund sent an urgent appeal to the **UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues** asking to take urgent action to prevent the imprisonment of the Bedouin Human Rights Defender Sheikh Sayah A-Turi.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018

BEDOUIN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

As a result of our work in 2018 to increase employment levels among Bedouin women as well as their working conditions, we contributed to:

- Presenting **comprehensive and critical data** on relevant policy, triggering public discussion;
- Putting the issue of Bedouin women's employment as a **central issue on the public and political agenda**. A communication channel with relevant decision makers has been established. There is an increased level of cooperation between the Knesset and civil society organizations, which increases the visibility and legitimacy of NGOs.
- **Advocating for a long-term plan** to promote Bedouin women's employment and increase investments for employment development. Relevant Ministries built a team responsible for promoting Bedouin women's employment.
- **Specific changes**: the proclamation of assistance for plants established in Bedouin towns (30 mio NIS); the consideration of a micro-industrial park adapted for women (20 mio NIS, decision pending).

THE MULTAKA-MIFGASH CASE

A significant achievement was reached on 26 December 2018, when the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the Beer Sheva municipality should continue allocating the public shelter for the Arab-Jewish Cultural Centre Multaka-Mifgash, which has been operating in this location for over a decade. Supreme Court Justice Meni Mazuz affirmed: "The principle of pluralism requires the municipality to allocate public facilities to a variety of associations, even those that do not conform with the consensus and the general public's opinion."

The impact of this decision is significant on different levels: 1) The Supreme Court has upheld the right of freedom of speech, pluralism and dissent in this case; 2) Arab and Jewish communities will have access to a space for joint activism and dialogue; 3) There was an overwhelming support from residents from Beersheba and the Negev, confirming the importance of the Multaka-Mifgash and the continuation of its activities.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY: UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

During the 29th session of the **UNHRC's Universal Periodic Review on Israel**, the United States, Austria, Slovenia and France specifically mentioned the abuse of rights of the Negev-Naqab Bedouins in their recommendations to the committee, as follows:

6.130. Enhance its efforts to counter discrimination of persons belonging to Arab, Bedouin, Druze and Circassian communities as well as persons belonging to other religious and ethnic minorities (Austria);

6.131. Ensure non-discrimination and respect for the rights of persons belonging in particular to the Israeli Arab and Bedouin minorities, including in access to land, employment, housing and places of worship (France);

6.132. Legally recognize unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev and improve access of all Bedouin citizens to basic services, including adequate housing, water and sanitation, health care and education (Slovenia);

63. The United States of America inquired about measures to continue to ensure that all components of society had an effective voice in civil affairs, to minimize administrative detention orders and guarantee that all detainees could effectively challenge in court the legal basis of detention, and to provide improved access to education, land, housing, health care and employment to Arab Israelis and Bedouins.

"THE VOICE BEHIND THE PICTURE": EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHY

In September 2018 NCF launched a beautiful exhibition in the **Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv**, featuring the photographs of Bedouin children from unrecognized villages. The exhibition is called "The Voice Behind the Picture", which presents the work of Bedouin children who participated in photography workshops provided by NCF over the last several years. The photographs are a vivid documentation of the lives of these youngsters living in conditions of poverty and with the ever-present threat of house demolitions. Yet, the photographs are full of life and often humor. The young photographers attended the festive opening and enjoyed being photographed and interviewed. The exhibition will be hosted by the museum until September 2019 and is open for the public. The museum decided to prolong the exhibition, which was scheduled until January 2019. As mentioned by Debbi Hershman, the museum curator, the exhibition has an 'immense educational value' for the children that are visiting the museum. This new and exciting collaboration with the museum is a grand opportunity to bring the testimonies of the participants' photographs into the heart of Tel Aviv.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

We are proud to say that as a result of cooperation with friendly states and international organizations that promote human rights, the majority of our funding comes from 'foreign entities'. We are forever thankful to all our supporters and partners in Israel and abroad (in alphabetical order):

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