



Submission to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Report Concerning Violation of Human Rights of Bedouin Women in Israel

Submitted by: Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF)

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Country concerned: Israel

Introduction

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) is an Arab-Jewish civil society organization based in southern Israel's Negev/Naqab region. Founded in 1997, NCF works to promote the civil and political rights of Arab Bedouin citizens of the State of Israel, with a focus on spatial justice, equitable planning, and access to services. As part of its broader work, NCF conducts research and advocacy addressing issues that are consequential for Bedouin women, including in employment, education, and access to infrastructure. This work has included documentation, community workshops, and field-based research conducted by NCF staff and partners.

The findings presented in this communication draw upon NCF's documentation efforts and the work of its affiliated research center, **Nagabiya: The Bedouin Society Knowledge and Research Hub**. Established in 2023, Nagabiya was created to address a severe lack of official data regarding the approximately 80,000 residents of the Negev's 35 unrecognized Bedouin villages. These communities are systematically excluded from the surveys and datasets of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics and other State institutions, resulting in the complete omission of their needs from planning and policymaking.

This submission highlights three interconnected patterns of human rights violations and systemic discrimination affecting Bedouin women citizens of the State of Israel: **Forcible evictions and home demolitions during armed conflict**, **Gendered Barriers to Employment and Economic Security**, and **Absence of emergency infrastructure and exclusion from civil protection mechanisms**.

These patterns are deeply rooted in the State's planning regime, emergency preparedness systems, and civil administration policies. They reflect a failure to apply gender-sensitive frameworks in areas of structural inequality, and they stand in direct contradiction to Israel's obligations under CEDAW.

This submission includes:

- Background and statistical evidence from field research and the 2023 Nagabiya Yearbook;
- Case studies and documented trends from 2023–2025;
- Analysis of State omissions and policy impacts;
- Recommendations for the attention of the Commission.

We respectfully urge the Commission to review these findings as part of its mandate to identify and address emerging patterns of discrimination against women, and to ensure protection for women living under systemic exclusion and displacement.

Section I: Forcible Evictions and Home Demolitions in Conflict Contexts

Overview: During periods of armed conflict and heightened insecurity, Bedouin women in the Negev/Naqab face an intensified risk of displacement and structural violence. This is particularly acute in unrecognized villages that lack formal planning status and are thus denied basic infrastructure, legal protections, and emergency services. The State of Israel has continued to carry out home demolitions and forced evictions in these areas - including during wartime and national emergencies - despite repeated calls by United Nations human rights mechanisms for a moratorium.



These actions disproportionately affect women, especially in women-headed households, and compound existing gender-based vulnerabilities. Evictions often result in the loss of shelter, livelihood, community ties, and access to essential services - without any safe or viable alternative provided by the State.

Documented Patterns and Developments

- In 2023, Israel demolished 1,030 structures in the Negev belonging to Bedouin citizens, a record number since 2013. Of these, 93% were classified as “self-demolitions” carried out under threat of heavy fines or criminal charges.¹
- A large portion of the demolitions occurred in unrecognized villages, where construction is effectively criminalized due to a lack of formal planning status. Women and children are typically present during these demolitions, and no alternative shelter is offered.²
- Demolitions and eviction orders continued throughout periods of military escalation, including the war in Gaza (from October 2023) and the April 2024 Iranian attack on Israel. In several cases, residents were displaced while simultaneously lacking access to bomb shelters, emergency alerts, or secure infrastructure.³
- In May 2024, notices of impending demolitions of more than 50 structures were served in the village of as-Sirr. Despite residents' attempts to appeal, demolition orders were advanced without regard to the conflict context. As a result of community mobilization, demolitions were temporarily halted on site, but the threat remains urgent and ongoing.⁴
- In Umm al-Hiran, an unrecognized village already subjected to partial demolition, new eviction orders were issued in June 2025, despite an ongoing regional conflict and lack of alternative housing options. Families face renewed trauma and displacement without due process or State support.⁵

Gendered Impact on Bedouin Women

- Bedouin women—particularly those in unrecognized villages—experience these demolitions not only as loss of shelter but as a multi-dimensional violation of dignity, safety, and access to rights.⁶
- Women bear the primary burden of caring for children, elders, and disabled family members. Evictions uproot them from social networks, prevent continuity of education, and leave them exposed to environmental and physical insecurity.⁷
- The stress and trauma associated with repeated displacement contributes to increased rates of mental health distress among women, particularly in women-headed households, for whom alternative housing is even more difficult to secure.⁸

Violation of International Norms

The continuation of home demolitions and forced evictions during periods of armed conflict contravenes multiple provisions of international human rights law, including:

- CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 (women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations)
- General Recommendation No. 34 (rural women)
- The ICESCR right to adequate housing (Article 11)
- The prohibition on forced eviction under international humanitarian law

Despite these obligations, the State of Israel has neither suspended demolition activities during conflict nor provided gender-sensitive alternatives for displaced Bedouin families.⁹

¹ Nagabiya Research Center, *Statistical Yearbook on Bedouin Communities in the Negev/Naqab*, 2023, p. 85.

² NCF, *Human Rights Violations in the Bedouin Communities in the Negev*, Revised Version, 2024

³ NCF, *Emergency Report: Umm al-Hirran*, June 2024

⁴ NCF & Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages, *Letter to UN Representatives and Diplomats – as-Sirr*, May 2024

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ NCF, *Human Rights Violations in the Bedouin Communities in the Negev*, Revised Version, 2024

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ NCF, *Statement to ECOSOC Special Meeting on Forced Displacement*, June 2024



Conclusion and Recommendation

The forced displacement of Bedouin citizens of Israel—particularly women in unrecognized villages—during periods of national emergency constitutes a clear and recurring pattern of gendered discrimination and structural violence.

We urge the Commission to:

- Recognize the impact of forced evictions during conflict as a form of gender-based violence.
- Call on the State of Israel to impose an immediate moratorium on home demolitions in the Negev during conflict and crises;
- Urge the State to provide emergency shelter, services, and long-term housing alternatives in consultation with Bedouin communities, with specific protections for women.

See Annex: Total demolitions in Bedouin localities [graph], 2023 (Nagabiya Statistical Yearbook, p. 85)

Section II: Gendered Barriers to Employment and Economic Security

Overview: Bedouin women in the Negev/Naqab face profound and intersecting barriers to economic participation, resulting in one of the lowest employment rates among women in Israel. These barriers stem from structural discrimination in planning, transportation, education, and access to childcare - compounded by the invisibility of women in unrecognized villages in official statistics and public policy. The situation has worsened during periods of national crisis and conflict, further marginalizing women from an already fragile labor market.

Despite the existence of employment programs targeted at Bedouin women, such as the Maagaley Taasuka (Employment Circles) initiative, most women in unrecognized villages remain excluded from economic opportunities due to their geographic isolation and lack of access to services.

Documented Barriers and Trends

- According to Nagabiya data, only 20.5% of Bedouin women in the Negev were employed in 2023, with the rate dropping to under 10% in unrecognized villages.¹⁰
- 58% of Bedouin women in unrecognized villages are not participating in the labor market due to lack of childcare services, education access, or transportation infrastructure.¹¹
- The Maagaley Taasuka program, aimed at improving women's employment through skills-building and wraparound services, has reached only a limited number of villages and lacks sufficient funding for scale-up.¹²
- In most unrecognized villages, there are no public daycare centers, despite repeated government commitments under the Five-Year Plans. This prevents women with young children from seeking work or training.¹³
- Employment services are concentrated in recognized towns or industrial zones far from women's homes. For women in unrecognized villages, travel is costly, time-consuming, and often unsafe due to the absence of reliable public transport.¹⁴
- Many women face digital exclusion that prevents them from accessing job postings, submitting applications, or participating in remote work or training programs.¹⁵
- Social stigma and traditional norms also restrict women's employment options, particularly for jobs outside the village or in mixed-gender settings. However, research indicates that structural barriers—not cultural norms—remain the main obstacle.¹⁶

Gendered Impact of Conflict

- During the 2023–2024 wartime period, many employers in the south ceased operations or shifted to remote work. Bedouin women in unrecognized villages, lacking digital infrastructure or physical shelter, were excluded from both.

¹⁰ Nagabiya Research Center, *Statistical Yearbook on Bedouin Communities in the Negev/Naqab*, 2023, p. 30.

¹¹ Ibid, pp.25-30

NCF & Nagabiya, *Position Paper: Employment of Bedouin Women in the Negev*, Nov. 2022.

¹² NCF, *Policy Paper on the Absence of Daycare Centers in the Negev*, May 2023

¹³ NCF, *Human Rights Violations in the Bedouin Communities in the Negev*, 2024

¹⁴ Nagabiya Research Center, *Statistical Yearbook*, p. 27

¹⁵ NCF & Nagabiya, *Employment Circles Program Findings*, 2023 - 2024

¹⁶ Ibid.



- Women who were primary or secondary earners in their families often lost their income due to job cuts or security closures in nearby towns and factories.
- Employment insecurity among women increased household dependency ratios and placed additional pressure on women already burdened with caregiving and unpaid labor.

Violation of International Standards

The structural exclusion of Bedouin women from employment opportunities violates several core provisions of international human rights law, including:

- CEDAW Articles 10, 11, and 14 (education, employment, rural women);
- General Recommendation No. 34 on the Rights of Rural Women;
- General Recommendation No. 27 on Older Women and Protection of Their Human Rights;
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Despite these obligations, the State has not adopted temporary special measures to address systemic disparities affecting Bedouin women in unrecognized villages.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Economic exclusion of Bedouin women in the Negev is both a cause and consequence of broader gender-based discrimination. Without targeted investment in physical infrastructure (such as daycare centers), geographic access, digital inclusion, and gender-sensitive employment services, there can be no substantive equality.

We urge the Commission to:

- Recognize the economic marginalization of Bedouin women in unrecognized villages as a form of gendered structural violence;
- Recommend that the State of Israel provide access to employment services and child care in unrecognized villages, including mobile and community-based models.
- Encourage the integration of civil society data into policy planning and require the publication of gender- and locality-disaggregated data on employment.
- Promote funding and scale-up of culturally responsive employment programs such as Maagaley Taasuka.

See Annex:

- Chart: Employment Rate of Bedouin Women by Type of Locality (Nagabiya Statistical Yearbook, p. 30)
- Graphic: Geographic Distribution of Daycare Access in Unrecognized Villages (NCF/ADVA/Negabiyya Paper on Childcare, 2023)
- Table: Maagaley Taasuka Program Reach and Limitations (Position Paper, Nov. 2022)

Section III: Lack of Physical Protection and Emergency Infrastructure

Overview: The State of Israel's emergency preparedness policies systematically exclude Bedouin communities—particularly those in unrecognized villages—from adequate physical protection. During periods of conflict, Bedouin citizens, and especially women and children, are left without access to bomb shelters, 'warning sirens, safe zones, or emergency evacuation routes. This exclusion is a direct result of discriminatory planning policies and the denial of recognition and infrastructure.

The impact of this neglect is gendered. Women bear disproportionate responsibility for safeguarding children, elders, and family members during emergencies, often with no physical protection available. As a result, they face heightened fear, trauma, and physical risk during military escalations.

Key Issues and Evidence

- Over 80,000 residents of unrecognized villages live in areas without a single bomb shelter, protected structure, or access to public safety infrastructure.¹⁷
- Most unrecognized villages are not connected to official alert systems. Residents often report not hearing warning sirens during missile attacks.¹⁸

¹⁷ Nagabiya Research Center, *Statistical Yearbook*, 2023, p. 40

¹⁸ NCF, *Statement to ECOSOC Special Meeting on Forced Displacement*, June 2025



- Even recognized Bedouin localities suffer from a lack of shelters. For example, in the town of Rahat, Israel's largest Bedouin city, there are fewer than 20 public bomb shelters for a population of over 77,000.¹⁹
- During the April 2024 missile attacks from Iran, Bedouin families in unrecognized villages faced the double threat of no shelter and active demolition orders. The State provided no emergency protection measures.²⁰
- Women were forced to hide children under beds or flee homes without protection, reporting extreme stress and helplessness. This has a long-term mental health impact, particularly among women in remote villages.²¹
- Bedouin women have repeatedly called on local and national authorities for equal access to shelters and emergency plans, to no avail.²²

Violation of International Norms

This structural exclusion from emergency protection constitutes a violation of:

- CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 (conflict situations);
- ICESCR Article 12 (right to health and safety);
- The right to non-discrimination and equality in the provision of public services under ICCPR and CEDAW;
- UNDRIP Articles 7 and 21 (rights of Indigenous peoples to life and emergency services).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The failure to provide physical protection to Bedouin women and their families during armed conflict represents a grave breach of the State's obligations under international human rights law.

We urge the Commission to:

- Recognize the lack of emergency protection as a form of gendered neglect and institutional discrimination.
- Recommend that the State of Israel immediately provide equitable access to shelters, sirens, and emergency alerts in Bedouin localities.
- Call for the integration of Bedouin villages—recognized and unrecognized—into all national and regional emergency preparedness plans, in consultation with local women leaders.

See Annex: Map of unrecognized villages without shelter access (Nagabiya/NCF, 2024)

Conclusion

1. This submission by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF), with research contributions from the Nagabiya Knowledge and Research Center, identifies recurring patterns of gender-based discrimination and structural exclusion affecting Bedouin women and girls in the Negev/Naqab. The report documents three interlinked domains: (I) **Forcible Evictions and Home Demolitions**, which continue during armed conflict without gender-sensitive protections; (II) **Barriers to Employment**, including structural obstacles and the lack of supportive infrastructure for working mothers; and (III) **Lack of Physical Protection and Emergency Infrastructure**, highlighting the absence of shelters and early warning systems for Bedouin women in both recognized and unrecognized villages.

Together, these sections reflect a pattern of neglect and violation that disproportionately burdens Bedouin women, compounding risks and eroding fundamental rights guaranteed under CEDAW and other international standards.

We respectfully request that the Commission recognize these practices as urgent manifestations of gendered inequality and call on the State of Israel to address them through coordinated, inclusive, and rights-based policy reforms.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ NCF, *Emergency Appeal on Lack of Shelter*, April 2024

²¹ Ibid.

²² NCF, *Petition to National Emergency Authority*, May 2024