פורום דו-קיום בנגב לשוויון אזרחי
منتدى التعايش السلمي في النقب من اجل المساواه المدنية
Negev Coexistence Forum For Civil Equality

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

website: www.dukium.org

Annual Report 2022



Aishah Abu al-Q'ian - Umm al-Hīrān

Situation in the Negev / Naqab

The end of 2022 brought the most right-wing, extremist, racist, ultra-nationalist government in the history of Israel. This added additional stresses to an already severe situation in the Negev region. The hopes for change and improvement in the lives of Bedouin citizens and residents from the inclusion of the United Arab List as part of the previous coalition government did not materialize. On the contrary, we witnessed one of the most violent repression of dissidents during the protests in January 2022 Sawa's event. In addition to increased police violence, the Negev/Naqab region is experiencing an increase in the proliferation of guns and gun violence as clearly documented in the joint report "Naqab/Negev Assessment: Gun Proliferation & Violence and Their Impact on Women", which our sister organization Gun Free Kitchen Tables (GFKT) prepared in cooperation with NCF in 2022. This is on top of the many unresolved issues that have plagued the Bedouin community since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

2022 also marked a deterioration of the human rights of Bedouin communities in the Negev/Naqab as documented in the NCF's report published in December 2022. Some of the aspects in which we saw worrying developments include:

Freedom of protest and repression: we encountered several cases of repression of local activists. The cases of Mariam Abu Kwider and Watan Mahdi, both female Arab students at the Ben Guirion University, are clear illustrations of this. Miriam and Watan participated in peaceful protests in May 2022 (for the killing of journalist Shereen Abu Aqleh and at a Nakba demonstration respectively). Both were either arrested or summoned to disciplinary proceedings.

Forced evictions and home demolitions: Besides an unprecendented number of home demolitions, the construction of the Jewish village of Hiran (on the same land of the Bedouin village of Umm al-Ḥīrān), has resumed. There are still hundreds of Bedouin residents that still live there, and have no housing solutions. Furthermore, the Israel Land Authority

decided to renew the contract with the KKL-JNF in order to “protect the land” (“of invaders'”) and resumed their afforestation works.

Food Insecurity: Based on a report by the local media outlet, SocialTV, it would take about 100 million dollars to solve the issue of food insecurity in Israel. This is less than 0.2% of the current Government's budget. Furthermore, Israeli citizens throw away about 5 billion dollars worth of food each year. If families in Israel would reduce food waste by at least 25%, this could change the lives of many families that are most affected by poverty and food insecurity. To put this in perspective, one fifth of the population in Israel - 2.8 Million suffers from food insecurity, including about 1 million children.

Children’s status in the Negev-Naqab: the Negev Bedouin population continues to be the poorest in Israel, with 79.6% of its children living below the poverty line and thousands lacking any form of educational framework (17% of all children of school/kindergarten age). When it comes to accessibility to basic services, Bedouin kids in the Negev have been struggling for years due to a lack of basic access to internet infrastructure and computer literacy.

Positive developments include the resilience and resourcefulness of the Bedouin population in the Negev/Naqab, the work of civil society organizations on the ground, and the significant increase in education levels among the Bedouin population, especially women. Bedouin women continue to be an essential pillar of the Naqab’s Bedouin community’s social fabric.



Asil Ziad al-Amur - as-Sirrah

Our Work in 2022 - Human Rights Work

Documenting Bedouin experiences through Video & Photography

Since 2014 we have provided workshops and training in video and photography to women and youth 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 2022, 48 women of different ages, interests and backgrounds, participated in 65 workshops for video and photography documentation. Most of them were in one-on-one or small group settings. The workshops were held in the villages of ʿAtīr, Ḥūrah, Umm al-Ḥīrān, Al-ʿArāgīb, Az-Zaʿarūrah, As-Sirrah, Talʿ Arād and Bīr Haddāj. The participants' worldviews and interests were reflected in their work, which documented similar fights for recognition and human rights in and for their communities. A total of two short film were screened and one of the videos on Umm al-Ḥīrān won the first price at the Solidarity Film Festival in Tel Aviv.

Umm al-Ḥīrān short film wins prize

We were humbled to work through the process of filming and editing the short film Umm al-Ḥīrān that wonderfully captured the day to day life of two women, Ā'ishah and Ruqayyah and their point of view on the process of being uprooted from their ancestral homes in the village to their new yet unfamiliar homes in the township of Hura. The film got a great amount of attention at the short film competition of the Solidarity Film Festival that took place in the Cinematheque in Tel Aviv in December as it won first place. We are proud of our filmmakers, of their hard work, and their ability to tell the story of their rightful struggle. They received an award of 5,000 NIS.

Link to award winning film: https://tinyurl.com/Umm-alHiran-video2022

Some of the Jury's verdict notes:

"Sensitive and powerful documentation, which deals, among other things, with memory and its erasure. The filmmakers immortalize their home and the process of its destruction, and the longing for a home while it is being crushed. In the act of documenting, the creator presents the story of the Bedouin society, together with their stories, of their home, and their children. In a rare and unique way, the film manages to combine images of pain and destruction, with a poetic language that is full of beauty and even inspires hope".



Rimal Abu al-Qian - Umm al-Ḥīrān

Women activist tour

In partnership with Sidreh - Bedouin Women's Association and Isha L'Isha - Haifa Feminist Center we hosted a tour in the Negev-Naqab. A diverse group of activist women visited the Naqab, demonstrating solidarity with the Bedouin women living here. On the tour, we learned about Sidreh's projects to empower Bedouin women. We also visited the unrecognised village of Al-Zarnug, where we were hosted by a local kindergartener named Miyada, who told us about the effects of the daily demolition in the area, particularly on the children of the community. Intisar Abu-Quider and Nura Sagira, the NCF's coordinators, spoke about their experience in coordinating the video and photography trainings with Bedouin women and children.



Elianne Kremer - Outlook over the unrecognized villages

Through a Child's Lens

Through a camera lens, children 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 can present the beauty, wealth and strength of their community and way of life, countering negative stereotypes about Bedouins.

In 2022, NCF and a professional filmmaker facilitated and conducted 56 workshops with a total of 103 participants of different ages. 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. The photographs taken by the children were featured in 10 publications and at least 10 social media posts.


Sillyn an-Naṣāṣrah - as-Sirrah

Compilation, Distribution & Exhibition of Photographs

Photo Albums: At the end of the winter workshops, young participants chose 20-40 pictures, which were used to print a photo album for each child.

Calendar: We chose 20 pictures taken by the children participating in the project for the September 2022 – December 2023 calendar in three languages (Arabic, Hebrew and English). We printed and distributed 175 calendars among diplomats, partners, donors and photographers.

Exhibitions: Photos taken by the children were showcased at an exhibition at the Kay College.

Reports

Research & Advocacy

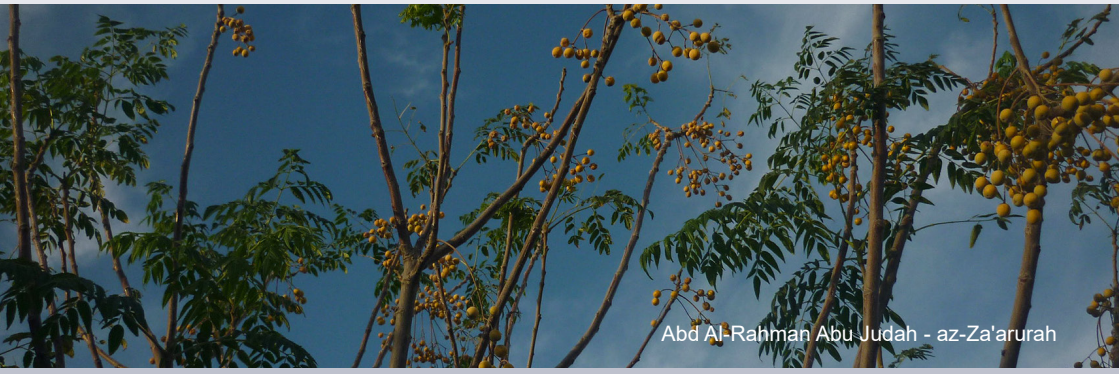
A significant part of NCF's work is based on its comprehensive and professional research on different issues. Project coordinators conduct regular analysis of events at the political level in consultation with partners. NCF regularly files requests for information from different government offices on relevant topics. 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.

Reports published in 2022:

- We published a comprehensive report on the topic of the January 2022 detentions, arrests, and police violence: "Enforcing the Invisible Barrier: Police violence during January 2022 protests of KKL-JNF Afforestation Projects". This report is a result of our partnership with the Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages (RCUV), the Sidreh Association, and the Al Huquq Center. Multiple testimonies document how, several minutes after the beginning of the protest, police violently repressed the demonstration.
- Joint submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review by NCF and Adalah on 5 October 2022. In this report, Adalah and NCF raise key issues of concern regarding Israel's lack of compliance with its international human rights obligations towards Bedouin citizens of Israel living in the Naqab. In particular, we address Israel's policy of forced displacement against the Bedouin, detailing the various methods used to implement it, including home demolitions, eviction lawsuits, major infrastructure plans, and the deliberate denial of basic social and economic rights.
- On the occasion of International Day of Human Rights, we published a report focused on the "Violations of Human Rights of the Arab Bedouin Community in the Negev/Naqab". This report exposes the continued neglect of the State of Israel, through home demolitions, development

induced displacement, excessive use of violence by the Police, and massive arrests. On the occasion of the International Day of Human Rights, the Government of Israel and the various State authorities should re-examine their treatment of the Negev/Naqab Bedouin people. There is no doubt that ensuring the rights of all residents of the region, the provision of services, as well as the promotion of development that focuses on those most in need, will reduce the profound inequality between the Bedouin and the Jewish communities and contribute to a viable, equal and sustainable Negev/Naqab for all of its residents.

- We had several position papers about employment of Bedouin women and infographics about home demolitions.


Abd Al-Rahman Abu Judah - az-Za'arurah

Local & International Advocacy

Meetings with Decision Makers

- We held a roundtable with three leaders of local authorities (mayors) during the second half of 2022, following a petition submitted to the Supreme Court by Adalah, NCF and Sidreh, requesting the establishment of employment offices in Bedouin towns in the Negev. While the Labour Department recommended the establishment of five employment offices in Bedouin towns in the Negev/Naqab, the Ministry of Economy approved only one. This is despite the high rates of unemployment and poverty in the Negev/NaqabParticipants of the roundtable discussed the issue of employment in the Negev. We also participated in some Knesset debates on issues related to employment, education, and more.

- We held two meetings with regional inspectors of two programs dealing with women severely affected by poverty to discuss cooperation opportunities and join a women's coalition for women that do not have Israeli citizenship.
- We also sent a letter to the Ministry of Economy to fix and translate to Arabic an online website that is intended to help residents find the most suitable day-care facilities and nurseries. The website has technical failures, some of the locations are wrong, and provides confusing information, especially for residents in unrecognized villages.

International Advocacy

- On August 6th, Salīmeh al-Ṣaġāyreh (NCF staff member, feminist human rights defender and activist from the unrecognised village of Rakhamah), met with Ms. Reem Alsalem (Jordan) Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls to hear the plight of the Bedouin women from the Naqab. Salīmeh talked about the dire situation in education, employment, lack of access to basic services and public transportation. We also talked about the detention of Bedouin human rights defender Mariam Abu Kwider.
- On the occasion of the 15th session of the expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous people, NCF submitted a statement on the Thematic Discussion on Violence against Indigenous Women.
- As a result of NCF's international advocacy work regarding police violence during protests in the Naqab in January 2022, the UN Special Rapporteurs on Minority Issues, Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association and Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance sent a communication to the State of Israel, requesting observations regarding relevant international human rights law.
- Together with the OHCHR, we organised a roundtable meeting on shrinking civic space and the role of civil society and the UN human rights mechanisms in Israel. Present were Special Rapporteurs, Israeli civil society organisations as well as those that represent refugees and asylum seekers in Israel.

Public Engagement

In 2022 we had a total of 686 participants of local tours and 1,908 participants in lectures and workshops.

Tours & Lectures: During the tours we visited the villages of Umm al-Ḥīrān, Abu Tlūl aš-Šahbī, Al-Lagia, Al-Sirrah, Az-Zarnūg, Khašim Zannih, Tel-Arad and Rās Jarābā. Tour participants met residents and community leaders and learned about their struggles.

Among the groups that participated in the tours were:

- Members of "Ruah Nashit" that work to promote Economic Independence of women survivors of abuse in Israel and strive for social change from a feminist perspective.
- 3 tours with fellows of Wahat al-salam/Neve Shalom from Switzerland and Sweden.
- In November alone we had 6 tours: notably with diplomats and representatives of Adalah, Isha L'Isha – Haifa Feminist Centre (for more information, see below), the Portland Foundation, Travel2Palestine, Students of the "Hand in Hand" school that works on the inclusion and equality between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel.
- We also had two tours with the participants of the preparatory programs (before the military service) Masbach Haemek.

Mainstream Media: Some highlights of our media presence in 2022:

- 21.8.2022 - An interview at Radio Makan about our digital literacy program for women and a meeting with the welfare minister.
- 08.11.2022 - A contribution to the site Arab 48 and Alarab (12.11.2022) about the Round table and the need of employment bureaus in the towns with three local mayors as part of a petition to the supreme court in Tel Sheva local authority.
- 20.12.2022 - Contribution to the report for Makan about the Negev administrations a possible counter-reaction
- 25.12.2022 - Contribution to the report for Makan about the 211th Destruction in Al Araqib.
- 30.12.2022 - Interview with Our CEO, Haia Noah and locals for MY NET about the the loss of security among citizens of the Negev-Naqab.

Social Media: On social media, we have 8,330 Facebook followers, 741 followers on Instagram, and 837 followers on Twitter.

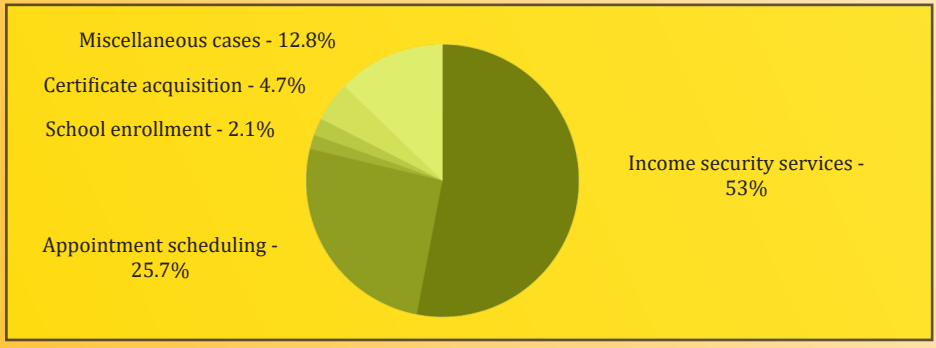
Strengthening Bedouin community

Increasing digital literacy

Throughout 2022, ten women received computers and training on the topics of rights advocacy and digital literacy. Bedouin women from unrecognised villages who had never used a computer learned a variety of digital skills, including how to send emails, use office package programmes, submit online applications to the national insurance system for financial compensation and allowances, and open a bank account, among other bureaucratic tasks. Besides the learning process, participants received inquiries from fellow Bedouin residents inside and outside their communities to aid them in accomplishing results from their rights advocacy.

Between January and December 2022, the number of inquiries managed by trained women, local volunteers and NCF's team was 828 as follows:

- 439 cases concerning income security services.
- 213 cases concerning schedules of appointments in health clinics, post offices, banks, social security services and Covid 19 tests.
- 14 cases of registration for the employment services.
- 17 cases relating to enrolling children in educational institutions.
- 39 cases to send certificates and contacting various government ministries.
- 106 miscellaneous cases (local council services, electricity company, post office).



Local Advocacy

As part of the Digital Literacy Project, NFC organized or attended different meetings, such as a meeting with the State Comptroller's Office, where they discussed their work, how to contact them, and how to handle inquiries and file a complaint.

NCF informed the Ministry of Welfare about the project and suggested that the ministry adopts this model and project as part of their services. As a result, our team was invited to meet with Welfare's Minister Meir Cohen, where we presented the project, including an implementation plan and budget. The meeting was very positive, and the Southern District Inspector who participated in the meeting was strongly in-favour of the project. It remains to be seen if they will allocate the needed budget for this, but we will keep advocating for the adopting of this project by this and other ministries and governmental institutions.



Muḥamad Āl-Danfīrī - Bir Haddaj

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, most 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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