



General Uri Gordin

Home Front Commander

**Subject: Deserting the Arab Bedouin citizen of the Negev during wartime**

**Dear Sir,**

We appeal to you to act immediately and without delay to ensure protection from missile and steep trajectory fire on the urban and agricultural settlements of Bedouins in the Negev in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of all residents during war. In particular we demand to immediately place mobile shelters in 35 unrecognized villages, in 11 settlements of the regional councils as well as in Rahat and 6 planned townships. This in view of the fact that after 1700 rockets to Israel in the last couple of days, and with no shelter in the villages, the Bedouin citizens face a significant and immediate danger to their safety.

More than 280,000 Bedouin citizens living in the Negev are in the immediate range of rocket fire from the Gaza Strip and are in real danger of life. According to the Planning Administration, about 100,000 live in unrecognized villages and 40,000 in unregulated neighbourhoods in recognized villages. Some of the Bedouin villages, such as Rahat with its more than 70,000 residents are very close to the Gaza Strip. However, while most of the neighboring Jewish settlements have a variety of shelter provisions, the Bedouin residents have no sheltering facilities. As far as known, they are also not fully covered by the iron dome.

Many of the dwellings are temporary, such as shacks and tin structures with no protection from the dangers caused by the continuous firing. This type of building is common in the unrecognized villages as well as in villages that are part of the regional councils that most of them were recognized 15 years ago but their development has not been completed and with no new safe building. Also in Rahaṭ and in 6 established townships there is an outrageous shortage of shielding means, whether due to unregulated construction, preventing building permits or socio economic reasons that make financing of shielding facilities difficult.

In the previous rounds of fighting the State failed to protect the safety of its Bedouin citizens while at the same time provided shielding solutions to the Jewish neighboring settlements. The lack of permanent public shelters or protected spaces in the Bedouin villages, and in view of the danger to the lives of its residents which is not less than the danger posed to the other residents of the Negev in areas which are at the same risk level, failure to take any action to provide protective measures is an extreme violation of their right to life and security, as well as their right for equality.

Despite the death of Mr. Uda El Wadag and the injury of 4 members of his family including his 3 months old daughter in 2014, and despite the injuries of Maram El Vachili and her young sister Atil in the unrecognized village El Wagan near al-Lagiyiyh that same month, and despite the promises to consider appropriate solutions, nothing has been done. Few days ago, Halil Awad and his daughter Nadin from the unrecognized village Dahamash near Lod were killed by a rocket due to the fact that there are no shielding possibilities in their village.

Despite the real danger known well to the army, and despite the continuing and multiple fighting rounds, and despite our petition to the Supreme Court of Justice, The Defense Ministry did not



act to ensure appropriate shielding to these residents. Thus you have ignored the right of the Bedouin citizens for life, security and body safety.

Given the extent of the tangible and unprecedented threat these days, we are demanding your immediate intervention to ensure a response to the threat facing the Bedouin citizens. we are sadly forced to add that if such a response is not promoted, we will be forced to consider applying for legal means.

Your early reply will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Haia Noach

Copy:

Minister of Defense, Knesset Member Benny Gantz

Minister Michael Biton, Ministry of Defense

Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General, Aviv Kochavi

Chairman, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Mr. Avi Dichter