



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



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# **On (In)Equality and Demolition of Homes and Structures in Arab Bedouin Communities in the Negev/Naqab**

**July 2020**

**Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality** | An Arab-Jewish organization established in 1997 by Arab and Jewish residents of the Naqab, to provide a platform for a joint fight for civil rights equality. The Forum considers all Israeli governments and their various authorities responsible for the denial of full rights from the Bedouin community in the Naqab and acts to prevent further affliction and harm to both recognized and unrecognized villages. The Forum's activities are varied and include public protests, social media, legal proceedings, community activities, work with Israeli and foreign media, local and international advocacy, research and more. All activities are based on Arab-Jewish collaboration.

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**Cover photo:** Self-demolition in the unrecognized village of az-Za'arūrah, photo by Eve Tendler, August 2019

**Back cover photo:** Police Officers from the Yoav unit in the unrecognized village of 'Atīr, photo by Hudā 'Abū al-Qi'ān, April 2019 ([Yuṣawiruna project – Photographing for Human Rights](#)).

In accordance with the law, the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality is proud to note that as a result of cooperation with friendly countries and international organizations that promote human rights, most of the funding for our activities comes from "foreign entities."

## Summary

Demolition of structures is one of the central tools used by the State of Israel against the Bedouin community in the Naqab, in order to dispossess them of their land and concentrate them in urban townships. This community, which has suffered for years from lack of adequate housing, has been engaged in a protracted struggle against the State over ownership of land in the Naqab. In 2019, as in previous years, the State of Israel chose to continue to invest large budgets in enforcement, leading to the demolition of some 2,241 structures in Bedouin communities in the Naqab. The statistics presented in this report are based on data from the Southern Administration for the Coordination of Enforcement of Land Laws (hereinafter: Southern Administration) that has been released to the public over recent years by NCF through the submission of applications under the Freedom of Information Act. **It should be noted that the data appearing in this report relates only to demolitions in the Bedouin communities.**

The State's policy toward its Bedouin citizens living in the Naqab is reflected not only in demolitions and the attempt to dispossess them from their land, but also in the fact that they do not treat them as citizens of full and equal status. Unlike other Israeli citizens, the relationship between Bedouin citizens and State systems and authorities is mediated by unique institutions established by the State solely for this purpose. The most significant manifestation of inequality is the existence of the Authority for the Development and Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev (hereinafter: Bedouin Authority), whose main goal, in the eyes of many in the Bedouin community, is to force as many Bedouin residents as possible from the villages into the townships.

In 2019, various enforcement agencies established and employed 'regulation units' and 'designated units' to promote 'enforcement

promoting regulation' and advance the Bedouin Authority's five-year plan. This mechanism of 'enforcement promoting regulation' is exercised through judicial injunctions; imposing of high fines (up to NIS 300,000); the constant presence of inspectors and police forces in the field; threats; and the use of drones. Although the Bedouin Authority continues to claim that it is not engaged in the destruction of structures and houses, the data shows otherwise, as the entire enforcement system is managed in accordance with the priorities of the Bedouin Authority and in full coordination with it.

During 2019, the trend of 'self-demolition' (carried out by the owners of the structures) continued - a product of the scope of intimidation and violence exercised by the Bedouin Authority in collaboration with all law enforcement and police bodies. According to the Southern Administration, there was a significant 19% increase in the number of demolitions carried out before demolition orders were issued, which is probably the result of the activities of the Yoav Unit's investigation division, which opens investigation files and criminal proceedings against the owners. Also, in 2019, the state continued to promote programs such as the extension of Highway 6 toward the south; the establishment of an open-pit phosphate mine; expansion of the military industrial zone in Ramat Beka; laying new railway lines and more - all at the expense of Bedouin residents of the Naqab. These programs put many villages and homes in danger of being demolished. This report relates the stories of four unrecognized villages that are currently in danger of eviction and immediate demolition: al-'Arāgib, Rās Jarābā, al-buqay'ah, and Wādī al-Khālīl.

This report lacks reference to the period when Bedouin citizens in the Naqab, together with the rest of the world, lived under closure due to the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, as the data presented here pertains only to 2019. It should be noted that with the declaration of a state of emergency and the orders issued by the Israeli government

to all of its citizens to stay at home, a group of 23 organizations, headed by NCF, sent the Attorney General an urgent request to immediately stop further punitive measures against the Bedouin population regarding house demolitions and plowing under of crops. The Attorney General and the Israeli government accepted the request and promised to stop demolitions of previously erected structures and reduce the presence of inspectors in the field.

Unfortunately, the enforcement and police forces did not consider it appropriate to immediately cease all enforcement activities in the Naqab. The State of Israel continued to plow under crops; distribute demolition orders and warnings; summon Bedouin civilians for police investigations; impose penalties on shepherds and more. This conduct during a health, social and economic crisis, such as has never been experienced in Israel, once again proved to the Bedouin citizens the extent to which State authorities are impervious to their rights. More than 30 cases were documented during March, April and May 2020, in which inspectors entered villages and townships and harassed the population in an unprecedented and violent manner. The precarious situation of the Bedouin communities in the Naqab, which is due to policies of dispossession, discrimination, and neglect, has only been exacerbated by the crisis.

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## **1. Introduction: The Arab Bedouin Community in the Naqab**

At the heart of the ongoing conflict between the Bedouin citizens in the Naqab and the State of Israel is the continuing denial of the State regarding Bedouin land ownership rights in the Naqab, and the dispossession policy it continues to employ. Most of the State's plans for the Naqab region have almost entirely ignored the needs of the Bedouin population and violated its most basic rights. The purpose of these plans, in the past and today, is to "regulate" the Bedouin communities' land and housing affairs, and to forcibly concentrate them in urban and semi-urban localities (government townships and recognized villages).<sup>1</sup>

In the middle of the 19th century, the Naqab was the permanent habitat of the Bedouin and was divided among the various tribes. The livelihood of those tribes was based, for the most part, on water-scarce agriculture in an area of about two million dunam (200,000 hectares). In 1948, on the eve of the establishment of the State of Israel, there were, according to various estimates, between 65,000 and 100,000 Bedouin in the area. After the war, most of them either left or were deported to Jordan and the West Bank, Egypt, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, leaving a mere 11,000 Bedouins in the Naqab. At the same time, the State of Israel began a process of evicting Bedouin communities from their places of residence, a process which continues to this day. From the early 1950s to 1966, the State of Israel concentrated the Bedouin in the Naqab in a closed area called the Siyāj (in Arabic: fence), under military rule. During this period, entire villages were displaced by the State from their seat in the western and northern Naqab into the Siyāj area.

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<sup>1</sup> The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 2014. *The Unrecognized Villages – "Prawer-Begin Plan"*. <https://tinyurl.com/y4nuel76>

The land that belonged to those Bedouin who became refugees, as well as much of the land owned by the Bedouin who remained in Israel, was appropriated and nationalized by way of a number of laws, including the Absentee Property Law (1950)<sup>2</sup> and the Land Acquisition Act (1953).<sup>3</sup> In addition, the State began to regulate the land and register it in its own name with total disregard for the Bedouin's indigenous rights on the land. This was done by claiming that these are "dead lands,"<sup>4</sup> and by enacting the Planning and Building Act (1965),<sup>5</sup> which re-designated most of the Bedouin land as agricultural land, nature reserves, or closed military zones, and not as areas for establishing Bedouin villages. In this way, all existing Bedouin dwellings were retroactively declared illegal. Thus, for the first time, the phenomenon of "unrecognized villages" came into being: villages which, for the most part, were established before the establishment of the State of Israel but did not receive any recognized planning status, and subsequently became illegal under Israeli law.

In 1966, with the disbandment of the military administration and with the completion of planning proceedings for the first recognized Bedouin township of Tal as-Saba' (Tel Sheva), the urbanization process that the State imposed on the Bedouin population of the Naqab began - a process that continues to this day. The state has established seven Bedouin townships, most of them in the Siyāj area, promising the residents "modern" services in exchange for organized settlement on urban plots. At the same time, Israeli policy towards the Bedouin in the Naqab focused on the effort to concentrate the entire population in the seven townships.

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<sup>2</sup> Absentee Property Law, 1950. <https://tinyurl.com/y2ckm8kl>

<sup>3</sup> Land Acquisition Law, 1953. <https://tinyurl.com/y6p2aq4x>

<sup>4</sup> For more information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 2012. Processes of dispossession in the Negev/Naqab: The Israeli Policy of Counter Claims against the Bedouin-Arabs [Hebrew], 2012. <https://tinyurl.com/y3dve4tb>

<sup>5</sup> Planning and Building Law, 1965. <https://tinyurl.com/ycg3dzqi>



Since 1999, the State of Israel has recognized 11 villages in the Naqab in various government decisions. These decisions appeared to be a major change from the previous policy, according to which the only option for Bedouin settlement was in the seven townships. However, some 20 years later, in practice, there is no significant difference between the recognized villages and those that remain unrecognized. Most of the recognized villages still lack approved urban planning schemes, so residents cannot obtain building permits. At the same time, demolitions are ongoing, and infrastructure such as water, electricity, sewage disposal and roads are still mostly inaccessible or incomplete.

Today, there are more than 35 Bedouin villages in the Naqab that the State of Israel refuses to recognize and refers to as "diaspora" or "illegal villages". Among them, are historic villages that existed before the establishment of the State of Israel, and villages moved by the State itself, during the 1950s, from their historical location into the Siyāj area. The State does not recognize any of these communities, and their residents receive very few services, and in most cases – no services at all, from the State.

Although members of the Bedouin community make up more than a third of the Naqab population, only 12.4% of the recognized localities in the region are designated for this community.<sup>6</sup> Israeli planning policy has ensured over the years that most Bedouin villages will remain unrecognized, continue to be subject to policies of demolition and punishment, and suffer from deprivation of infrastructure and services. This policy is implemented in all types of communities where the Bedouin reside – government-planned townships, recognized

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<sup>6</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017. *Localities and population, by district, subdistrict, religion and social groups*, table 2.16

villages and unrecognized villages. While this policy has been somewhat successful, most unrecognized villages remain in place.



Pictured: The unrecognized village of 'Atir. Photo: Hudā 'Abū al-Qi'ān, May 2017

## **2. Demolition of Structures in Arab Bedouin Communities in the Naqab**

The right to adequate housing is a recognized fundamental right in international law, anchored in a variety of conventions that the State of Israel has long been party to. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) emphasizes that this is a right that must be interpreted broadly, including the right to live in security, peace, and dignity. According to the Committee, the right to adequate housing also includes protection from forced eviction and from arbitrary demolition of homes, and the right to choose where to live. In order for housing to be considered adequate, it must take into account the cultural identity of its occupants.<sup>7</sup> The demolition of structures and houses in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab

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<sup>7</sup> UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'The right to adequate housing', 2014, <https://tinyurl.com/yaolj2mv>

systematically violates their right to adequate housing, even when judged in light of a very limited definition.<sup>8</sup>

In 2019, NCF worked alongside other organizations to raise awareness in the international community, especially within UN human rights mechanisms, concerning human rights abuses in the Naqab. As a result, a number of various UN committees (CESCR,<sup>9</sup> CERD - United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination<sup>10</sup>) and six other Special Rapporteurs<sup>11</sup> issued strong conclusions and recommendations to the State of Israel, demanding it cease the use of home demolitions as a tool and recognize, as far as possible, the unrecognized Bedouin villages. In addition, the State of Israel was asked to respect the Bedouin' cultural lifestyle and their historical ties to the land in the Naqab.

Demolition of structures and houses is a major tool of the State of Israel in dealing with the Bedouin community in the Naqab, with the goal of promoting a policy of forced transfer from the unrecognized villages to the townships, and the dispossession of land from the Bedouin population. The Bedouin community has been suffering from a major housing crisis for years without adequate response. Tens of thousands of people live in homes under demolition orders, usually due to lack of ability to obtain a building permit. The members of the

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<sup>8</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Israel*, 12 November 2019, E/C.12/ISR/CO/4, COs 20-21, <https://tinyurl.com/r5wf4bx>

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 8.

<sup>10</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to nineteenth reports of Israel*, 12 December 2019, CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19, COs 28-29, 54, <https://tinyurl.com/yd9vdnbs>

<sup>11</sup> Mandates of the Special Rapporteurs in the field of cultural rights; on adequate housing; on the situation of human rights defenders; on the human rights of internally displaced persons; on minority issues and on contemporary forms of racism: Public Communication, 1 May 2019, AL ISR 6/2019, <https://tinyurl.com/y5qvulcs>

community are waging a protractive struggle over land ownership, ownership of which the state continues to deny.<sup>12</sup>

In 2019, there was a slight decrease in the number of building demolitions, 3.65% less than in 2018 (from 2326 to 2241),<sup>13</sup> but the trend of demolitions performed by the owners of the structures (hereinafter: 'self-demolition') continued, amounting to 88% of all structures demolished. Another significant figure is the dramatic 146% increase in the number of demolitions made by the owners of the structures before the issuance of any demolition order (hereinafter: 'demolitions performed in procedure') - 736 structures in 2019 (33% of all demolitions) compared to only 299 structures in 2018.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the Israeli government and law enforcement agencies have chosen to invest in mechanisms such as 'enforcement promoting regulation,'<sup>15</sup> employed by 'regulation units' and 'designated units' within enforcement bodies. The use of these mechanisms is ordained by the Bedouin Authority's priorities and serves "as an incentive ... to reach evacuation agreements with the residents."<sup>16</sup> In order to facilitate their use, an annual work plan is made in with the collaboration of law enforcement agencies, the Bedouin Authority and the police. Aforementioned designated units have been created within the National Unit for Planning and Building Law Enforcement (hereinafter: the National Unit), the Abu Basma Regional Committee, the Green Patrol and the Israel Lands Authority (hereinafter: ILA) for the implementation of the work plan.

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>13</sup> Southern Administration for the Coordination of Enforcement of Land Laws, 'Summary of Working Year 2019', 2020, p. 21 Section 15 [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/ybe89ev6>

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 21 Section 12 [Hebrew]

<sup>15</sup> Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, "Negotiations" under Fire: Demolition of buildings as a central tool for the dispossession and concentration of the Bedouin community in the Negev, pg.20 [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/y4ctmaza>

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 20 Section 7 [Hebrew]

By way of judicial orders, heavy administrative fines, the constant presence of supervisors and police forces in the field, and the use of drones - the enforcement bodies have contributed to increasing the element of intimidation and threat to Bedouin residents to bring them to "agreements" with the Bedouin Authority, against their will. In addition, State authorities have implemented an enhanced enforcement mechanism aimed at preventing construction and "fresh invasions" that allows enforcement authorities to use reasonable force to remove anyone who rebuilds their home or returns to land that he was evicted from within 30 days of the "invasion"<sup>17</sup>; and the mechanism of 'regulation promoting enforcement' - a course of action that began in 2016, by which the Southern Administration works in cooperation with the Bedouin Authority to complete the "regulatory process" without the need for enforcement.<sup>18</sup>

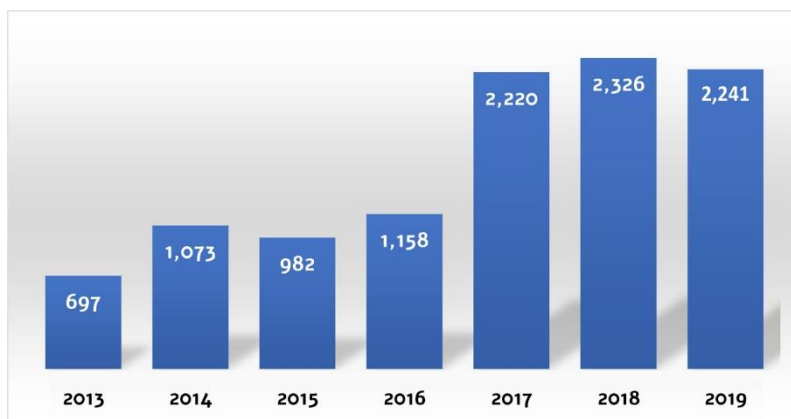
This data shows that despite the Bedouin Authority's claims that it does not deal with house and structure demolitions of the population it is intended to serve, it does play a major role in enforcement proceedings and even establishes working arrangements for the various enforcement bodies.

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<sup>17</sup> Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, "House Demolitions as a Central Tool for the Dispossession and Concentration of the Bedouin Population in the Negev/Naqab - Updated Data for 2017 ", 2018, p. 7 , <https://tinyurl.com/y99o543a>

<sup>18</sup> See footnote 15, pg. 22 [Hebrew]

**Figure 1 - Demolition of structures in the Naqab Bedouin communities, 2013-2019**



The data presented in Figure 1, shows a sharp increase in the number of demolitions in Bedouin communities in the Naqab since 2013. In just six years, the number of demolitions rose from 697 in 2013 to 2,241 demolitions in 2019 - a 221% increase in demolition rates. Between 2013 and 2014, the demolition rate increased by 54%, from 697 to 1,073 demolitions of structures in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab. In 2015, there was a slight 8.5% reduction in the number of structures demolished, but in 2016 there was an 18% increase and the number of demolitions reached 1,158. In 2017, some 2,220 structures were demolished with more than 90% increase compared to 2016. In 2018, there was a 5% increase in demolitions in the Naqab and the number reached a peak of 2,326 structures. In 2019, there was a slight decline in the number of demolitions from the previous year of 3.6%, and 2,241 structures were demolished. All told, in just eight years, some 10,969 structures were demolished in Bedouin communities in the Naqab.

**Figure 2 – Demolition of structures in the Naqab Bedouin communities by type of structure, 2019**

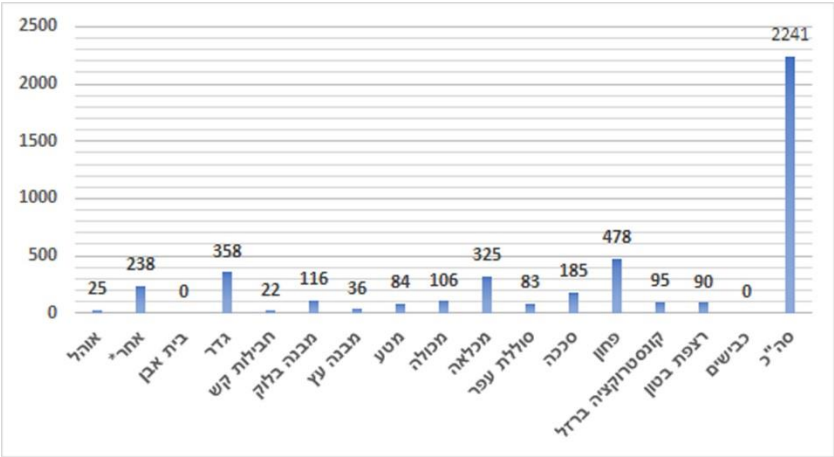


Figure 2 classifies the type of structures demolished in Bedouin communities during 2019. This is a figure first published in 2016 that reveals the broad definition given by the Israeli enforcement authorities to the term "structure". This list makes it possible to estimate the number of structures used for farming and grazing purposes, such as pens, orchards and scattered straw bales, which totaled about 431 cases of agricultural damage.

\* According to data from the Southern Administration, "other" are structures that were demolished "in [enforcement] procedure" (without a warrant), which also includes scrap, solar panels, equipment, construction materials and more.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Southern Administration for the Coordination of Enforcement of Land Laws, 'Copy of Coexistence Forum: Total for 2018 work year', 2019, p. 14; Southern Administration for the Coordination of Enforcement of Land Laws, Total for 2019 work year, 2020, page 14 Section 6 [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/ybe89ev6>

In 2018, for the first time, the Southern Administration released data concerning the number of structures used for residential purposes that were demolished in Bedouin communities in the Naqab. In 2015, 416 residential structures were demolished and in 2018, the number rose to about 604 homes. Unfortunately, in 2019, the Southern Administration chose not to publicize data on the number of houses demolished in that year. However, we have summed up the number of tents, sheds, stone, block, and wood structures – estimating that approximately 655 of the demolished structures were residential – amounting to an 8% increase in one year.

In 2018, as part of the government's attempt to implement Amendment 116 of the Planning and Building Law (known as the Kaminitz Law)<sup>20</sup>, one of Simplex's 3D tools for mapping and modeling came into routine use in the Naqab. Approximately two years ago, Simplex<sup>21</sup> won a five-year contract from the Ministry of Finance, which the National Unit operates under. As part of its work, the company uses state-of-the-art technology to discover and analyze construction anomalies. With the help of a unique photography system (the weight of which allows installation on all types of aircraft), it collects information about any change in construction in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab, which is then transmitted to the various enforcement authorities.<sup>22</sup> In 2019, the use of the photography and analytical functions of the Simplex system was expanded to the eastern areas of the Naqab desert.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See footnote 5, amendment no. 116, 2017

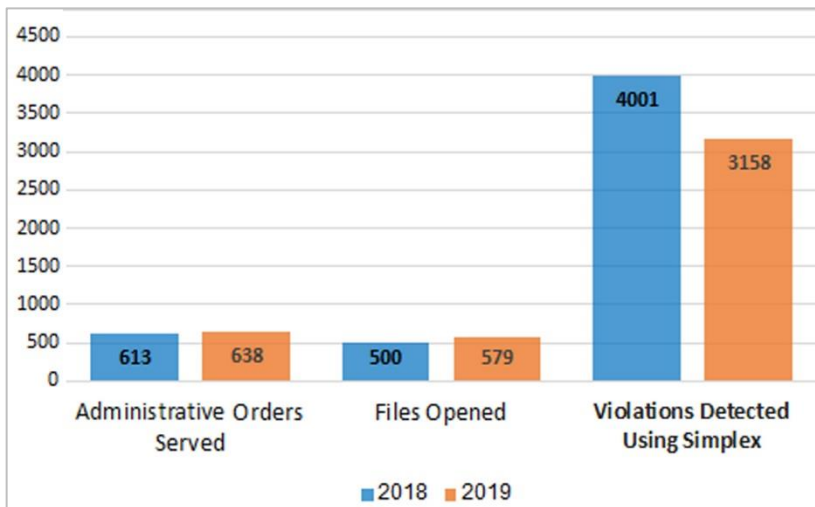
<sup>21</sup> Simplex Mapping Solutions Ltd, <https://www.simplex-mapping.com/>

<sup>22</sup> Reshuyot (Magazine for Local Councils), February 2018, pp. 2-3 [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/y4hottfj>

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 21, Section 12.



**Figure 3 – Administrative demolition orders served using the Simplex System, 2018-2019**



In 2018, 500 files were opened, and 613 administrative orders were distributed, which are the result of over 4,000 Simplex exploration tours conducted in the Naqab. That is, in 2018, the number of files opened accounted for about 12.5% of all the searches made by the Simplex system.<sup>24</sup> In 2019, fewer exploration tours were conducted (3,158 in number) but, compared to 2018, 15.8% more cases were opened (579) and more administrative orders were issued (638).<sup>25</sup> In other words, in 2019 there was an increase of about 4% in the number of orders served compared to 2018 in spite of a decrease in the total number of exploration tours. According to Southern Administration data, the reason that a vast amount of information that has been

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<sup>24</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

supplied by Simplex has not been acted upon, is a lack of manpower, which prevents the issuance of additional administrative files.<sup>26</sup>

The use of advanced technological measures against a marginalized population with poor resources increases the feeling of despair and alienation among Bedouin residents of the Naqab, most of whom are defined by state authorities as construction "criminals", when, in fact, they have no way of obtaining building permits. While in the past, residents experienced constant encounters with inspectors and police forces on the ground, today they are also subject to aerial surveillance.

It is worthy of note that the drones are equipped with cameras that incorporate advanced video processing capabilities, which can include automatic face recognition, recording of license plate numbers, and the ability to analyze large numbers of variables. As such, the drones have become a particularly invasive means of monitoring, capable of gathering sensitive information over long periods of time - regardless of weather conditions. Sometimes the size of the drones, combined with the altitude at which they fly, makes it difficult for the public to know where and when they are being used for documentation - which significantly increases the violation of their right to privacy.<sup>27</sup> In an aggressive struggle between civilians lacking effective safeguards against the government and the various arms of enforcement, it would seem worth considering whether or not it is advisable to use measures that could potentially cause mental, economic and social harm to the Bedouin population in the Naqab.

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 22, section 21.

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Justice, Privacy Protection Authority, 'Privacy Aspects of Use of Drones', 2018 [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/yakamwic>

## **2.1 'Initiated Demolitions', 'Self-Demolitions' and 'Demolitions Performed in Procedure'**

Demolitions in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab are classified by the authorities as 'initiated demolitions', 'self-demolitions' and 'demolitions performed in procedure'. The source of the differences in classification of the type of demolition is the impetus of the demolition and its legal base.<sup>28</sup>

**'Initiated demolitions'** are performed by various enforcement agencies through the issuing of demolition orders as part of concentrated and coordinated demolition operations. These are usually long convoys including dozens of personnel, police officers from the Yoav special police unit as well as regular 'blue' Israeli police forces. Most often, when dealing with limited, one-location demolitions, forces arrive without notice and in the early morning, when the women are usually at home alone. If demolitions are planned in other communities for that day, larger forces will enter the village or township. Every operation involves many vehicles and dozens of enforcement personnel.

**'Self-demolitions'** are carried out by the owners of the structures themselves, after a demolition order has been issued. The Southern Administration defines 'self-demolitions' as a direct result of "dialogue and investigations conducted by the Yoav [special police force]."<sup>29</sup> This definition is puzzling, since investigations and file initiations are not related in any way to dialogue. On the contrary, the presence of police forces and the fear of criminal sanctions that can be imposed on the owners of the structures creates great trauma for the Bedouin

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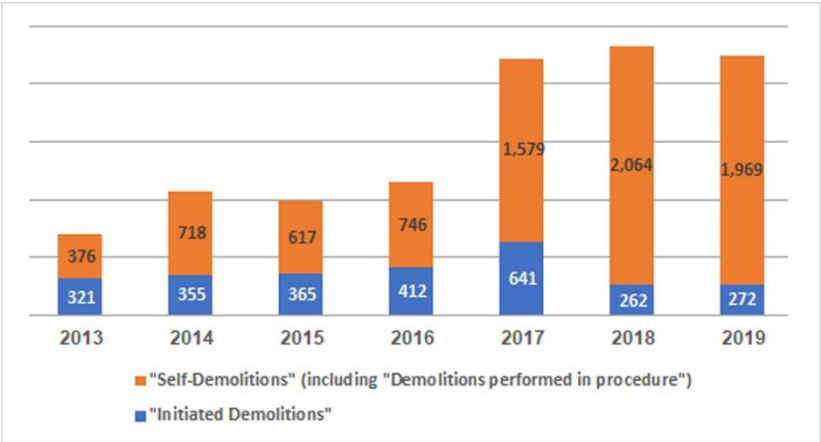
<sup>28</sup> For further information, see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, Mechanism for Dispossession and Intimidation: Demolition Policy in Arab Bedouin communities in the Negev/Naqab', 2019, pp. 19-21, <https://tinyurl.com/yx937585>

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 9

residents. The desire to avoid this trauma, the possibility of saving personal equipment and construction materials in a controlled demolition, and threats from authorities demanding reparation for demolition costs from the owners, are just some of the reasons why people decide to demolish themselves.

The official count of 'self-demolitions' includes demolitions 'performed in procedure', which are also defined as the result of Yoav unit dialogues and investigations, but these are conducted before the structure owners receive demolition orders.

**Figure 4 – 'Self-demolitions' (including demolitions 'performed in procedure') as opposed to 'initiated demolitions', 2013-2019**



The number of 'self-demolitions' increased from 1,579 demolitions in 2017, to 2,064 in 2018 - an increase of about 31%. In 2019, there was a slight decline (95 incidences) in the number of 'self-demolitions'. Between 2013-2017, there was an increase in the number of 'initiated demolitions', but in 2018, the number of 'initiated demolitions' dropped drastically from 641 to 262 demolitions. This trend also continued in 2019, with about 88% of the demolitions (1,969) being

executed by the owners themselves, and only 272 structures that were demolished by the authorities.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 5 – Percentage of ‘self-demolitions’ ‘initiated demolitions’ and demolitions ‘performed in procedure’, 2019**



In 2019, the number of structures demolished in 'initiated demolitions' was 272, accounting for about 12% of total demolitions. The proportion of demolitions carried out by the owners of the structures ('self-demolitions' without demolitions 'performed in procedure', reached 55%, approximately 1,233 structures. In 2019, the 'performed in procedure' demolition rate increased from 25% in 2018 to 33% in 2019 (736 structures destroyed by their owners before a demolition order was issued) - an 8% increase in just one year.<sup>31</sup>

These figures evidence a worsening of the government's position and increased pressure on residents through the constant presence of

<sup>30</sup> Composed from data supplied by the Southern Administration following requests under the "Freedom of Information Law" initiated by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality.  
<sup>31</sup> See footnote 13.

enforcement agencies on patrol, during demolitions, issuing of demolition orders, threats to impose fines, and aerial photography by way of drones. All the aforementioned, plus repeated visits by representatives of the Bedouin Authority, are meant to place constant pressure on civilians in order to force them to move from the unrecognized villages to the townships and villages that have been recognized by the State.

### **3. Exclusion of Arab Bedouin Citizens from Decision-Making**

The State's policy towards the Bedouin is reflected not only in implementation of house demolitions and the attempt to evict Bedouin from their lands, but also in the fact that they are not treated as citizens of equal status. One of the key manifestations of this fact is that, unlike other Israeli citizens, interaction between the Bedouin residents and the State's systems and authorities is mediated by unique institutions established by the State solely for this purpose. For most of the time since the establishment of the State of Israel, Bedouin citizens in the Naqab have not had independent local government institutions, and the unrecognized villages still do not have such institutions today.<sup>32</sup> The most prominent expression of inequality is the establishment and continued existence of the Bedouin Authority, "an institution whose main mission is to do the opposite of what its name implies"<sup>33</sup> and which is in charge of regulating the affairs of the Bedouin in the Naqab in both recognized and unrecognized communities.

Following the end of the military administration in 1966, responsibility for Bedouin affairs was transferred from the Ministry of Defense and

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<sup>32</sup> Swirski, S. & Hasson, Y., *Invisible Citizens: Israeli Government Policy Toward the Negev Bedouin*, *Adva Center*, 2006, pg. 7, <https://adva.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/NegevEnglishSummary.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Haia Noach, "Flatten the Graph? It is More Important to Flatten Homes in Bedouin Villages", Siach Mikomi [Hebrew], May 13, 2020, <https://tinyurl.com/ybz5q9z9>

the Army to the ministerial committees in the Knesset (Israel's Parliament). These committees focused, for the most part, on issues that were usually dealt with by the various government ministries, such as: planning and construction, water, health, education, and direct contact with the population. First and foremost, the committees focused on planning policies for dispossession, concentration, and transfer of Bedouin residents into the government-planned townships.<sup>34</sup>

While the Knesset ministerial committees were responsible for policy-making, the ongoing management of Bedouin civilian affairs in the Naqab was concentrated by the then Israel Land Administration (MMI), now the Israel Land Authority (ILA), which was established in 1960 as a division within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (hereinafter: the Ministry of Agriculture). In 1986, MMI became the central governing institution for Bedouin affairs and established a body called the Bedouin Administration (in its full name, the Bedouin Development Administration). The Bedouin Administration was allegedly established for the purpose of negotiating with Bedouin residents who filed ownership claims over land in the Naqab, but over the years became the main government body charged with responsibility for all the Bedouin-related issues in the region - including planning authority, land agreements, water allocations, health services, etc.<sup>35</sup> At that time, all government budgets for the Bedouin population in the Naqab, including local municipal budgets, were transferred through the Bedouin Administration and not directly by the various governmental ministries - as was the case everywhere else in the country.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Swirski, S. & Hasson, Y., *Invisible Citizens: Israeli Government Policy Toward the Negev Bedouin*, *Adva Center*, 2005, pg. 14-15 [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/ycm5hf3j>

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 32, pg. 6.

<sup>36</sup> See footnote 34, pp. 15-16.

Along with MMI, the Bedouin Administration has moved, over time, to a large number of different government ministries (Ministry of Construction and Housing; Ministry of National Infrastructure; Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment; and then back again to the Ministry of Construction and Housing). For the most part, Arik Sharon was responsible for moving MMI (and as a result, the Bedouin Administration as well) from ministry to ministry and between Likud party Ministers.<sup>37</sup> This fact had many implications when it comes to setting policies on the various issues, so that the Bedouin were seldom included in the decision-making process.

### **3.1 The Authority for the Development and Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev (the Bedouin Authority)**

In 2007, a decision was made to establish the "Bedouin Settlement Regulation Authority in the Negev", in the Ministry of Construction and Housing (Government Resolution 1999).<sup>38</sup> The principal designated purpose of the Authority was to regulate land ownership claims, regulate permanent residence and infrastructure, assist with employment integration, and coordinate education and welfare services. Following Government Resolution 3707,<sup>39</sup> and the recommendations of the Prawer Commission,<sup>40</sup> the 'Authority for Implementing the Regulation of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev' (hereinafter: the Implementation Authority) was established in the

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<sup>37</sup> See footnote 36.

<sup>38</sup> Government Resolution 1999 (15.07.2007), 'Establishment of the Bedouin Settlement Regulation Authority in the Negev' [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/ycoh3rqg>

<sup>39</sup> Government Resolution No. 3707 (11.09.11), 'Report of the Inter-ministerial team for Implementation of the Committee for the Regulation of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev – continuing discussion and transfer of arena of operation from office to office' [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/y8r3lobv>

<sup>40</sup> Adalah – The Legal Center For Arab Minority Rights in Israel, 'Demolition and Eviction of Bedouin Citizens of Israel in the Naqab (Negev) – The Prawer Plan, 2013, <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7589>



Prime Minister's Office (changed in 2012 to the Authority for the Development and Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev).<sup>41</sup>

The Implementation Authority was supposed to work with the Bedouin Authority to implement the Praver plan as quickly as possible. Later, when the plan was frozen, all authority was transferred to the Bedouin Settlement Regulation Authority in the Negev, in the Ministry of Construction and Housing.<sup>42</sup> In 2014, the Authority's name was changed to its current name, and it became an internal unit in the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>43</sup> In addition, its powers were expanded to include dealing with social and economic issues and the Implementation Authority was disbanded - so that all authority was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>44</sup>

In 2015, former MK (Member of Knesset) Uri Ariel (the Jewish Home party) was appointed Minister of Agriculture where he served until his resignation in November 2019. During his tenure, approximately 8,972 structures were demolished in Arab Bedouin communities in the Naqab. The Chairman of the Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (hereinafter: the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages), Mr. Attia el-Assam, said in response to the announcement of Ariel's resignation that: "His era as Agriculture Minister was the most difficult period for the Bedouin sector ... his goal is to squeeze the Bedouins into a minimal area and not provide them any services ...," a policy that relates to the Bedouin citizens as enemies.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Government Resolution 5110 (20.09.2012), "Renaming the 'Authority for Implementing the Regulation of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev' [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/y9je8r7c>

<sup>42</sup> See footnote 38, section 3x.

<sup>43</sup> Government Resolution 1986 (21.08.2014), 'Renaming the Bedouin Settlement Regulation Authority in the Negev and change of administrative standing and adaptation to budget regulations' [Hebrew], <https://tinyurl.com/y8do6zrx>

<sup>44</sup> See footnote 43, sections 1-4.

<sup>45</sup> Priel, M., 'The Minister Uri Ariel Resigned – and the Negev is Really Not Sorry', Branza news Be'er Sheva and the Negev, December 10, 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/y8v8zogn>

These designated governing bodies were never run by members of the community and most of the persons employed by them came from outside of the Bedouin community. Today, of the 14 executive positions in the Bedouin Authority, there is only one Bedouin who oversees the Social and Communal Division. All other office holders are Jews - including the head of the Bedouin Authority, Yair Maayan.<sup>46</sup> While the Bedouin Authority is trying to portray itself as acting on behalf of the Bedouin community, it is playing a significant part in the State's attempts to deny the Bedouin of their land and demolish their homes. By conducting aggressive and violent "negotiations" and denying any possibility of formal recognition of the villages, the Bedouin Authority is trying to force members of the community to move to recognized localities and waive their land claims.

The statements made over the years by the head of the Bedouin Authority, Yair Maayan, about the population that he is supposed to serve, provide evidence of the policy of dispossession that is being perpetrated by the Bedouin Authority. During a hearing in the District Planning and Construction Committee (Southern District), Maayan was asked about the consent of residents to move to a new neighborhood planned to be built in one of the Bedouin townships. In response, Maayan acknowledged that the Bedouin population's honest and genuine consent to their evictions is in fact the result of threats and issuing of demolition orders designed to exert pressure<sup>47</sup> to bring them to agree to move from their current place of residence and, de facto, forfeit their land ownership claims.

As part of the Bedouin Authority's five-year plan, enforcement agencies are working to open legal cases against structures in localities that the Bedouin Authority is seeking to vacate. By actuating a system

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<sup>46</sup> The authority for development and settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev, 'About', *Website for Governmental Services and Information* [Hebrew], 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/yagsc9g5>

<sup>47</sup> From deliberations of the Planning Authority, Southern District Committee, January 6, 2020.

of 'enforcement promoting regulation', more than 833 legal files relating to approximately 4,041 structures were opened in the first half of 2019.<sup>48</sup> As was noted previously, this system is ordained by the Bedouin Authority's priorities and actuated in the framework of an annual work plan made in collaboration with law enforcement and the police, as well as involving the Yoav's intelligence unit.

In 2019, the Yoav unit opened 547 investigative files involving the interrogation of 523 Bedouin residents. In the process, 361 structures were demolished by the owners themselves before a demolition order was issued.<sup>49</sup> In the same year, the Yoav unit filed three lawsuits against Bedouin citizens to recover demolition costs - another mechanism that strikes fear in the heart of families who are, in any case, financially challenged, thus forcing them to demolish their homes themselves. For example, in the unrecognized village of al-Arāgīb (see Section 4.1, pg. 30), families were required to pay the State an amount of NIS 1.3 million for eviction costs<sup>50</sup> (the matter is pending in the Supreme Court). As noted above, these actions are intended to force "consent" from the Bedouin residents, but are presented in the Southern Authority's annual report as "collaboration" or a result of "a focused and intensive process of dialogue."<sup>51</sup>

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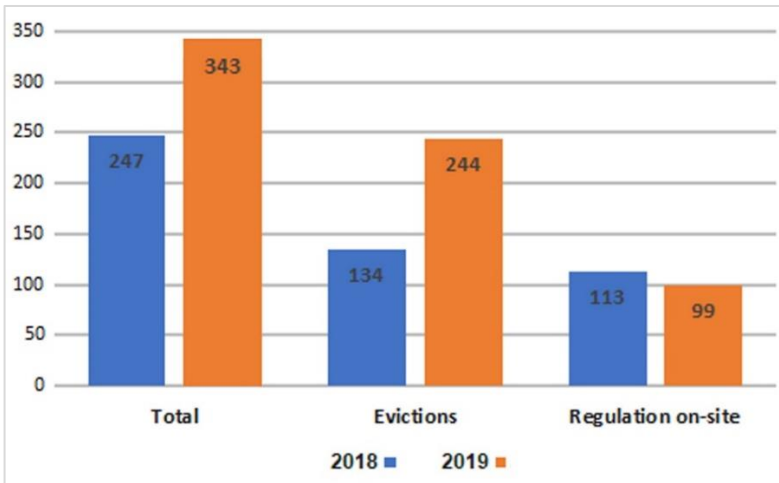
<sup>48</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 17, sections 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ben Zirki, A. (08.08.2019), Israeli Court Orders Bedouins to Pay Cost of Their Eviction From Unrecognized Village. *Haaretz*. <https://tinyurl.com/y3gnfvwy>

<sup>51</sup> See footnote 13, pg. 18.

**Figure 6 – Evictions as opposed to 'regulation on-site'**



As shown in Figure 6, in 2018, the Bedouin Authority signed 247 "agreements". Of these, 113 were "regulation on-site", i.e. without eviction, and 134 agreements involved forced the eviction of the residents from their homes. A total of 343 "agreements" were signed in the year 2019, an increase of about 38.9% from the previous year. The number of evictions in 2019 increased dramatically by 82%, while the "agreements" signed for "regulation on-site", that do not require eviction of residents, fell by approximately 12%.

The 'enforcement promoting regulation' procedure can be extremely violent, as evidenced in the case of [Umm al-Hirān](#).<sup>52</sup> In 2017, hundreds of armed police officers entered the unrecognized village for the purpose of demolishing six structures. During the raid, a resident, Ya'aqub 'Abū al-Qi'ān, was shot and killed by members of the various

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<sup>52</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, On the Map - Umm al-Hirān. <https://tinyurl.com/y2ytk29a>

police forces operating in the village that night.<sup>53</sup> Two months after Ya'aqub's death, contacts between the residents' representatives and the Bedouin Authority resumed, and on April 10, 2018, a framework agreement was signed between the parties stating that the residents would move to the Hūrah township and destroy their homes in the village. At the same time, another agreement was signed with the residents, detailing what they would receive from the State.<sup>54</sup>

In the same year, the villagers filed a petition with the Supreme Court against the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Agriculture, the head of the Bedouin Authority and the State of Israel; claiming that the additional agreement was discriminatory and unequal. The prosecutor's office, in its response to the petition before the Court, argued that the additional agreement should be revoked, as Yair Maayan, the head of the Bedouin Authority, has no authority to deal with land distribution issues.<sup>55</sup> In the end, the State agreed to recognize this agreement but under certain conditions. In the Supreme Court ruling in February 2020, Justice Dafna Barak-Erez wrote that she felt "uncomfortable concerning treatment of the sensitive issue of moving residents from Umm al-Hīrān to the township of Hūrah, as evidenced by the factual detail in the preliminary response of the State itself."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Breiner, J. (24.02.2020). 'Probe Shows How Israel Police Shot Innocent Bedouin Teacher and Left Him to Die'. *Haaretz*. <https://tinyurl.com/ydbsuwjr>

<sup>54</sup> Libeskind, K., 'The State Attorney's office presents: Lies, concealing facts from the High Court, and agreements that should not be met' [Hebrew], *Maariv*, June 6, 2019. <https://tinyurl.com/y2s8bz2g>

<sup>55</sup> See footnote 52.

<sup>56</sup> See footnote 54.

#### **4. Villages in Danger of Demolition and Immediate Eviction**

The State's failure to recognize the unrecognized villages in the Naqab constitutes not only a decision to avoid their development, but also a blatant violation of basic human rights, among them – planning rights.<sup>57</sup> The decision whether or not to recognize a village is, in general, a political decision - and is not determined strictly on the basis of planning criteria. In the areas where Bedouin villages that the state refuses to recognize exist, many Jewish settlements have been established over the years - some of them have a small number of residents. This policy has far-reaching implications, preventing the unrecognized villagers in the Naqab from basic services and rights and putting them under constant threat of demolition, dispossession, and forced transfer from their land to townships that are recognized by the State.<sup>58</sup>

There are any number of examples of villages suffering from the heavy hand of the Bedouin Authority and the enforcement bodies. In this report, we have chosen to present a number of villages that are in immediate danger as a result of various plans being promoted by the State.

##### **4.1 al-'Arāgib**

We wrote extensively about the unrecognized village of [al-'Arāgib](#)<sup>59</sup> in our previous report, June 2019.<sup>60</sup> The village was established in the Ottoman period, on land acquired by the villagers at that time from

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<sup>57</sup> Bimkom – planners for planning rights. "The Unrecognized Villages in the Negev: Recognition and Equal Rights," a document filed with the Commission for a Policy Proposals to Regulate Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, headed by Eliezer Goldberg, Supreme Court Justice (Retired) [Hebrew], 2008, <https://tinyurl.com/y7wultre>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 'On the Map - al-'Arāgib'. <https://tinyurl.com/y7qh8c4m>

<sup>60</sup> See footnote 28, pp. 25-26.

the al-'Ukabi family. In 1953, the Military Administration ordered the residents to temporarily vacate the village, claiming that the State needed territory for military training – but in the end, the authorities permanently banned the residents from returning to the village. The village lands were purchased under the Land Acquisition Act 1953, but the villagers were not told and did not know of that acquisition. Over the years the villagers maintained a presence and contact with their village and land. They continued to cultivate their fields, graze their herds in the countryside and bury their dead in the family cemetery. During the 1970s, the villagers filed claims for their land with the settlement clerk. In July 2010, the entire village was demolished by the State, and since then the enforcement forces have returned and destroyed it again 175 times.

In 2018, the village leader, Sheikh Sheikh Sayah Abu Madhi'm A-Turi, was arrested on 19 charges of trespassing, 19 counts of illegal entry into public land and more. He was sentenced to 10 months in prison, five months' probation and a fine of NIS 36,000. After the Sheikh's early release from prison in the summer of 2019, enforcement agencies and police continued to harass residents of the unrecognized village of al-'Arāgib. Inspectors from the Green Patrol, accompanied by Yoav unit policemen, arrived on a daily basis, harassed residents, confiscated property without any court order (mattresses, chairs, a water tanker intended for transporting water from the village well, kitchen utensils and more), arrested women and minors and even detained for questioning two Forum activists who were staying in the village in solidarity with the villagers.

The incessant harassment of Sheikh Sayah and his family for trespassing and their imprisonment for those violations are an attempt by the authorities to obstruct the residents' nonviolent struggle and evict them from their historic land. Not incidentally, all this is happening while a lawsuit concerning the ownership of the land is still

being heard in court. The imprisonment of Sheikh Sayah for offenses of trespassing and the imposition of prison sentences for these offences could lead to the criminalization of hundreds of thousands of Bedouin citizens of the Naqab who hold a similar status.

#### **4.2 Wādī al-Khālīl**

Wādī al-Khālīl is adjacent to the recognized village of [Umm Batīn](#)<sup>61</sup> and northeast of it near the Shoket junction. The villagers have been living there from before the establishment of the State of Israel and have filed land claims. As part of the State's attempt to force the Bedouin population in the unrecognized villages to move to recognized townships, several programs are currently being promoted, including the extension of the "Trans-Israel Road" (Route 6) to the south. This plan was approved in 2010 and in 2019 the Trans-Israel Company began work on it south of Shoket Junction. The landscape and open spaces in the Naqab around Be'er Sheva and from Be'er Sheva towards the south enable optimal planning of the extension route to avoid, as far as possible, the displacement of large populations. Despite this, the state saw it appropriate to extend the road south through an area populated by more than 1,000 Bedouin residents, including the residents of Wādī al-Khālīl.

According to residents of the village, about a year ago, representatives of the 'Trans-Israel' company came to the village to negotiate with the families facing eviction, but the Bedouin Authority intervened, arguing that the negotiations could proceed only by way of them. In January 2020, another warning was issued by the enforcement authorities to residents instructing them to evacuate, and on February 21, some of them were summoned for questioning.

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<sup>61</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 'On the Map - Umm Batīn'. <https://tinyurl.com/y93rst4s>



The villagers are seeking a permanent solution that includes setting up an agricultural neighborhood in al-Lagiyyih, where they have land, but the Bedouin Authority has been refusing, for months, to relate to the issue. Although the extension of Route 6 is in progress, the Bedouin Authority did not find it appropriate to present a suitable solution to the residents. This situation may force them to demolish their homes and move out of the path of the highway, and thus forcibly transferred to one of the recognized townships. As of today, residents are in contact with private attorneys in an effort to mitigate their situation.

#### **4.3 Rās Jarābā**

Rās Jarābā is a historic village east of Dimona and within the city's jurisdiction. The village has about 600 inhabitants. The families of the village lived on land where the city of Dimona stands today. As the city developed, the families were pushed to where they live today. However, the Bedouin citizens are not registered as residents of Dimona and cannot vote in local elections or receive services and tax benefits like the citizens living in the city.

In March 2018, villagers began receiving warning letters from the Dimona Township, which is planning to build a new neighborhood (the Rotem neighborhood) in place of their homes. At the end of June 2019, all houses in the village received removal and eviction orders (about 95 orders all told) from the Israel Land Authority. Since then, the villagers have been in legal proceedings. Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (hereinafter: Adalah) has taken on the legal defense and the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages is providing public support for the villagers in order to defer their expulsion from their historic lands.

For their part, the villagers are willing to compromise. They are asking to be recognized as a unique neighborhood within Dimona which

would enable them to continue, to some extent, their traditional way of life. The Bedouin Authority seeks to relocate them immediately to [Gašir as-Sirr](#)<sup>62</sup> and [Abu Tlūl aš-Šahbī](#)<sup>63</sup> villages - but residents are opposed to the move on the grounds the land that is being offered to them belongs to other families.



Pictured: The unrecognized village of Rās Jarābā. Photo: Eve Tendler, August 2019

#### **4.4 al-buqay'ah**

al-buqay'ah is located north of the city of Arad and is made up of 18 groups of families who were settled in the area by order of the Military Administration as early as 1952 – after being displaced from their land in the Dimona area. The village currently has about 1,000 residents. The al-buqay'ah area has various planning designations - some of the

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<sup>62</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 'On the Map - Gašir as-Sirr', <https://tinyurl.com/y8re98dh>

<sup>63</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 'On the Map- Abu Tlūl aš-Šahbī'. <https://tinyurl.com/y9znzw4o>

residents live in areas that were defined as live-fire military zones after the village was established, some live on nature reserves and some in undefined areas. Several years ago, a decision was made in the Southern District Planning Administration, without the residents' knowledge, to transfer them to M'arit (the Kriyot neighborhood) together with residents of other Bedouin localities in the area ([Tal 'Arād](#)<sup>64</sup> and [al-Bāt](#)<sup>65</sup>) in order to vacate 4,500 dunams. In March 2020, the decision was approved (under certain conditions) by the National Planning and Building Council.<sup>66</sup>

In September 2019, residents received removal and eviction orders. As a result, a local committee has been set up that is working today with the Bimkom - Planning in Support of Human Rights NGO, Adalah, the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages, and residents of Arad, to reach agreement with the Bedouin Authority and the Arad municipality. Residents want to remain in place as much as possible (especially in the area of the Nokdim Village, which employs many of the residents).

## **5. Conclusions**

The struggle to define the use of the broad expanses of the Naqab has continued from the establishment of the State until this day. The State of Israel is using all the means at its disposal to concentrate the Bedouin community in large, crowded townships and against the wishes of most members of the community, rather than negotiating fairly to resolve the issue of Bedouin land ownership and settlement.

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<sup>64</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, 'On the Map - Tal 'Arād': <https://tinyurl.com/yaru58a6>

<sup>65</sup> For further information see: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, On the Map - al-Bāt. <https://tinyurl.com/y7h3p39x>

<sup>66</sup> Planning Administration - National Council for Planning and Building, "Resolutions of the National Council for Planning and Building, Session No. 638, 3.3.2020, District Building Plan 17/23/14/4: Kriyot Neighborhood", pg. 6 [Hebrew]. <https://tinyurl.com/ybf6snwd>

In practice, there is no obstacle to reaching a solution agreed upon by all, one that respects the wishes of the Bedouin population and the aspirations of the State. Dispossession and a policy of aggressive and violent negotiation including the use of enforcement tools and demolition of homes will not lead to such a solution. The use of demolitions in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab has devastating consequences, including the disintegration of the community's social structure and a decline in levels of authority, together with feelings of fear and distrust of the State and the authorities acting on its behalf.

The members of the Bedouin community in the Naqab are citizens of the State, but the State insists on continuing to treat them as enemies and not as citizens with equal rights. Instead of working to protect the rights of Naqab Bedouin to live in dignity with proper housing, State authorities are systematically working to demolish their homes and move them against their will from their ancestral land, which is contrary to international conventions. By way of legislative and planning mechanisms, the State is deepening the housing crisis and the high poverty rates in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab. It is working to concentrate more and more citizens in the recognized townships, which will find it difficult to provide them with even the most basic services.

The fact that the State does not treat Bedouin as equal citizens deepens their mistrust and their exclusion from political, economic and social discourse. Unlike the rest of Israel's citizens, the interaction between Bedouin residents and the State's systems and authorities is mediated by unique institutions established by the State solely for this purpose, with the greatest expression of inequality being the existence of the Bedouin Authority.

During 2019, approximately 2,241 structures were demolished in the Bedouin communities in the Naqab, of which some 655 are estimated

to be residential. Even more worrisome is the trend of 'self-demolitions', which continued to make up 88% of all demolitions in that year. The desire to avoid the trauma of a violent and unforeseeable enforcement mechanism, as well as criminal and economic sanctions, creates a huge measure of intimidation within the Bedouin population in the Naqab and brings the owners of the structures to demolish them themselves. In this report, we presented only four of the Bedouin villages that are in immediate danger of being demolished and vacated, but State authorities are promoting additional programs that put more than 90,000 citizens of the unrecognized villages in danger of eviction.

The policy of construction and home demolitions is violent and aggressive and does not build trust between citizens and the State. That is especially true when the State is unable to offer alternative solutions for citizens living in the unrecognized villages. The State of Israel must obey the international human rights institutions that are calling on it to cease the demolitions and begin taking trust-building steps with the community, enabling a solution that respects the Bedouin lifestyle and the various aspirations of community members in a manner that is consistent with the State's planning logic.

There is a need to promote the equitable distribution of resources between the various communities in the Naqab and to reduce the huge gaps between the Arab population and the Jewish population living in this common region. Prevention of basic services, non-recognition, and the use of mechanisms of power will only perpetuate the historical gaps between communities and prevent Bedouin communities from developing in all aspects. The solution must be based on public participation and recognition of the communities' aspirations, desires and lifestyle, which will lead to the organization of space in the Naqab in a just way and enable an equitable life for all residents of the Naqab - Arabs and Jews alike.



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