

Below are some of the Concluding Observations of the various United Nations Committees and Forums concerning the situation of Arab Bedouin women from the Negev/Naqab (Israel's Southern Region).

UNPFII (United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues) sessions

15th Session, May 2016

42. Acknowledges indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, in particular that of indigenous women, which contribute to global efforts and initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

56. Security and rights of indigenous girls and women in conflict settings constitute an urgent priority, including within the framework of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

16th Session, April–May 2017

49. Urges States to expand opportunities to enable indigenous women to participate actively in the political life of the country in which they live, and to ensure the safety of indigenous women who are defending the rights of their peoples and territories.

17th Session, April 2018

51. Recommends that UN health organizations and Governments incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies and programmes and reproductive health services aimed at providing indigenous women with quality health care.

CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women)

48th Session, January–February 2011

35(a). Take the necessary measures to reduce the drop-out rates of Bedouin girls and increase the number of Bedouin women at institutions of higher education through the provision of scholarship.

39(b). Strengthen its efforts to close the gaps in the infant and maternal mortality rates of Bedouin women and children.

45(a). Continue to take effective measures to eliminate discrimination against Bedouin women and to enhance respect for their human rights through effective and proactive measures, including in the fields of education, employment and health.

(b). Respect the Bedouin population's right to their ancestral land and their traditional livelihood.

68th Session, October–November 2017

11. Adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate discrimination experienced by national minorities, specifically women and girls from the Arab and Bedouin communities.

17. Address all physical and economic barriers that impede access to justice for women, in particular those belonging to Arab and Bedouin communities.

23(c). Reinforce projects to increase cooperation with civil society organizations representing women's interests, including Arab and Bedouin women.

37(b). Introduce temporary special measures, such as quotas, to increase the participation of Bedouin women in political and public life.

43(a). Strengthen its strategies, including through the use of temporary special measures such as targeted scholarships, to improve education outcomes among Bedouin women and girls, and use attendance officers from the Ministry of Education to prevent them from dropping-out of school.

45(c). Adopt specific measures, including temporary special measures, to improve the participation of Bedouin in the labour market and remove barriers faced by Israeli Arab women to gaining access to employment.

47(b). Continue to strengthen efforts, such as the implementation of the national screening plan for breast cancer and the treatment of ovarian and lung cancer, in order to improve health outcomes among Bedouin women, in particular with regard to obesity, lung cancer and infant and maternal mortality.



Women demonstrating against Israel's policy of home demolitions.

Photo: Amal Abu al-Qian, 'Atir 2016

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)

47th Session, November–December 2011

31. Continue to take measures to improve the situation of Bedouin women and girls with regard to their access to health-care, education and employment.

CERD (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination)

100th Session, November–December 2019

33. Eliminate all barriers faced by minority women in obtaining their right to employment, education, health-care and justice. Incorporate a minority women perspective into policies and strategies.

39 (b). Intensify its efforts to increase the labour market participation for women belonging to Bedouin and Palestinian communities, by providing education and training that fit their experience and level of job skills.

Women's Rights and Human Rights of the Arab Bedouin women in the Negev/Naqab

The United Nations has constantly made women's rights a priority, beginning with mentioning it in its founding charter and more recently declaring gender equality and female empowerment one of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, which is often regarded as a Bill of Rights for women internationally. In 2010, UN Women was founded as a branch whose sole task is to advance the status and empowerment of women.

The UN is also committed to Human Rights in general, evident in its creation of bodies such as Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD); Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR); Human Rights Committee (CCPR); and the Human Rights Council.

The basic rights of Arab Bedouin women residents of the Negev/Naqab are impaired by the institutionalized discrimination against them, which manifests in unequal allocation of land, planning, and housing resources. Arab

Bedouin women have the lowest socio-economic status in Israel and face wide-ranging violations of their rights, including the right to health, employment, accessible education and adequate standard of living.

The Concluding Observations and matters brought to your attention of different UN Committees and Forums, reveal the inability of the State of Israel to implement the various human rights covenants to which it is committed, specifically, of Arab Bedouin women from the Negev/Naqab. The UN's recommendations and observations cited in this brochure highlight the importance of promoting women's rights, in particular, Arab Bedouin women from unrecognized villages, who suffer from constant threat to their household and their unique and traditional way of life.

For these reasons, Israel must recognize the unrecognized Arab Bedouin villages in the Negev/Naqab and grant Arab Bedouin women equal access to services as equal citizens of the State.

Sidreh is a non-profit organization established in 1998 in Lakiya with the mission to support the Palestinian-Bedouin woman in the Negev in her pursuit of the full realization of herself and her rights as well as those of her community. Their work at CEDAW contributed extensively to their Concluding Observations on Arab Bedouin women.

Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) was established to provide a framework for Jewish-Arab collaborative efforts in the struggle for civil equality and the advancement of mutual tolerance and coexistence. NCF's work in the international sphere contributed to the Concluding Observations by UN human rights Committees, such as CCPR, CERD and CESCR.