



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023



# INTRODUCTION

A WORD FROM OUR CEO & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HAIA NOACH

In 2023, **Negev Coexistence Forum (NCF)** continued its unwavering **commitment** to fostering a more just and inclusive society, with a focus on addressing the unique challenges faced by **Bedouin communities**. Despite the complex landscape in Israel, our organization demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering dedication to our mission. Over the course of the year, the **political issues** added additional stress to an already-troubled situation. We witnessed **aggressive policies** and **incitement** against the Arab society as a whole in Israel. This year, we also witnessed more **murders in Arab communities** than ever before. We pursued our goals, continued to work with women and children and **advocated for enhancing human rights** in the Negev-Naqab.



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN / OCTOBER 7TH, 2023



CHLOÉ PORTHEAULT  
PROTEST / TEL AVIV / MURDERS IN THE ARAB COMMUNITY

Since the Gaza war began on October 7th 2023, NCF swiftly adjusted its strategies to provide immediate aid, essential supplies, and **support to the most affected families**, services that should be governmental authorities' responsibility. We also participated in the **emergency coalition leadership**. We authored a position paper advocating for **shelter** protection for vulnerable Bedouin communities. We then presented it in the **Parliament** and shared it with journalists, diplomats, and anyone who approached us seeking to visit the community. **Our work** focused on **addressing the specific needs** arising from the **complex intersection** of conflict and the pre-existing challenges faced by the Bedouin population.

Haia Noach

THE USE OF THE IMAGE IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 27A OF THE COPYRIGHT LAW. IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR RIGHTS AS THE COPYRIGHT OWNER HAVE BEEN VIOLATED IN THIS PUBLICATION, YOU CAN CONTACT NCF VIA EMAIL AT [WWW.DUKIUM.ORG](http://WWW.DUKIUM.ORG).

# SITUATION IN THE NEGEV-NAQAB

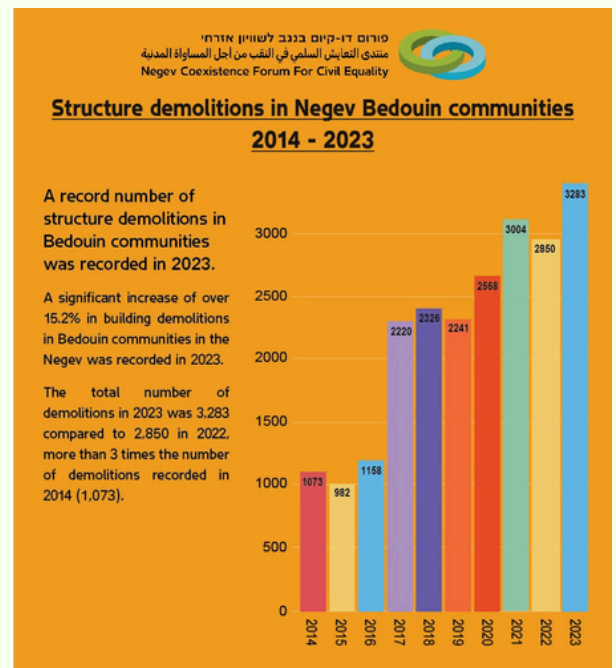
Unfortunately, home demolitions didn't halt with the onset of war; Bedouin communities face, once again, government-ordered home demolitions and now have to juggle the stress of two threats to basic human rights: the threat of war and the constant worry that they will lose their homes.

**Home Demolitions:** There was a significant increase (15.2%) in the rate of demolitions of "illegal buildings" in the Negev during 2023, during the term of office of the Minister of National Security. The graph illustrates a despicable record-high number of destructions and displacements (3,283 total). To inform and advocate to the public, we published an article titled **"The increasing home demolitions in the Negev - an open wound in a bleeding community."** Read the article [here](#).

**15.2%**      **3,283**

INCREASE IN THE RATE  
OF HOME DEMOLITIONS

TOTAL HOME  
DEMOLITIONS IN 2023



**Al-'Arāgīb Follow-up:** Al-'Arāgīb is an unrecognized village west of Route 40, between the Lehavim and Goral Junctions. The village of al-'Arāgīb was established during the Ottoman period, on land purchased by the village's inhabitants during the 20th century. The people of Al-'Arāgīb appealed to the Supreme Court in an attempt to acquire full, legal ownership of their land, and after a lengthy legal procedure that lasted 15 years, the District Court in Beer Sheva rejected residents' ownership claims.

Judge Geula Levin dismissed the plaintiffs' arguments that the property expropriation procedure carried out in 1954, under the directives of the then Finance Minister Levy Eshkol, was flawed.

On July 29th, a gathering was organized by village residents, families, and human rights organizations, including NCF, to commemorate Al-'Arāgīb's initial displacement 13 years ago. The event aimed to protest ongoing house demolitions and the recent court decision rejecting residents' ownership claims over the village lands. The village has been destroyed 222 times since 2010 and up to the end of 2023.



AZIZ, LOCAL RESIDENT / AL-'ARĀGĪB DEMONSTRATION



# SITUATION IN THE NEGEV-NAQAB

*The racist and discriminatory government continues to threaten civil society, equal human rights for all people in Israel and the opportunity for upward mobility for Bedouin in the Negev-Naqab.*

**Minister Chikli's Plan:** The Chikli Plan, green-lit by the Ministerial Committee for Bedouin Community Development in the fall of 2023, **comes under scrutiny for its assertive nature.** The plan focuses on Bedouin communities: Rahat, Mareit, Bīr Haddāj and Ḥūrah.

The plan's **potential impact, including mass evictions of Bedouin families**, raised obvious concerns, and it seemed to clash with the broader Negev-Naqab settlement agenda. An essential **concern was the exclusionary decision-making process**, where the Bedouin community, a pivotal stakeholder, was **conspicuously omitted from the conversation**. The lack of consultation of the Bedouin community **challenges democratic principles and forfeits the potential for a collaborative approach** to development. Compounding the issue is the apparent **exclusion of existing Bedouin villages from Chikli's plan**, casting doubt on the government's dedication to fair, comprehensive development of the region. Furthermore, ongoing demolitions and forced expulsions **potentially violate international conventions and human rights**. Within this context, the analysis **underscores the imperative need for a transparent and inclusive development strategy in the Negev**. The reference to UN declarations emphasizes the necessity of active Bedouin involvement in Parliament and respecting the rights of the Bedouin community.

**Budget Cuts:** Finance Minister Smotrich's refusal to transfer the budget of 200 million shekels to Arab localities, which was promised by the previous government, **threatens to destabilize** their local councils, leading to severe consequences. **As the most vulnerable population in Israel**, Bedouins will undoubtedly shoulder most of the burden. **Along with 27 other civil society organizations, NCF issued a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Interior Moshe Arbel, demanding allocation** of the promised-budget to the local Arab authorities. The funds are **crucial to their socio-economic development and mobility**, and failure to transfer this money will only encourage criminal organizations and condemn Arab society to poverty.

**Lack of Schools and Kindergartens in the Negev-Naqab:** Six years ago, the Education Ministry presented a plan to increase the number of Bedouin children enrolled in preschool. However, due mainly to the lack of kindergarten schools in the unrecognized Bedouin villages, **5,045 children from the Bedouin community (17% of 3-to-5-year olds)** are still not registered in an educational facility, **while almost all respective Jewish children are enrolled in educational facilities**. To combat this issue, **advocacy employees at NCF appeared before and/or met with the Knesset's Education Committee, the Special Affairs Youth Committee, and the Committee for Children's Rights**. We presented evidence detailing the ways in which Bedouin communities lack support for children and will continue to follow up with government officials on their behalf. (Photo: protesting the lack of education facilities in Bedouin communities in the Negev-Naqab on Road 40 in Be'er Sheva.)



# HUMAN RIGHTS WORK

*NCF invested much effort in documentation of the Negev-Naqab through various visual projects, in order to protect and promote the human rights of Bedouin. The Digital Literacy Project focused on basic digital education, which is needed to access aid and government assistance during the ongoing war.*

**Documenting Bedouin Experiences Through Photography & Film:** Since 2014, we have provided photography and videography workshops and training 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 2023, we fostered workshops and training with three groups of people across Bedouin villages in the Negev-Naqab. **"Yuṣawiruna"** is a program for women photographing human rights, and **"Recognized"** is the program facilitating videography training and exposure. **"Through a Child's Lens"** is a program dedicated to providing educational and uplifting after-school activities for children. Despite halting workshops during October and November, **we were able to conduct over 77 workshops throughout the course of the year.**

At the end of the winter workshops, the 'Through a Child's Lens' coordinators chose 20 pictures taken by young participants for NCF's September 2022 – December 2023 calendar. The **calendars were printed in three languages (Arabic, Hebrew and English) and distributed among 175 diplomats, partners, donors and professional photographers.** In addition, photos taken by the children were showcased in an exhibition at the Rahat Community Center. **(Featured photos taken by "Through a Child's Lens" participants.)**

## 77

PHOTOGRAPHY  
WORKSHOPS IN  
2023



ADAN - UMM AL-ḤIRĀN



NADINE - 'ATĪR



IMAN - LAKIYA

**"Fusing Horizons" Exhibition:** The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality had the great pleasure of taking part in the exhibition in **honor of Yossi Yonah's book launch, "Fusing Horizons".** The exhibition presented several **photos taken by women from the unrecognized Bedouin villages of 'Atīr, as-Sirrah and Tal 'Arād,** who are participants in our Yuṣawiruna project. The exhibition was shown at the **Sapir Gallery** in the city of Sderot, from May 31st to June 29th 2023.

**Digital Literacy Project:** This project aims at **increasing the digital connectivity** of Bedouin women from unrecognized villages—as a means of **improving their access to social services and facilitating the practice of their civil rights.** Our volunteers received around **300 requests for assistance** and helped women overcome issues directly affecting their well-being. When the war began, our efforts adapted to the new political landscape, offering **digital guidance, such as assistance filling out government forms, regarding services** that help counter the new, intense challenges impacting the Bedouin community.

# STRENGTHENING THE BEDOUIN COMMUNITY

*In response to the war, we have regularly met with other grassroots and civil society organizations to discuss the terrible current events, how the reality will affect our work, and how to help as many people in need as possible.*

**Aid Distribution and Support:** Our coordinators, in constant talks with village residents, evaluated their needs. We were able to **acquire and distribute essential resources**, such as food, toys, baby formula, and any other necessary assistance to **hundreds of families in unrecognized villages**. We sent **six food trucks** to the villages of Abu Tlūl aš-Šahbī, al-Fur'ah, Šgīb as-Salām, along with **five tons of flour**. We also sent **two truckloads** to the Emergency War Room in Hūrah and **a truckload of toys and books** to Rahat. We helped **distribute government food cards in various villages, such as Wādī an-Na'am, Abu Tlūl, and more.**

We created a **support and relief group** at the local level by recruiting and training **Arab and Jewish volunteers**, and we visited grieving families that lost children during the bombing in the area with additional organizations. **Our goal is to make sure those affected by the crisis receive the help they need.**

Alongside other Arab civil society groups, we were part of the **Negev Coalition Emergency War Room**. State representatives from government ministries visited and took part in the Emergency War Room, which gave them the opportunity to more-easily understand the problems that were being raised to them by different communities. **Our objective is to redirect emergency aid funds to local authorities and unrecognized villages to offer assistance to those in the region.**



SABACH ABU MEDIGEM / AL ARAGIB /  
DIGGING A SHELTER IN THE CEMETERY



MOFEED ABU SUELIM / WADI AL NA'AM

**Shelters and Safety:** On October 13, the **Association for Civil Rights, along with NCF** and other NGOs, engaged with relevant ministers and the Home Front Command to **propose the establishment of protection zones, emergency shelters, and alarm systems in certain villages**. This came after **six children were killed** from missile attacks at the beginning of the war in October. By October 18, the Ministry of Social Equality, who, at the time, was in charge of the Bedouin population, had announced a **partnership with the Home Front Command** to address the protection gaps in Bedouin communities in the Negev. Subsequently, **30 Hesco shelters, which are sand-filled protective structures without roofs, were installed**. NCF, in collaboration with **Bimkom** (Planners for Planning Rights), assisted in **mapping** the existing shelters in recognized and unrecognized Bedouin villages.

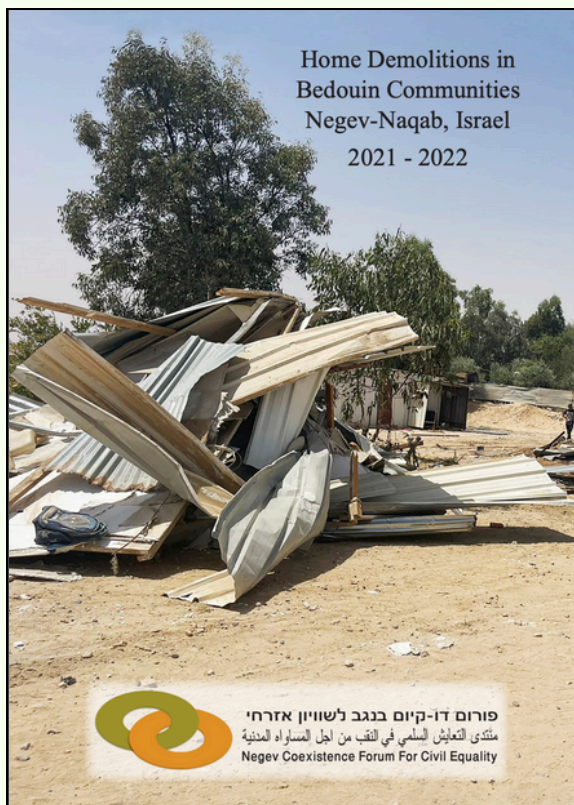


# REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

*Dissecting issues most important to the Negev-Naqab Bedouin and Arab community as a whole.*

**Food Insecurity in Unrecognized Villages in the Negev-Naqab:** Neglect of residents of the unrecognized villages is outrageous. The security threat prevents Bedouin citizens residing in the Negev from purchasing necessities, **thus creating a threat of food insecurity and even hunger, a rate which is liable to accelerate if the present war continues.** The research gathered in 2022 led to the publication of our findings in 2023, prior to the outbreak of war.

**More from the exploratory study** carried out jointly by the Negev Coexistence Forum and the Adva Center **on the subject of food insecurity in the “unrecognized” Bedouin villages in the Negev can be read [here](#).**



## **Home Demolition Report for 2021/22:**

In 2022, the Southern Administration reported that **2,850 structures were destroyed, including 380 residential buildings.** The other structures, while not being residential, were critical to the livelihood of families.

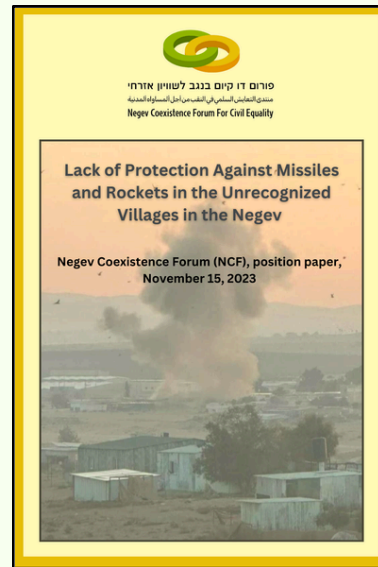
The **construction and demolition policies** carried out by the authorities are **brutal, violent, and undermine the trust** between Bedouin citizens and the state. This is especially true when the authorities are **unwilling to offer suitable alternatives to the residents of unrecognized villages.** **The right to housing should be an essential component** of response strategies. This requires the provision of adequate resources to realize the right to fair housing for all.

# REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

*Dissecting issues most important to the Negev-Naqab Bedouin and Arab community as a whole.*

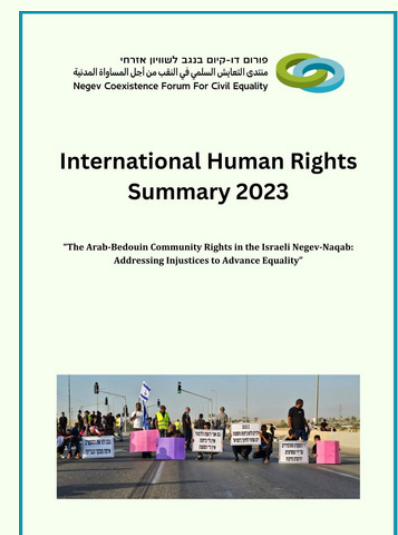
**Shelter & Safety Report:** All the gathered information regarding safety for Bedouins was compiled into a position paper titled, **“Lack of protection against missiles and rockets in the unrecognized villages in the Negev”**.

Due to the **lack of protection**, the residents of unrecognized villages in the Negev were vulnerable to direct hits daily. The number of Bedouin casualties is **very high relative to their share of the general population**. The lives of thousands of Bedouin residents were, and still are, in real danger in the absence of any safe space to take shelter.



**NCF's Report on Human Rights** focuses on the **challenges** faced by the **Bedouin** community in the Negev-Naqab region of Israel. It addresses issues such as **forced displacement, discrimination in access to basic services, denial of land rights, and limited livelihood opportunities**.

The report **sheds light on systemic injustices endured by Bedouin citizens**, advocating for meaningful **change** and promoting awareness of their **struggles to uphold their rights and dignity**.



## POSITION PAPERS

### **Idle Youth in the Bedouin Community in the Negev: A Critical View - May 2023 (Hebrew)**

*The State Comptroller's report on idle Arab youth points to the far-reaching consequences of this phenomenon.*

### **Addressing Overcrowded Schools within Bedouin Education in the Negev to Prevent Dropouts and Damage to the Educational Climate - May 2023 (Hebrew)**

*As part of the discussion on the dropout rate of Bedouin students in the Negev, we appeal to decision-makers to act urgently and split up Bedouin schools–due to overcrowding.*

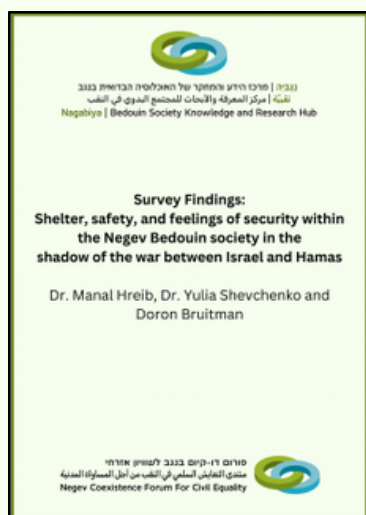


**Nagabiya's Bedouin Society Knowledge And Research Hub** aims to counteract a lack of available information on the Bedouin population by focusing on consistent data collection and documentation to provide an annual snapshot of life in the unrecognized villages, with particular emphasis on the employment challenges faced by Bedouin women.

The **focus** of the research center is on **collecting data and documenting the reality of life in the unrecognized villages in order to present an annual situational picture, emphasizing employment issues among Bedouin women.** Based on the research findings, the center will draft **practical proposals, produce policy documents and position papers, and provide data that can lead to appropriate fundraising and development.** Below is an example of Nagabiya's work.

## SURVERY FINDINGS

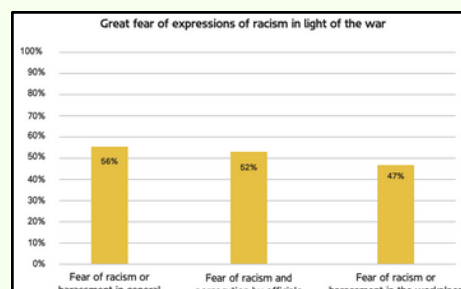
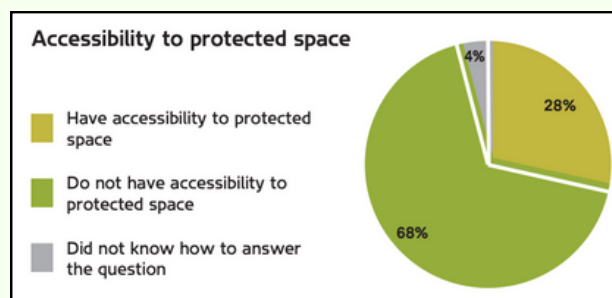
*When the war began, "Nagabiya" Research Center conducted a survey focusing on the protection and sense of security of the residents of the recognized and unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev.*



**Survey Findings:** The survey polled **350 people** during late **November**. The **goal** of the survey was to **investigate various aspects of the safety and the sense of security of the residents of Bedouin communities in the Negev** in the wake of the events of October 7, their aftermath, and the war that broke out between Israel and Hamas. **The survey examines the aspects of safety and security in regard to several indicators: economic, occupational, social and spatial.** The results, which were disseminated in 2024, are highlighted below.

**67.6% of the population does not have access to any protected space. 92% of the residents of the unrecognized villages reported that they could not reach a protected space in time to avoid possible injury during rocket fire.**

**All respondents** expressed fear of expressions of racism in light of the war. **56%** stated that they have a great fear of expressions of racism, **47%** stated that they fear expressions of racism and harassment in the workplace to a great extent, **52%** reported that they fear racism and persecution by officials.



# LOCAL ADVOCACY

*In 2023, NCF participated in 28 kneset debates and discussions, through in-person meetings and Zoom, throughout the course of the year. Our local advocacy goal is to raise awareness of the Bedouin struggle in the Negev and demand equal rights for all people in Israel.*

## **Advocating for Bedouin Women's Employment:**

Much of our advocacy efforts focused on assisting Bedouin women and children gain access to equal rights and opportunities. In the **snapshot of the adjacent Knesset meeting on Yom Ha-Negev (The Negev Day)**, NCF's Local Advocacy Coordinator, Huda Abu Obaid & Research Center Manager, Dr. Manal Hreib addressed the **Special Committee of the Rights of the Child on the shortages of daycare and kindergarten facilities** in Bedouin villages, which creates a **barrier to women's employment**.



# 17

TOURS  
CONDUCTED IN  
2023

**Tours of the Negev-Naqab:** NCF conducts tours every year for diplomats, students, activist groups, potential and current donors, and individuals who wish to learn about the **long-time plight of the Bedouin society**. The tours **facilitate the recognition and respect of their human rights**, from the community members and the villagers themselves. In 2023, we conducted **17 tours**, though no tours were conducted during October and November. We offer **two types of tours: Civil Rights, Policy and the Distribution of Resources Tours and Women's Rights and the Status of Women and Women Employment** in the Bedouin Society Tours. The purpose of the tours, respectively, is to **expose visitors to the social, historical, and political reality of life** in the Negev-Naqab and **emphasize the issue of women and their status**,



**Protests:** In addition to the aforementioned Al-ʿArāḡīb demonstration in July, **in March, members of NCF joined a demonstration protesting all home demolitions**, organized by the Steering Committee of the Arabs in the Negev, the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages and Heads of Arab Municipalities in the Negev. **Also in March, parents, students, and teachers from Bedouin communities along road 40 gathered at Be'er Sheva's Government Center in an organized protest to draw attention to the insufficient provision of classrooms and schools for Bedouin children in the Negev-Naqab.**

In August 2023, NCF participated in several protests against the violence plaguing the **Arab community**, which, at the time, had endured **170 murders within the Arab community**. Some of these protests were met with violence by the police. The police claimed that their **officers have been too busy with the protests against the government's judicial reform to deal with this ongoing wave of violence**. When the world's attention turned to conflict in Israel, NCF responded by **co-organizing a protest in Tel Aviv for the International Rights of Children Day** (photo above left) and participated in a protest demanding **release of all hostages**, as well as a **lasting ceasefire and peace agreement**.

# LOCAL ADVOCACY

*Much of our local advocacy efforts focus on changing the public's opinion. This is done through social media campaigns, signed petitions and the dissemination of information in the national media.*

**Combating Incitement Toward the Arab Community:** The war has resulted in **discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel**, with several incidents of arrests, expulsions, and job terminations. **Although the Bedouin community endured the most deaths** of any other in Israel and had **five members of their community kidnapped** on October 7th, they seem to be **caught between two worlds**: as their heritage is Palestinian, yet they reside within Israel's green line. **Petitions have been endorsed**, which seek to reduce the division between Jewish and Arab communities within Israel. **Emergency organizations that gathered statistics reported incidents** of media violence, false information, and persecution against students and professors.

**Israeli Media:** Throughout 2023, NCF, its staff and/or activities were **mentioned** in Israeli media **55 times**, across **Hebrew, Arabic and English websites**.

55

MEDIA MENTIONS  
IN 2023



Prior to the onset of war, our **social media strategy focused on advocating** for Bedouin rights, including the documentation of rights violations, such as unethical home demolitions. We also **advertise the joint, peace-building activities** hosted by or in partnership with NCF, such as the 2023 Iftar, a celebratory dinner breaking the fast at the start of Ramadan. **After the war began** and the Bedouin community suffered greatly at the hands of Hamas, we **launched social media campaigns** in an effort to **inform the public** of the Bedouin communities' testimonies of **shared tragedy and destruction**. We created posters (photo adjacent) to spread awareness about the lack of missile protection in the Negev and the resulting loss of life.

## INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

In 2023, we continued to **raise awareness** for our cause among international parties. We are proud to say **NCF staff members interacted with and lobbied to ambassadors in the following countries: Holland, Sweden, Italy, France, and India**. We met with several **diplomats** and embassy representatives (in **Switzerland, Canada, Austria and Great Britain**) to discuss NCF's work and projects and explained how each successive Israeli government has negatively targeted the Bedouin community in the Negev-Naqab. NCF considers foreign states as essential partners in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy. For example, in September, NCF board and staff members met H.E. Ambassador Nikolaus Lutterotti at the Austrian Embassy to discuss the current situation and struggles of the Bedouin community in the Negev.



NCF ADVOCACY STAFF WTHH  
AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR



# THANK YOU TO OUR 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." A special thank you to our supporters (in no specific order):

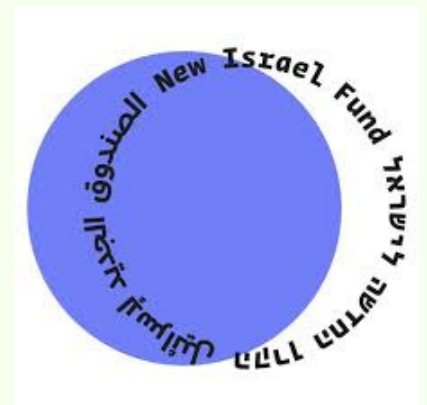
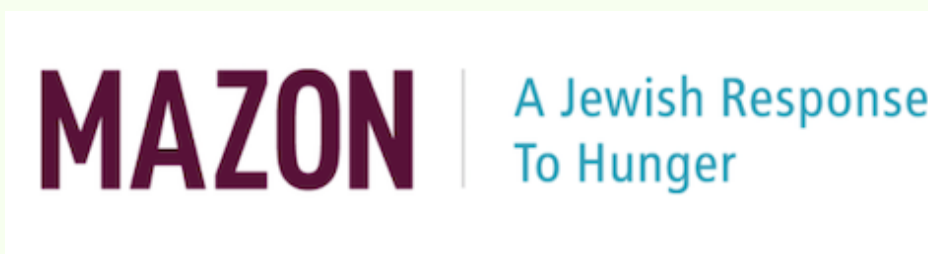
---



**ROSA  
LUXEMBURG  
STIFTUNG**



**KIBBUTZ BE'ERI**



A heartfelt thank you to all the private donors who generously contributed to NCF's work this year, especially those who responded to the call for emergency funds after the war began. Your continued support is immensely appreciated.