



July 7th, 2021  
Mr. Yoaz Hendel  
Minister of Communications

Topic: **Achieving proper distribution of Fiber Optics**

Your honor the Minister,

Last month we were shocked to discover that you had decided to exempt Bezeq from distributing fiber optics for speedier internet throughout the country.

1. This decision is extremely unacceptable: it is unacceptable that residents of areas suffering the lowest quality of internet connection and an absence of market competition due to the lack of appropriate internet infrastructure or no supplier competition, will continue to be neglected and even harmed, thus building injustices upon existing injustices.
2. Digital Inequality has become a major focus issue through the lessons learned from the Covid-19 outbreak in Israel, an issue whose solution is critical for the development of the periphery. This past year, hundreds of thousands of Israelis became disconnected from the labor market while hundreds of thousands of students were disconnected from the education system. The economic, employment and academic costs of this fiber distribution controversy, placing economic gain over all other social needs, is eminent.
3. Acute harm is being done to peripheral communities, Arab and ultra-orthodox communities. Rather than centralizing these communities and prioritizing their wellbeing, they are once again pushed aside.
4. It is illogical that Bezeq can choose which settlements they are interested in providing services to, and which settlements (home to over 500,000 families) must wait for an external and low-budget tender in order to receive proper internet services. In issues such as these, it is the government's duty to promise that the national interest dictates and not private interests.
5. It is illogical that high poverty rates in settlements are actually a criteria preventing them from receiving services.
6. Fast and reliable internet connection has become necessary in the world for professional and academic purposes. It has also become a basic human need, a means of production and an elementary learning tool. The Covid-19 pandemic has proven so acutely: it has not been possible to manage trade and commerce services, educational services and medical services without digital infrastructure. Furthermore, without proper internet access, it has been impossible to communicate with governmental authorities and public service bodies. Once again, disenfranchised communities are lowest on the list of priorities.
7. The Israeli government claims that they prioritize peripheral communities. How is it possible that these settlements suffer from low-quality internet services and must wait another decade to access quick internet services while those living in the center will enjoy improved services and a competitive market provided by three different suppliers? This can be explained by structured and pre-determined discrimination whose broad outcome will be the exacerbation of pre-existing digital inequalities.
8. **It cannot be that no conclusions have been drawn through past experiences and prices paid by disenfranchised communities. Once again, more than four different**



**populations in Israel are discriminated while market interests are free to crush civil rights and equality.**

We call you to:

1. Demand that Bezeq broadens its list of distribution channels to include representation from all areas of the country and all populations (including Arabs, Ultra-Orthodox and others).
2. Increase the annual budget if necessary so that it amounts to 250 million shekel in the first year and another 250 million shekel in the second year and limit the budget to two years.
3. Include all of the Arab and Ultra-Orthodox localities to the tender of the first year including: Abu Grīnāt, Abu Tlūl aš-Šahbī, Umm Batīn, Umm Al Fahm, Abten, Aqsal, Al-Azzi, Al-Arian, Al-Rom, as-Sayyid, Abalin, Baqa Al-Gharbiyye, Buqata, Bir Al Maqsur, Bīr Haddāj, Basma, Jaljulieh, Jissr Al-Zarqa, Dahi, Dir Al-Assad, Dir Raffat, Drījāt, Zarzir, Hulad, Hussaniyyeh, Hamadiyyeh, Tuba-Zanghriyyeh, Taybeh, Tamra, Yanuch-Jat, Yarcha, Kuḥlih, Kamaneh, Ksīfih, Kasra-Samiyyeh, Kaabiyeh-Tabash-Hajajrah, Kuffer Qassem, Kuffer Qarah, Lydd, al-Lagiyyih, Majd Al-Qrum, Majdal Shams, Maager, Mijdal, Maiyser, Manshet Zabdeh, Mass'adeh, Maaleh Iron, Mash'had, Na'aurah, Saauad (Hmariyyeh), Arab Al Na'im, Arad, 'Ar'arah, 'Ar'arah an-Nagab, Ajar, Uzayyer, Ailot, Ein Ma'ahal, Ein Nakubeh, Kniyyeh, Ein Raffah, Arabeh, Aramsheh, Fureidis, Pqi'in (Bukiyyeh), Qalanswa, Gašir as-Sirr, Rahat, Shibli-Umm Al Ghanem, Sheikh Danon, Tel Katzir, Tal as-Saba', Tarābīn aš-Šāni', as well as Elad, Bet Shemesh, Bnei Brak, parts of Jerusalem, and more peripheral settlements.

**In conclusion, we demand a drastic change to the tender and participation in the list of settlements and areas where Bezeq will distribute fiber optic infrastructure.**

**Thank you,**

Elianne Kremer  
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