

Negev Coexistence Forum  
For Civil Equality

منتدى التعايش السلمي في  
النقب من أجل المساواة المدنية

פורום דו-קיום בנגב  
לשוויון אזרחי



**International Day for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**

**March 21, 2012**

# **Availability and Accessibility of Government, Commercial, Public, and Health Services in Arab Villages and Structural Discrimination Against Arab Employees in Government Offices in the Negev**

**A Picture of the Situation**

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## **Abstract**

This report deals with the accessibility of government, commercial and public services in the Bedouin towns and the employment of Arab workers in government services in the Negev. The report was published by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In light of government claims that moving the Bedouin population to permanent towns will benefit them and enable them to enjoy a higher level of services, this year's report will focus upon services that are being offered in Bedouin towns. The report raises a gloomy picture. Despite the fact that the rate of unemployment is extremely high in Bedouin towns, there are no employment offices in any of the communities, with the exception of the city of Rahat. Similarly, there are no Ministry of the Interior services available in Bedouin towns, except for Rahat, where only partial services are available. There has been some improvement in services offered by the National Insurance Institute since the issuance of last year's report, and mobile offices now visit other communities twice a week. By contrast, permanent National Insurance Institute offices exist in Jewish settlements in the Negev, such as Yeruham and Mitzpeh Ramon, despite the fact that these towns have smaller populations than the Bedouin towns.

Furthermore, none of the Arab communities has offices for public housing services or rental assistance. According to the regulations of the Ministry of Construction and Housing for receiving rental assistance, none of the Arab communities in the Negev (except for Rahat) are even listed as eligible for receiving rental assistance. By contrast, all Jewish settlements that were sampled, together with well-established Jewish settlements such as Lehavim, that were not sampled in this report, are eligible for rental assistance.

There has been an improvement in the number of Bedouin communities which have bus services, but the number of busses available each day in these towns is less than those

available in Jewish settlements in the Negev. There is also no public transportation available whatsoever in the communities belonging to the Abu Basma Regional Council.

There has been an improvement in the services offered by the Bezek Telephone Company in some of the Bedouin towns, including most notably Rahat. On the other hand, in the Abu Basma Regional Council and in two neighborhoods of Lafia, there is still no infrastructure for telephone services. In Tel Sheva, infrastructure exists but it is not yet in use. Consequently, people living in these areas do not have telephone services.

There is a full bank branch and an express branch (for limited services) in Rahat, and an express branch in Hura. In the remaining Bedouin communities, there are no banking services.

Maternity care clinics exist in most of the communities that were sampled, but no clinics exist in El Sayyad, Tarabin, or Kuchleh, and people living in these communities are forced to travel to other towns to receive health services. Consequently, women who cannot get to the clinics in other villages are forced to go without health services, and their children are denied the treatment and follow-up that they require.

From discussions with the person responsible for freedom of information in the governorship of state services, it appears that there has been no significant improvement in the employment of Arabs employed in government services. This finding is extremely unfortunate and worrisome in light of the fact that the government designated 2012 as a year in which Arabs would constitute 10 percent of government workers.

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## Introduction

For the third consecutive year, The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality (NCF) has published a report dealing with structural discrimination against Arabs living in the Negev on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The current report focuses on two issues:

1. Accessibility of government, public, commercial, and health services and informal educational services for residents of Bedouin towns in the Negev.
2. The number of Arab citizens employed in government services in the Negev.

Bedouin Arabs are an indigenous population which has been living in the Negev for hundreds of years. In 1948, the Bedouin population in the Negev numbered between 60,000 and 90,000 people, and some researchers claim that the number was even higher. During the war of 1948, most of the Bedouin Arabs fled or were evicted from the Negev, and by the end of the war only 11,000 Arab Bedouin remained within the confines of the State of Israel.

Evictions of the Arab Bedouin living in the Negev began in the 1950s, and the Israeli government concentrated them within an area known as the Siyag, or "fenced area". This area extended over 1000-1300 square kilometers in the eastern Negev, an area that is less fertile than the northwestern Negev area where the Bedouin had lived previously and which was handed over for the establishment of Jewish settlements following the war. No Bedouin remained in the northwestern Negev. It should be noted that before 1948, the "fenced area" comprised only 20 percent of the Arab Bedouins' land in the Negev<sup>1</sup>.

Tel Sheva, the first Bedouin town, was established in 1966. The town of Rahat was then established together with five other Bedouin towns before the end of the 1990s. The objective of these towns was to concentrate the Arab Bedouin into congested urban communities, all of which were established without adequate infrastructure and with almost no possibility of employment for the rural, agricultural population which was forced to settle there. Data from the National Office of Statistics reveals that in 2010, the population of the area of Be'er Sheva numbered 620,400 people, 196,900 of whom are Arab Bedouin.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the Bedouin live in seven government-planned towns, in the village of Tarabin, in another nine villages that were recognized over the last decade, and in so-called

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<sup>1</sup>Porat, H., 2007, The Bedouin in the Negev Between Nomadism and Urbanization 1948-1973. Negev Center for Regional Development, Ben Gurion University, p. 13

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Statistics, 7 March 2012 Annual Statistics for Israel 2011 Table 2.10, Population According to Population Groups, Religion, Age, and Gender, Region, and Area, Averages 2010 pp. 210, 212. < [http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton62/st02\\_10x.pdf](http://www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton62/st02_10x.pdf)>

“unrecognized villages” in the Negev. Ensuring that this population is adequately represented in government offices in the Negev is a civil and moral obligation that the Israeli government must fulfill towards its Bedouin citizens and an essential step in the integration and advancement of this compartmentalized population group. The same holds true for the provision of suitable levels of government, commercial, and public services.

In light of a government plan known as the Praver-Amidror Plan, which aims to forcibly displace 30,000 Bedouin citizens and concentrate them into Bedouin towns, we have decided to focus this report on the issue of services that are being offered to the Bedouin population in the Negev in the settlements of Segev Shalom, Kasifa, Hura, Lakia, Tel Sheva, Arara Banegev, Rahat, and the towns within the Abu Basma Regional Council.

According to the Israeli government, the main reason for concentrating the Bedouin into towns is that this would offer them a higher level of services and modernization, and thus bring about an increase in their standard of living. This report attempts to examine this claim by means of a partial sampling of government services (such as employment offices, branches of the National Insurance Institute, etc.), the degree of accessibility to government health clinics, and the availability of commercial-business services and public facilities such as youth, sports, and cultural centers in Bedouin towns.

### **Destructive Impact of Bedouin Urbanization**

The State of Israel began to implement a policy of urbanization for its Bedouin population in the mid 1960s, when seven "semi-urban" towns were planned for the purpose of absorbing the entire Bedouin population. According to Avinoam Meir<sup>3</sup>, this process led to a radical change in all walks of life for the Bedouin in the Negev (Meir, 1987). The process of Bedouin urbanization was initiated for several reasons. Israeli professor Oren Yiftachel<sup>4</sup> claims, for example, that the urbanization program stems from the desire of the State of Israel "to populate the Negev with Jews and decrease the control of Israeli Arabs over land in the Negev (Yiftachel, 2003)." Others view the urbanization process as an inevitable part of "modernization" to which the government wishes to subject the Bedouin. Urbanization enables the government to concentrate as many Bedouin citizens as possible within a limited urban area. Those who support this policy claim that it enables the government institutions to better provide for the

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<sup>4</sup> Yiftachel, O. (2003) 'Bedouin-Arabs and the Israeli Settler State', in Champagne, D. and I. abu-Saad (eds), *Indigenous People between Autonomy and Globalization*, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

citizens' needs and offer them improved infrastructures and public services. However, this claim is not reflected in the reality of life in the Bedouin towns.

Bedouin academic and professor at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Ismail Abu Saad, claims that the Bedouin towns were not given sufficient resources for independent development, making them even more dependent upon the kindheartedness of the Israeli economy and causing them to retain their low status in the Israeli hierarchy.<sup>5</sup>(Abu-Saad, 2008) In a report by Eliezer Goldberg, a retired Israeli High Court of Justice judge, the State Comptroller is quoted as saying: "The recognized towns have remained in a state of misery and neglect. The rate of unemployment among the recognized settlements is significantly higher than the national average: the Bedouin settlements were established with a minimal level of development: there was no sewage system constructed, the roads were paved only half as wide as they were planned, drainage was poor, and no open public areas were developed and there are only a limited number of public institutions. There has been no significant improvement in the level of development or infrastructures since they were built."<sup>6</sup>

The reality that exists in the recognized towns, as presented in the State Comptroller's report, proves that the policy of urbanization was not implemented for purposes of development, providing better services, or modernization, but rather by a desire to increase control over the Bedouin population and to ensure that reserves of land in the Negev would remain free for the purpose of future Jewish settlement.

### **Arab Employment in Government Services**

The year 2012 was designated as a year for promoting an adequate representation of Arabs in the public sector, according to decision number 2759 of the Israeli government, issued on 11 November 2007. According to this decision, entitled "Adequate Representation of the Arab, Druze, and Circassians Sectors in Government Services," members of these population groups should constitute 10 percent of government workers by the end of 2012.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that this objective was originally set for the end of the year 2010, but was postponed because the government offices failed to meet the objective.

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<sup>5</sup> Abu-Saad, I. (2008) 'Spatial Transformation and Indigenous Resistance: The Urbanization of the Palestinian Bedouin in Southern Israel' in *American Behavioral Scientist* 51(12)

<sup>6</sup> Website of the Ministry of Construction and Housing from 17.3.2012. Report of the Judge Goldberg regarding Bedouin Settlements in the Negev, January, 2009. P. 24. .  
<[http://www.moch.gov.il/odot/rashut\\_beduim/Pages/goldberg.aspx](http://www.moch.gov.il/odot/rashut_beduim/Pages/goldberg.aspx)>

<sup>7</sup> Website of the Prime Minister, 12 March, 2012, Decision 2479 *Adequate Representation of the Arab, Druze, and Circassians in Government Services*,  
<<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Archive/Decisions/2007/11/des2579.htm>>Prime>

A parliamentary investigation committee headed by Israeli parliament member Ahmed Tibi was established in 2008 to deal with the issue of Arab employment in public service. On 25 January 2009, the government allotted 800 new government jobs to bolster the decision of 2007.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the government decision and the allotment of additional jobs, the annual report of the Commission of Government Service regarding adequate representation of the Arab, Druze, and Circassian population in Government Services for 2009 reveals that there was an increase of only 0.3 percent in the number of Arab employees in government service since 2008. In other words, there was a slight, slow increase in the number of Arabs working in government jobs each year, but in 2009, they still only constituted 6.97 percent of all government workers.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the objective that was set for this year will not be met unless a supreme effort is made.

The Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities, which operates within the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Employment, defines discrimination that is forbidden in the workplace as, "Relating to a person differently because of his or her background, gender, sexual orientation, personal status, age, pregnancy, fertilization treatments, parenthood, in vitro fertilization, race, religion, nationality, country of origin, outlook, political party orientation, or reserve military service."<sup>10</sup>

The situation regarding employment of members of minority groups was assessed according to the principle of "adequate representation in order to prevent instances of such discrimination." The principle of adequate representation stems from the need to ensure participation of minority groups in the public expanse. One of the known methods of ensuring adequate representation is "representative bureaucracy." This implies ensuring places and integrating minorities in public service in proportion to the relative size of their segment of the population. Consequently, the government, as the largest employer in the economy, must implement the idea of adequate representation

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<sup>8</sup>Haaretz Website, March 17, 2011, The Israeli government has allotted 800 new government jobs for Israeli Arabs. 6.01.2009.

<<http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/objects/pages/PrintArticle.jhtml?itemNo=1058722>>

<sup>9</sup> Government Service Commission Website, Jan. 12, 2012, Adequate Representation of Arabs, Druze, and Circassians in Government Service, Report for 2009. <<http://www.civil-service.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/40EBBD2-11AF-4871-B076-42AE16231867/0/ethiopiansReport2009.pdf>>

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Industry, Commerce and employment Website, Commission ship for Equal Work Opportunities, 12 March, 2012, *What is Discrimination?*

<<http://www.moital.gov.il/NR/exeres/468BEBFD-1E8B-4BDD-A8A3-5EC614FB15BD.htm>>



of minority groups. It must also lead the private sector in adopting this principle and ensure adequate representation of minority groups therein.<sup>11</sup>

The underrepresentation of the Arab population in general, and the Arab Bedouin population of the Negev in particular, is a situation of "structural racism." Structural racism implies a method of allotting more social rights to a certain group in society; in other words, a system in which public policy, institutional regulations, cultural representation, and other norms help in various ways to perpetuate inequality against a racial background. In a reality of structural racism, laws and institutions are not required to act in an obviously racist manner in order to cut various groups off from society, but must merely perpetuate unequal historical conditions.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, discrimination towards the Arab residents of the Negev is not limited to inequality regarding employment in government services, but also involves the degree of accessibility of government, commercial, public and health services as well.

The United Nations Charter for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966) determines that racism is: "Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life"<sup>13</sup> Israel signed this charter in 1966, and it has been in force in Israel since 1979.

This report will therefore assess the government, commercial-business, and public services, as well as services related to public health that are offered in the Bedouin towns, as opposed to Jewish towns in the Negev. The report will also present the percentage of Arab workers that are employed in government offices in the Negev as it relates to the size of the Bedouin population in the area of Be'er Sheva.

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<sup>11</sup> Position Paper, *Promoting Adequate Representation of the Arab Minority in Government Service*, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. <<http://public-policy.huji.ac.il/upload/k.pdf>>

<sup>12</sup> Wiley, Maya. *Structural Racism and Multi-Racial Coalition Building*. Institute of Race and Poverty. November 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Association for Human Rights Website, 12 March, 2012, U.N. Charter for Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966. <<http://www.acri.org.il/he/?p=72>>

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## Methodology

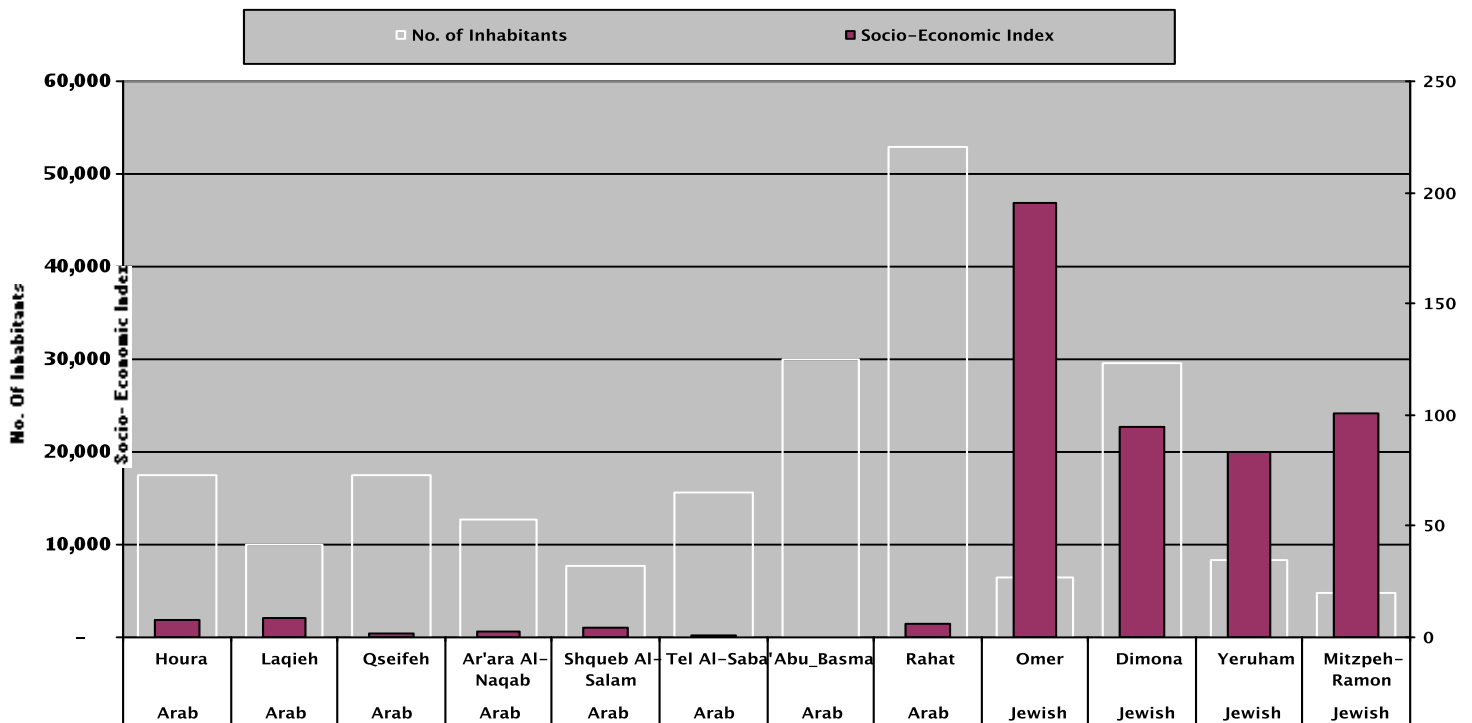
The data in this report was compiled using several methods:

1. Letters were sent to the offices of the mayors of the Bedouin towns in the Negev in February 2012. Only the towns of Segev Shalom, Arara BaNegev, and Kasifa responded in writing or by telephone.
2. Because of the difficulty in gathering data, interviews were held with social workers and residents in the various communities.
3. Data was also collected and produced from government, commercial, and public websites.
4. It was not possible to obtain precise data from the Commission of Government Services regarding the employment of Arabs in government services for 2011, or regarding the change in the number of workers as opposed to the previous year. Telephone calls were made to Ms. Henya Markovitz, the person in charge of freedom of information at the Government Services Commission to receive a current and accurate picture of the situation.

## Findings and Analysis

### 1.1 Communities in the survey – General information, availability of government, public, commercial and health services and informal educational services for residents of the Bedouin communities in the Negev

Graph 1: The Communities in the Survey: Population and Socio-Economic Rating



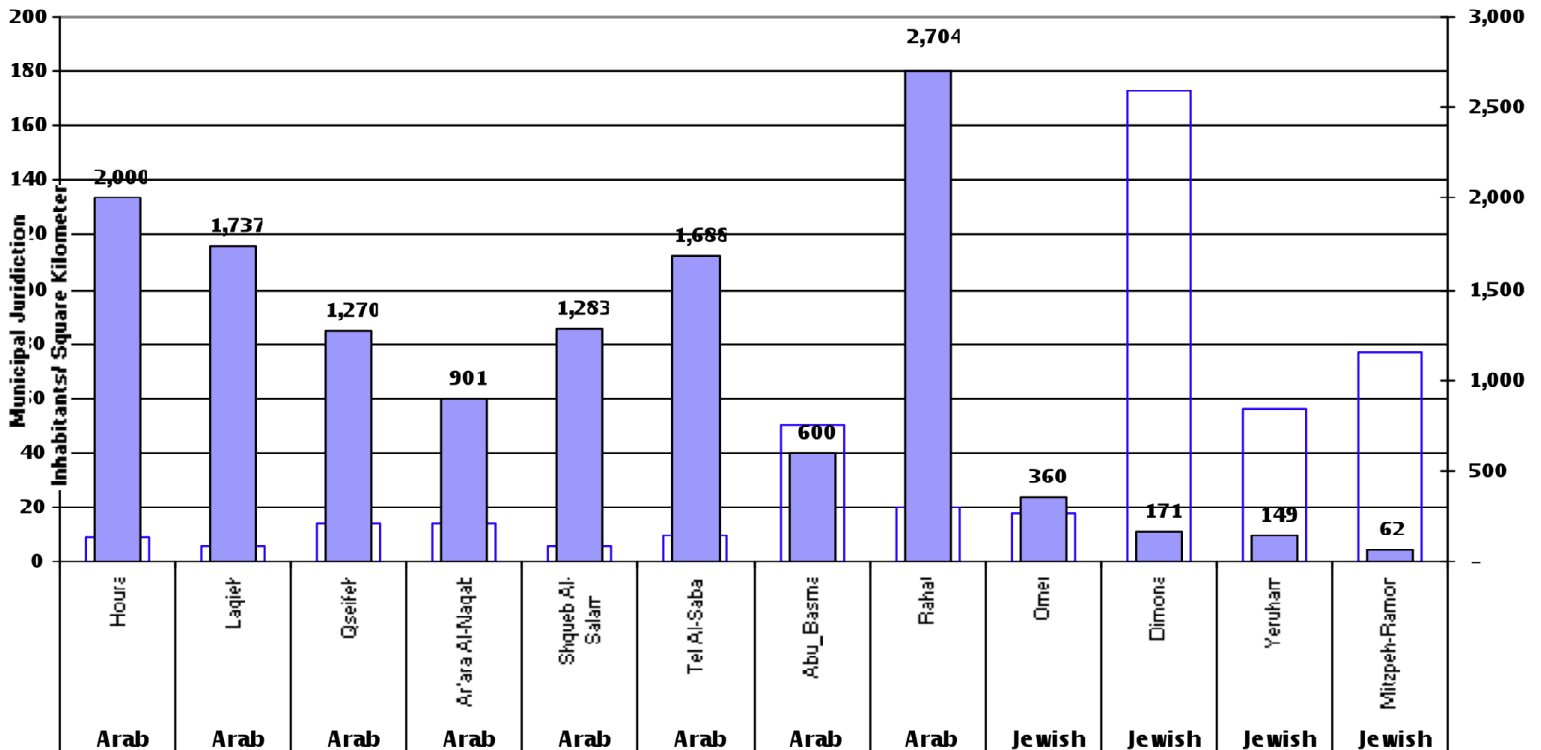
Graph No. 1 presents the number of residents<sup>14</sup> in each of the communities included in the survey and their socio-economic rating<sup>15</sup> out of 197 communities, with 197 being

<sup>14</sup> National Bureau of Statistics Website , Communities and Additional Geographical Distribution for 2012, 18.3.2012. < [http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?Mlval=cw\\_usr\\_view\\_SHTML&ID=807](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?Mlval=cw_usr_view_SHTML&ID=807)>

<sup>15</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics Website from 12.3.12, Regional and Municipal Councils According to Alphabetical Order, Rating, Connection to Group, Population,. Variable Values, Score, and

the highest rating. The graph shows that the Arab communities are rated below the index from the socio-economic standpoint.

Graph 2: Communities in the Survey – Population Density According to Square Kilometer



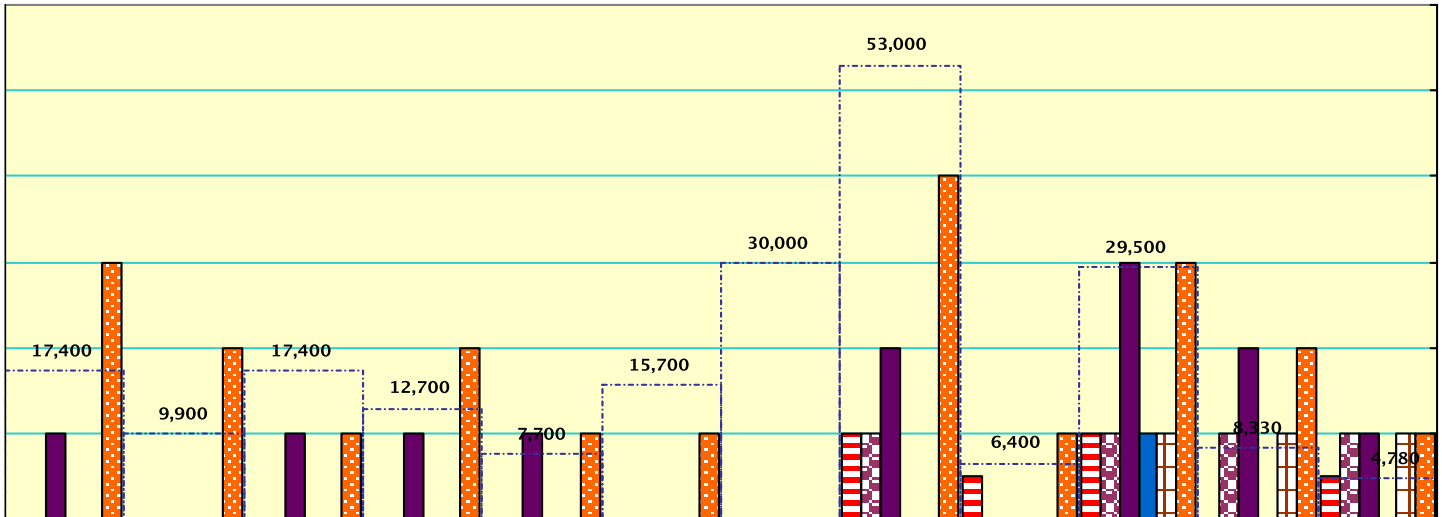
Graph 2 presents the available space allotted for residents to live within the area of each of the communities in the survey. The Arab communities, which appear on the left side of the graph, usually have a higher population density than the Jewish communities. The highest is 2074 residents per square kilometer in the city of Rahat,

Rating Code According to variable included in the index of 2006.

[http://www.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2009n/24\\_09\\_244t1.pdf](http://www.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2009n/24_09_244t1.pdf)

where one quarter of the Negev's total Bedouin population live. On the other hand, in Jewish communities, the population density is lower – implying a higher level of income from property tax that benefits residents.

Graph 3 – Government Services in Various Communities in the Negev



Graph 3 presents the situation regarding government services that are available in Bedouin towns and Jewish communities in the Negev. Communities with a permanent branch or mobile office of the National Insurance Institute were categorized according to the number of hours the offices are open to the public each week: (1) 0-10 hours, (2) 10-15 hours, and (3) 15 hours or more.

The communities were then categorized according to the presence or absence of a branch of the Ministry of Interior. In Omer and Mitzpeh Ramon, there is no permanent branch, but partial services, such as applying for passports, I.D. cards, and census listings, which are provided through the offices of the local municipality. Services such as public housing, a branch of the offices for receiving rental assistance, and employment offices were rated according to the absence or presence of a local branch in the town.

The findings reveal a gloomy picture. A comparative glance provides data showing that only partial government services are available in the Bedouin towns, where overall there are fewer services than in Jewish communities in the Negev. Except for Rahat, which is the second largest city in the Negev and where there is a permanent branch of the National Insurance Institute that is open two days a week for a total of 12 hours (located in a trailer, see picture on page 26), none of the Bedouin towns have a permanent branch of the National Insurance Institute. A mobile office of the National Insurance Institute visits Kasifa, Hura, Arara BaNegev and Segev Shalom once or twice each week and operates no more than 9 hours per week. In Lakia, Tel Sheva, and towns in the Abu Basma Regional Council, there is no service of the National Insurance Institute at all.

Yeruham, a Jewish town of 8,330 residents, has a permanent branch of the National Insurance Institute that is open four days a week for a total of 14 hours. By comparison,, in Tel Sheva, a Bedouin town of 15,700 people, there is no service provided by the National Insurance Institute at all. In Mitzpeh Ramon, a Jewish city with 4,780 residents, there is a permanent office of the National Insurance Institute that is open for 10 hours each week. There are no branches of the Ministry of Interior in any of the Bedouin communities, with the exception of Rahat, where only partial services are available, including the ability to register the population.

Despite the fact that all the Bedouin towns have a low socio-economic rating (Group 1) and high unemployment levels, there are no employment offices in any of the towns, except for Rahat. This means that thousands of people are forced to travel to Be'er Sheva, Dimona, or Arad to sign up at the unemployment office in order to receive unemployment compensation. On the other hand, the Jewish town of Yeruham, which has a smaller population than any of the Bedouin towns (with the exception of Segev Shalom), has its own unemployment office.

It should be noted that "Rian" centers are currently operating in Segev Shalom and Hura following government decision 747 of 27 November 2006, concerning the program for developing the Negev.<sup>16</sup> Rian Centers are designed to provide accessibility for people seeking employment in place of government employment offices, and one such center is currently operating in Rahat.

There is no public housing available in any of the Bedouin towns, despite the fact that they are located at the bottom of the socio-economic scale of all towns in Israel (See Graph 1). There are also no offices of the Amidar Company, which provides public housing or offices for receiving rental assistance for those who are eligible. On the other

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Construction and Housing Website, 10.3.12. Government Decision 747 of 27.11.2004, Plan for Development of the Negev, Section 3.

[http://moch.gov.il/Gov\\_Decisions/Pages/GovDecision.aspx?ListID=f33e0a4b-aa35-4b12-912e-d271a6476a11&WebId=fe384cf7-21cd-49eb-8bbb-71ed64f47de0&ItemID=12](http://moch.gov.il/Gov_Decisions/Pages/GovDecision.aspx?ListID=f33e0a4b-aa35-4b12-912e-d271a6476a11&WebId=fe384cf7-21cd-49eb-8bbb-71ed64f47de0&ItemID=12)

hand, all the Jewish towns have Amidar Company branches, offices for receiving rental assistance, and public housing is available in these towns (shown in Graph 3), as well.

Rental assistance is only provided in communities that are defined as eligible communities. The website for the Ministry of Construction and Housing states that with the exception of Rahat, none of the Bedouin towns are listed as communities in which people are eligible to receive rental assistance.<sup>17</sup> To be included on the list of places eligible for rental assistance, communities must meet one of the following criteria: communities that are cities, communities that are not cities but whose population is above 1,000, communities in which at least 5 percent of families were shown in the last census to be renting housing from private landlords totaling at least 30 families, and other settlements within areas of top national priority (such as border towns) that are not included in the first or second category. In kibbutzim and communal moshavim (agricultural villages), aid is only provided to residents who are not members, or who are candidates for membership in the agricultural villages.

According to data from the Knesset's Center for Research and Information, this implies that 84,600 persons eligible for rental assistance, who constitute 96.6 percent of the total number of those eligible, live in Jewish settlements (including integrated cities) and 2,936 eligible persons, who constitute approximately 3.4 percent of the total number of those eligible, live in Arab communities. 86 percent of the total population lives in Jewish and integrated communities, and approximately 14 percent live in Arab communities. Therefore, only 1.6 percent of the budget allotted to rental assistance actually goes to residents of Arab communities. Despite the fact that many Arab communities, including Bedouin towns, have over 1,000 residents, they are not included in the criteria for eligibility because the rental market in these communities is below 5 percent.<sup>18</sup> Only the city of Rahat appears on the national list of eligible communities. Due to these criteria, a situation exists in which most of the budget is allotted to Jews, thereby discriminating against Arab citizens.

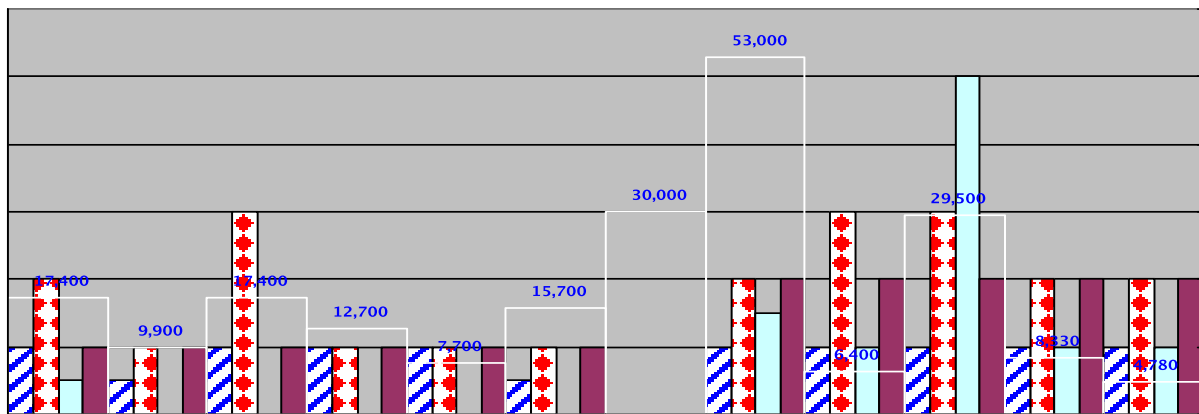
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<sup>17</sup> List of settlements eligible for aid in rent payment, Website of the Ministry of Construction and Housing. > [http://moch.gov.il/siyua\\_bedyur/schar\\_dira/Pages/yeshuvev\\_schar\\_dira.aspx](http://moch.gov.il/siyua_bedyur/schar_dira/Pages/yeshuvev_schar_dira.aspx)<

<sup>18</sup> The Knesset Center for Information and Research Ministry of Construction and Housing, Allotment of Aid in Rent according to Communities, 26.10.2012  
><http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m02847.pdf><



Graph 4: Public and Commercial Services in Various Communities in the Negev



Graph 4 shows the public and commercial services available in Arab and Jewish communities in the Negev. The postal services were rated according to the type of branch that exists in the community (post agent or post office), the number of hours the service is open to the public each week, and the variety of services available. Bezek services (the Israeli telephone company) were rated according to the existence of infrastructure. Places in which there was only partial infrastructure, or in which the infrastructure was inactive, received a score of 0.5. Banking branches were examined according to whether a branch exists in the community and the number of branches available in each. An express office, where only partial banking services are available, received a score of 0.5. Public transportation was rated according to the number of busses that leave the community for Be'er Sheva between the hours of 07:00-08:00. One bus received a score of 1, 2-5 busses received a score of 2, and 5-10 busses received a score of 3.

The findings reveal that there are no banking services in most of the Bedouin towns. There is an active banking branch in Rahat and an express branch that provides partial

services (current account information, an ATM machine, a machine for depositing checks), and a regular branch. In Hura, there is an express branch, but in the other towns there are no banking services except for the post office banking services, where limited services are offered through postal agencies.

In three Jewish settlements, there is at least one branch of a bank. In Dimona, for example, which has a population of 29,500, there are five bank branches. By contrast, Rahat, which has almost two times the population of Dimona, with 53,000 residents, only has two banking branches, including one that offers only partial banking services. In Hura, which has 17,400 residents, there is only an express bank that offers partial services, while in the Jewish community of Omer (population of 6,400 residents) there is a regular branch of a bank that offers a wide variety of services.

There are postal agents in all of the Bedouin communities (except for Rahat) that are open 36.5 hours each week. The agencies are operated by a contractor by means of a permit, and provide similar, though less extensive, services than those provided by a regular post office. There is at least one post office in all the Jewish settlements that were sampled.<sup>19</sup> In the communities of the Abu Basma Regional Council, there is no branch of the post office or postal agents, but there are locations set up for mail distribution in some of the communities. For example, in Bir Hadaj, Mulda, and Abu Karinat, there are post boxes, but in Alsayar, Kassar a-Sir and Tarabin there are none. In Um Betin, there are post boxes, but some have been broken. In light of the situation, many residents have post office boxes in Jewish cities nearby, for which they must pay.

There is infrastructure for telephone services in most of the Bedouin towns, but not in all of them. In the communities of the Abu Basma Regional Council, for example, there is no connection to the Bezek infrastructure. In neighborhoods 11 and 12 of Lafia, there is no infrastructure at all. In Tel Sheva, the phone lines cannot be used due to damage done to the infrastructure.<sup>20</sup> While collecting information, we spoke with a resident of Tel Sheva who explained that some of the residents do not actually have telephone service due to a long-term problem that has not been repaired, but they are still being billed for owning a telephone line.

The availability of public transport was sampled according to the number of busses leaving a community for Be'er Sheva from 07:00–08:00, the rush hour when most people travel to work. With the exception of the communities in the Abu Basma Regional Council, where there is no public transport at all, there is public transport in the Bedouin settlements. In Lafia, Segev Shalom, and Tel Sheva, public transport is

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<sup>19</sup> Israel Postal Service Website, 12.3.2012, ><http://www.israelpost.co.il/><

<sup>20</sup>"Phone lines were stolen in Tel Sheva. We're back to living in Tents." Ynet, 8.1.11, 2011. ><http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3831312,00.html><

particularly sparse. The Jewish town of Omer, which has fewer residents than any of these three Bedouin communities (See Graph 1), has far more busses available during the hour that was sampled. Public transport is essential for residents to get to work, hospitals, academic institutions, financial and commercial services, and government offices that are not available within the communities.

### **Informal Educational Services in Various Towns in the Negev**

Youth and cultural centers or alternative centers operate in all of the Jewish settlements. In Omer, there is no Youth and Cultural Center, but there is a center known as "Beit Hapoel" that offers sports activities, a center for the elderly that offers classes and groups for adults, and the community has an auditorium. In the Bedouin communities, there are usually Youth and Cultural Centers, but in Lafia and in some communities in the Abu Basma Regional Council, these centers are not operating. There is a Histadrut - Union Workers Center in Rahat [WHAT IS A HISTADRUT CENTER?] as well as a Youth and Cultural center, but it is not operating. There is a building and a collection of books in Segev Shalom, but there is no budget for a librarian and the library is consequently closed. There is a library in Abu Karinat, in the Abu Basma Regional Council, located in the local high school and designated to serve all the communities of Abu Basma. There is no library in Lafia, but a mobile library for children and teenagers is operated by volunteers from the "Lafia Women's Organization" on weekends. There is a mobile library in Arara Banegev, Lafia, Bir Hadaj and Al Fura operated by the Israeli Book and Library Center that, according to the center's website, visits the communities twice a month.<sup>21</sup>

Table 1: Family Health Clinics in Various Communities in the Negev

<u>Type of Settlement</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>No. of Clinics</u>
Town	Hura	3
Town	Lafia	2
Town	Kasifa	1
Town	AraraBaNegev	2
Town	Segev Shalom	1
Town	Tel Sheva	1
Abu Basma R.C.*	BirHadaj	1
Abu Basma R.C.*	Kasar a-Sir	1
Abu Basma R.C.*	Mulda/WadiRawain	1
Abu Basma R.C.*	Makhol	1

<sup>21</sup> Mobile Libraries for the Arab Sector. Israel Book and Library Center Website, 17.3.12.  
 <<http://www.hasifria.org.il/icl/heb/arabprojects/autobook/>>

Abu Basma R.C.*	Tarabin	0
Abu Basma R.C.*	Kohala	0
Abu Basma R.C.*	Abu Karinat	1
Abu Basma R.C.*	Darijat	1
Abu Basma R.C.*	Al Sayid	0
Abu Basma R.C.*	Um Batin	1
City	Rahat	4
City	Omer	1
City	Dimona	4
City	Yeruham	2
Town	Mitzpeh Ramon	1

\*Villages in the Abu Basma Regional Council

Table 1 presents the number of family health clinics and "Tipat Halav" (infant health clinics) in various communities in the Negev. Family health clinics exist in all the Jewish communities and in most of the Bedouin communities. One worrisome finding, however, is that in Tarabin, Al Fura and Kohala, there are no services available in family health clinics. This is despite the fact that in Tarabin, there is a building designated for a clinic. Furthermore, the number of health clinics available does not always correspond to the number of residents in a community. For example, in Tel Sheva, which has a population of 15,700, there is only one clinic. In the Jewish town of Yeruham, by contrast, there are two clinics that serve a population of only 8,330. It is important to note that the family health clinics in some of the Bedouin communities also serve the residents of the neighboring unrecognized villages.

According to data from the Board of Health in the Southern Region, the rate of infant mortality among the Arab Bedouin population was 13.6 for every 1,000 births in 2010.<sup>22</sup> According to a report by the State Comptroller, the infant mortality rate among Arabs in the Negev in 2009 was 12.2 for every 1,000 births.<sup>23</sup> In other words, there was an increase of more than 10 percent in the rate of infant mortality in the span of one year. Undoubtedly, the accessibility of family health clinics is essential in decreasing these difficult findings. Infant mortality rates among the Arab-Bedouin are four times that of

<sup>22</sup> Even, Dan, Increase in the Rate of Infant Mortality in the Bedouin Sector Haaretz Website, 17.3.12. <<http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/health/1.1172018>>

<sup>23</sup> State Controller's Report, 12.12.2012, page 751. <<http://www.mevaker.gov.il/serve/contentTree.asp?bookid=604&id=193&contentid=&parentcid=undefined>>.

the average in Jewish settlements, which, according to the National Office of Statistics, is 2.7 for every 1,000 births.<sup>24</sup>

In 2009, the government closed the family health clinics in the unrecognized villages of Abu Talul and Wadi Naam and in the village of Kasar A-Sir in the Abu Basma Regional Council, due to lack of manpower.<sup>25</sup> As a result, residents of Abu Talul and Wadi Naam petitioned the High Court of Justice, and the court ordered that the clinics be reopened. The three clinics were reopened, but in Wadi Naam, the clinic, which serves thousands of people, is open only once a week.<sup>26</sup>

Table 2 – Industries, Business and Number of Employees in Bedouin Communities in the Negev

Community	Industries in 2008	Number of Employees	Businesses in 2009	Number of Employees
Hura	3	34	17	151
Kasifa	0	0	9	27
Lakia	1	60	5	27
AraraBaNegev	3	30	4	47
Tel Sheva	1	13	11	74
Segev Shalom	1	15	6	38
Rahat	13	95	113	766
Total	22	247	165	1130

<sup>24</sup> Dan Even, Increase in the Rate of Infant Mortality in the Bedouin Sector , Haaretz Website, 17.3.12.

<sup>25</sup> Adalah, ' Following Adalah's Petition Israeli Health Ministry Reopens Mother and Child Clinics in Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages in the Naqab, (Press Release, 11 August 2010) <[http://www.adalah.org/eng/pressreleases/pr.php?file=11\\_08\\_10](http://www.adalah.org/eng/pressreleases/pr.php?file=11_08_10)> at 24 January 2012> .

<sup>26</sup> Alternative Report submitted by the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the occasion of the consideration of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> periodic reports of Israel . Submitted 30 January 2011. <http://www.dukium.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/CERD-shadow-report-final.pdf>

Table 2 shows that there are only a small number of industries in the permanent Bedouin communities in the Negev and that the number of jobs provided by industrial activities is extremely small.<sup>27</sup>

There are 474 industries operating in the Negev; the Bedouin are integrated into these industries an extremely limited manner, since most Bedouin workers are employed in small industries that require only a few workers. There are no areas that have been approved for industry in most of the Bedouin towns, and consequently, most Bedouin businesses operate within the area of the city market in Be'er Sheva or the Emek-Sara Industrial Zone. The Bedouin communities that have industrial zones are Rahat, Hura, Segev Shalom, Arara BaNegev, and Tel Sheva. The industrial zone in Rahat encompasses 570 dunam (14 acres) and comprises 13 industries, the largest of which employs only 21 workers. Most of the industries are smaller and have fewer employees.<sup>28</sup>

## 1.2 Employment of Arab Workers in Government Service in the Negev

A report compiled by the Negev Forum for Co-Existence in 2011 revealed that out of 5,217 persons employed in government services in the southern region, only 197, or 3.7 percent, are Arabs. In seven out of 17 government offices in the region, seven have no Arab employees at all. More than 10 percent of the workers in the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Ecology, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Veterinary services are Arabs. The Income Tax Offices (Customs and VAT Tax), the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Welfare have the lowest percentages of Arab employees, with only 1.3 percent, 1.5 percent, 1.4 percent, and 2.3 percent, respectively. The percentage of Arab employees in welfare units is also low.<sup>29</sup>

The 2011 report also reveals that many of the Arab employees in the Negev are in areas of health services, where there is an explicit need for Arab-speaking workers. Another outstanding finding is the relatively high rate of employment of Muslim religious people – Imams, for example – who are the only one who can fill to use positions, and this

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<sup>27</sup> Data from the Book of Statistics for Bedouin in the Negev, Ben Gurion University, 2010, p. 121. <<http://web.bgu.ac.il/NR/rdonlyres/04BC4DDD-6D60-4B11-A1CA-1B107C2535/117066/hebrewbooksideJuly.pdf>>

<sup>28</sup> Society in the Negev – Changes in an Era of Urbanization, Dr. Tabat Abu Ras, Keren Avraham Initiatives, 2011, p. 86. <[http://www.abrahamfund.org/img/upload/0/0\\_3770.pdf](http://www.abrahamfund.org/img/upload/0/0_3770.pdf)>Bedouin>

<sup>29</sup> Report of the Negev Forum for Co-Existence and Civil Equality, Constructive Discrimination and Racism against Arab Employees in Government Offices in the Negev and Accessibility and Availability of Government Services in Arab Communities – A Picture of the Situation, 2011, page 11.

accounts for the higher employment rate in the interior ministry. 44 Arab workers are employed in management positions. These constitute the lowest portion in the table representing non-academic workers, who constitute 22.3 percent of Arab workers.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the government decision, mentioned in the introduction to this report, that by the end of 2012, 10 percent of government employees would be Arabs, it appears that there is a minimal chance that this objective will be met. In 2009, only 6.9 percent of all government employees were Arabs, and the situation in the south is even worse. Despite the fact that 30 percent of the Negev population is Arab, Arab employees constitute only 4 percent of the total number of government workers.<sup>31</sup> These figures are far from the 10 percent objective that the government was due to implement.

On 12 July 2011, the Parliament Committee for Absorbing Arab Workers in Public Services hosted the Commissioner for Government Services, Att. Moshe Dayan. Dayan responded to the findings of the Commission for Government Services for 2010, stating, "The overall situation is not good, and we must aim for an objective in which at least 10 percent of all public workers are Arabs. [...] I intend to discuss the issue of integrating Arab employees with all the heads of the various ministries. Any office that fails in this objective will be held accountable."<sup>32</sup>

Despite this statement, it appears that the situation remains unchanged. A telephone conversation with Henya Markovitch, who is responsible for freedom of information in the Government Commission, revealed that there is no significant change in the percentage of Arab workers employed in government services. "There has been no significant increase. There is usually an increase of one half to three-quarters of a percent in the number of Arab government workers each year."<sup>33</sup>

The fact that there has been no increase in the number of Arab employees in government services despite the objective that the Israeli government has set for itself is worrisome. We would expect members of the Knesset to ensure that members of the Arab population are integrated into the economic and social life of the country, and to take action in the committee for promoting the situation of employing Arab citizens in

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup>Website of the Commission for Government Services, 3 March, 2012, Proper Representation of Members of the Arab Population including Druze and Circassians, in Government Services, 2009 Report. <<http://www.civil-service.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/40EBBBD2-11AF-4871-B076-42AE16231867/0/ethiopiansReport2009.pdf>>

<sup>32</sup> Knesset Website, Announcement to the Press by the Parliamentary Research Committee on Absorption of Arab Employees into Public Service, 12 July 2010.

<<http://www.knesset.gov.il/spokesman/heb/Result.asp?HodID=8862>>

<sup>33</sup>Telephone conversation with Henya Merkovich, responsible for freedom of information in the Government Commission, 5 February, 2012.

the various government offices. Instead, right-wing members of the Knesset have chosen to approach the Speaker of the Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, with a demand to disband the parliamentary research committee that was appointed to closely investigate the issue of absorbing Arab employees into public service.<sup>34</sup>

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## Summary and Conclusions

The findings of this report reveal a dismal picture regarding the degree of accessibility of government, business, health, and public services in Bedouin communities in the Negev. On the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we hoped to present a more positive picture regarding the degree of accessibility and availability of various government services, and draft a report that would outline a true attempt to integrate Arab citizens of Israel as government service workers. However, this is not the case.

The situation regarding government services in the Bedouin towns is dismal, and residents of these towns are forced to travel to nearby Jewish communities to receive these services. The report reveals that despite the fact that some of the Bedouin communities have a larger population than various, nearby Jewish communities, the availability of services that exist in the Bedouin towns is more limited. For example, in Mitzpeh Ramon, a Jewish town that has a population of approximately 4,700, there is a more extensive range of government services available (the government employment office, National Insurance Institute, and the Ministry of Interior) than in the towns of Lafia (population 9,900) or Tel Sheva (population 15,700), where none of these services are available.

Despite the fact that the rate of employment in the Bedouin towns is extremely low and these towns are rated on the lowest range of the socio-economic scale, there is no government employment office, no public housing office, and no office for rental assistance in any of the towns. The only place where there is an employment office is Rahat.

The situation is similar in regard to the commercial services. We observed that the available banking services are far more limited in Bedouin towns than in Jewish settlements. For example, there are only branches of banks in Rahat and Hura. It should

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<sup>34</sup> Yonatan Liss, "The Right Demands to Disband the Committee dealing with Absorption of Arab Workers into Public Service, Haaretz Website, 20.3.2012.

<<http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/1.1667747>>



also be noted that in Hura, only partial services are offered. The same is true regarding one of the two branches of banks operating in Rahat. In contrast, there is at least one working bank in each of the Jewish communities that we sampled.

The situation regarding postal services and telephone services and infrastructure is extremely poor in the towns of the Abu Basma Regional Council. There is no post office in these towns and no connection to the Bezek telephone infrastructure. The Bedouin communities also suffer from a lack of public transportation that is essential for residents to get to work and to utilize public services.

We are pleased at the level and variety of government services available in Jewish communities in the Negev and have no intention of opposing them or demanding that they be reduced. On the contrary, we wish to emphasize the necessity of increasing the services available in Bedouin communities so that they are equal to those in Jewish communities, and to improve the extent of services in all the communities. The entire Negev has long been neglected as an area in the periphery and has been deprived of government budgets and services. Overall action needs to be taken to improve all aspects of life in the peripheral areas of the country in general, and in the Negev in particular. It is, however, important to note that the Arab Bedouin population in the Negev suffers doubly from exclusion; not only do they suffer the same exclusion that Arab citizens in the Negev endure, but they are subject to national exclusion as well.

The findings of this report reveal that the government is absolving itself from its responsibility towards the Bedouin towns that were established by the State of Israel and for their residents. The findings regarding the situation in the newly-recognized villages (located in the Abu Basma Regional Council) are especially disturbing.

The "Law of Arrangement of the Bedouin Settlements in the Negev 2012,"<sup>35</sup> commonly known as the Praver-Amidror Plan, outlined the Israeli government's plan for arranging the settlement of the Bedouin population in the Negev. In light of the findings revealed in this report, the Israeli government's claim that this Plan, which would transfer 30,000 Bedouin from unrecognized villages to permanent Bedouin towns and cities, will benefit the Bedouin, raises many doubts regarding the true motives of the plan. Additionally, it is important to note that the Committee for Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) called on the Israeli government to discard the Praver-Admidror Plan in March 2012.

Despite the various government decisions intended to increase the employment of Arab workers in government services, we see that the number of Arab employees has increased very little. Despite the fact that 2012 was designated as the year in which 10 percent of government services employees would be Arabs, the picture on the ground is

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<sup>35</sup> Website of the Plan for Arranging Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, 15.March.2012, Memorandum of the Law for Arrangement of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, 2012. <<http://bedouin.pmo.gov.il/he/hememorandumoflaw>>

different. The findings point to extremely low percentages of employment of Arabs in the southern region that are far from the government's objective and far below the percentages of Arab employment in other regions in the country.

Unless a sincere effort is made to integrate Bedouin Arabs in the Negev into government services, to offer government health, business and public services in the towns, and to develop industry and commerce, the situation will remain unchanged.

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## Recommendations

- Various steps must be taken to integrate Bedouin society in the Negev, instead of perpetuating its exclusion, and to implement corrective discrimination.
- The provision of various government services must be developed and broadened in the Bedouin towns, such as employment opportunities and branches of the National Insurance Institute and other institutions, in order for them to be more available and accessible to residents.
- Private companies should be encouraged to develop commercial services in Bedouin towns, such as branches of banks and other services that are lacking or do not exist.
- Expanding the extent of commercial activities should be encouraged, and industrial areas should be developed, in Bedouin towns in the Negev. This step would improve the accessibility of business services to residents of these communities, as well as would create new jobs and places of employment.
- Government, public, commercial, and health services should be significantly developed in towns in the Abu Basma Regional Council.
- The number of Arab employees in government services should be significantly increased in the southern region of the country, particularly in government offices, and Arab employees should be promoted to key positions.



Entrance to the Ministry of Interior, Rahat



Offices of the National Insurance Institute, Rahat



Southern part of the Industrial Zone, Rahat

Negev Coexistence Forum  
For Civil Equality

منتدى التعايش السلمي في  
النقب من أجل المساواة المدنية

פורום דו-קיום בנגב  
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