

ISRAEL:

Multiple patterns of internal displacement affect several ethnic and religious groups

A profile of the internal displacement situation

30 August, 2007

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Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

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Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

Norwegian Refugee Council
Chemin de Balexert 7-9
1219 Geneva, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 799 07 00
idmc@nrc.ch

www.internal-displacement.org

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OVERVIEW

Multiple patterns of internal displacement affect several ethnic and religious groups

Internal displacement in Israel has been caused by conflict between Israel and its neighbours, as well as by Israeli policies towards its citizens. Several waves of displacement have occurred since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, affecting Arab, Bedouin and Jewish citizens. There is little information available on internal displacement in Israel, as few organisations work with internally displaced people (IDPs), and very few studies are available. There are no government or UN estimates of IDP numbers, but based on various calculations by IDP advocates and academics, between 150,000 and 420,000 people are currently displaced in the country.

This overview considers the background, pattern and response to four different situations of internal displacement in Israel: the displacement of Arab villagers and their resettlement following the creation of Israel, the displacement of Bedouin communities in the south and the threat of eviction they currently face, the temporary displacement from northern Israel during the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in mid-2006, and the displacement from the Israeli town of Sderot due to attacks from Gaza in mid- 2007.

Flight or eviction of Arab villagers and resettlement following the creation of Israel

Following the proclamation of the State of Israel in May 1948, armies from neighbouring Arab nations entered the former Mandate of Palestine and fought against Israeli military forces. The war ended in 1949, but no general peace settlement was achieved.

In 1948/1949, between 600,000 and 760,000 Arabs who had lived in the territory which became Israel were driven out or fled the country and became refugees (MERIP, 2001, "Palestinian"; Bligh, 1998, p.124). During this period another 46,000 to 48,000 Arab villagers were displaced throughout Israel. Today, estimates of the size of this group (including the descendants of the people originally displaced) vary widely, from 150,000 to 342,000 people (National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, February 2000; Nir, 8 January 2001; BADIL, May 2006, p.48). The vast majority (about 90 per cent) of IDPs are Muslim and most of the rest are Christian. The Druze community was spared from displacement for the most part (Al-Haj, September 1986).

In December 1948, the United Nations established the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to assist all those who were resident in Palestine in 1946 and who lost their homes and livelihoods. UNRWA assisted the internally displaced people within Israel from 1950 to 1952, when the government of Israel took over this responsibility. Following the war, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 194, which, while non-binding, affirmed the right of refugees to return to their homes at the earliest practicable date, and to be compensated for lost property (UN GA, 11 December 1948).

Meanwhile the government of Israel created an institutional and legal land regime under which most of the properties of IDPs and refugees were appropriated by the state. One of the cornerstones of this system was the Absentee Property Law of 1950. According to this law the state acquired control of all the property left by the people who had fled their homes between 29 November 1947 and 19 May 1948, even if they had stayed in the country. As a result, most of the IDPs were declared "present absentees" and the government acquired their unoccupied properties (Schechla, October 2001).

In 1949 the Israeli government started to rent land to the displaced people. While in some cases this happened without any problems, in many others they faced opposition from their Jewish neighbours. Many also feared that renting land in the area of displacement would compromise their claims to their original property (Cohen, December 2000). At the time, the IDPs lived under Israeli military administration like the vast majority of the Arab population in Israel, and their freedom of movement was severely limited as a result. The ending of the military administration in 1966 improved their situation but did not allow them to regain their lost properties.

Hopes for returning home have been disappointed

Many local non-governmental organisations promote the rights of the Arab minority in Israel, including those of the internally displaced people. IDPs, supported by local organisations, have appealed to Israeli courts against land confiscation, but the process has been slow and the displaced have generally viewed the level of compensation as insufficient. An element complicating this process is that new houses and roads increasingly occupy their land.

In June 2003, the Israeli Supreme Court turned down a petition by people displaced from the villages of Kafar Bir'em and Ikrit in northern Israel. During the 1948 war, the inhabitants of these villages were ordered by the Israeli army to leave their homes. They were promised that they would be able to return within two weeks, but were never actually allowed to do so (Ettinger, Ha'aretz, 27 June 2003). After six years of hearings, the Israeli Supreme Court accepted in 2003 the state's claim that Israeli interests, based on a combination of the current security situation and the Palestinians' persistent demand for the right of return of refugees, could not justify the return of the displaced petitioners unless there was a change in the political situation.

Today many of the people displaced in 1948 and their children live, like the rest of the Arab population in Israel, in Arab towns with little or no Jewish population, or otherwise they live in mixed Arab-Jewish towns. Generally, the government does not provide Arab Israelis with the same quality of education, housing, employment, and social services as Jews. Tensions between Arab and Jewish communities have increased since the second intifada and the general elevations of regional tensions after 2000.

Eviction of Bedouin from their land in the Negev

Since the creation of the State of Israel, the Bedouin have been pressured to leave their land in the Negev region, in the south of the country. Successive Israeli governments enacted a series of laws and regulations facilitating the confiscation of Bedouin land. Dispossession was made easier by the fact that the Bedouin generally held no land titles.

In 1949 many Bedouin were ordered to move into a closed area under military administration. Following the ending of military rule in 1966, most of them continued living in the former closed area. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the government built seven towns for the Bedouin in the Negev. According to human rights advocates, the Bedouin were not sufficiently involved in the planning of the towns and not enough consideration was given to their lifestyle and traditions. Furthermore, the compensation received for giving up their land in exchange for a new house in the towns was considered too low. While the seven towns do offer better access to services than the traditional Bedouin settlements, the quality and level of services is still inferior to those in Jewish towns (Lithwick, 2000). Also, according to the US Department of State, government planners have noted that funds to complete the seven towns were far from sufficient (USDoS, February 2005).

Today, about half of the 140,000 Bedouin in the Negev live in the seven towns. The rest live in "unrecognised villages", which were declared illegal by the National Planning and Building Law of 1965. About 45 villages of displaced Bedouins are viewed as illegal by the government and lack

public water and electricity infrastructure as well as educational, health and welfare services. Children in unrecognised villages are 2.4 times more likely to suffer from malnutrition than youngsters living in other Bedouin villages (Sinai, Ha'aretz, 7 February 2005). Close to 31 per cent of school-age children in those villages are illiterate (Ha'aretz, 24 June 2004). Overall, the Bedouin are the poorest community in Israel, and entire regions in the Negev have become hubs for drugs, violence and serious crime (Ha'aretz, 24 June 2004). Bedouin infant mortality rates have also increased by 50 per cent over from 1997 to 2003 (Lavie, Ha'aretz, 30 January 2004, part I).

Permanent settlement plan leading to renewed displacement

In April 2003, the Israeli government adopted a five-year plan to build permanent settlements in the Negev region for the Bedouin living in the villages it considered illegal. The programme also provided for the compensation of displaced Bedouin. The plan was poorly received by the Bedouin, whose leaders complained about the lack of consultation with their community, in particular regarding the price set for their land and the percentage of land exchanged. The Israeli government began in 2004 to implement the plan, which includes intensification of house demolitions, destruction of crops and filing of eviction suits (ACRI, June 2004). Due to the resistance to the plan from affected Bedouin communities, clashes between authorities and residents escalated in 2004, resulting in the killing of one Bedouin resident of the village of Atir (Hasson, Ha'aretz, 22 March 2004; Ha'aretz, 24 June 2004). One of the measures used from 2002 to early 2004 to displace the Bedouin was the spraying of crops to discourage land cultivation. This measure was halted in March 2004, following a temporary injunction from the Israeli Supreme Court (Yoaz, Ha'aretz, 16 February 2005). In April 2007, the Court in its final ruling ordered that the spraying of fields in the Negev cease, due to the damage caused to the health of inhabitants and their livestock (Adalah, June 2007).

In 2005, the government said that it was in the process of establishing seven new Bedouin towns and expanding existing towns, in close consultation with representatives of the Bedouin communities (CERD, 23 July 2005). In November 2005 the government adopted the National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev for 2006-2015, known as "Negev 2015", which failed to acknowledge or plan for unrecognised villages. As of mid-2007, however, the implementation of the plan had not started, and in the absence of official recognition of the Bedouin villages, homes continued to be demolished, and no services had been provided to the villages considered as illegal by the state (ADVA Center, January 2007; ADALAH, June 2007).

In April 2005, following an appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court by several organisations representing unrecognised Bedouin villages in the Negev, the Interior Ministry began the process of granting recognition and providing municipal services to one of the unrecognised villages, Um Batin (Rinat, Ha'aretz, 28 April 2005). But eviction from other unrecognised villages continued, and even accelerated in 2006 (Adalah, June 2007). In May 2007, some 100 residents of the village of Al-Twayil were made homeless when the Israeli authorities demolished their tents and shacks (Ha'aretz, 8 May 2007).

Temporary displacement from northern Israel during Israel-Hezbollah conflict

Several hundred thousand people fled northern Israel for the centre and south of the country during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in July and August 2006. The fighting began after the Islamist militia attacked across the Lebanese-Israeli border and captured two Israeli soldiers. Israel retaliated with a month-long military offensive targeting Hezbollah strongholds all over Lebanon, which also caused heavy damage to civilian infrastructure. Over 1,000 Lebanese people died, and close to a million were displaced due to Israeli attacks (AI, 23 August 2006). Meanwhile, Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into northern Israel, a region which is home to 1.5 million people. Most of the Hezbollah rockets appear to have been directed at civilian areas,

and pedestrians, hospitals, schools, homes and businesses were hit (HRW, 5 August 2006). At least 43 civilians died in northern Israel, seven of them children, and over 300,000 fled their homes (Israel MFA, 23 August 2006; Brookings, 15 August 2006, p.2).

Most of the people displaced left for the centre and south of Israel. In the absence of a government evacuation system, people who fled the north left under their own steam, or with the help of NGOs (JBI, 15 August 2006). In addition, up to one million either stayed in bomb shelters, hid at home or alternated between the two (Brookings, 15 August 2006). Many of the shelters were described as crowded, with little or no fresh air, and dirty (JBI, 15 August 2006; IRIN, 12 August 2006). Those who stayed behind did so because of their work, because they refused to be chased out by Hezbollah, or because they were too weak or too old to leave (AFP, 4 August 2006). The situation of Arab Israeli residents in towns hit by the rockets was particularly difficult. Most did not have relatives to stay with in safer parts of the country, and many could not find safety in their towns, as Arab towns generally lack public infrastructure, including bomb shelters (NYT, 31 July 2006; IRIN, 6 August 2006; ADALAH, June 2007). IDPs without relatives elsewhere found refuge in the centre and south of the country with strangers who opened their homes, and also in hotels and in tents (IRIN, 15 August 2006).

The government primarily relied on Israeli NGOs, international Jewish voluntary agencies and individuals to assist the displaced. About 40,000 children from the north were taken to special summer camps in central Israel, to keep them out of harm's way (Jewish Agency, 20 August 2006).

Following a cessation of hostilities on 14 August 2006 based on UN Security Council resolution 1701, most IDPs and those living in bomb shelters cautiously returned to their homes in northern Israel (IRIN, 17 August 2006). Those too weak or too old to return on their own were assisted by organisations like Magen David Adom, a member of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (MDA, 24 August 2006). Once home, many had to cope with the trauma of their displacement. Economic and social life had been paralysed during the month of conflict, and many businesses were reportedly going to close down because of the level of physical damage sustained. Thousands of homes, schools, businesses, synagogues and cars were damaged or destroyed by Hezbollah rockets, and many crops were lost (JBI, 15 August 2006).

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, facing criticism for his government's handling of the war in Lebanon, promised \$2 billion to rebuild the northern Israeli towns hardest hit by Hezbollah rockets (Reuters, 24 August 2006). Following the war, the Israeli government settled some 25,000 claims by individuals and businesses who had suffered direct or indirect damage (UNGA, 2 October 2006). The Prime Minister's Office appointed a Coordinator for the Reconstruction of Infrastructures and Institutions in Haifa and the North to liaise with ministries and local authorities. The Coordinator completed his work at the end of 2006 (Israeli Prime Minister's Office, 26 December 2006).

In June 2007, rockets were launched from Lebanese territory into northern Israel, but no casualties or instances of displacement were reported as a result.

Displacement from the Israeli town of Sderot due to attacks from Gaza

Since 2000, the Israeli town of Sderot, close to the Gaza border, has been the target of rocket attacks, killing eight residents, including two children. In May 2007, Palestinian militant factions, including Hamas, stepped up the rocket fire from across the border, and many Qassam rockets landed in or around the town. Israel responded by targeting Hamas military sites in Gaza and attacking groups it believed to be involved in the attacks (NYT, 1 June 2007). According to the mayor of Sderot, some 10,000 people fled the town in mid-May 2007 (IRIN, 18 May 2007). A

minority was evacuated by the Israeli government, and most left independently (Israel National News, 17 May 2007). Thanks to private funding, over two thousand of them found refuge in hotel rooms in the southern town of Eilat, while several hundred others stayed for ten days in tents in the city of Tel Aviv (Ha'aretz, 5 June 2007; IRIN, 18 May 2007).

Many schools in the city were closed temporarily, with some students leaving the town, and others afraid to leave their homes (IRIN, 29 May 2007). Meanwhile, mental health workers set up a 24-hour emergency centre to treat Sderot residents suffering from panic and anxiety attacks (IRIN, 18 May 2007). The Israeli Supreme Court ordered the government to reinforce all Sderot schools to withstand attacks, but the government said it would only be able to complete the Court's demand within one to three years (Ha'aretz, 12 June 2007; Ha'aretz, 23 July 2007). An Israeli Parliamentarian Committee asked the Finance Ministry to compensate both Sderot workers who showed up at work, and those missing days of work for fear of attacks, but the Ministry responded that such a provision did not have a legal basis (Ha'aretz, 6 June 2007). Sporadic attacks against Sderot from Gaza continued as of August 2007 (Y Net, 6 August 2007).

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

Background of the conflict

Methodology: who is an IDP in Israel and in the Palestinian territories (2002-2006)

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has decided to provide two profiles on internally displaced persons (IDPs): one for Israel and one for the Palestinian territories. The reasons behind this decision are explained below, as our conclusions may be subject to debate. We have looked at the definition of refugees according to UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), the definition of refugees in the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the IDP definition according to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Mandate of the UNRWA

A separate regime was created in December 1949 to provide assistance to the Palestinian refugees. The mandate of UNRWA was to assist all those who were residents in Palestine in 1946 and who lost their homes and livelihood in 1948 (UNRWA, Overview). The definition of a Palestinian refugee included the people who lost their homes in 1948 but remained in what became the State of Israel. From 1950 to 1952, UNRWA assisted both the people who had fled or were driven from the State of Israel (1949 armistice line) and those who had lost their homes but stayed in what had become the State of Israel. In 1952, Israel took over the responsibility of the ones who had remained in Israel. Today, UNRWA provides basic services - education, health, relief and social services - to over 3.8 million registered Palestine refugees in the Middle East (as of June 2001).

"Refugee" according to UN 1951 Convention

Article 1 of the UN 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as "a person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there for fear of persecution." (UN, 1951 Refugee Convention).

"IDPs" according to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: "internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." (UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement). The Global IDP Project does not cover internal displacement due to natural and human-made disasters.

How to apply the above definitions in the case of Israel and the Palestinian territories

Usually, the main way to distinguish between who is a refugee and who is internally displaced, is to look at whether the displaced have crossed an international border. According to UNHCR, "Refugees are people who have crossed an international border into a second country seeking sanctuary. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) may have fled for similar reasons, but remain within their own territory and thus are still subject to the laws of that state" (UNHCR 2002). This principle is problematic with the Palestinian refugee situation, because of the absence of agreed

borders between Israel and some of its neighbors, including the Palestinian territories. Also, the Palestinian refugees were explicitly excluded from the coverage under the 1951 refugee convention, because they were covered under UNRWA (UN 1951 Refugee Convention, Introductory Note).

To determine who is a refugee or an internally displaced person in Israel or in the Palestinian territories, we have compared the IDP definition with the one of refugees from the UN 1951 Convention. Using these definitions, we define four classes of displaced Palestinians:

1. Palestinians, who left homes in 1948 from Israel for Lebanon and other recognized states.

These Palestinians became refugees and not internally displaced since they went from their country of habitual residence, whether considered the British mandate of Palestine or Israel, to Lebanon, etc. Even though they may not have crossed an agreed border, as in the case of Lebanon, they are still clearly outside their country.

2. Palestinians, who left homes in 1948 from Israel for Gaza and the West Bank.

These Palestinians are also refugees and not IDPs. They went from Israel to a different entity, which was never under Israeli sovereignty and is currently under partial Palestinian sovereignty. While there is no agreed border, they are not in their country of origin. Though it is difficult to define the legal status of the Palestinian territories, even the Israeli government has not claimed that these territories are part of the State of Israel, except for East Jerusalem. Israel occupies Gaza and the West Bank which are for a great part under its military jurisdiction but has not annexed them. The Israeli government has not extended citizenship to the Arab inhabitants of the territories, except to residents of East Jerusalem. Finally, while the Palestinian State has not yet materialized, the right of the Palestinian people to a state has been recognized by the international community.

3. Palestinians, who fled or were driven from their homes during the 1948 war, but remained within what became the State of Israel.

These people are clearly not refugees, but they are internally displaced, because they are still seeking to go back to their former homes and have outstanding claims against the State of Israel. They have Israeli citizenship and most of them have joined forces under the National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel to negotiate directly with the State of Israel.

4. Palestinians, who are displaced from their homes in Gaza and the West Bank due to illegal or discriminatory house demolitions and evictions, but have not left these territories.

These Palestinians are not refugees, since they have not left their country. They are internally displaced, because their displacement was a result of human rights violations. According to the Oslo Accords, Gaza and West Bank are considered as a single territorial unit (see Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, September 13, 1993), so movement between the two areas does not create refugee status.

As a consequence, IDMC considers as internally displaced in Israel those who fled or were driven from their homes during the 1948 war but remained within what became the State of Israel and who are still seeking to go back to their former homes; we also consider as internally displaced those who have been displaced from the Gaza Strip or the West Bank and remained in these areas.

See also:

Dina Abou Samra and Greta Zeender, August 2006, Can the IDP label be used

in Israel/Palestine?, Forced Migration Review [[Internet](#)]

Partition plan of the former Mandate of Palestine and 1948 war

- 29 November 1947: UN GA voted partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab State
- 14 May 1948: proclamation of State of Israel
- 15 May 1948: armies from neighboring Arab nations entered the former Mandate of Palestine and fought against Israeli military forces
- At the end of the war in 1949, Israeli territory had increased 50% but no general peace settlement was achieved
- December 1948: UN GA adopted resolution on return and compensation of refugees (UN GA 194)
- Many Arabs, including Bedouins, left or were expelled from the territory which became Israel and others became internally displaced persons
- Establishment of areas under military administration following 1948 war
- 600,000 Jewish refugees arrive in Israel from 1947 to 1950

MERIP, 2001, "Partition plan":

"On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab. The UN partition plan divided the country in such a way that each state would have a majority of its own population, although some Jewish settlements would fall within the proposed Palestinian state and many Palestinians would become part of the proposed Jewish state. The territory designated to the Jewish state would be slightly larger than the Palestinian state (56 percent and 43 percent of Palestine, respectively) on the assumption that increasing numbers of Jews would immigrate there. According to the UN partition plan, the area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem was to become an international zone."

To view the text of the UN GA Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947 calling for the partition of the British-ruled Palestine Mandate into a Jewish state and an Arab state. see [[External Link](#)]

U.S. DOS, December 1998:

"Violence between Arab and Jewish communities erupted almost immediately. Toward the end of the British mandate, the Jews planned to declare a separate state, a development the Arabs were determined to prevent. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed. The following day, armies from neighboring Arab nations entered the former Mandate of Palestine to engage Israeli military forces.

In 1949, under UN auspices, four armistice agreements were negotiated and signed at Rhodes, Greece, between Israel and its neighbors Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The 1948-49 war of independence resulted in a 50% increase in Israeli territory, including western Jerusalem. No general peace settlement was achieved at Rhodes, however, and violence along the borders continued for many years."

To view the text of the declaration of independence of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, please see [[External Link](#)]

UN GA, 11 December 1948, para.11:

Following the war, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 194, which "Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the

property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

Al-Haj, September 1986, p.654:

"Following the 1948 war, only 160,000 of the 700,000 Arabs [see *note below*] who had lived in the territory which became Israel, remained in the country. Of these, 69.7 percent were Moslems, 21.2 percent Christians and 9.1 percent Druze (Ben-Amran, Eliyahu 1965, "A Demographic description of the Arab population"). Among the Arabs who remained in Israel some were compelled to move to other communities after the destruction of their localities during the war, and have become internal refugees. Our definition of the Arab internal refugees is derived from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): 'A person whose normal residence was Palestine for a minimum of two years immediately preceding the outbreak of the conflict in 1948 and who, as a result of this conflict has lost his home and his means of livelihood. This definition has been extended to cover the children of such a person [...]."

Note: The number of Palestinians who left the country is subject to controversy. While M. Al-Haj mentions that there were a total of 700,000 Arabs in the territory which became Israel, the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) states that over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees (MERIP 2001, "Palestinian Arab Refugees"). According to A. Bligh, the number of refugees was between the general range of 600,000 to 760,000 (Bligh, January 1998, p.124)

Abu-Rabia, November 1994:

"At the end of the British Mandate, the Bedouin population of the Negev numbered between 65,000 and 100,000. [...] When the Israeli Army occupied the Negev in 1948, the majority of the tribes were expelled to Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and Sinai. Other Bedouin, who were afraid of the Israeli authorities, especially because they had participated in battles against Israel, left of their own accord. The situation remained unstable until 1953, when only about 11,000 Bedouin were left in the Negev."

Canadian Forces College, Information Resource Centre, 2001:

"After independence the areas in which 90 percent of the Arabs lived were placed under military government [in fact, military administration]. This system and the assignment of almost unfettered powers to military governors were based on the Defense (Emergency) Regulations promulgated by the British Mandate Authority in 1945. Using the 1945 regulations as a legal base, the government created three areas or zones to be ruled by the Ministry of Defense. The most important was the Northern Area, also known as the Galilee Area, the locale of about two-thirds of the Arab population. The second critical area was the so-called little triangle, located between the villages of Et Tira and Et Taiyiba near the border with Jordan (then Transjordan). The thirds area included much of the Negev Desert, the region traversed by the previously apolitical nomadic beduins."

Eban, 1978, p.144:

"Between 1947 and 1950, approximately 600,000 Jewish refugees arrived in Israel."

Key Historic events: 1956-2007

- October 1956: Suez war (Israel, France, Great Britain against Egypt) and UN SC Resolutions 235 and 236
- May 1967: Six-Day War (Egypt, Syria, Jordan against Israel) and UN SC Resolutions 242

- October 1973: October War or Yom Kippur War (Syria, Egypt against Israel) and UN SC 338
- March 1979: Peace treaty between Egypt and Israel
- 1978 and 1982: Israeli invasion of Lebanon (and withdrawal in May 2000)
- December 1987-1993: Intifada
- October 1991: Madrid meeting of Israeli, Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian and Palestinian leaders convened by U.S. and Soviet Union Presidents
- September 1993: Israel and PLO signing of declaration of principles on the transfer of authority from Israel to interim Palestinian authority; other agreements (such as Interim Agreement on West Bank and Gaza in 1995) followed
- July 2000, break down of Camp David talks
- September 2000: start of "Al-Aqsa Intifada" and killing of Israeli Arab demonstrators in October 2000
- 2001-2004 Intifada continues despite series of peace initiatives
- 2005 Mr Abbas was elected Palestinian leader following the death of Arafat
- July-Aug 2006, fighting between Israel and Hezbollah (Lebanon)
- 2007 power sharing agreement between Hamas and Fatah does not hold

U.S. DOS, December 1998:

"In October 1956, Israel invaded the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula at the same time that operations by French and British forces against Egypt were taking place in the Suez Canal area. Israeli forces withdrew in March 1957, after the United Nations established the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Gaza Strip and Sinai. [...]

In May 1967, after tension had developed between Syria and Israel, Egyptian President Nasser moved armaments and about 80,000 troops into the Sinai and ordered a withdrawal of UNEF troops from the armistice line and Sharm El Sheikh. Nasser then closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli ships, blockading the Israeli port of Eilat at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba. On May 30, Jordan and Egypt signed a mutual defense treaty. In response to these events, Israeli forces struck targets in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria on June 5. After 6 days of fighting, by the time all parties had accepted the cease-fire called for by UN Security Council Resolutions 235 and 236, Israel controlled the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the formerly Jordanian-controlled West Bank of the Jordan River, including East Jerusalem. On November 22, 1967, the Security Council adopted Resolution 242, the "land for peace" formula, which called for the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 in return for the end of all states of belligerency, respect for the sovereignty of all states in the area, and the right to live in peace within secure, recognized boundaries. [...]

On October 6, 1973--Yom Kippur (the Jewish Day of Atonement)--Syrian and Egyptian forces attacked Israeli positions in Golan and along the Suez Canal. Initially, Syria and Egypt made significant advances against Israeli forces. However, Israel recovered on both fronts, pushed the Syrians back beyond the 1967 cease-fire lines, and recrossed the Suez Canal to take a salient on its west bank, isolating Egyptian troops, who eventually surrendered. The United States and the Soviet Union helped bring about a cease-fire between the combatants. In the UN Security Council, the United States supported Resolution 338, which reaffirmed Resolution 242 as the framework for peace and called for peace negotiations between the parties. [...]

In September 1978, U.S. President Jimmy Carter invited President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to meet with him at Camp David, where they agreed on a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. [...] The treaty was signed on

March 26, 1979, by Begin and Sadat, with President Carter signing as witness. Under the treaty, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt in April 1982."

Abu-Rabia November 1994, p.16:

"As a result of the Camp David Treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979, Israeli air bases in the Sinai desert had to be evacuated so that the area could be returned to Egypt. A site for the construction of a new airfield was chosen in the Tel al-Malah area, on the eastern portion of the Beer-Sheva basin. The government had to enact a special law that would enable it to start work in the area and settle the Bedouin land problem."

Israel launched a major invasion of Lebanon in 1978 to retaliate against Palestinian attacks and then again in 1982 following an assassination attempt of an Israeli ambassador (Operation Peace for Galilee); Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 (compiled from BBC News, 7 December 2000)

BBC News, 23 April 1998:

"In December 1987, a spontaneous yet well-organised uprising - the "Intifada" - began in Gaza and spread like a fire across the West Bank and into Jerusalem itself."

BBC News, 8 December 2000:

"It lasted, with varying levels of intensity, until 1993."

U.S. DOS, December 1998:

In 1991 "The coalition's victory in the Gulf war opened new possibilities for regional peace, and in October 1991, the Presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union jointly convened an historic meeting in Madrid of Israeli, Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian, and Palestinian leaders which became the foundation for ongoing bilateral and multilateral negotiations designed to bring lasting peace and economic development to the region."

On September 13, 1993, Israel and the PLO signed a Declaration of Principles (DOP) on the South Lawn of the White House. The declaration was a major conceptual breakthrough achieved under the Madrid framework. It established an ambitious set of objectives relating to a transfer of authority from Israel to an interim Palestinian authority. [...]

Jordan and Israel signed a historic peace treaty at a border post between the two countries on October 26, **1994** [...].

In 1995 Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Arafat signed the historic Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on September 28, 1995, in Washington. The agreement, witnessed by the President on behalf of the United States and by Russia, Egypt, Norway, and the European Union, incorporates and supersedes the previous agreements and marked the conclusion of the first stage of negotiations between Israel and the PLO."

On November 4, 1995, assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by a right-wing Jewish radical (from U.S. DOS December 1998).

In 1998 "After a 9-day session at the Wye River Conference Center in Maryland, agreement was reached on October 23, 1998. The Wye agreement is based on the principle of reciprocity and meets the essential requirements of both the parties, including unprecedented security measures on the part of the Palestinians and the further redeployment of Israeli troops in the West Bank." (U.S. DOS December 1998)

In July 2000, breakdown of talks during Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David (see BBC News 26 July 2000)

In late September 2000, *started what has become known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada.*

Mitchell Report, May 2001:

"What began as a series of confrontations between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli security forces, which resulted in the GOI's [i.e. Government of Israel] initial restrictions of the movement of people and goods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (closures), has since evolved into a wider array of violent actions and responses."

U.S. DOS, February 2001:

"On **October 1**, Israeli Arab leaders called a general strike, which received widespread support from Arab citizens, thousands of whom demonstrated throughout the country." *The following days, several Israeli Arab demonstrators were killed by the Israeli police and hundreds were injured.*

HRW, 2003:

During 2002: "The violence that erupted beginning in September 2000 intensified in 2002. Civilians increasingly paid the price for repeated, egregious violations of international humanitarian law by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Palestinian armed groups. At least 1,949 Palestinians and 637 Israelis were killed between September 2000 and late October 2002, the majority civilians, including 292 Palestinian and seventy-nine Israeli children. New patterns of abuse arose, and old ones intensified. Pernicious practices that had been diminishing were revived."

Despite several peace initiatives, violence in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories continued throughout 2003 and 2004.

Jan. 9, 2005: Mahmoud Abbas elected Palestinian president.

Aug. 15-24, 2005: Israeli evacuation of Gaza settlements and four West Bank settlements

2006

HRW, 2007, pp.477-78:

"In January Hamas's "Change and Reform" bloc won an unanticipated victory in the second-ever Palestinian Legislative Council elections, taking 74 of 132 seats (or 56 percent). In March, Hamas formed a new government, appointing Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister.

Israel and key Western powers, which list Hamas as a terrorist organization, responded to Hamas's victory by boycotting the government, cutting diplomatic ties, and withholding the Palestinian Authority's tax revenues (in the case of Israel) and international donor funding (in the case of Western countries), which together accounted for approximately 75 percent of the Palestinian Authority's budget.

These actions caused a severe political and financial crisis in the OPT, which was continuing at this writing. From March onwards, the Palestinian Authority was unable to pay the salaries of almost all of its approximately 165,000 civil servants, salaries on which one-quarter of all Palestinians rely. Poverty and dependence on outside food aid climbed sharply. Because Israel retained effective day-to-day control over most key aspects of life in Gaza, including ingress and egress and thus the economy, it retained the responsibility of an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure that the occupied population has access to food and medicine, and that basic health, security, and education needs are met.

Renewed military conflict in Gaza compounded the crisis after a Palestinian armed group kidnapped Israeli soldier Corporal Gilad Shalit on June 25. In a stated bid to free Shalit and suppress increased Qassam rocket attacks from inside northern Gaza (see "Palestinian

Authority” below), Israel bombed Gaza’s sole electrical power plant, which had provided 45 percent of Gaza’s electricity, conducted a number of military incursions into Gaza, and engaged in a wide-scale campaign of artillery shelling into northern Gaza.

July-August 2006: war between Israel and the Hezbollah. For a detailed account of the war from the Israeli side, see

Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 31 August 2006, Hizballah's Rocket Campaign Against Northern Israel: A Preliminary Report , by Uzi Rubin, [[Internet](#)]

For additional information , see:

UNSC, 12 August 2006, Security Council calls for end to hostilities between Hizballah, Israel, unanimously adopting resolution 1701 (2006) [[Internet](#)]

UNSC, 28 June 07, [Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 \(2006\)](#)

HRW, 12 July 2007, [Israel/Lebanon: A Year Later, No Justice for War Violations](#)

2007

February 2007: In an attempt to end fighting, Hamas and Fatah agree to form a power-sharing government.

June 2007: End of power-sharing government. Following continued fighting between Hamas and Fatah, Hamas takes control of Gaza, while the Fatah remains in control of the West Bank

See:

AI, 24 May 2007, Israel and the Occupied Territories - AI Report 2007 [[Internet](#)]

HRW, World Report 2007: Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) [[Internet](#)]

For latest news from Israeli/Palestinian conflict and peace efforts, as well as more background information, please see:

CNN Mideast Struggle for Peace [[External Link](#)]

BBC News Middle East Crisis [[External Link](#)]

Washington Post War and Peace in the Mideast [[External Link](#)]

Ha'aretz (Israeli daily newspaper) [[External Link](#)]

Arabia.com [[External Link](#)]

Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel: identity and location (2001-2007)

- Despite Israeli citizenship, situation of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel remains precarious
- Most live in the Galilee in the north, in the center close to the West Bank, and in the Negev (mostly Bedouin population)
- The situation of IDPs and of Arab Israelis in general is not likely to improve as long as the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is not settled

- The 2003 report of the Orr Commission - established following the police killing of 12 Israeli-Arab demonstrators and a Palestinian in October 2000 - stated that government handling of the Arab sector was primarily neglectful and discriminatory

Information Resource Centre, Canadian Forces College, 2001:

"The Arabs who remained inside post-1948 Israel became citizens of the Jewish state. They had voting rights equal to the state's Jewish community, and according to Israel's Declaration of Independence were guaranteed social and political equality. Because Israel's parliament has never passed a constitution, however, Arab rights in the Jewish state have remained precarious. [...] Israel's Arab residents were seen both by Jewish Israelis and by themselves as aliens in a foreign country. They had been waging war since the 1920s against Zionism and could not be expected to accept enthusiastically residence in the Jewish state. The institutions of the new state were designed to facilitate the growth of the Jewish nation, which in many instances entailed a perceived infringement upon Arab rights."

MERIP, 2001, "Palestinian Arab":

"Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel have had a difficult struggle to maintain their cultural and political identity in a state that officially regards expression of Palestinian or Arab national sentiment as subversive. Until 1967, they were entirely isolated from the Arab world and were often regarded by other Arabs as traitors for living in Israel. Since 1967, many have become more aware of their identity as Palestinians."

U.S. DOS, February 2001:

"The Government does not provide Israeli Arabs, who constitute approximately 20 percent of the population, with the same quality of education, housing, employment, and social services as Jews. In addition, government spending is proportionally far lower in predominantly Arab areas than in Jewish areas; on a per capita basis, the Government spends two-thirds as much for Arabs than for Jews. According to the National Insurance Institute, 42 percent of Israeli Arabs live below the poverty line, compared with 20 percent of the total population. The Government also follows a disproportionately restrictive policy on issuing building permits to Arab citizens, resulting in the issuance of proportionately more building demolition orders against Arab-built structures."

US DOS, 6 March 2007:

"The 2003 report of the Orr Commission, which the government established following the police killing of 12 Israeli-Arab demonstrators and a Palestinian in October 2000 [...], stated that government handling of the Arab sector was "primarily neglectful and discriminatory," was not sufficiently sensitive to Arab needs, and that the government did not allocate state resources equally.

In 2004 the government adopted an interministerial committee's proposals to act on some of the Orr Commission's findings, including: establishment of a government body to promote the Arab sector; creation of a volunteer, national civilian service program for Arab youth; and the creation of a day of national tolerance. At year's end the government implemented neither these proposals nor the original Orr Commission recommendations. On January 6, the government directed a Deputy State Attorney to reexamine the 2005 decision by the PID to close its investigation into the 2000 killings [...]. At year's end there had been no further action.

The Knesset subcommittee, chaired by an Israeli-Arab member to monitor Israeli-Arab sector needs and advocate alterations in the budget to benefit that sector, was disbanded following the March elections.

[...]

In September MK Effie Eitam called for expulsion of most Palestinians from the West Bank and removal of Israeli Arabs, whom he called "traitors in the first degree," from the political system.

According to the Israel Democracy Institute's annual Democracy Index, released on May 9, 62 percent of Jewish citizens believed the government should encourage Arab citizens to emigrate. Figures for 2005 showed approximately 93 percent of land in the country is public domain, the majority of which is owned by the state, with approximately 12.5 percent owned by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). All public lands and that owned by the JNF are administered by the governmental body, the Israel Lands Administration (ILA). By law public land may only be leased, and the JNF's statutes prohibit land sale or lease to non-Jews. In January 2005 the Attorney General ruled the government cannot discriminate against Israeli Arabs in marketing and allocation of lands it manages, including lands the ILA manages for the JNF. The Attorney General also decided that the government should compensate the JNF with land equal in size to any plots of JNF land won by non-Jewish citizens in government tenders.

Israeli-Arab advocacy organizations have challenged the government's policy of demolishing illegal buildings in the Arab sector. They claimed that the government restricted issuance of building permits for Arab communities, thereby limiting Arab natural growth. According to statistics published by the Arab Center for Alternative Planning, the government issued tenders for the construction of 1,820 housing units in northern Israel, which has an Arab majority, during a five month period in 2004. Only 140 of these were designated for Arab communities, despite a shortage of housing in the Arab sector. In October 2005 the government also launched a development program for all 104 communities in the north, both Jewish and Arab, to attract new residents and investment.

[...]

The Orr Commission found that "suitable planning should be carried out [in the Arab sector] as soon as possible to prevent illegal construction..." An interministerial committee, created to advise the government on implementing the Orr Commission recommendations, called on the ILA to complete master plans for Arab towns. In 2004 the Supreme Court ruled that omitting Arab towns from specific government social and economic plans is discriminatory. At year's end according to the government, master plans had been completed for 23 of the country's 128 Arab communities; another 81 communities were being planned. New construction is illegal in towns that do not have master plans or in the country's 37 unrecognized Bedouin villages.

[...]

On September 26, the Finance Minister established a work team to develop a five-year plan to narrow the economic gap between Jewish and Arab communities. The minister also announced that one-quarter of the \$930 million (NIS four billion) allocated for post-conflict rehabilitation would be for the Arab sector.

Israeli Arabs were underrepresented in most universities, professions, and businesses. In June a researcher from Haifa University and Sikkuy reported only 2.8 percent of the country's high technology workers were Arab. The Haifa University researcher also noted 70 percent of Arabs with college degrees in high technology fields failed to find work in the country between 2001 and 2005.

Well-educated Israeli Arabs often were unable to find jobs commensurate with their qualifications.

[...]

In 2003 the government approved an affirmative action program to promote hiring Israeli Arabs in the civil service. However, according to current government figures, only 5.5 percent of civil service employees were from the Arab sector. On March 12, the government ordered the Civil Service Commission to allocate 37.5 new positions annually through 2008 to government offices that employ qualified Arabs, Druze, and Circassians. A 2000 law requires minorities have "appropriate representation" in the civil service and on the boards of government corporations.

[...] In April media reported that approximately 1 percent of employees in state-run companies were Arabs.

[...]

The law exempts Israeli Arabs from mandatory military service, and in practice only a small percentage of Israeli Arabs so served. Citizens who did not perform military service enjoyed less

access to social and economic benefits for which military service was either a prerequisite or an advantage. Israeli Arabs generally were restricted from working in companies with defense contracts or in security-related fields. In 2004 the Ivry Committee on National Service recommended Israeli Arabs be given an opportunity to perform national service. On December 13, the government announced procedures to offer a civilian service program to citizens not drafted for military service. Beginning in June 2007, Israeli Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews would have the opportunity to serve for one to two years as volunteers in health, education, or welfare sectors. After completing service volunteers would be eligible for the same national benefits accorded military veterans.

The Israeli Druze community numbered approximately 100,000 and the Circassian community numbered some 3,000. Males were subject to the military draft, and the overwhelming majority accepted service willingly. Some Bedouin and other Arab citizens not subject to the draft also served voluntarily."

ICG, 4 March 2004:

"The community is located in three main areas:

- the Galilee and the north, including the towns of Nazareth, Sakhnin and Shafa Amr;
- the "Little Triangle" in central Israel, which runs west of the Green Line separating Israel from the occupied territories, is home to approximately 30 per cent of the Arab Israeli population, and includes the towns of Umm al-Fahem, Taibeh, Tireh, Baqa al-Gharbiyeh and Kafr Qasem;
- and the Negev Desert in the south, where roughly 140,000 Bedouin live in seven settled townships (including the town of Rahat) and in approximately 45 "unrecognised villages".

In addition, about 10 per cent of the community lives in six mixed Jewish-Arab cities: Tel Aviv/Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Lydda, Ramle and Upper Nazareth (Natseret Ilit). In each, Arabs are a minority and reside in largely separate neighbourhoods.

In addition, about 10 per cent of the community lives in six mixed Jewish-Arab cities: Tel Aviv/Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Lydda, Ramle and Upper Nazareth (Natseret Ilit). In each, Arabs are a minority and reside in largely separate neighbourhoods. Members of the Arab Israeli community share a common ethnicity and language, Arabic, which, although officially recognised as the country's second language, is rarely used in the public arena, including on street signs and in administrative and legal procedures. Approximately 82 per cent of Arab Israelis are Sunni Muslims, the rest (some 200,000) are divided equally between Christians and Druze."

Cook, in MERIP, 10 May 2003:

"The Bedouin, who comprise some 15 percent of the one million Arab citizens of Israel, are divided into two main groups. A few tens of thousands living in the Galilee in the north are descended from tribes that arrived from Syria. A southern group, the majority, reached the Negev from Sinai and the Arabian Peninsula. Before 1948, when the state of Israel was created, the Negev was almost exclusively inhabited by Bedouin tribes, whose historic claims to the land had been recognized by the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate authorities."

ICG, 4 March 2004:

"Arabs enjoy greater political rights in Israel than in other states in the region but they suffer from an unequal allocation of three basic components of a democratic society: resources, rights and representation.[...]

A. RESOURCES

There are stark disparities in resource allocation. For instance, only 4 per cent of the 2004 development budget is earmarked for the Arab community. Similar inequities affect the education sector, housing, cultural programs and sports. Remedying this will require boosting the Arab

community's ability to affect political decision-making and, in particular, actively recruiting Arab Israelis into the civil service and other public sectors.[...]

B. LAND AND PLANNING

For Palestinian citizens of Israel, the discriminatory aspects of land policy, and in particular land confiscation and disparity in the allocation of state lands, are the most serious material concern and most frequent source of friction with the state. Roughly 93 per cent of land is state owned, its use and development administered by the statutory Israel Lands Administration (ILA). The majority of this land has been expropriated from Arabs. As a result, Arabs, roughly 20 per cent of the population, own approximately 3.5 per cent of land in Israel; while their numbers have increased six-fold since 1948, land under their control has diminished, and they are barred from purchasing or leasing land in roughly 80 per cent of the country.[...]

C. EDUCATION

Education statistics show wide disparities between Arab and Jewish Israelis. Generally, the Arab school system is under-resourced; only 7 per cent of the Ministry of Education's 2004 budget is allocated to it.

Although they possess their own distinct dynamics, relations between Israel's Jewish and Arab populations cannot be viewed separately from Israeli-Palestinian relations. Progress -- or the lack of it -- in the peace process typically has a powerful impact on inter-communal relations. The early years of Oslo coincided with promise on the domestic front, in terms of both political alliances and resource allocation; Palestinian citizens of Israel were perceived to be potential bridges to the wider Arab world, and some of their leaders visited Damascus, often with official encouragement. By contrast, the second intifada and the general worsening of the regional climate after 2000 were accompanied by a sharp deterioration in communal relations; by extension, Arab Israeli dealings with Palestinians from the occupied territories or other Arabs generally are viewed with suspicion.

It generally is assumed that a peace agreement would ease civil tensions within Israel and lessen security concerns."

The Israeli government reports specific measures for its Arab population. Please read the following CERD report in its entirety for detailed measures described the Israeli government:

CERD, 23 June 2005:

1. "During the last few years, the Israeli Government has placed an emphasis on improving the infrastructure and increasing the development rate in Arab villages and towns. To this end, the Government has promoted local outline plans (for the development of Arab villages and towns) and allocated funds to support their development.
2. The Government adopted a series of decisions giving priority to the preparation of outline and zone plans in the Arab sector (January 1998, March 2000, June 2004). The budget for the preparation of the outline and zone plans is approximately 56 million NIS. Furthermore, a national project to promote outline and zone plans in the Arab sector is currently executed in approximately 60% of the Arab sector localities and may be expanded in the future.
3. These plans are meant to respond to the expected population growth in the Arab sector until the year 2020 and to allocate sufficient land to this end. Where there is need for public lands, the Israel Land Administration (ILA) allocates land for the purpose of establishing public institutions and housing for residents who are not landowners. A comprehensive national outline plan, dealing with construction, development and preservation (National Outline Plan #35) is near completion and will be presented for governmental approval during 2005.
4. Naturally, the plan includes Arab towns and villages. The explanatory notes attached to this plan outline, *inter alia*, several guiding principles for the development of Arab communities.

The rationale behind these guidelines is to tailor a response to the special needs of the Arab sector in order to close the gaps and achieve equality between the Jewish and the Arab sectors. This plan is based on the principles of affirmative action and includes preferential budget allocation, loans, and designation of certain Arab towns and villages as preferred development zones.”

See also:

ADALAH, June 2007, On the Margins, Annual Review of Human Rights Violations of the Arab Palestinian Minority in Israel 2006 [[Internet](#)]

Adalah, February 2007, Adalah's Report to the UN CERD in Response to the List of Issues Presented to Israel, [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, 10 August 2006, Israel: Bombed Arab Israelis face conflict of identity [[Internet](#)]

Difficult living conditions of the Bedouin in southern Israel (2006-2007)

- Most of them are poverty-stricken, without access to clean water, electricity, roads, schools

ADVA Center, January 2007, pp.4-5:

“At the other end of the socio-economic ladder is Israel’s poorest population group, the Bedouin, who today comprise about a quarter of the Negev’s population (around 150,000 out of approximately 550,000). Slightly over half of the Bedouin live in recognized villages that are at the bottom of the country’s rankings for practically all community-based socio-economic indices. The remaining Bedouin population live in localities that are not recognized by the State and hence lack the most basic services, such as clean water, electricity and telephone services, access roads, public institutions, schools, and service, commercial and industrial areas [...]. The Negev Bedouin have the country’s lowest rate of high school matriculation. In 2005, the figure was just 26.6%, compared with a national figure of 44.9%; all seven of the recognized townships fall into the bottom quarter of the average community wages table; all seven of them belong to the localities with the highest level of jobseekers; and Rahat, the biggest recognized Bedouin locality, has Israel’s lowest rate of 20-29 year-olds studying at an academic institution [...].

[...]

Among the Jewish localities in the Negev, the development towns have the lowest socio-economic level. [...]

The low income levels in most of the localities of the Negev make it difficult to generate a sufficiently broad tax basis to finance local development. [...]

In the absence of local resources, the government might have been expected to give particularly generous aid to the Negev localities, so as to enable their local authorities to provide the population with good services, and even to invest in local economic development. [...]

The recognized Bedouin localities enjoyed even greater government support – NIS 1,786 per capita, approximately NIS 160 per capita less than the settlements. However, when the locally-raised income of the Bedouin localities, most of whose residents are poverty-stricken, is added to the income from the government, the resultant total (in the regular budget) of the local authorities in the Bedouin localities comes to NIS 3,143 per capita – compared with NIS 4,987 per capita in the development towns, and NIS 4,929 per capita in Omer, Lehavim, and Meitar.”

See also:

Adalah, April 2006, Land Disputes in Israel: The Case of the Bedouin of the Naqab By Dr. Thabet Abu-Ras, Adalah's Newsletter, Volume 24 [[Internet](#)]

Adalah, March 2006, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Land and Housing Rights [[Internet](#)]

Abu-Rabia, Aref, 2002, Negev Bedouin Displacement, Forced Settlement and Conservation", in Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples, Displacement, Forced Settlement and Sustainable Development, Edited by Dawn Chatty and Marcus Colchester, Berghahn Books New York Oxford, Chapter 11, pp202-211, (reproduced here with the author's permission) [[Internet](#)]

Causes of Displacement

Bedouin communities were displaced to military areas and many were later resettled to towns (1949-2007)

- In 1949, Israeli authorities concentrated some Bedouin communities from the Negev in a closed area under military rule
- Between 1948 and 1953, other communities were reportedly evacuated from areas outside the closed zone and relocated
- After the cancellation of military rule in 1966, most of the Bedouin continued living in the former closed area
- Following the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979, Bedouins who had stayed on their lands had to resettle when a military airfield was constructed in the Negev
- In 1989, the Malkovitch Committee, set up by the Israeli government to investigate 'illegal' buildings in the Arab community, recommended to demolish more than 11,000 Arab houses, including entire villages, which would later be called 'unrecognized villages'
- From the 1970's to the 1990's, the Israeli government planned and built 7 urban-style towns for the Bedouin
- Eviction of Bedouin in "unrecognized villages"

According to Dr. Alexander Kedar, Faculty of Law, University of Haifa and the Israeli Association for Distributive Justice:

Kedar December 2004, p3:

"I believe that most Arab Bedouin, i.e. the Bedouin who were removed from their normal residence and moved to the Savag Zone (an area in the northern Negev), come within the category of internally-displaced persons."

According to the scholar Aref Abu-Rabia (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), displacement of the Bedouin community has occurred in three different circumstances:

Abu-Rabia November 1994, pp. 15-16:

[At the end of the 1948 war] "The Israeli authorities concentrated the Bedouin under military rule in the northeastern Negev, in a closed area (Sayig) A special permit had to be obtained from the authorities to enter or leave the area or to move within the region between one tribe and another. In this way, the authorities ensured that they had complete control over the Bedouin. Sheikhs, notables, and other friends of the authorities were given special permits which allowed them freedom of movement out of the closed area, on the condition that they returned to the tribe by

evening. It should be noted that, after the cancellation of military rule in 1966, most of the Bedouin continued living in the former closed area. [...]

The recognition of the problem as relating to three different categories within the Bedouin population is important. As with the consequences of the forced evacuation and concentration of the Bedouin following the war of 1948, tribes from different areas have lived in different circumstances. Those Bedouin who have stayed on their lands, and are the subjects of the present land settlement attempts at Tel al-Malah [i.e. where the military airfield was constructed following the peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979], differ from those whose land was confiscated or its use restricted. And these two groups are different from those that were evacuated between 1948 and 1953 from areas outside the closed zone and were relocated."

According to the coordinator of social rights and outreach for the Bedouin community in the Advocacy Center in Beer-Sheva:

Al-San'a 26 May 2000:

"Following the war, the majority of the Bedouin Arabs were moved off their traditional land holdings to a closed military area (Siag) in the Beer-Sheva region. From the 1970's-1990's, the Israeli government planned and then built 7 urban-style towns, without the participation of the Bedouin population or consideration for Bedouin lifestyle, traditions, or social (family, tribal, etc.) relations."

Lithwick 2000, pp.9, 25:

"The seven Bedouin towns in the Negev [...] are the result of an explicit governmental program over the past two decades to relocate the Bedouins in more concentrated 'urban' areas. Ostensibly to provide health, education and social services more efficiently, in reality the objective was to acquire for the State much of their extensive but incompletely documented land holdings in the Negev. The towns were 'planned' with nicely subdivided lots, rights of way for infrastructure, schools, clinics, and public spaces. [...]

Compensation was promised, but the terms were unacceptable to most of the land-owning Bedouins. Restriction of herds, of water, and of other services, together with forced evacuation, succeeded in moving large numbers to these towns. This process led to a widespread sense of having been treated unfairly and illegally. Bedouins were moved from the lands east of Beer Sheva to enable construction of the Nevatim military air base after the withdrawal from the Sinai. Compensation for the move and for their lands was deemed to be unjust. They look at the generous compensation paid to Jewish Israelis who were moved from their homes in Yamit, at the same time and for similar reasons, and feel, not unreasonably, that they have been treated as second class citizens."

According to R. Peled, former adviser to the chairman of ministerial committee on Bedouin affairs in Israel:

Peled, November 2001:

"It is at least inaccurate to say that it [the resettlement into towns] was done without the consent of the Bedouin inhabitants. No one was forced to move into a town. It is true that in these towns services were offered that were not available in the unrecognized villages, and one could claim (rightfully) that the government avoided supplying services in the unrecognized villages as a mean of pressure on the population to move into the towns more quickly. On the other hand the truth is that with all respect to the Bedouin tradition, the vast majority of Bedouins today prefer to live in a town than in the traditional tents.

The process of moving into a town is a sort of business deal in which the Bedouin "sells" 80% of his land to the state, in fixed and state-controlled prices (often way too low) and gets money to build a house. The other 20% he gets in land in the new town. The dispute over the price for the land and the percentage of land exchanged is the main reason for preventing Bedouins today

from moving into towns. So it is hard to say that people were moved to towns without their consent, everyone who moved did so under no physical threat or pressure. As to the respect to their tradition – again this is complicated. On one hand, the state thinks much respect was given [...]. For instance – when the new towns were built, each neighborhood was kept for a certain family. If a neighborhood was built for 100 households of the Al-Kian family, and only ten of them moved in, the other 90 pieces of land are still being kept for the family, at the same time that other neighborhoods are being developed. [...] On the other hand, I am sure that much more could have been done, and for sure there was not enough involvement of the Bedouins in the planning."

National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, February 2000:

"The process of evictions and demolitions continued to affect Arab communities: [...] tens of Arab villages in the Negev; in 1974, the village of Arab al Mafjar (near Hadera) was uprooted to build the national electricity company; in 1981, after the Camp David Agreements with Egypt, thousands of Arab families in the Negev were evicted to make way for military airfields on their lands: in 1987, the government formulated a committee to investigate 'illegal' buildings in the Arab community, called the Malkovitch Committee: this committee recommended in 1989 to demolish more than 11,000 Arab houses, including entire villages. These villages were later called 'unrecognized villages'. It is important to mention here that since the creation of the State of Israel, no Jewish settlement was ever evicted to make way for a building project."

Ha'aretz, 8 May 2007:

"30 structures, among them shacks and tents, were demolished on Tuesday in the unrecognized Bedouin village of Al-Twayil in the Negev. The Council of Unrecognized Villages said the demolitions left 100 people with no roof over their heads. The village, north of Be'er Sheva, has been in a struggle with the authorities for many years.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, when Israel's Arabs were subject to martial law, the families of the village were moved to the nearby areas of Lahura and Lakiya, but they were unable to remain due to claims on the land by other families, leading many of them to return to their original land over the past 20 years.

Following the demolitions, the Israel Lands Authority said it evacuated 24 'invasions' in the area and that 'these invasions have taken place for the seventh time this year, to the same place.'

'The invaders have homes in Lakiya,' the authority said, and added that they had 'evacuated tents, livestock shelters, and sheds.'"

Adalah, June 2007, p.69:

"The Israeli authorities have always demolished Arab homes in the Naqab [i.e. Negev], and thousands of houses are slated for demolition. However, the pace of demolition was particularly rapid in 2006, to the point where barely a week went by without such actions being executed. While in the past demolitions involved a small number of homes in each case, 2006 saw the demolition of dozens of homes at a time, sometimes affecting entire villages.[...]

The demolition leaves the families in the open without shelter, even during the fiercely cold winters in the region."

See also:

Alternative Information Center (AIC), 30 March 2007, Eviction of the Bedouin from the Negev in Israel, by Cara Loverock [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, 18 January 2007, Negev Bedouins fight to stay on land [[Internet](#)]

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, 10 January 2007, Israel erases entire Bedouin village in the Negev [[Internet](#)]

Ha'aretz, 6 December 2006, State demolishes 17 houses in unrecognized Bedouin village in Negev [[Internet](#)]

RI, 2 Oct 2003, Between Hope and Fear: Bedouin of the Negev [[Internet](#)]

Flight or eviction of Arab villagers and resettlement (1948-1960)

- In most cases flight occurred under battle conditions
- In the first decade after the establishment of Israel and in the late 1950's, the displaced were resettled in the communities where they are still today
- Committee of internally displaced persons reports that in the mid-1950's new displacements occurred when people were evicted from their villages
- Druze villages were spared from displacement
- Close to the Lebanese border, Christian Arab villagers often became internally displaced, while Muslim Arabs were driven across the border
- Most of the internally displaced persons were resettled into "shelter villages"

Al-Haj, September 1986, p.656:

"Our data indicate that the vast majority of the internal refugees [i.e. internally displaced persons] were settled in their current communities during the first decade after the establishment of Israel. The first wave of movement occurred during and immediately after the 1948 war. They fled from their original communities to search for a place of asylum. Their flight was as much a surprise to the Jewish community as a whole as to the Arab community. In most cases flight occurred under battle conditions [...]. The second wave of the refugees movement occurred during the late 1950s, when refugees began to prepare for long term settlement. [...] The re-uniting of the fractionated original communities and kinship groups was an important factor which determined this wave of movement. Since the 1960s, there was but little refugee movement between communities."

National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, February 2000:

"During the 1947/48 period, about 385 Palestinian villages and towns were evicted. In some cases even after the 1948 ceasefire agreements between Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries, some villages and towns were evicted, as in the case of Majdal Askalan, which was uprooted in 1953.

The process of evictions and demolitions continued to affect Arab communities: in 1951 and 1956 the villages of Krad al Baqara and Al Ghanami in the Al-Hula valley in the North of Israel were evicted; [...]."

Kanaana, 2001:

"Within the UN line [i.e. 1947 partition plan] very few Arab localities remained; about 20 of them or about one out of every 20 Arab localities survived. No pattern seems to appear in the geographical or topographical distribution of these villages.

They do, however, seem to share some common characteristics. One thing they seem to share is what they were not; they were not main stream Arab Moslem villages – about half of them were semi-settled Bedouin tribes, two were Druze Arab villages, three were Circassian, one of Albanian origin, and one Ghawarni. [...]

The areas across the UN line, conquered by the Israelis in 1948 (that excludes the towns and villages in the Triangle, which were ceded to Israel during the Armistice agreement with Jordan in 1949) fall into two geographical areas, each manifesting a pattern of its own.

The first area is the fertile, agriculture plane lying between the Jerusalem corridor and the Negev. In this area, similar to most areas within the UN line, no Arab communities survived the war. All the communities in this area were main stream Moslem Arab villages.

The other area across the UN line, conquered by Israeli forces is the Galilee. Unlike any other area in Israel, most of its Arab localities (about two-thirds of them) survived. The Galilee is quite unique. Besides the West Bank, which was not taken by Israel in 1948, it is the only almost totally mountainous area in Mandate Palestine.

The Galilee was densely populated and almost totally Arab. Many of these localities were Druze and Christians including the town of Nazareth.

The Galilee villages that were destroyed were either Moslem or Christian or both but not Druze. Again they were either villages which put up some resistance or those that lie at a short distance from the Lebanese border. Many of the latter were evicted after the end of the war. Moslem inhabitants generally were sent across the Lebanese border, and Christians were generally transferred to surviving Arab villages which remained in Israel."

BADIL, 23 April 2001:

"Most of the 46,000 who became internally displaced were herded into what Israeli expulsion schemes euphemistically termed 'shelter villages.'

The geographic distribution of the internally displaced draws a map of mostly forced resettlement that followed three criteria: (1) territory allotted was not within area heavily populated by Jewish settlers; (2) it was never too close to existing Jewish settlements; and (3) it was deemed valueless to Jewish settlement and development. [Hillel Cohen, September 2000]"

For more information on the Druze people, please see [\[External Link\]](#)

Displacement of communities in northern Israel during Israel-Hezbollah conflict

- Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel, hitting northern Israel, a region which is home to 1.5 million people, and in particular the northern cities of Haifa, Kiryat Shmona, Safed, Karmiel, Tiberias and Nahariya.
- Most of the Hezbollah rockets appear to have been directed at civilian areas and hit pedestrians, hospitals, schools, homes and businesses
- Most of the displaced left for the centre and south of Israel. In the absence of a government evacuation system, people who fled the north did so under their own steam, or with the help of NGOs
- Over 1,000 Lebanese died, and close to a million were displaced due to Israeli attacks

Wikipedia, December 2006:

"The 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict refers to the military conflict in Lebanon and northern Israel, primarily between Hezbollah and Israel, which started on 12 July 2006. The conflict began with a cross-border Hezbollah raid and shelling, which resulted in the capture of two and killing of eight Israeli soldiers. Israel held the Lebanese government responsible for the attack, as it was carried

out from Lebanese territory, and initiated an air and naval blockade, airstrikes across much of the country, and ground incursions into southern Lebanon. Hezbollah continuously launched rocket attacks into northern Israel and engaged the Israeli Army on the ground with hit-and-run guerrilla attacks.”

HRW, 5 August 2006:

“Hezbollah must immediately stop firing rockets into civilian areas in Israel, Human Rights Watch said today. Entering the fourth week of attacks, such rockets have claimed 30 civilian lives, including six children, and wounded hundreds more.

'Lobbing rockets blindly into civilian areas is without doubt a war crime,' said Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch. 'Nothing can justify this assault on the most fundamental standards for sparing civilians the hazards of war.'

Hezbollah claims that some of its attacks are aimed at military bases inside Israel, which are legitimate targets. But most of the attacks appear to have been directed at civilian areas and have hit pedestrians, hospitals, schools, homes and businesses.”

JBI, 15 August 2006:

“The prime targets of the Hizbollah rockets were the Northern Israeli cities and towns of Haifa, Kiryat Shmona, Safed, Karmiel, Tiberias, and Nahariya.⁴ The victims of these rockets which appear to specifically target civilians were Israeli Jews and Arabs alike.[...]

Northern Israel is a region of about 1.5 million people. The 'Northern District' has 20.7% of the area and 17% of the total population of the country, and Haifa has 4% of the area and 12.4% of the total population of the country. 19.5% of Israel's total population of about 7 million are Arab. 60.1% of the Arab population of Israel lives in the “Northern District” and Haifa.[...]

Kiryat Shmona is one of the Northern towns in Israel that was particularly hard hit. As of August 9, 2006, most of Kiryat Shmona's 25,000 residents had fled. The 5,000 to 10,000 residents who remained lived in basements and other shelters to protect themselves from the rocket attacks. Many of the individuals who fled left through private arrangements, either staying with relatives in Southern Israel or moving into hotel rooms as long as their financial resources allow them to. Others left through charitable initiatives of wealthy individuals or NGOs.

Five hundred residents of Kiryat Shmona were evacuated on August 8th, in accordance with a decision made by the city's municipality the night before. The evacuees were given temporary accommodations on an army base. The city organized lists of people asking to be evacuated, starting with the elderly and physically disabled. Kiryat Shmona's Mayor Chaim Barbibai described this initiative as a “refreshment” trip to give residents a chance to recuperate before returning to their shelters. The evacuation process was chaotic, with workers with lists of people and telephone numbers running 'around a web of temporary telephone lines trying to come up with an accurate list of those who wanted to go and places that would be willing to take them'. Although residents of the town begged not to be returned to Kiryat Shmona, Mayor Barbibai said that they lack the means to accommodate everyone, and had to 'make decisions'. One angry resident told the mayor 'Get us out of hell'. The Kiryat Shmona evacuations represent the first time an entire town has been evacuated since the creation of Israel in 1948.

Two NGOs, Migdal Or and Orot Hesed, have, between them, relocated some 45,000 people to stay with families throughout the country while Orot Hesed had another 10,000 on its waiting list.²⁹ Russian-born Israeli billionaire Arcady Gadamak privately funded a “tent city” for 6,100 IDPs on Nitzanim Beach.”

AI, 23 August 2006:

"Israel conducted attacks throughout Lebanon from land, sea and air, killing some 1,000 civilians. Hizbullah launched thousands of rockets on northern Israel, killing some 40 civilians. Hundreds of thousands of civilians in Israel and Lebanon were displaced.

Since many Israeli Arabs are among the poorer population in Israel, it was difficult for many to flee the area but 200 were believed to be staying in rented hotels and other dwellings in Bethlehem."

Israel MFA, 23 August 2006:

"Since July 12, 43 Israeli civilians and 119 IDF soldiers have been killed."

June 2007

UNSG, 18 June 2007:

"The [UN] Secretary-General strongly deplores the rocket attack on the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona that was launched from southern Lebanon yesterday.

Noting that this attack represents the most serious violation of the Blue Line since the end of the war in 2006 and an attempt to destabilize the situation in Lebanon, the Secretary-General reiterates the importance of respecting and fully implementing Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and urges all parties to exercise maximum restraint."

AFP, 17 June 2007:

"Militants in Lebanon fired rockets into Israel for the first time in 10 months, with the Israeli army saying a Palestinian group was behind the strike that caused no injuries."

See also

UNSC, 12 Sep 2006, Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (S/2006/730) [[Internet](#)]

Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, August 2006, Report to the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement in Israel by Naomi Kikoler, Researcher, [[Internet](#)]

Xinhua News Agency, 4 Jun 2007, Israeli intelligence warns of Hezbollah rearming in south Lebanon: report [[Internet](#)]

Displacement due to rockets launched from Gaza (May-June 2007)

- In the course of two weeks more than 250 rockets were fired into southern Israel by Palestinian armed groups, mostly by Hamas' armed wing
- In mid-May 2007, some 10,000 people left the town of Sderot to find refuge in other parts of the country, such as Eilat and Tel Aviv

AI, 1 June 2007:

"Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups must cease reckless air strikes and indiscriminate rocket attacks which have been killing civilians and spreading fear in the Gaza Strip and in southern Israel.

In the past two weeks some 50 Palestinians have been killed and some 200 injured in the Gaza Strip by Israeli air strikes and other attacks. In addition, two Israeli civilians have been killed and more than 20 injured in the southern Israeli town of Sderot by so-called "qassam" rockets launched from the Gaza Strip by Palestinian armed groups.

As has often been the case in the past, unarmed civilian bystanders have borne the brunt of this latest spate of attacks and counter-attacks.

In Israel, a 32-year-old woman, Shirel Friedman, was killed on the evening of 21 May 2007 when a rocket struck a car in the parking lot of a shopping centre in Sderot. A few days later, on the morning of 27 May, 36-year-old Oshri Oz was killed by a rocket that landed near his car as he was driving in Sderot.

These crude home-made rockets are indiscriminate weapons, as they are unguided and cannot be aimed at specific targets. The victims have invariably been civilians. In the past two weeks more than 250 rockets have been fired into southern Israel by Palestinian armed groups, mostly by Hamas' armed wing. Houses and other properties have also been destroyed or damaged in such attacks."

NYT, 1 June 2007:

"After seven years of rocket fire, sometimes sporadic and sometimes intense, Sderot has turned into a city of fear. A working-class town whose outer limits lie less than a mile and a half from Gaza's border, Sderot is the bull's-eye for the relatively crude Qassams, whose warheads are stuffed with shrapnel. With each attack, more of its 24,000 residents are added to the list of those treated for "charada," or severe anxiety or alarm in Hebrew.

Two weeks ago Palestinian militant factions, including Hamas, sharply stepped up the rocket fire from across the border, ending a tenuous six-month cease-fire. About 270 Qassam rockets have been launched at Israel since then, according to the Israeli Army, many landing in or around Sderot. Israel has responded by pounding Hamas military compounds and outposts in Gaza and attacking groups it believes to be rocket-launching cells, mainly from the air.[...]

Several thousand residents have left town temporarily, and a few who had the means have gone for good."

IRIN, 18 May 2007:

"Some 800 residents were evacuated, in addition to 1,600 the previous day who were given hotel rooms in the southern resort of Eilat paid for by an Israeli tycoon.

Sderot mayor Eli Moyal said almost half the town's 20,000 residents had fled of their own accord after waves of Qassams were launched at the town this week. [...]

Qassams

Often described as a crude makeshift weapon, the Qassam rocket is a simple homemade steel rocket filled with explosives. Although they are sometimes referred to as missiles, they are free-flight artillery rockets lacking any guidance system.

When a Qassam is fired, Sderot residents have a maximum of 15 seconds in which to take cover before it lands. The Qassams are launched from towns such as Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, which is only a kilometre from Sderot."

Israel National News, 17 May 2007:

"Approximately 2,500 of Sderot's 20,000 residents left the city temporarily on Thursday due to ongoing rocket attacks. 800 were evacuated by the government, and will stay in Soldiers' Association hostels in Netanya.

The government evacuation ended in the afternoon, apparently due to a lack of space in the hostels. Many reacted angrily to news that the evacuation was over, and dozens burst into the office of Mayor Eli Moyal in protest. Fellowship organization representatives were present, and promised to sponsor weekend vacations for 350 people.

1,600 residents were evacuated by Russian-Israeli billionaire Arcadi Gaydamak, who will pay for them to stay in hotels in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Be'er Sheva. Thousands more left independently."

See also:

Ha'aretz, 25 June 2007, Jihad militant killed in IDF strike; two missiles hit Sderot [[Internet](#)]

The Guardian, 20 June 2007, Israel strikes rocket launch sites in Gaza [[Internet](#)]

Ha'aretz, 8 June 2007, Anxiety and anger, By Dr. Rony Berger [[Internet](#)]

IRIN, May 2007, "We can't keep running for ever" [[Internet](#)]

for reference on Sderot:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sderot>

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE

Global figures

About 150,000-420,000 internally displaced persons in 2007

- According to various sources, between 46,000 and 48,000 Arabs became displaced within what became Israel in 1949
- Over fifty years later, this group (including the children of the displaced) represents about 150,000 to 200,000 persons
- Organizations defending the rights of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel also include the Bedouins who were ordered in 1949 to move into a close area under military rule in the Negev and now for the most part live in "unrecognized villages", and estimate the number of displaced at 250,000-420,000

Estimates of IDPs in Israel vary widely. There is no government or United Nations estimate. Sources for estimates are academics, Palestinian NGOs and Israeli papers. The lowest estimate is 150,000 and the highest is 420,000, which includes the children and grandchildren of Arab villagers displaced in 1948, as well as Bedouin communities displaced later on.

46,000-48,000 IDPs in 1949

Nir 8 January 2001, in Ha'aretz:

"According to the Hebrew University's Hillel Cohen, the author of a study on displaced persons in Israel, refugees from 64 out of 162 villages abandoned in the north in 1948 remained in Israel."

Al-Haj September 1986, p.657:

"The vast majority of the internal refugees were villagers who originated in about 370 villages destroyed during the 1948 war [...]"

The National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, February 2000:

"Of the estimated 150,000 Palestinians who remained within Israel proper when the last armistice agreement was signed in 1949, some 46,000 were internally displaced, as per UNRWA's 1950 registry record."

Bligh, January 1998, p.124-125:

"Most figures given for the number of Arab refugees in the Middle East at the end of the war are estimates, which put the number of refugees between the general range of 600,000 to 760,000. In contrast, the number of the Arab citizens living on the results of the first Israeli census, held on 8 November 1948. This census had a clear purpose: to determine to what extent the Arabs living in Israel, the refugees included, threatened Israel's national security. Thus, bearing in mind the method and the purpose it is logical to assume that much effort was invested in trying to reach an accurate calculation. [...] It is clear that the number used by the Israeli Government for internal calculations, as well as for diplomatic approaches, did in fact stand at 48,000 [mid-1952]. [...] [T]he number of Arabs living in Israel as of 31 December 1950 stood at 170,000, comprising less than 50,000 refugees [i.e. internally displaced persons]."

150,000 -200,000 IDPs in 2000

Al-Haj, September 1986, p.654:

"The estimation of the internal, as well as the external refugees, is controversial. After the Arab-Israel war in 1948, the estimation of the internal refugees ranged between 31,000-50,000 [...]. At present, roughly one out of four Arabs in Israel is an internal refugee or originated from a refugee family [...]. This would include a population sized of about 150,000. The vast majority of the internal refugees are Moslems (about 90 percent) and a tiny minority are Christians (about 10 percent). No Druze are represented among the internal refugee. Since no Druze village was destroyed as a result of the 1948 war and no Druze left their settlements permanently."

Nir, 8 January 2001, in Ha'aretz:

"The displaced Israeli citizens number 150,000-200,000 are a mere fraction of the world's Palestinian refugees. But with regard to the Israeli Arab population of about 1.08 million [that includes Muslims, Christians, Druze and Bedouin], they are a significant sector. In some Galilee communities they are a majority. About half of Nazareth's Arab residents are internal refugees and their descendants and more than half of Umm al Fahm's residents belong to this group."

According to Hillel Cohen, a researcher at Hebrew University (Jerusalem), who wrote his master thesis on the internally displaced in Israel, there are 150,000 internally displaced persons in Israel today, not including the Bedouin community (Cohen, 20 July 2001, e-mail correspondence).

Organizations defending the rights of the internally displaced say that 250,000 to 345,000 are now displaced

National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, February 2000:

"Today, the internally displaced and their descendents number about 250,000 persons."

BADIL, 23 April 2001, p.27:

"While about 180,000 internally displaced Palestinians currently live in and around 80 villages and towns, the remaining 70,000 (mostly Bedouins from the northern Galilee region) live in *unrecognized villages*."

BADIL, Nov 02, p.6:

"Estimates of the total IDP population inside Israel and in the 1967 occupied territories therefore vary according to source, available data, and applicable definition of internally displaced persons. There are approximately 260,000 1948 internally displaced Palestinians who comprise around one-quarter of the total Palestinian population inside Israel."

BADIL, 6 Nov 02, overview:

"There are no official estimates for the total number of internally displaced Palestinians inside Israel. UNRWA, which operated inside Israel between 1948 and 1952, and the Red Cross estimated that there were approximately 30-40,000 internally displaced Palestinians in 1948. Using this data, and the average natural growth rate of Palestinians inside Israel, the number of internally displaced Palestinians in Israel today is estimated to be around 263,000 persons. This estimate, however, does not include Bedouin displaced after 1948 in the Naqab, the urban internally displaced (e.g., from Haifa and Akko/Acre) who were permitted to return to their cities of origin but denied the right to repossess their homes and properties, Palestinians who were transferred after 1949 from outlying village settlements (khirba) to the village proper in the A'ra valley, and Palestinians who remained in their village but lost their lands. If all these categories of displaced persons are included, the total number of internally displaced Palestinians inside Israel today exceeds 300,000 person."

According to BADIL, there were 32,380 IDPs in Israel in 1950. Following natural growth, they were some 345,217 in 2006 (BADIL, May 2006, p48).

Here is the explanation for this figure:

BADIL, May 2006, p.69:

“1948 internally displaced persons

Derived from initial registration figures from UNRWA in Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UN Doc. A/1905, 30 June 1951. The population estimate for 1950 was most likely included as UNRWA registered refugees. Data for 1950–2001 was calculated on the basis of an estimated average annual growth rate of the Palestinian population inside Israel of 4.2%. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian Muslim population inside Israel (which comprises 82% of the total Palestinian population inside Israel) increased annually by 4.4% between 1948 and 2001 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002; Statistical Abstract of Israel, No. 53). In 2003, the annual growth rate of the Arab population in Israel had diminished to 3% annually.

The population updates for 2004 and 2005 are therefore based on 3% annual growth (“The Arab Population of Israel 2003”, Statistilite 50, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics). The figure does not include those Palestinians internally displaced after 1948, conservatively estimated at 75,000 persons. Internally Displaced Palestinians, International Protection, and Durable Solutions, BADIL Information & Discussion Brief No. 9 (November 2002). The annual average growth rate of the IDP population is upgraded by a quarter of a percentage point to allow for further internal displaced after 1948 due to internal transfer, land confiscation and house demolition.”

Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, 2001:

In the Negev Desert, "There are 45 such villages with 68,000 citizens, living in what is known as an 'unrecognized village.'"

UN Human Rights Committee, 9 April 1998, para.853:

"According to a Ministry of Interior survey [Government of Israel], it is estimated that there are over 100 illegal settlements, many consisting only of a small cluster of structures, spread over the Negev area alone, involving 108 tribes, over 9,000 housing units, and roughly 50,000 inhabitants, or slightly less than 1 per cent of the national population. Another 3,000 Bedouins live in illegal settlements in the Galilee region."

Temporary displacement of over 300,000 from northern Israel (2006)

- Up to one million people stayed in bomb shelters, in addition to 300,000 temporary displaced, due to Hezbollah rocket attacks into Israel from Lebanon

Brookings, 15 August 2006:

"While little attention has been paid to displacement in Israel, more than 300,000 have been displaced and up to one million more were hiding in bomb shelters and their homes or moving between the two. There were three reasons for the lack of attention. International organizations have not been present in the north and the burden of providing relief has fallen on the government, local charitable organizations, and the Diaspora. The lack of presence of international organizations has curtailed the number of reports published and disseminated on conditions in Israel. The government's desire to maintain a strong external identity was posited as having led the government to downplay the severity of displacement in Israel. Finally, as Human Rights Watch had noted, there appeared to be a degree of bias on the part of certain international bodies and parts of the media that led them to underestimate the culpability of Hezbollah and the impact that their attacks were having on Israeli civilians.

As a result of the Katyusha rocket attacks, life in the north of Israel had come to a standstill with businesses, schools, and public transportation shut down and more than 6,000 homes damaged."

JBI, 15 August 2006:

“It is difficult to obtain any official numbers of persons who were displaced by the war or of those who lived in underground shelters in the war zone. While government officials have given various public estimates, it is difficult to assess what data these estimates are based on. According to Mark Regev, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, approximately 330,000 residents of Northern Israel fled their homes during the war. 11 An IDF spokesperson told the American Jewish Committee’s Israel office on July 27, 2006 that its estimate of the displaced was 300,000. The Foreign Ministry has said in other accounts that it estimates that more than a million people were forced to live in shelters during the war, some of whom no longer have habitable homes.”

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Family reunion, as well as religious and economic considerations played a role in the choice of shelter villages in the 1950s and 1960s (2003)

Bokae'e Feb 03, pp.5-6:

"Several factors explain the patterns of internal displacement inside Israel. Some IDPs found refuge in nearby villages in which they had relatives, family and friends. Nearby villages were also the most similar socially and culturally to the de-populated village. In A'raba, for example, 44 of 68 surveyed IDP families, chose A'raba as a shelter village because they had relatives and family in A'raba. The process of re-uniting from the same village of origin played a central role in the subsequent movement of IDPs from one village to another.

Religion also played a role in the choice of shelter village, especially for the displaced Christian minority (some 10% of the total IDP population). Displaced Palestinians from the village of Bir'am (a Christian village in the Galilee), for example, found refuge in the Christian village of al-Jish. But religion also played a role in the choice of shelter village for displaced Muslim population. Tamra village (a Muslim village in the Galilee) took in displaced Palestinian Muslims from al_Damoun, al-Rwiss, and al-Birwa etc. This consideration was less important in relation to the 'mixed' localities that included more than one religious group. Nazareth, for example, a largely Christian city before *al-Nakba*, absorbed a large percentage of displaced Palestinian Muslims. Interestingly, Muslim IDPs preferred to live in the city periphery, in areas such as al-Safafri neighborhood (named after the depopulated village of Saffuriya), or the eastern neighborhoods which were close to the rural life. The few displaced Christians that came to Nazareth preferred to live in the city center and the Christian neighborhoods.

Economic considerations also influenced the choice of shelter village, especially in the latter part of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s after IDPs realized that the period of displacement would not be short as they had expected and hoped. Economic conditions generally in the shelter villages were miserable, due to restrictions on freedom of movement, the effects of the war on the Palestinian economy, and the limited resources in the villages. These conditions did not assist in the economic integration of internally displaced. Since the beginning of the 1950s, many IDPs migrated from the village to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities. IDPs from the depopulated village of Saffuriya, for example, migrated to Nazareth from the upper Galilee during the end of the 1950s. The Palestinian sociologist Majid Al-Hajj noted that during the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, approximately 35.5% of the IDPs who came to Shfara'amr during this period were pushed by economic considerations. For many IDPs, economic prosperity was seen as an alternative to their refugee status. Local villagers, however, totally rejected urban migration for social and cultural reasons."

Illustration of patterns of displacement: the account of the displaced from Kafar Bir'em, Upper Galilee (2002-2003)

- Temporary displacement of the villagers of the Christian village of Kafar Bir'em, close to the Lebanese border, has lasted over fifty years

- Village was declared a close military area in 1951 by the military governor
- In 1952, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the villagers could return to their village with the permission of the military governor but permission was never granted and the village was destroyed in 1953 by the Israeli army
- Over fifty years after displacement, they are still trying to return to their destroyed village

Committee for the Uprooted of Kafar Birem, 2001:

"Kafar Bir'em is an Arab Christian village in Upper Galilee of Israel. Its inhabitants were ordered in 1948 to leave their villages for two weeks. Until now, they are uprooted in their country. Their land was confiscated and the village was demolished in 1953. Until now the Israeli authorities insist not to let the uprooted return to their village and lands. [...]"

[In November 1948], Residents of Kafar Bir'em, citizens of the new state, are ordered to leave the village to the nearby village Al-Jish, a distance of 5 KMs South of Kafar Birem, Also to Rmaish (4 KMs North into Lebanese territory). The Minister of Minorities, Bechor Shitrit, the Military Commander for the Galilee district Elisha' Sultz, and Emanuel Friedman. Explicitly promised the residents that they would be able to return to their homes and lands within 2 weeks. And that their temporary relocation is solely for guaranteeing their safety until the security conditions in the region stabilize. The army agrees to permit ten guards, chosen by the residents, to remain in the village to protect the homes and property of the residents during the temporary relocation.

In April 1949, The government leases the lands and crops – disregarding the uprooted to a Jewish company, in which the workers are Arabs from northern Galilee (north of Israel). Despite the alleged security needs used, it still prevented the uprooted of Kafar Birem from returning to their homes and property. [...]"

As citizens of Israel, they turned to the Supreme Court of Justice in 1951 for redress of their grievances. The government responded by declaring of [sic] Kafar Bir'em a 'closed military area' and issuing a Post-Datum expulsion order in an attempt to legalize retroactivity [sic] what had been illegal in the past three years (1948-1951). The Court ruled in January 1952 that: the villagers were indeed entitled to return to their village, as had been promised. But they could only return with the permission of the military governor. Permission was denied until now, forcing the villagers to remain as uprooted refugees. In August 1953 the government declared that the lands of Kafar Bir'em had been uncultivated by their legal owners (the uprooted) therefore the government confiscated it and gave parts of the lands to nearby Israeli settlements. The following month, in a deliberate attempt to thwart the high court's verdict, the military forces bombed and dynamited the village of Kafar Bir'em, reducing it to rubble as its people tearfully looked on. The people of Kafar Bir'em have continuously sought the enactment of the promise made to them repeatedly over the past five decades."

Cook, 9 October 2002:

"What distinguishes the cases of Biram and Ikrit from other destroyed Palestinian villages [...] is that the Israeli state admits both that the inhabitants never resisted the advancing soldiers and that they were given an explicit promise by the army that they would be allowed to return.

After the evacuation, many of Biram's inhabitants moved a short distance away to the village of Jish waiting for the all-clear from the army. When they heard nothing, they turned to the courts and began the long battle that continues to this day."

For more on the subject, see:

Ettinger, Yair (Ha'aretz Daily) 27 June 2003 [IDF told villagers they'd be home in two weeks](#)

It should be noted that the inhabitants of the nearby village of Ikrit and others were evacuated at the same time than the villagers of Kafar Bir'em and are going through the same legal and administrative procedures.

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical Security

Impact of Israel-Hezbollah conflict on Israeli children (August 2006)

JBH, 15 August 2006, p.15:

“The rockets raining on Northern Israel have had a severe impact on children. As said above, seven children were killed. Many children experienced the fear of rockets and the hardship of living in shelters.

Edward Rettig of AJC’s Israel Office in Jerusalem traveled to Northern Israel throughout the conflict, delivering first aid kits as well as toys to children. Rettig said, “You see a kid with that look in his eye that is a combination of boredom because he has been through this before, and terrible fear. I saw kids in two situations: children in shelters under bombardment who have a great deal of fear and anxiety and children in displaced persons camps where they are sleeping in a room with 9 or 10 other family members. This is obviously traumatizing for them. And sometimes, children are sent away from their families to go stay with relatives in the South. They are left to worry about their father in the army and their mother who is in a shelter. The safety bubble a child is entitled to feel has been ripped away. When a child sees a rocket hit a nearby home, he or she is never going to be the same.”

Insecticide used to spray Bedouin crops presents danger to health (2004-2007)

- According to testimonies collected by the Arab Association for Human Rights, spraying operations took place without prior warning, and also lead to the destruction of livestock
- In March 2004, Israeli Supreme Court issued a temporary injunction to prevent the spraying of herbicide on Bedouin crops, and then ordered to cease the spraying in 2007 ruling
- Senior Israel Land Administration official admitted using non-approved chemicals to spray Bedouin crops (2005)

Hasson, N. in Haaretz Daily, 22 March 2004:

“According to statistics collated by the unrecognized villages and Physicians for Human Rights, over 28,000 dunams of crops across the Negev have been sprayed by the ILA since it began its crop-spraying policy in February 2002. The spraying policy replaced the policy of destroying crops with the use of tractors, which in some cases led to clashes between local residents and police.

The substance used by the ILA is called Roundup, a well-known and popular weed-killer, which turns crops - mainly wheat, but also corn and watermelons in the case of the Bedouin - yellow. The warning label on the spray tells those using it to wear gloves, not breathe in any vapors being emitted, and wear clothes that cover the entire body.”

ARABHA, July 2004, pp.5-6:

“From the testimonies collected by the Arab Association for Human Rights (“HRA”) from Bedouin citizens whose lands were sprayed, it emerges that the spraying operations took place:

- (1) Suddenly and without any prior warning to the Bedouin citizens;
- (2) without giving the Bedouin citizens a fair opportunity to present their arguments before undertaking the spraying operations;
- (3) without granting the Bedouin citizens the possibility to address the court in advance in order to prevent the spraying operations, or at least to examine the legality thereof;
- (4) without consideration of the fact that, for many years, there has been a protracted conflict between the Bedouin citizens and the ILA regarding the ownership of the agricultural areas that were sprayed, and that this conflict has yet to be resolved;
- (5) without consideration of the fact that, in some cases, spraying took place while Bedouin citizens were present in the agricultural areas, with the result that some of them came into contact with the chemical substance, inhaled it, and consequently suffered respiratory difficulties, headaches, blurred vision and general weakness, causing some of them to require medical treatment;
- (6) without consideration of the fact that, in some cases, the spraying operations led to the death of livestock; and
- (7) without consideration of the fact that although this chemical substance has been used for many years as a herbicide and insecticide, studies have suggested that the use of this substance may pose various threats to human health, to animals and to the environment – and, in any case, the warning label on the substance itself states that it must not be used by means of aerial spraying, and certainly not in the vicinity of civilian population centers.”

US DOS, 28 February 2005:

“In March [2004], the Supreme Court issued a temporary injunction to prevent the ILA [Israel Land Administration] from spraying herbicide on Bedouin crops in unrecognized villages. Adalah alleged that the herbicide has caused adverse health effects; the ILA claimed that the crops were planted illegally on state-owned land.”

Yoaz, Ha’aretz, 16 February 2005:

“The Israel Lands Administration has been spraying fields cultivated by Bedouin farmers in the Negev with chemicals that have not been approved by the Agriculture Ministry and have been banned for use in aerial spraying.

Last week, a senior ILA official submitted an affidavit to that effect to the Supreme Court of Justice, which is currently discussing a petition filed by Bedouin farmers against the ILA's crop-spraying policy in the Negev. The ILA claims that its policy is designed to counter the phenomenon of illegal occupation of state-owned land by Bedouin.

The petition, filed in May 2004 by attorney Marwan Dalal of Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, claims that “the spraying of crops endangers the life and health of human beings and animals, as well as their environment.” Along with the petition, Adalah submitted an expert opinion that stated that crop spraying increases the chances of birth defects and statistical likelihood of developing cancer.

At the time the petition was filed, the court issued an injunction banning all aerial spraying, and the ILA subsequently returned to its previous policy of plowing, which it originally abandoned because it was accompanied by violent protests by the Bedouin, thereby endangering ILA employees.

The aerial spraying, which began in 2002, is carried out by Chim-Nir, a private company based in Herzliya. According to the affidavit, which was signed by Israel Scope, director of the ILA's supervisory division, Chim-Nir used three different types of chemical - Roundup, Typhoon and Glyphogen - all of which are derivatives of glyphosate. Between 2002 and 2003, the company only used Roundup, but Scope's affidavit shows that, in 2004, it also used the two other chemicals. According to Scope, ‘the label on the Typhoon packaging does not specify any

instructions regarding aerial spraying. This means that aerial spraying with Typhoon has not been approved."

Adalah, June 2007, p.72:

"In April 2007, the Supreme Court issued its final ruling in the petition, ordering the Israel Lands Administration to cease the aerial spraying of fields farmed by Arab citizens in the Naqab [Negev] due to the damage this causes to human health and to livestock."

See also **ADALAH, ADALAH'S NEWSLETTER**

Volume 10, February 2005, **ILA Official Admits to Spraying Unauthorized Chemicals on Arab Bedouin Crops [Reference below]**

Bedouin in unrecognised village killed during clashes with state representatives (2004)

- Dispute between the Negev Bedouin and the government has been escalating

Ha'aretz, 24 June 2004:

"The latest clashes between state representatives and members of the Bedouin Abualkia'an clan claimed the life of one man, and more clashes are expected to be on the way. Tempers are flaring primarily over the future of the village of Atir, home to some one thousand clan members. The Israel Lands Administration wants village residents, designated as "unrecognized," to move to the town of Hura, while the villagers refuse and want official recognition of their village.

This case reflects the broader and complicated problem of the Negev Bedouin. All of the reports, position papers and committees dedicated to the matter (at the Prime Minister's Office, the interior and defense ministries, the National Security Council, and Knesset), and all the plans and committees for developing and legalizing the lands attest to the fact that the dispute between the Negev Bedouin and the government has not been solved, and, in fact, is escalating.

Some 140,000 Bedouin live in the Negev; about half of these in seven urban settlements established, among other reasons, to alter the nomadic lifestyle of these goat-herding tribes and get them to adapt to permanent habitation. For several reasons, primarily due to the rickety physical and social infrastructure and rising unemployment in the south, these townships did not succeed as their founders had hoped, and the Bedouin are not eager to settle in them. Conditions are far worse in the 46 unrecognized villages, including seven that are in the process of receiving recognition, that are referred to as the Bedouin "Diaspora."

As a result of this situation, health and education standards among Negev Bedouin are extremely low compared to the national average. About 60 percent of the community's babies are not inoculated, the school dropout rate is exceedingly high, and 31 percent of school-age children in the unrecognized settlements are illiterate. Entire regions in the Negev have become hubs for drugs, violence and serious crime, and Bedouin are growing increasingly alienated from the establishment. Security experts and others have warned in recent years of a violent outbreak aimed at state institutions. Bedouin politicians themselves have sounded the same warning, in a threatening tone."

Freedom of movement

The displaced from Kafar Birem cannot go back to their village since it is still a closed zone (2003)

- Arab citizens of Israel under military rule until 1966
- The village of Kafar Bir'em (northern Galilee) remained however a closed zone
- According to the Israeli government, emergency regulations such as Regulation 125, declaring territories as "closed military zones", are employed sparingly and can be appealed to the High Court of Justice

Committee for the uprooted of Kafar Birem, 2003:

"The establishment of Israel was accompanied by placing the Arab citizens under a military rule. The Arab population was subject to a military command that controlled their political, economic, social and about all aspects of their daily life and movements. As a result, the regions with Arab population were divided into small districts to which people were confined unless special, military-issued, permits were obtained. These permits, of course, became a tool of control to the population. So much, that movements between villages within a region required these special permits. At the same time the Jewish population had no movement restrictions at all.

Kafar Birem was declared as a closed military region based on emergency rules created by the British Mandate in 1945. The military rule was removed in 1966, however, the Arab population remained under security-region rules that were declared in 1949. Finally, in 1972, the defense minister, Moshe Dayan, cancelled all aspects of military and security-region rules with exception to the area of Kafar Birem. On December 27th 1972, Kafar Birem was re-declared as a security-region subject to the Northern Israeli Military Command. Until now Kafar Birem is a closed zone. It is well recognized that the security classification of Kafar Birem is but a cover to the Israeli government to avoid carrying out the Supreme Court order of 1952. A fact that is protested by many mainstream politicians and thinkers."

According to the Israeli government:

UN Human Rights Committee, 9 April 1998, para. 370-373:

"For all persons who are lawfully within the territory of the State of Israel, there is no requirement of registration in particular districts, and movement within the State is generally unrestricted. [...]"

The Mandatory Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945, grant military commanders or ministers broad powers to limit freedom of movement by a variety of means for the purpose of ensuring public safety, national security, public order, or for quelling of riots and insurgencies [...]. Such measures include curfews (regulation 124), declaration of closed military zones (regulation 125), orders prohibiting an individual from entering specified places or areas or requiring a person to notify the authorities of his whereabouts (regulation 109), orders placing a person under police supervision and restricting a person's place of residence or movement outside of a specified place or area (regulation 110). The above measures are employed very sparingly within the State of Israel. [...]"

All orders restricting freedom of movement issued under these emergency regulations are appealable to the High Court of Justice [...]"

In June 2003, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled against the return of the displaced to Kafar Birem (for more information, please see International Response Section).

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Living conditions of Bedouins in unrecognized villages has worsened these past few years (2004-2007)

- Rising of infant mortality figures among Negev Bedouin (2004)
- Few health clinics serve the unrecognized villages and difficulty to obtain ambulances (2004)
- Israel Health Ministry-Ben Gurion University Survey found that Bedouin children living in unrecognized villages were 2.4 times more likely to suffer from malnutrition than youngsters living in recognized villages (2005)
- In September 2006, Haifa district court rejected a petition to connect the unrecognized villages to clean water sources

Lavie, Haaretz Daily, 30 January 2004, part I:

"The fact that the infant mortality figures among the Negev Bedouin are the highest of all the population sectors in Israel is not news. The news is that over time the death rate - only among the Bedouin - is rising at an alarming rate. The Health Ministry is helpless to fight the phenomenon: According to official statistics published by the ministry recently, the number of infant deaths among the Negev Bedouin has increased from 11.2 deaths per 1,000 births in 1996 (in the Jewish sector - 4.5) to 17.1 in 2002 (Jews: 4.0). An increase of over 50 percent in six years, somewhere between Syria (18 deaths for every 1,000 births) and Oman (16.2). If the mortality rates had remained at the 1996 level, the lives of 130 Bedouin babies would have been saved."

Lavie, Haaretz Daily, 30 January 2004, part II:

"Serving all the unrecognized villages, each with a population of 500 to 5,000, are only seven such clinics; there are also nine HMO clinics. For the sake of comparison, in Lehavim, a community of 5,000, there are three HMO clinics.

Ambulances don't always enter the unrecognized villages. During the period following the Arab riots of October 2000, they sometimes refused even to enter the recognized towns, such as Tel Sheva. Today, the drivers who don't know the way often refuse to travel along dirt paths that don't appear on any map. Anyone who needs an ambulance has to bring the patient on his own to the meeting point on the main road. By the time a heart-attack patient arrives at the gates of the hospital, at least 45 minutes are likely to pass, enough time to depart from this world."

Ruth Sinai, Ha'aretz, 7 February 2005:

"One out of every six Bedouin first-grade pupils - and one out of every eight Jewish first-graders - in the Negev, suffers from malnutrition, according to a new study conducted by the faculty of health sciences at Ben-Gurion University and the Health Ministry.

The study is based on data collected by public health nurses in the Negev from 791 youngsters, which is considered a broad sample. The research was carried out by Prof. Drora Fraser and Dr. Natalya Bilenko, who examined the children's weight as compared with their height.

Bedouin children living in unrecognized villages were 2.4 times more likely to suffer from malnutrition than youngsters living in recognized villages, the survey showed.”

Ha’aretz, 25 September 2006:

“Haifa district court last week rejected a petition to connect the unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev to clean water sources, citing the larger underlying issue of village regularization.

In its session as a water court, the court ruled that the water commissioner has no authority over considerations pertaining to town regularization in Israel, and therefore rejected to appeal by the Adalah Legal Center on behalf of over 100 Negev families.

The Adalah Center plans on appealing the decision with the Supreme Court. They said there is no connection between realizing the basic right all state residents to clean water and the legal standing of the Negev towns.”

See also: BBC News, 27 February 2007, Land Struggle of Israel's Bedouin
[\[Internet\]](#)

Health

Set-up of emergency centre to treat Sderot residents from panic and anxiety attacks (May 2007)

IRIN, 18 May 2007, "Residents":

“Local mental health workers have set up a 24-hour emergency centre to treat residents [of Sderot] suffering from panic and anxiety attacks, headed by psychiatrist Adriana Katz. The nearest hospital is in Ashkelon, 13km away.

“Fear rules this city every day. The entire population has been traumatised without exception. They suffer post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. We have more than 30 people in here during bombardments and we give them group therapy,” she said.

Some 1,400 Qassams have been fired at Sderot since Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005 - and more than 3,000 rockets have hit the town since the first in April 2001, killing eight residents , including two children.”

See also: IRIN, 18 May 2007, 'I don't sleep at night because I am afraid for my children'
[\[Internet\]](#)

Shelter

Displaced from Sderot, near Gaza, find temporary shelter in hotels and tents (May-June 2007)

Ha’aretz, 5 June 2007:

“Crews working for Russian-Israeli billionaire Arcadi Gaydamak yesterday finished dismantling the Tel Aviv tent city their patron had built for hundreds of Sderot residents who left their city for fear of Qassam rockets fired from the Gaza Strip.

The Sderot residents who chose to stay in Gaydamak's tents in Park Hayarkon returned to their homes Sunday.

The residents, who had stayed at the site for 10 days, were taken back to the northern Negev city."

IRIN, 18 May 2007:

"Some 800 residents were evacuated, in addition to 1,600 the previous day who were given hotel rooms in the southern resort of Eilat paid for by an Israeli tycoon.

Sderot mayor Eli Moyal said almost half the town's 20,000 residents had fled of their own accord after waves of Qassams were launched at the town this week."

Poor shelter conditions of those who stayed behind in northern Israel during Israel-Hezbollah conflict (August 2006)

JBI, 15 August 2006, p.10:

"Many residents in Northern Israel lived in air raid shelters under the ground to provide them with some measure of protection during the Hizbollah rocket attacks. The conditions in many of these shelters have been described as squalid. Many did not have proper toilet facilities. Many of the shelters did not have facilities for the storage and preparation of food and the residents in many cases were not able to leave to get food or medical supplies that they need. Shelters were crowded, stuffy with little or no fresh air, and dirty."

The displaced usually set up their own separate neighborhoods within the Arab towns of Israel (1986-2001)

- In many towns and villages, the displaced persons live in separate neighborhoods, segregated according to their original native village
- Many live in the most impoverished and overcrowded neighborhoods
- According to the Secretary of the NGO Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, pressing housing needs of the third generation of displaced

Al-Haj, September 1986, p.656:

"Most of the internal refugees, as well as the Arab population in Israel, live in homogenous Arab localities. The vast majority are villages and only two are Arab towns: Shefar-Am and Nazareth. Even those who live in mixed Jewish-Arab cities usually have separate neighborhoods."

Nir, 8 January 2001, in Ha'aretz:

"In many towns and villages, the displaced persons live in separate neighborhoods, segregated according to their original native village. In Arrabe for instance, natives of Mia'ara, an abandoned Western Galilee village, set up their own neighborhood after 1948. Similarly, refugees from the Zipporiah village (on whose ruins today's Zippori community was built) created their own neighborhood in nearby Nazareth."

Schechla, October 2001, p.22:

"Many of the internally displaced today live in the most impoverished and overcrowded neighborhoods of what are now 'mixed towns' - the previously Arab towns of Acre, Jaffa, Lydda, and Ramla. For example, the ancient coast town of Acre, attacked by Israeli forces and largely

depopulated in 1948, became a magnet for Palestinian survivors of outlying village depopulations."

According to Wakim Wakim, secretary and spokesman of the NGO Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel,

Wakim Wakim, October 2001, p.34:

"The internal refugees [i.e. IDPs] are [...] disadvantaged there, since they also had no land to build on. The first generation simply built on top of the homes their parents had acquired, but what of the second generation? There's an entire quarter in Nazareth that's inhabited by displaced people from Saffuriyya, a destroyed village which is right next door. Many of these people are from families that owned hundreds of dunams a few kilometers away, but today they can't find 200 square meter in Nazareth to build on. So the drive for return is not based on nostalgia or yearning but on an existential problem: the pressing need for housing and available surface area. The problem is even more acute for the third generation. This is what has given our cause great momentum and support."

Many displaced Bedouins live in settlements not recognized by the State of Israel (1999-2005)

- Many internally displaced Bedouins now live in "unrecognized villages", i.e. villages which were declared illegal by the National Planning and Building Law of 1965 and usually do not receive municipal services
- According to a Bedouin organization, many of these villages existed before the creation of the state of Israel
- A few villages were recognized by the labor government of Yitzhak Rabin but it is not the case for hundred more
- Following appeal by organisations representing the unrecognized villages to the Israel Supreme Court, the Israel Interior Ministry begun process of granting recognition and municipal services to one of the villages (2005)

Peled, November 2001:

According to R. Peled, former adviser to the chairman of ministerial committee on Bedouin affairs in Israel, many now living in "unrecognized villages" were displaced in 1949 when "they were ordered by the military administration to move into a specific region it decided all Bedouins should be concentrated it."

Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, 2003:

"Unrecognized Village: a term that the Palestinian community adopted in describing the villages which the Israeli government refer to as scattered settlements or populations. Many of these villages existed long before the establishment of the State of Israel. [...]"

"The Negev is 60% of the total land area within the green line. The 120,000 Arab Palestinian Bedouin (25% of the Negev population of which approximately 50% live in 'settled localities' while the remaining residents are living in the unrecognized villages) are a marginalized population in the south [...]"

Since 1965, the problem of the unrecognized villages in Israel has become increasingly aggravated. During that year, the government legislated the law of planning construction as well as an outline plan, which included only 123 Arab villages. Thus, hundreds of Palestinian Bedouin villages and localities were deliberately ignored and according to the Planning and Construction Law, were considered not to exist. All the land upon which the Palestinian Bedouin Unrecognized

Villages are situated have been classified as agricultural land, therefore, according to this classification all buildings erected are illegal, i.e. the villages are considered to be completely illegal entities."

Schechla, October 2001, p.24:

In 1986 the Interministerial Commission concerning Illegal Construction in the Arab Sector, better known as the Markowitz Commission, was appointed. "It was this commission that first applied the term 'unrecognized' to entire villages and neighborhoods of 'recognized' Arab towns where the buildings were 'unlicensed,' thereby giving a name to an extant but previously ambiguous category."

U.S. DOS, February 2001:

"The unrecognized villages were declared illegal by the National Planning and Building Law of 1965 when the lands on which they sit were rezoned as nonresidential and the Government claimed ownership. According to the Government, recognizing these villages would conflict with its attempts to establish new villages in 'an orderly manner, and would leave disputes over the land unresolved.' Residents of the unrecognized villages pay taxes to the Government; however, they are not eligible for government services. Consequently, such villages have none of the infrastructure, such as electricity, water, and sewers, provided to recognized communities. The lack of basic services has caused difficulties for the villagers in regard to their education, health care, and employment opportunities. New building in the unrecognized villages is considered illegal and subject to demolition. Private efforts have supplied some unrecognized villages with water, and the courts have ordered the provision of limited health and education services. The Government has yet to fulfill its commitment to resolve the legal status of unrecognized Arab villages. Eight villages have been recognized officially since 1994, but nearly 100 more, of varying size and with a total population of nearly 70,000 persons, remain in limbo. Of the eight villages that have been recognized, the Government has yet to actually implement the decisions."

Schechla, October 2001, p.23:

According to J. Schechla, Middle East/North Africa Coordinator of the Housing and Land Rights Committee of Habitat International Coalition, the inhabitants of 'unrecognized villages' "are under continuous - and ongoing - processes of dispossession and displacement."

Ha'aretz, 10 December 2002:

"[...] 40 Arab townships known as "40 unrecognized villages" lack official connections to the water and electricity infrastructure as well as educational, health and welfare services. Their children suffer from ongoing neglect."

"To this day seven unrecognized villages in the Negev have been granted recognition, but only after a cabinet decision. Seven others are in various stages of recognition." (Hasson, Ha'aretz, 20 May 2004)

Israel government to grant recognition to Bedouin village in Negev (2005)

Rinat, in Ha'aretz, 28 April 2005:

"The Interior Ministry has begun the process of granting recognition to the Bedouin village of Um Batin in the Negev, and as such is preparing to provide municipal services, chief among them sanitation.

The interior minister is expected to sign an edict which will delineate the town's boundaries and grant it official status in the Abu Bismah regional council, which is the first Bedouin regional council ever established.

The recognition process gained renewed momentum two years ago in the wake of a High Court appeal filed jointly by the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, Physicians for Human Rights, and El Oneh, which represents unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev."

Living conditions in the 7 towns where the Bedouins were resettled are lower than for the rest of the population (2000-2005)

- While Bedouins in towns have a better access to services than in the traditional settlements, quality and level of services are inferior to those in Jewish towns
- Government planners noted that funds to complete the seven new townships were far from sufficient, and that the average Bedouin family did not have adequate funds to purchase a home there (2005)

Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Negev, 2001:

"57,200 people (Bedouin) live in 7 villages, planned and built by the Israeli government: Rahat, Tel Sheva, Segev Shalom, Arrara, Hura, Kaseifa and Lakiya."

Lithwick 2000, Executive Summary & p.26:

"A substantial body of evidence [...] indicates that the towns have failed to meet the basic needs of an urbanizing population. The towns are socially, economically and politically dysfunctional, ranking as the most disadvantaged settlements in Israel by a significant margin. [...]"

The towns did offer prospects for acquiring better public services. Dispersion across the Negev made it difficult to provide quality education and health services, let alone modern infrastructure for the Bedouins. There can be little doubt that these services are now more accessible than they were formerly. But what is also undoubted is that the level and quality of these services in the Bedouin towns continue to be inferior to those provided to the Jewish towns."

Abu-Rafia, November 1994, p.16:

"The Bedouin diet is changing. Although bread was, and remains, the dietary staple, Bedouins are now freed from their previous dependence on seasonal produce. [...]"

There are ten modern clinics serving the Bedouin population, in the urban and tribal settlements. [...]"

There has been progress in the number of schools and teachers provided, the number of children in the schools, the attendance of girls, the awareness of parents of the importance of education, and the willingness of parents to send their children to schools."

US DOS, 28 February 2005:

"Government planners noted that funds to complete the seven new townships were far from sufficient, and that the average Bedouin family did not have adequate funds to purchase a home there. Clashes between authorities and residents of unrecognized villages have escalated over the past year, resulting in one Bedouin resident of the village of Atir killed during a clash with a government home-demolition unit."

For a discussion on whether the resettlement of the Bedouin population into the seven towns described above had been done with their consent, please see [\[Internal Link\]](#)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Half of schools in Sderot, close to Gaza will not be reinforced by September 2007 (June 07)

- Israeli Supreme Court ordered the government to reinforce all classrooms in Sderot and surrounding communities
- Government said that it could not comply, and that the reinforcement would be finalized within 1-3 years

Ha'aretz, 12 June 2007:

"According to assessments from the [Israeli] Prime Minister's Office, it will be impossible to comply with the High Court's ruling two weeks ago which ordered the state to reinforce all classrooms in Sderot and in the communities around Gaza by the beginning of the coming school year.

During a hearing Monday in the PMO, officials estimated that the reinforcement would be finalized within 1-3 years. In coming days, PMO officials will decide whether to file a request for an additional hearing with the court.

The High Court had previously ruled that the present method of designating one protected area per school is insufficient and therefore all the classrooms must be reinforced by September [2007].

According to the present system, students have 15 seconds, from the moment the alarm sounds until the Qassam hits, to reach each school's single protected area. The High Court determined that this was not enough time and that the method does not meet the test of reasonability.

A few months ago, the cabinet allocated NIS 135 million to reinforce all classrooms for grades 1-3. However the High Court determined that all classrooms, up to the 12th grade, must be reinforced.

The additional estimated NIS 200 million to reinforce all classrooms will bring the total allocation to approximately NIS 400 million.

At present, some 340 classrooms are not reinforced - about half of all classrooms in Sderot and the communities around the Gaza Strip."

See also:

IRIN, 29 May 2007, Israel-OPT: Low attendance as schools reopen in shell-shocked Sderot [[Internet](#)]

Y Net, 6 August 07, Qassam lands in Sderot kindergarten, By Shmulik Hadad [[Internet](#)]

Delays in school and trauma in northern Israel following Israel-Hezbollah conflict (August 2006)

- Israeli Ministry of Education's psychological counseling service received hundreds of appeals from parents concerned about symptoms of anxiety in their children
- Nahariya's Mayor decided to delay the start of the school term by two weeks, due to the difficulties the city endured during the Israel-Hezbollah conflict

Ha'aretz, 22 August 2006:

"During the war, Liel refused to stay alone for a minute, and when Nina would pop down to the supermarket, she would cry and plead with her to come back. When a neighbor jokingly told her to sleep with her shoes on because they'll probably have to go down to the shelter during the night, Liel refused to remove her shoes before going to bed.

The Education Ministry cannot say how many children there are in Liel's situation. Community coordinators for Shefi, the ministry's psychological counseling service, have fielded hundreds of appeals from parents concerned about symptoms of anxiety in their children. But Shefi director, Dr. Bilha Noy, says it is too early to say how many of them will still be in this state by the time the school year opens, and a month later.

According to Noy, studies on similar situations (including the Gulf War) indicate that most children who suffer post-traumatic stress experience "natural healing" - not long after the war ends and things return to normal, the anxiety symptoms gradually disappear and the child resumes functioning normally. However, Noy adds, between 5-8 percent of the children will retain signs of post-traumatic stress for a longer period, necessitating more intensive treatment and monitoring.

With 450,000 kindergarten and school children in Haifa and the North, even 5 percent is a lot for Shefi to handle - some 22,500 children who will require therapy.

In preparation for the new school year, Shefi professionals are holding seminars for school principals and kindergarten and school teachers during which they provide a cathartic opportunity for participants to discuss their experiences during the war, on the one hand, and also administer a crash-course in post-traumatic stress - how to talk with kids about their experiences and allow them to unburden their feelings; which troubling signs displayed by the children need watching; and what measures can be used to encourage kids to express their feelings or to soothe them.

The ministry kits sent recently to schools and kindergartens contain suggestions for activities to this end - from art and creative writing to guided imaging and relaxation techniques. The activities will obviously have to be adapted for different age groups.

According to Education Minister Yuli Tamir, the teenagers who went through the war will require extra attention, since they can be expected to have some tough questions about the handling of the war that they must be given a chance to express.

These activities will not be limited to northern schools. "A child who hosted a family from the North at this home, or who had a relative fighting in Lebanon experienced a state of emergency and should be given an opportunity to talk about what he's gone through," says the chief psychologist at Shefi, Hava Friedman.

But the ones carrying the brunt of the burden will be the school counselors and psychologists up North. The Education Ministry has allocated an additional 110 job slots for psychologists in the region (compared to the 535 already in place) and 4,000 additional counseling hours on top of the existing 4,500."

Ha'aretz 21 August 2006:

"When the school year opens in most Israeli communities, the children of Nahariya will still be at home. The reason: Mayor Jacky Sabag decided to delay the start of studies by two weeks due to the difficulties the city endured during the war. Sabag said that the decision was in response to requests from local parents' associations. He also cited the need to renovate schools damaged by Katyusha rockets.

However, Sabag made the decision to delay school openings before the cease-fire took effect - and now that Nahariya residents have returned, parents are angry about the decision. They want to reestablish their children's routines as quickly as possible."

NYT, 1 June 2007:

"In the current siege, many schools have closed. Some that are equipped with fortified roofs and bomb shelters reopened Tuesday. At the Gil Elementary School, 49 pupils turned up, out of 200. The principal, Etti Azran, said she knew the location of every absent pupil. Seventy-six were out of town, and the rest were at home, their parents too scared to bring them, she said."

See also:

Haaretz, 31 May 2007, Gov't says can't meet deadline to reinforce Sderot schools, By Mijal Grinberg [[Internet](#)]

Israeli government defends its education record for Bedouin unrecognized villages (2005)

In its submission to the CERD in 2005, the Israeli government stated:

CERD, 23 June 2005:

"With regard to education, it should be emphasized that pupils in illegal villages are entitled to the same level of education as all other pupils in Israel. However, for obvious reasons, it is not possible to build elementary and high schools in every village, whether legal or not. Hence, 11% of the pupils of Israel (Jews and non-Jews) study in regional schools that serve rural localities. Thus, it is not uncommon for Israeli localities not to have their own local schools.

Furthermore, the special situation of pupils from illegal villages is given consideration by the education authorities. The education system allocates extra resources (primarily study hours) to schools whose pupils suffer from environmentally caused academic deficiencies. A special index is used to determine the eligibility of schools to receive such additional resources and one of the criteria of this index in the non-Jewish sector is the inclusion of pupils from illegal villages. In other words, the higher the percentage of pupils who come from families that reside in illegal villages, the more resources are allocated to the school. Thus, schools with pupils from illegal villages receive additional teaching hours which enable them to deal with the specific problems of this population (most notably, poor domestic complementary studying conditions)."

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self Reliance

Impact of temporary displacement from northern Israel on livelihoods (August 2006)

- Dire impact on families in southern Israel hosting the displaced

JBI, 15 August 2006, pp.13, 14, 18:

"The bombardment of rockets resulted in the paralysis of social and economic life for one and a half million residents of Northern Israel. According to news sources, 40,000 small and medium sized businesses in services and commerce in the north stood empty during the war. Representatives of the sector claimed that thousands of businesses are collapsing. News sources report that 110,000 employees have been absent from their jobs due to the war. The Head of the Bank of Israel estimated that as of mid-August, the war had caused a 1% reduction in the Israeli economy. The Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce stated that businesses in the North lost revenues of \$1.4 billion.[...]

Many families in the southern part of the country that took in IDPs to live in their homes had to deal with the space constraints and financial burden of providing for additional individuals in their household. A call for donations to purchase supplies of cooking oil and flour was issued by NGO Kav HaChessed (The Mercy Hotline). The NGO stated that it could no longer supply for the basic needs of families in Jerusalem hosting IDPs from the North. The spokesperson reported that many Jerusalem families, which themselves have up to 5 family members, were collapsing under the burden of supplying the basic needs of up to an additional 10 IDP family members or acquaintances from the North."

Slow adjustment of the displaced as a minority in Israel and as newcomers in host communities (1986)

- The internally displaced had to adjust as part of the Arab minority in Israel society, while they also face problems of adjustment in local communities
- Before displacement, they worked in agriculture, mostly in their own lands
- Once displaced and deprived of their land, their economic situation was very difficult, especially until the late 1950's
- Intergenerational differences were observed among the displaced: the young are more educated and there are less differences between them and the locals; many have ceased to perceive their uprootings as temporary and have established stable relations with locals

Al-Haj, September 1986, pp. 656-661:

"The adjustment problem for the internal refugees is twofold. On the one hand, they are part of the Arab minority in Israel and thus they have to face the problems of integration and adjustment of the Arabs as a whole in Israeli society. On the other hand, they have to face the problems of refugee adjustment in the local host communities [...]

The problem of refugee adjustment in the host community is mainly social, since refugees as well as locals are dependent economically and politically on the Jewish sector. The refugee status is evident only at the local level. [...]

Before the displacement they worked in agriculture, mostly in their own lands. During the first decade after the establishment of Israel in 1948, refugees [i.e. internally displaced persons] suffered the most as a result of the difficult economic situation of the country. The Israeli economy witnessed high unemployment [...]. The first priority for the Israeli Government was to secure employment for the new Jewish immigrants, who came as part of the mass Jewish immigration to Israel during the early 1950s and doubled the population of the country within a few years. [...]The internal refugees had to compete with locals for any employment at hand within the poor economic local system. This compensation was asymmetric because refugees had no property or any economic resources. Their lands were entirely expropriated, since they were defined officially as absentees. [...] The Government allocated a special budget to secure employment for the internal refugees. Evidence in several documents in the Shefar-Am municipality showed the allocation of a number of 'work days' for the municipality which were intended to provide employment on local projects for the heads of refugee households, supervised by the local authority. However these projects engaged only a small segment of the refugees. [...] In the late 1950s, there was a noticeable improvement in the economic situation of the country. The demand for Arab labor accelerated. [...] [In the mid-1980's], about 22 percent of refugees [i.e. internally displaced persons] have secondary or post secondary education and about 10 percent work at high level of occupation (Academic, professional,...). [...]

At the communal level, intergenerational differences are observed, both in social and in psychological adjustments. The young generation has not experienced the difficulties of flight and settlement in the new environment with no property or means of livelihood at hand. Moreover, the younger generations are more educated and differ from the older generation in the competition for economic and political positions within the community. The narrowing of the class differentiation between locals and refugees, particularly for the young generations, has contributed to their adjustment. Several political and economic changes which occurred during the first decade have put an end to the 'waiting and expectation period', where refugees expected their problem to be settled and to be able to return to their original communities. In the early 1980s refugees began to prepare for long term settlement, when they ceased to perceive their uprootings as temporary. This encouraged their social adjustment and established more stable relations with locals."

For more on land issues, please see [\[Internal Link\]](#)

Israeli government recognized the serious disparities between the Jewish and Arab populations in terms of housing and land (1998)

- Development of Jewish towns and settlements has not often been matched by similar steps for the Arab towns
- Starting the end 1980's, government approval of town plans for Arab localities, and measures to make it easier for them to receive public and private development funding

UN Human Rights Committee, 9 April 1998, para. 849-850:

"Over the course of Israel's history, serious disparities between the Jewish and Arab populations in the availability of housing and of land for development have become entrenched. A significant part of the problem derives from expropriation of land in the aftermath of the War of Independence [1948]. Only 7 per cent of all land in Israel is privately owned, 4 per cent by Arabs and 3 per cent by Jews. The remaining 93 per cent is managed by the Israel Lands

Administration (ILA) on behalf of the owners of the land: the Keren Kayemet Leyisrael, an organization funded by private Jewish donations (10 per cent of ILA-managed land); the Development Authority (10 per cent), and the State (80 per cent). The ILA has, over the years, leased or transferred significant land holdings for development of Jewish towns and settlements, while for the most part new Arab localities have not been established through similar arrangements, except for the eight Bedouin towns [in fact seven] established in the southern Negev region. Another source of the gap in housing and development is the historic lack of approved town plans in the Arab sector, which made it exceedingly difficult to develop existing Arab localities to meet the needs of the Arab population, which has grown sixfold since 1948.

Over the past decade, the Government has taken measures designed to reduce the considerable differences in housing and development between the Jewish and Arab sectors. Among others, the ILA has allocated land for residential projects, industrial areas and public buildings in several Arab localities; the Ministry of Interior has approved town plans for 29 Arab local authorities (out of 81), is close to approval of five other town plans, and has begun expedited development of town plans for 41 more localities; the land area of several localities has been enlarged for use in development, and plans for the enlargement of nearly 20 other Arab localities are currently under review; many Arab localities have been included in highest-priority development areas, which enables entrepreneurs to develop land and, in appropriate circumstances, to lease land at a fraction of its real cost; government ministries have increased their funding for development of residential and industrial infrastructure considerably over the last five years; the Interior Ministry has initiated a variety of programmes aimed at improving the effectiveness of Arab local authorities in spurring and managing development in areas under their jurisdiction, and actively encourages the formation of economic corporations which make it easier to receive public and private development funding (thus far 17 such corporations have been formed)."

The National Council for the Defense of the Rights of Displaced persons in Israel (2000-2001)

- Because the 1991 Madrid Conference did not address the situation of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, the displaced founded in 1995 a committee to advance their goal to return to their villages of origin
- The committee is an umbrella organization uniting thirty local committees of displaced
- Activities are organized to strengthen the displaced sense of identification with their abandoned villages
- The committee has decided to negotiate directly with the Israeli government and not through the Palestinian Authority

National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced Palestinians in Israel, February 2000:

"The 1991 Madrid Conference excluded reference to UN resolution 194, which emphasizes our right of return and neglected the existence of the Palestinian Arab Minority in the homeland. In response, the internally displaced set an initiative, in 1992, to gather and unify our struggle for the right of return to our villages and towns of origin.

The first popular meeting of the internally displaced at Qasr al-Salam/Tamra on March 11, 1995 resulted in the establishment of the National Committee for the Rights of the Internally Displaced Palestinians in Israel mandated "to follow up, and lead the struggle for return."

Nir, 8 January 2001, in Ha'aretz:

"The National Council [for the Defense of the Rights of Displaced persons in Israel] is an umbrella organization uniting thirty local committees of refugees [i.e. internally displaced persons] from abandoned villages within Israel.

The Council is legally registered as a non-profit organization. Its members organize activities to strengthen the displaced persons' sense of identification with their native abandoned villages. These include picnic outings to village grounds on Independence Day (that Palestinians refer to as the 1948 'Nakba', or catastrophe), renovation of mosques, churches and cemeteries, and compiling documentary material on their villages. [...]

In dealings with Israel Arab public, one problem the National Council faced was Wakim's own reputation as a political radical. Many internal refugees would rather not be represented by a man or organization of radical image, whose declared goals are uncompromising – demanding a complete return to all abandoned lands and houses.

[...]

Israel's 'internal refugees' – Arab citizens of the state who come from villages that were abandoned in 1948 but who remained in the country – recently told the Palestinian authority [PA] not to negotiate with Israel in their name.

They don't want the PA to assume responsibility for their demands to return to their native homes. Attorney Wakim Wakim, secretary of the National Council for the Defense of the Rights of Displaced persons in Israel, said he and his colleagues are afraid Yasser Arafat will make far-reaching concessions on the right of return issue.

For this reason, they don't want the PA to incorporate their cases into the peace talks. Instead, they want the internal refugees themselves to wage their own legal, public and political struggle within the framework of the state of Israel.

Wakim said the displaced persons believe they have a better chance of realizing an internal right of return to their abandoned villages than do 1948 refugees living outside Israel.

As Israeli citizens they can wield all legal tools available to the public. 'The government of Israel should understand if it manages to impose some sort of quasi-agreement which defuses the question of the right of return, it will still have to confront our own demands that our rights as citizens be redeemed.'

After the 1993 Oslo accords, the internal refugees decided to divorce their case from the PLO's political campaign for recognition of the Palestinian refugees right of return. The Oslo agreement held that discussion of the right of return should be deferred to final status negotiations.

PLO officials asked this group of displaced Israelis to suspend public activity on their case. But the delegates rejected the PLO request and created the National Council to champion their rights as displaced persons. The National Council is an umbrella organization uniting thirty local committees of refugees from abandoned villages within Israel."

Wakim Wakim said in an interview for the Journal of Palestine Studies that the National Committee is planning to conduct a field survey, which it has not been able to carry out so far due to lack of financial resources (Wakim Wakim, October 2001, p.33)

Public Participation

Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages is an elected body but not legitimized by the state (2004-2007)

Idealist.org, 2007:

"The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Arab Villages in the Negev (RCUV) is a democratically elected body, chosen to represent the Bedouin community of the 45 unrecognized villages in the Negev. The residents of each village elect a local committee of 3- 7 persons, who become members of the general assembly of the RCUV. The general assembly elects the chairperson and the executive committee once every 4 years.

The primary goal of the RCUV is unconditional governmental recognition of the Arab Bedouin (unrecognized) villages in the Negev, which have been completely excluded from any form of governmental support or recognition. This recognition, however, must translate to more than municipal services. "Recognition" implies social, economic, and cultural equality with all citizens of Israel. The RCUV urges the Israeli government to adopt a just policy to develop the Bedouin villages and community, taking into account their social identity and historical rights on the land."

Lavie, in Haaretz, 30 January 2004, part II:

"The offices of the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages are located in a building in the heart of the old city in Be'er Sheva. It's a ghost council: The residents of the villages elected their representatives, but the state doesn't recognize them. Sometimes government representatives speak with some of the members of the council, but they emphasize that "they speak to us as private individuals, as though we had returned to the period of the mukhtars (Arab village heads)," says Ibrahim Abu Sbieh, the deputy chair of the council.

The only thing that encourages Abu Sbieh is the solidarity shown by several dozen organizations, most of whose members are Jews, including the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, which, together with the Bedouin council comprises the Yahad (Together) forum, and helps them in their struggle for existence. Since October 2002, just as in the Galilee, the Negev has been abuzz with cooperative efforts of Jews and Arabs.

"This time it's not hummus coexistence, but a common struggle," says Orly Almi, PHR coordinator of the health project in the unrecognized villages."

Committee of IDPs in Israel organized first meeting in 1992 and second one in 2000 (2003)

Bokae'e, February 2003, pp.14-15:

"In April 1992, internally displaced Palestinians organized the first public meeting in which they established a follow-up committee concerning the affairs of IDPs inside Israel. The committee reaffirmed that IDPs are part of the Palestinian people, and voiced protest that the negotiations with the Israeli government were ignoring their rights.[...]

In March 2000, internally displaced Palestinians organized a second conference in Nazareth, with the participation of local committees, Palestinian political parties, and representatives of the PLO. The final statement of the conference reaffirmed the final statements of the first conference in Ebilin (1995), including the reaffirmation of the right of return of IDPs and refugees. During 2000, ADRID organized, in coordination with the local committees of the de-populated villages, during

the commemoration of the Nakba. More local IDP committees also became members of ADRID during the year."

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Following displacement and expropriation, 1.2 million Palestinians citizens of Israel own less than 3 percent of the land (May 2005)

COHRE & BADIL, May 2005:

“Since its creation in 1948, Israel has utilised its land and property laws to expropriate over 17 million dunum (17 000 km²) of land from Palestinians who became refugees. Israel has also confiscated between 60 and 80 percent of all lands owned by Palestinians who remained in the State. These lands are roughly estimated to amount to one million dunum (1 000 km²).

Overall, at least 92 percent of lands within the State of Israel are under some form of Government control. Palestinians, who number around 1.2 million and constitute about one-fth of the population of Israel, own less than 3 percent of the lands. Re-zoning laws rendered as many as 100 Arab villages, with a combined population of between 70 000-100 000, ‘unrecognised’ and deprived of basic services and infrastructure. Orders for home demolitions are issued retroactively, and homes in mainly Arab areas remain highly vulnerable to such measures. At the time of writing this report, although a handful of villages in the northern area had been recognised, they had yet to receive adequate services.”

For more information, see COHRE & BADIL, May 2005 Ruling Palestine, A History of the Legally Sanctioned Jewish-Israeli Seizure of Land and Housing in Palestine [Link below]

Difficulty for the Bedouin community to have their property recognized (2001-2005)

- Historically most of the Bedouin property was not registered with the British Land Registry Office
- Three principal Israeli laws impacted on Bedouin land claims and facilitated confiscation: The Land Acquisition Law of 1953, the Land Rights Settlement Ordinance of 1969, and the Negev Land Acquisition Law of 1980
- While certain claims have been settled by Israeli government, many remain outstanding
- According to Palestinian organization BADIL, displaced Bedouin have never won a land claim in any lawsuit
- The Bedouin, who once owned 94 percent of the total land, now own less than 3 percent

Abu-Rafia, November 1994, pp.15-16:

"The Bedouin land ownership has been a legal issue at least since the days of the Ottoman rule in the Negev and the Palestine. The Bedouin did not know then that the legal status of lands as laid down in Turkish law would be of significance one hundred years after it was originally defined by the Turks. The lands taken by the government were considered to be its property or under its control and administration. [...] A law enacted in 1956 classified the land into five categories: private lands (mulk); lands for agriculture or pasturage, but not for building purposes (miri); lands of the Moslem religious institutions (waqf); lands for public purposes such as crossings and public roads (matruka); and waste or lands which were not owned by anyone (mawat). To work mawat lands, permission had to be obtained from the Government, and the lands had to be registered.

[...] When the legal definition was amended in 1921, it was no longer possible to purchase or obtain rights to these lands, even by working them.

Nevertheless, in practice, the British Mandatory authorities recognized the ownership of land by the Bedouin, and levied taxes on them on cultivated lands. [...] But most Bedouin lands were not registered with the Land Registry Office, and the authorities classified the lands as mawat. According to al-Aref, the reasons for non-registration of lands were fear of the burden of government taxes, abhorrence of revealing details of private property, and the fact that the Bedouin saw no sense in registering their property on paper as proof of ownership. At that time proof, quite simply, lay in the sword. So in practice, most of the lands of the Negev were defined as mawat. [...]

The Israeli authorities adopted Ottoman law, especially in connection with mawat lands."

Arab Association of Human Rights, 2001, "Negev":

"The state has been able to develop a legal process that makes Bedouin land claims invisible. This process has been achieved through 3 principal laws:

The Land Acquisition (Validation of Acts & Compensation) Law (1953) states that land that was not in the possession of its owner in April 1952 could be registered as state property. It facilitated a massive transfer of lands in the Negev, since at the time the Bedouin had been transferred by the state into the enclosure zone. Although some tribes returned to their lands after the enclosure zone was lifted, they found that, since the land was now registered with the state, they either had to lease it or 'trespass.' Consent to lease has been taken in court as proof that the land was never theirs.

The Land Rights Settlement Ordinance (1969) classified all mawat lands (Ottoman term) as state property, unless a formal legal title could be produced. Mawat (literally dead) land was defined as unworked and more than 1.5 miles from the nearest settlement. The last opportunity for the Bedouin to register their lands against mawat status had been in 1921, at a time when their rights were not challenged by anyone. The category became a major means for expropriation in the Negev because although Israeli courts acknowledged that Bedouin had been living in the areas they claimed, they did not recognise Bedouin tents as constituting settlements in terms of the law. Further, they defined working the land as changing it; pastoralism was an unrecognised form of living. The law abolished all previous conflicting registrations.

The Negev Land Acquisition (Peace Treaty with Egypt) Law (1980) facilitated large scale confiscation orders of Bedouin lands to build military bases and an airport in the wake of the peace treaty with Egypt. No appeal against the confiscation was allowed [...]. The military base at Im Tinan (56,000 dunams taken) was never built, and in 1994 was turned over for use by Jewish farmers.

In 1976 the Land Settlement Department opened to finally settle Bedouin land claims, according to the following deal: it would recognise 20% of the total claim (with documented proof), would offer compensation for 30% (at 65% its value) and would expropriate 50%. To date agreements on these terms have been reached for 160,000 dunams; claims on 743,327 dunams still remain outstanding."

BADIL November 2002, p.16:

"For Bedouin IDPs, the legal process appears to be a no-win situation; no Bedouin has ever won a land claim to any of the more than 3,000 lawsuits filed over the past several decades."

Refugees International, 2 October 2003:

“Presently the Bedouin, who once owned 94 percent of the total land, own less than 3 percent. The rest of the Negev, some 85 percent of the total landmass, has been turned into blocs of military zones and conservation parks, and declared off-limits.”

In 2005, the Israeli government detailed measures to compensate Bedouin who moved to newly created towns:

CERD 23 June 2005:

“In accordance with provisions offering compensation to Bedouins moving to these towns, the Government provides the land free of charge, while the affected Bedouins receive significant compensation for any abandoned properties. Compensation is awarded both in monetary terms and in terms of land, as quantified by construction and crop value. In addition, grants are provided for the families who choose to move to existing or new towns. Since 2002, these compensation rates have risen dramatically.

In order to ensure the special character of Bedouin communal life and prevent exploitation of those state benefits by non-Bedouins, the State has refused offers by non-Bedouin to buy land in the areas designated for exclusive Bedouin towns.”

The Israeli government enacted a series of laws by which it acquired land or prevented access to it (1950-1980)

- The Israeli government used some regulations already enacted by the British government, such as the law allowing to declare "closed" areas
- According to the Absentee Property Law of 1950, the internally displaced became "present absentees" and lost their land

Yiftachel, Summer 1998:

"Legal unidirectionality was a central aspect of Jewish land transfer as Israel created an institutional and legal land regime whereby confiscated land did not merely become state land, but jointly belonged to the entire Jewish people, and was prohibited from being sold. This ensured that all land transfers moved in one direction – from Palestinians to the state – and never vice versa."

Arab Association for Human Rights, 2001, "Land and Planning":

[Main laws:]

"Absentee Property Law (1950): by which the State acquired control of all the property (inc. land) left behind by those persons who were expelled or fled their homes during the 1948 war. The absentee status does not change should the person come back or actually still be in the country. Then they are known as 'present absentees.'

Land (Acquisition for Public Purposes) Ordinance (1943): which authorises the government to confiscate land for public purposes with minimal compensation. 40% of the owner's land can be confiscated without compensation. Public purposes are usually Jewish: From 1200 dunams confiscated in Nazareth for public purposes, 80 dunams were used for public buildings and the rest to build Jewish housing. [NB: 1 Acre = 4 Dunams]

Defence (Emergency) Regulation 125 (1945): which grants military commanders the authority to forcibly declare areas "closed" and so prevent anyone from entering or leaving them without special permission. This regulation is used to evacuate areas, and on occasions entire villages,

so as to facilitate the transfer of ownership with minimised resistance. No compensation is ever offered."

Adalah, 2003:

"Regulation 125 has never been used to close Jewish settlements in Israel, even where these communities are located in dangerous areas. Moreover, Jewish settlements adjacent to these uprooted villages have used these lands for their own purposes."

Arab Association for Human Rights, 2001, "Land and Planning":

"Agricultural Settlement (Restrictions on the Use of Agricultural Land and Water) Law (1967): which prevents Jewish leaseholders of State lands from subleasing them back to Palestinian Arabs."

The displaced faced many obstacles when they had to rent abandoned land in their place of refuge starting 1949 (2000)

- Two ground rules of Israeli government in 1949: first, only abandoned land in inhabited villages should be rented to the Arab population; second, the displaced with economic difficulty would be the primary beneficiaries of land allocation
- The process was marked by tension between the different departments of the Israeli governments in charge of allocating land, and the Jewish settlement movements asking for more land
- The Israeli government thought that by renting land where the displaced had found refuge, they would think less about their lost villages
- While in some cases the displaced did rent land without problem, in many cases, they had to face opposition from their Jewish neighbors, or pressure from the host communities and refused to rent abandoned land; also, many feared that renting other land would hurt their claim on their own land; the proposed land was also often of bad quality and too small

Cohen, Winter 2000, pp.53-56:

"[...] [A]u début de 1949 commença l'allocation de terres aux Arabes. Ainsi furent également établies les deux règles fondamentales qui allaient accompagner la politique de mis en affermage des terres pendant toutes les années suivantes: a. Dans la mesure du possible, on n'allouera aux Arabes que des terres abandonnées dans des villages habités, et b. les réfugiés démunis et sans moyens d'existence seront les bénéficiaires prioritaires de ces allocations. [...]"

L'allocation de terrains commença la même année sur l'arrière-plan de luttes de pouvoir et d'influence entre les diverses instances qui se considéraient comme responsables du dossier, à commencer par le préposé à l'administration des Biens des absents, et le département des terres agricoles, tandis qu'une autre lutte se déroulait entre les divers mouvements de colonisation qui réclamaient des terres pour leurs implantations. [...]"

Selon un rapport du ministère des Minorités, ces diverses instances finirent par se mettre d'accord pour coopérer et, en février 1949, 28 000 dunums avaient été alloués à des Arabes, dont 20 000 dans le nord du pays. Toutes les terres ne furent pas allouées à des réfugiés: un grand nombre le furent à des Druzes, qui les louèrent autour des villages abandonnées, ainsi qu'aux proches du gouvernement militaire. Le ministère des Minorités, cependant, parmi les diverses tâches qu'il s'était assignées, considérait qu'il était nécessaire de faire en sorte que les réfugiés fussent prioritaires pour obtenir des terres en affermage.

Une autre institution centrale active parmi les réfugiés était la commission pour les Affaires des réfugiés, qui discuta abondamment de la question des terres. [Selon un membre de la

commission, Yossef Weitz] 'les lots de terre dans les villages ne dépasseront pas 20 dunums [...]. L'Etat les [i.e. les déplacés intérieurs] aiderait à acquérir du matériel agricole'. [...] L'installation des réfugiés dans les lieux où ils avaient trouvé refuge, pensait Weitz et les autres membres de la commission, affaiblira leur nostalgie pour les villages abandonnés, et permettra la poursuite du partage des terres au profit de la colonisation juive.

C'était le fondement de la règle d'airain établie par la commission [...]: en aucun cas il ne faudra louer aux réfugiés des terres dans les villages où ils habitaient auparavant. [...]

Les réfugiés qui s'étaient installés à Maker et à Jdeideh restèrent sur place, louèrent des terres et construisirent des maisons, avec l'aide de l'autorité préposée à la réinsertion des réfugiés. De même à Akrabeh, village voisin de Safad, et à Wad Hamas, sur les pentes du mont Arbel, des réfugiés s'installèrent sur les terres de l'Etat, et là aussi se heurtèrent à l'opposition de leurs voisins juifs. Mais les plans de l'autorité ne furent pas toujours couronnés de succès. Dans de nombreux cas les réfugiés, du fait de leurs positions politiques ou des pressions exercées par les habitants des villages d'origine, refusèrent de louer des terres abandonnées. [...]

"Dotan [Alexander Dotan, du ministère des Affaires étrangères] énumère ensuite d'autres problèmes au sujet de l'allocation de terres aux réfugiés, et les raisons du refus d'un grand nombre d'entre eux de demander des terres en affermage: a. Ils voulaient cultiver leur propre terre, et craignaient que la location d'autres terres ne porte atteinte à leurs droits sur celles dont ils étaient les propriétaires. b. Les réfugiés, dont l'écrasante majorité se trouvait dans une situation économique difficile, ne disposaient ni de bêtes de somme ni d'un fonds de roulement leur permettant d'attendre la récolte. c. L'exiguïté des terres qui leur étaient proposées et la mauvaise qualité du terrain. [...]

Il arrivait aussi parfois que des réfugiés (ou des membres d'autres groupes prioritaires, comme les soldats druzes démobilisés) signent un contrat en présence de l'administrateur des Biens vacants, mais que les propriétaires originels de la terre, leurs parents ou d'autres personnes prétendant avoir des droits sur ces terres les empêchent physiquement de s'y installer et de les cultiver."

Arab association denounced discrimination between Jewish and Arab communities regarding land and housing (2001)

- Difficulty to appeal against land confiscation, low level of compensation offered, new Jewish towns established but no new Arab town; houses built without permit are tolerated in Jewish communities but demolished in Arab communities
- Recent court decisions have made some attempt to lessen discrimination

Arab Association for Human Rights, 2001, "Land and Planning":

"There is little possibility of legal appeal at these confiscation orders since wide powers are given to the executive authorities. Equally, the terms of the expropriation are unreasonable since the compensation levels offered are low and the government determines the value of the land. These terms are often refused, and the land is expropriated without settlement. At all times, a punitive system of land taxation is maintained to encourage private owners to sell their lands incrementally." ()

In fact, the property law encouraging such a punitive system of land taxation was cancelled in 1999 (Peled, November 2001).

Arab Association for Human Rights, 2001, "Land and Planning":

"To further the goal of dispersing the Jewish population, the state has maintained a policy of continually establishing new settlements for Jews only. [...] The establishment of these settlements is coordinated principally by the Jewish Agency, rather than the government, which provides houses, infrastructure and also the facilities for basic services. [...] There are no parallel settlements established for Palestinian Arab citizens. [...]

Houses built outside the planning framework or without the appropriate permit are subject to demolition. Yet planning laws are enforced unequally: while illegal building is tolerated in Jewish communities, it is harshly punished among Arab communities."

It should be noted that while the state has indeed maintained a policy of establishing settlements for Jews until very recently, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in March 2000 that settlements founded by the Jewish community could not prevent Arabs from living in them (Peled, November 2001).

Since 1976 yearly demonstration against land expropriation has become National Day for Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel (2000)

MERIP, 2001, "Palestinian Arab Citizens of Israel":

"Since 1967, many [Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel] have become more aware of their identity as Palestinians. One important expression of this identity was the organization of a general strike on March 30, 1976, designated as Land Day, to protest the continuing confiscation of Arab lands. The Israeli security forces killed six Arab citizens on that day. All Palestinians now commemorate it as a national day."

King-Irani, Fall 2000:

"On March 30, 1976, Palestinian citizens of Israel coordinated mass demonstrations against the state's ongoing land expropriations in the Galilee. Since that year, Land day is observed every March 30 to commemorate the six unarmed Palestinian protesters who were shot dead by Israeli internal security forces in the Galilean village of Sakhnin. Each year, Land Day provides Palestinian citizens of Israel with their one and only trans-confessional, *national* holiday: a day to identify with the land and to show solidarity against the enforced expropriations of communal land."

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Discriminatory planning policies towards the Bedouin community (1998-2004)

- Since mid 1960's, Israeli policy has been resettling the Bedouin citizens into seven townships
- The Rabin government took some steps to extend formal recognition to several of the 45 "unrecognized" villages and allocate resources but successor governments did not expend most of the sums earmarked in budgets
- The Sharon government which, in April 2003, adopted in April 2003 a five year plan for the Negev Bedouins which was poorly received by the Bedouin community
- Israel uses a 'carrot and stick' policy to encourage its policy of concentrating the Bedouin into townships

ICG, 4 March 2004:

"The phenomenon of unrecognized villages is remarkable in a modern state. The term applies principally to communities that existed prior to Israel's founding but have never been incorporated into designated planning provisions and so for planning and permit purposes remain "unrecognised". The overwhelming majority of such villages are inhabited by Bedouin, whom the state argues need to be moved to a planned urban locality. Seen as illegal and potentially subject to demolition, the villages are ineligible for basic services or infrastructure.

Unrecognised villages also are denied representation in elected local government.

There are a number of settled communities in northern Israel whose existence pre-date the establishment of the state but which have never been granted formal recognition. For the most part, Bedouin possess registration documents, yet the state argues that they cannot build on the land. The Rabin government took some steps to extend formal recognition to several of these villages and allocate resources for service and infrastructure but successor governments did not expend most of the sums earmarked in budgets. [...]

The most difficult cases are in the southern Negev where some 70,000 Bedouin live in approximately 45 unrecognised villages, mostly without land registration documents. Bedouin land rights in the Negev are not recognised, so their lands typically have been confiscated and registered as state possession then often subsequently re-zoned for the establishment of new, Jewish neighbourhoods. Since the mid-1960s, the state has sought to settle and "modernise" the Bedouin by concentrating them into what are now seven governmentally-designated urban localities in the Negev. Planned without consultation with representative Bedouin, the towns are a jarring contrast to the traditional Bedouin way of life and lack economic potential. Moreover, in exchange for a plot in one of these localities, Bedouin were required to settle their claims to expropriated lands. As a result, many the Negev Bedouin refused relocation to the townships. The phenomenon of unrecognised villages is essentially a response to the failure of these urbanisation efforts.

In 2000, the ministerial Sub-Committee on Bedouin Affairs briefly sought to generate a "comprehensive plan" that would have recognised sixteen to eighteen villages, based on a scheme drawn up in consultation with (and accepted by) the Regional Council for the

Unrecognised Villages, a Negev-based advocacy group. However, it was shelved by the Sharon government which, in April 2003, adopted a five year plan for the Negev Bedouins. The former minister with responsibility for Bedouin affairs, Haim Oron, decried this plan as "a declaration of war against the Bedouin community".[...]

Additional expropriations and forced removals exacerbate social tensions and foster crime. The unrecognised villages -- which cannot be found on a map -- lack basic services, electricity, sewage, infrastructure, health clinics and schools, and generally can be accessed only by dirt roads. Children must walk long distances to reach points where they can board buses to school. Demolition orders against Bedouin homes are a constant menace.[...]

A number of young Bedouin have resorted to crime, not political protest, in response. The townships themselves, which have become "breeding grounds for drug abuse and crime", are hardly models of social or economic progress. Government policy has neglected basic steps to improve living conditions. As Knesset Bedouin Lobby Chair and opposition parliamentarian Colette Avital says, "the largest single budget item in the new government program for the Bedouin in the Negev is additional law enforcement". A policy debate on settlement patterns is urgently needed; a key condition is for the authorities to hold genuine consultations with Bedouin representatives."

ACRI, 1998:

"Israel uses a 'carrot and stick' policy to encourage its policy of concentrating the Bedouin into townships. The "carrot" is allowing Bedouin to purchase plots of land for building a house at a subsidized price in the townships and to reach a compensation settlement with the State in return for their land claims outside the township. The "stick" is to refuse to recognize the Bedouin settlements outside the seven planned townships and to make life in those settlements unbearable through harsh enforcement of planning and construction laws. For the "crime" of illegal construction, houses are demolished and criminal sanctions are imposed. In addition, basic services are denied to these settlements, or they are provided at a substandard level (see sections on health and education). This includes connection to the water and electricity grids, health care, education facilities, and welfare services. Even so, only half of the Bedouin population has agreed to move to the townships. The others cling to their unrecognized settlements, despite the difficult living conditions that exist there. It should be noted that the State's Report gives no explanation as to why the Bedouin's housing needs must be solved in urban townships rather than in rural settlements. The State's claim that the nomadic lifestyle of the Bedouin is the reason for not including their settlements in outline plans is evasive, since only a very small minority within the Bedouin population maintains a nomadic lifestyle.

Such discriminatory policies are clearly in violation of Israel's Basic Laws. Neglect and discrimination deny the Bedouin population of their basic rights to an adequate standard of living, health care, and education."

Government plan for resettling Bedouin met resistance (2003-2005)

- In 2004, the Israeli government began to implement a plan to relocate Bedouin living in unrecognized villages to one of the seven Bedouin towns
- Main goal of the plan is to encourage the Bedouin residents of the Negev to move to permanent settlements
- Plan met fierce criticism from Bedouin community
- Most of the criticism of the plan, however, focuses on the threat of increased enforcing of building and land regulations

- New towns should be created where the three main Bedouin tribes live today in unrecognized villages
- Tens of thousands people part of the other tribes may have to move there as well
- Government has ordered the spraying of crops of Bedouin in unrecognized villages to discourage them to stay in their villages

ACRI, June 2004:

"In order to cause the Arab Bedouin population to move from the unrecognized villages to residential areas planned for them, the government activated a plan in the past year that includes, among other elements, an intensification of house demolitions, toxic spraying of crops from the air, the allocation of resources to reject land ownership claims by the Bedouin, filing eviction suits, and reinforcing state ownership of the land."

Cook, in Merip, 10 May 2003:

"The Negev program lays aside a budget for compensation of displaced Bedouin, although if the precedent of the former wave of registrations in the 1970s is followed, reparations will be meager or will take the form of offers of subsidized homes in the new townships. [...]"

It will be possible to appeal disputes between individual Bedouin and the Israel Lands Administration (ILA), the government's land-holding arm, over the status of land. But such appeals will be referred to a ministerial committee or to the "responsible minister" -- that is, to the more powerful party in the dispute. Until recently, the "responsible minister" would have been the interior minister, but in the new coalition government that job has gone to the dovish Avraham Poraz of Shinui. Sharon therefore transferred planning responsibilities temporarily to his own prime minister's office, before passing them on to his hawkish trade and industry minister, Likud member Ehud Olmert, who presided over numerous demolitions of Palestinian houses as mayor of Jerusalem. Olmert was quoted in Ha'aretz on April 11 saying that 'we will conduct contacts with [the Bedouin]. However, I assume that they will absolutely oppose [the plan]. We will not be deterred from implementing the decision, because there is no other way that we can fulfill [our mandate]. If [this issue] was subject to an agreement, it would never be given. It is a question of the government's determination in implementing its decisions.'

The five-year plan's second thrust is the creation of three new townships based on three Bedouin villages that have been recognized, Bir Hadaj, Dariyat and al-Madbah, which are respectively to be given the Hebrew names of Bir Heim, Mari'at and Beit Felet. The villages were chosen because they are home to three of the largest tribes, whose combined opposition might have posed the biggest threat to implementing the plan. Tens of thousands of other Bedouin will be left with no choice but to move into the three new or seven existing townships.

For varying tactical reasons, over the course of the 1990s another four of the 45 unrecognized villages were also recognized, though public services in those villages have not improved. The exclusively Jewish Southern Regional Planning Committee has refused to approve local master plans for the recognized villages, thereby condemning Bedouin residents to life without water and electricity supply indefinitely. The sham of recognition is illustrated by the case of Abda, which won a supposed change of status in 1992. The community, however, was not recognized in its entirety, only the homes of seven families who were to be incorporated into a planned national park to include the historic village of Abda and its Nabatean ruins.

The government's likely intentions toward the partially recognized villages, as well as the unrecognized ones, emerged on March 4, 2003 when the Israel Lands Administration, without warning, sent helicopters loaded with herbicides to Abda and sprayed some 375 acres of crops being grown by the villagers. Children playing below were covered in the toxic mist, the pilots apparently undeterred by their presence in the fields. Although the government later advised

residents that the herbicides were not harmful to humans, several children needed treatment for shock after they and their parents thought they had been the victims of a chemical attack from Iraq. The crop destruction was repeated on April 2, when some 1,300 acres were sprayed -- more than 300 acres of which belonged to the family of Sheikh Jabar Abu Kaff, head of the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages."

Ettinger, Ha'aretz Daily, 5 May 2003:

"About 250 Jewish and Bedouin protesters held a rally outside the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem yesterday, calling on the government to halt its development plan for the Bedouin community in the Negev that the cabinet recently approved.

At a quiet demonstration, the protestors described the government's \$1.1 billion plan as 'a declaration of war on Bedouin in the 45 villages not recognized by Israel.'

The main goal of the plan is to encourage the Bedouin residents of the Negev to move to permanent settlements. Millions of shekels are being set aside to increase enforcement and to speed up legal proceedings against illegal construction work and to evict those who illegally occupy state land.

United Arab List MK Talab al-Sana, the only Arab lawmaker to join the protest, told the demonstrators 'the Bedouin must not be turned into Israel's Indians. This plan is designed to dispossess us of our land.'

The plan, which was formulated by minister Tzipi Livni and has now been transferred to deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, deals chiefly with the development of permanent towns in the Negev. It recommends building seven such settlements, as well as industrial zones, hospitals and schools. The plan also proposes improving public service in the Negev.

According to Yachad, the umbrella organization representing over 30 Jewish and Arab groups which organized yesterday's demonstration, 'most of the money allocated to this project originates from the regular budget of various ministries. These funds were earmarked for the Bedouin communities in the past, but were blocked because of policies.'

Most of the criticism of the plan, however, focuses on the threat of increased enforcing of building and land regulations, including the Green Patrol and a special police division to oversee construction."

US DOS, 28 February 2005:

"During the year [2004], the [Israeli] Government began to implement a plan to relocate Bedouin living in unrecognized villages to seven new townships. Nearly two-thirds of the plan's \$225 million (1 billion NIS) allocation is earmarked for "environmental law enforcement in the Negev," which included resources for crop-spraying and home demolitions."

Adalah denounced the inadequacy of government plan aiming to improve the situation of Bedouins in unrecognized villages (2004-2005)

- According to Adalah, this is not a development plan, but a plan to concentrate the Bedouin on a minimum amount of land in the Negev (March 2004)
- In February 2005, Adalah sent letters to various government ministries, requesting the cancellation of lawsuits filed to evacuate 1,500 Bedouin from the unrecognized village of Atir-Umm al-Hieran in the Negev

Adalah, 30 March 2004:

“On 4 May 2003, Adalah sent a letter to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Attorney General Elyakim Rubenstein challenging the legality of a 9 April 2003 government decision regarding the Bedouin sector. This decision sets forth a NIS 1.175 billion (about US \$265 million) five-year plan (2003-2007). According to the decision, the objective of the plan is “to alter and improve the situation of the Bedouin population in the Negev, relieve its distress, arrange for the orderly recording of land in the Negev, and strengthen law enforcement.”

The main aspects of the plan include the setting forth of policy guidelines and government spending for: (i) contesting and settling ownership claims and land arrangements; (ii) “enforcing the state’s rights to land and enforcing the planning and building laws;” (iii) completing the development and infrastructure of the existing seven Arab Bedouin towns (Rahat, Lagiyya, Kessife, Tel el-Sebe, Hura, 'Arora, and Segev Shalom); and (iv) the planning of seven new such towns.[...]

The government’s decision is not a development plan, but rather, a plan to concentrate the Palestinian Bedouin living in the Naqab on a minimum amount of land. In the letter, Adalah set forth five main arguments against the plan:

(1) *Conflict of interest between the functions assigned to ILA* [Israel Lands Administration]. According to the plan, the ILA is tasked with the development of the existing and planned towns for the Arab Bedouin. At the same time, it is also charged with “submitting motions to court contesting any land ownership claims made by the Bedouins.” One authority cannot be responsible for two conflicting duties, both development and contesting the land claims of the “subjects” of this development.

(2) *No community consultation*. None of the Arab Bedouin living in the unrecognized villages in the Naqab, those who stand to be most affected by the plan, were consulted prior to its approval. The failure of the government to consult with the community makes the plan illegal. By not consulting with the community or with experts, the government is continuing to use an old model of planning which it employed in the establishment of the existing seven government-planned towns for the Arab Bedouin in the Naqab. This model is widely regarded as a failure by experts, who describe the government-planned towns as “socially, economically and politically dysfunctional, ranking as the most disadvantaged settlements in Israel by a significant margin.”

(3) *Discriminatory Approach*. According to the decision, the ILA “will act to fully implement the rule of law by enforcing the state’s rights in land, including taking actions against trespassers.” This approach is discriminatory for three reasons: (i) The plan targets only so-called “illegal buildings” in the unrecognized Arab Bedouin villages, while ignoring this phenomenon in Jewish communities; (ii) the problem of “illegal buildings” in the unrecognized villages is a result of discriminatory state policies – these villages have been systematically excluded from local and national development plans, making it impossible for residents to obtain building permits; and (iii) while the government frequently engages in community consultation on property rights issues with Jewish communities, no such approach was taken with the affected Arab communities in the context of this plan.

(4) *Need for legislation*. The plan affects a large number of people, their basic rights and their livelihoods, and concerns matters of intense social conflict between Arab citizens and the state. As such, in order to have initial legal validity, the plan must be a part of a legislative process and not a decision of the government. Further, even if such a plan was set forth in legislation, it would need to pass judicial challenge and review.

(5) *Failure to recognize native land rights*. The plan ignores the historical and contemporary injustices suffered by the Bedouin, ranging from their expulsion and forced flight during the 1948 War, to the confiscation of their land, and their displacement and re-location during the military regime imposed on all Palestinians in Israel between 1948 and 1966. The government should adopt a different approach, which recognizes the historic injustice done to the native Arab Bedouin in the Naqab as well as their land rights.

In June 2003, the Attorney General responded to Adalah's letter stating that the appropriate way to critique the plan is to voice and/or file objections to it through the land planning procedure. The Minister of Industry and Trade replied in July 2003, claiming that the plan constitutes an affirmative action program for the Arab Bedouin in the Naqab."

Adalah, February 2005, cancellation:

"On 20 February 2005, Adalah sent a letter to the Attorney General, the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Trade and Industry, requesting the cancellation of lawsuits filed to evacuate the 1,500 Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel from the unrecognized village of Atir-Umm al-Hieran in the Naqab, and the recognition of the village in the regional planning for the area.

The village of Atir-Umm al-Hieran was established roughly 49 years ago, following the transfer of Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel to the area in 1956 by order of the Regional Military Governor. The village's inhabitants leased approximately 3,000 dunams of land for agricultural use. Prior to their enforced transfer, the inhabitants of Atir-Umm al-Hieran were living in the Wadi Zuballa region, where they had lived and farmed for hundreds of years. Following their expulsion from Wadi Zuballa, their land was transferred by the state to Kibbutz Shuval for agricultural use."

New Jewish village established by government where Bedouin tribe was trying to return (Jan 04)

- Israeli army evacuated the Bedouin from the area for six months in 1951 due to army exercises
- Tribe was sent to temporary settlement in the region which was never officially recognized
- Since then tribe members have tried to return
- Other tribe was offered to live there but refused
- Jewish village established there in early 2004 against the wishes of former inhabitants

Hasson & Ettinger, in Ha'aretz, 20 January 2004:

"The establishment of Giv'ot Bar has perhaps put an end to the decades-long struggle of the el-Ukbi tribe, which wanted to set up its own settlement at the site.

The struggle began in 1951 when the IDF evacuated the Bedouin from the area, for six months, due to army exercises. The tribe was sent to a temporary settlement some 25 kilometers away near Arad, and has never been officially recognized. Since then, tribe members have tried to have their lands returned in order to set up an agricultural settlement at the site.

Four years ago, tribe members learned that the government was planning a settlement there for the Tarrabin el-San'a tribe, which currently lives near Omer. The planning bodies approved the master plan, which was dropped after the Tarrabin refused to move there. The el-Ukbi tribe approached then-prime minister Ehud Barak who agreed to its request to move to the site. However, with the arrival of the Sharon government, the site was designated as a Jewish settlement rather than a Bedouin one.

Since then, the el-Ukbi tribe has fought to prevent the establishment of Giv'ot Bar. The tribe submitted its latest appeal to the national planning and construction committee on January 1. The committee's rejection of the request was received on Sunday by the Construction Ministry, which decided to set up the Jewish settlement immediately. By press time, the el-Ukbi tribe and their lawyer from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel had not received an official reply from the committee. "We received their answer via the radio and the caravans," said Ali Shatiha, one of the plaintiffs.

Meanwhile, the Bedouin look enviously at the generator at the site. "We don't have an orderly supply of water and electricity to this day," Shatiha said, while the new settlers claim they will receive water in two days.

"This is an illegal settlement," said MK Talab al-Sana (United Arab List), who criticized the authorities for setting up the Jewish settlement in the middle of the night. "The Bedouin consider the establishment of this settlement with the aid of Minister Eitam a very serious move. There are plenty of government lands in the Negev where settlements can be built, so why do the Jews have to settle on lands that are claimed by the el-Ukbi tribe?" he asked. "There are so many Jewish settlements, why don't they recognize one of the Bedouin villages instead of building another settlement for Jews?"

The new settlers tried to avoid the confrontation. "We have waited for more than a year for our dream," said Galit Bashan. "It is a new start in a new place."

The first 15 Jewish families to move into Giv'ot Bar will live in caravans. The settlement plans to house a total of 150 families.

Environmental activists have also expressed opposition to Giv'ot Bar, saying that rather than building new settlements, existing Negev villages need to be strengthened."

Compensation or land exchange proposed by the government but not accepted by the displaced of Kafar Bir'em (2003)

Committee for the uprooted of Kafar Birem, 2003:

"The Israeli government pursued, simultaneously, two policies in the years after the deportation of the population of Kafar Birem and the demolition of the homes of the residents and seizure of the land. On one hand, the government continued to suggest that once the security needs are changed, the population of Kafar Birem will naturally be allowed to return to the village. On the other hand, various proposals for settling the demands of the residents were made. Some of the these proposals included:

1. The military commander proposed on October 22nd 1953 (a mere 38 days after the demolition of the village)

Exchange of the lands of Kafar Birem with land elsewhere, including the lands and homes of communities of refugees of the 1948 war.

Emigration of the residents abroad.

Compensations.

2. On April 19th 1954, a proposal that would have allowed the Kafar Birem uprooted to:

Build homes in Jish (where they took refuge), and return some of their lands from before November 1948 (those bordering Jish).

3. On June 15th 1956, a proposal was made that included:

Build homes in Jish,

Be provided with new land in Jish.

Compensations.

4. On January 26th 1958, proposal for re-settlement in Jish was made.

5. On April 11th 1965, a proposal for resettlement at any location except Kafar Birem was made.

6. On June 17th 1966, a proposal for resettlement in Jish was made.

7. In 1985 a proposal for establishing a shared village for the uprooted of Kafar Birem and Iqrit outside their respective expropriated land was made .

All these proposals shared one objective: that of solidifying the expropriation of the lands and properties of the Kafar Birem deportees and substituting their properties by properties of absentees of the 1948 war."

It should be noted that the inhabitants of the nearby village of Ikrit were evacuated at the same time than the villagers of Kafar Bir'em and are going through the same legal and administrative procedures. According to Wakim Wakim, Secretary of the NGO Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel, a third Court decision was also issued in favor of the inhabitants of Ghabsiyya (Wakim Wakim October 2001, p.36)

Some IDPs allowed to return to localities of origin but not to recover property (2003)

Bokae'e February 2003, p.7:

"Some of the IDPs from the cities of Haifa, Akka, Jaffa, and IDPs from the villages Sha'ab and Eilut, for example, were allowed to return to their localities, but were not permitted to repossess their homes and property. They were only permitted to look for new housing in their localities of origin. Under the second rare pattern [...], a small number of displaced communities were able to rebuild their neighborhoods on land beside their village of origin. Part of the population that remained from the village of 'Ayn Hawd, located in the Karmel area of the Galilee, for example, rebuilt homes adjacent to their original village which was settled by Israeli artists. Further examples include al-Mansora in the A'ra valley, as well as the case of displaced Bedouin communities in the north and south of Israel. Many of these villages are not recognized by the government (i.e. 'unrecognized villages') and do not receive government services."

According to Israeli government, efforts are made to improve the situation of the Bedouins, including those deprived of their land (1998)

- According to government, compensation to Bedouins for lost property was done in very favorable terms
- Government provided services to some unlicensed settlements and says to want to accommodate the Bedouins' traditional way of life, while not fulfilling all their demands
- Eight settlements were recognized by the government and funding to Bedouin communities increased

UN Human Rights Committee, 9 April 1998, para. 851-856:

"The Bedouin population in Israel, particularly in the Negev Desert area, is perhaps the most disadvantaged single community in Israel in terms of per capita income, unemployment, and the level of infrastructure and services in their communities. There are approximately 100,000 Bedouins in the Negev, and roughly 38,000 in the Galilee. For most of Israel's history, the Bedouins have been engaged in a dispute with the Government over possession of lands and housing rights, which recently appears to be significantly closer to its resolution. [...]"

The Bedouins were originally nomadic tribes, whose economy was based on camel and sheep herding. [...] Among themselves, land possession and ownership was determined by internal custom, which did not involve any written deeds of sale or ownership. [...]"

Beginning in the 1950s, the Government pursued a policy of concentrating the Bedouins in the northern Negev, particularly in the Sayig area, which covers roughly 1.5 dunams, 40 per cent of which is used by the Bedouins for habitation, agriculture, and animal grazing; and of settling them in new government-planned towns, which had the unfortunate effect of uprooting them from their

traditional way of life. Much of the hundreds of thousands of dunams over which Bedouins claimed ownership by force of possession and cultivation was transferred to State ownership. Seven towns were built in the Negev area, which today are the homes to roughly 50,000 persons, or half of the Negev Bedouin, who received compensation and very favourable terms for building or purchasing housing. The others live in unplanned, unlicensed homes and settlements, often without basic services such as water, electricity, roads, health care and educational facilities. In some cases, the Government provides these services without proper planning and legal arrangements. In other cases, the Ministry of Interior demolishes homes which have been built without permits. The Bedouins wish to be permitted to form rural settlements, where they can maintain their traditional way of life, and demand that the Government recognize existing structures and settlements, sanction the establishment of local authorities and town planning councils, and fund the development of infrastructure. The Government's position has been to find a workable solution within the framework of the law which will not force upon the Bedouins a housing solution inimical to their traditional way of life, but will also not involve a duty to create local government institutions and fund infrastructure in every place where members of the Bedouin community wish to live. According to a Ministry of Interior survey, it is estimated that there are over 100 illegal settlements, many consisting only of a small cluster of structures, spread over the Negev area alone, involving 108 tribes, over 9,000 housing units, and roughly 50,000 inhabitants, or slightly less than 1 per cent of the national population. Another 3,000 Bedouins live in illegal settlements in the Galilee region.

Over the past five years, the Government has taken important steps towards solving the land and housing problem in the Bedouin communities and towards bringing their quality of life to a level closer to that of the rest of the population, while preserving their way of life. Eight Bedouin settlements were recognized by the Government during 1994-1996, and consultations are currently taking place between the Government and Bedouin representative organizations regarding the recognition of a ninth settlement. Official recognition allows these settlements to receive government funding prior to the approval of town development plans. Consultations over other, smaller illegal settlements, mostly comprised of single families, are continuing, with the intention of integrating these settlements into larger, recognized settlements. Zoning and development plans for these newly-recognized settlements are being prepared, and the Government made a special allocation of NIS 5 million in 1996 for immediate infrastructure development in these settlements. In addition, plans developed by the Housing Ministry call for the construction of two or three new urban localities (each accommodating 600-800 families), two or three agricultural settlements (each containing up to 600 families), 10 agricultural farms (to be inhabited by 30 families each), and five to seven shepherding settlements for a total of roughly 100 families. In 1996, a parliamentary commission which reviewed the condition of the Bedouin communities recommended that sufficient resources be allocated for the development of these new localities, and that arbitrators be appointed to expedite processing of Bedouin land claims.

Government investment in the Bedouin sector has increased markedly over the last several years. Overall funding by the Housing Ministry increased from NIS 50 million in 1989-1992 to NIS 138 million in 1993-1995. Several years ago, the Minister of Housing issued guidelines requiring that investments in infrastructure in the Bedouin communities be allocated on a level comparable to those granted to Jewish localities. The Israel Lands Administration invested NIS 128 million in infrastructure between 1991 and 1995, as well as NIS 50 million in compensation for Bedouin land claims. As part of the settlement of such land claims, the ILA also subsidizes 80 per cent of the cost of plots sold to Bedouins. In addition, the ILA has approved an NIS 280 million sewage-system installation project, has developed industry and crafts areas in three Bedouin localities, and, together with the Agriculture Ministry, has funded the construction of several commercial greenhouses.

The Ministry of Interior has approved outline development plans during the past five years for each of the seven existing Bedouin towns, which will facilitate the construction of housing,

industrial areas, public institutions and public works. In addition, the Interior Ministry has significantly increased its regular allocations to Bedouin local and regional authorities, as part of its campaign to eliminate the disparity in allocations between Arab and Jewish municipal authorities generally. [...]

In 1996, an interministerial committee was established to oversee and implement all government programmes related to the Bedouin communities. Within the National Infrastructure Ministry, a Directorate for the Advancement of Bedouins has also been set up, and has begun developing new plans for continued resolution of housing, land and development problems."

*According to the Adviser to the Israeli Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, Mr. Zaken,
CERD, 11 March 1998, para.69:*

"During the previous 25 years, 60,000 inhabitants had gradually settled in 7 Bedouin villages having the necessary infrastructure, and he added that it was difficult to provide infrastructure for nomadic populations. He categorically refuted the fanciful statement made the previous day that the Bedouin were being forced to settle down; not a single one had been forced to do so."

See also the National Response section for more information on the Israeli government's policies towards the Bedouin community.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

Government response to internal displacement from 1948

- Following U.S. government pressure, Israel took over the responsibility of the displaced from UNRWA
- The Israeli government decided not to create a special government body to take care of the displaced but that they would be cared for by existing governmental departments, and that no organization representing the displaced would be recognized
- The government tried to limit the areas inhabited by the Arab population, and gave priority to IDPs from villages who surrendered to the Israeli army
- In 2003, the Israeli Supreme Court rejected request of return of displaced villagers, stating that return could be only considered if there was a change in the political situation
- Israeli government said it feared that the return of the displaced would pave the way for the return of refugees, although the displaced are Israeli citizens
- The Biram Residents Committee has prepared a detailed plan of resettlement. Fostering coexistence, the plan makes no claim to land where Jewish communities currently live or farm

Israel government takes over UNRWA's responsibilities towards IDPs

In December 1948, the United Nations established the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to assist all those who were resident in Palestine in 1946 and who lost their homes and livelihoods. UNRWA assisted the internally displaced within Israel from 1950 to 1952 until Israel took over this responsibility. In May 1952, largely as a result of American and UNRWA pressure, Israel notified the Director General of UNRWA, Ambassador Blandford, that it agreed that UNRWA would be relieved of further responsibility for the refugees in Israel. (Bligh November 1994)

In August 1952 the Israeli Government in resolution 575 established a ministerial committee to examine the question of how to deal with the Arab displaced in Israel, and to present the Government with a policy proposal. It decided that:

- (1) A general survey of the refugee problem should be carried out
- (2) The Israeli Government would temporarily provide welfare and jobs to the refugees [i.e. IDPs] until the upcoming final resolution of the problem.
- (3) No special Governmental body would be established to take care of the refugees; they would be cared for by the appropriate Governmental Departments.
- (4) Those agencies, referred to above, would cooperate and coordinate activities with one another.
- (5) No other representative organization of refugees would be allowed to function. If created it would not be recognized by the Government.
- (6) The Government's policy would be widely publicized to the Arab community. (Bligh January 1998, p.129)

The Israeli government defined the following categories of Arab IDPs and refugees in the early 1950s: "(1) those who left Palestine for enemy countries during the fighting – they would not be allowed back; and (2) those who moved from their original places of residence but stayed within Israel; here again two types of refugees were identified: (a) those from villages which surrendered to the Israeli army, and (b) those from villages which had fought the Israeli forces. No clear decision was made on the operational steps to be taken, but the impression created by the document implied that the two categories would be allowed back; group (a) first and group (b) last." (Bligh January 1998, p.127)

At the time, the Israeli government concentrated on resettling the 600,000 Jewish refugees who arrived in Israel between 1947 and 1950 (Eban 1978, p.144). Also, the main preoccupation of Israel since inception was its security. Its government seemed to fear that the displaced Arab population would join hostile armies in a future war against Israel, and therefore tried to limit the areas inhabited by the Arab population. As a result, it aimed to:

- (1) To limit, as much as possible, the area inhabited by Arabs.
- (2) To avoid reconstructing destroyed Arab villages.
- (3) To refrain from establishing new Arab villages.

The consequence of this policy was the integration of the displaced into the already existing Arab communities and villages (Bligh January 1998, pp.129-130).

IDPs did not give up on their hopes to return to their former homes

The struggle of the pre-1948 residents of the northern villages of Kafar Birem [or Bir Am] and Ikrit and their descendents, regarding their long-term demand to be allowed to rebuild their homes is emblematic. The Israeli government and Courts have recommended the return of the displaced, but such return has never been allowed in practice. In November 1948, David Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary that "as for the Christians of Biram and other villages... we will willingly consider their return only when the situation on the border is stabilized." In 1977, Menachem Begin promised to return them to their families, and in that spirit, in 1998, then-justice minister Tzachi Hanegbi recommended to the Netanyahu government that "no obstacles should be placed in the way of the return of the evacuees in the spirit of the Libai and Klugman recommendations which provide a step forward and a strong basis for negotiation." (quoted by Ha'aretz Daily 10 Oct 01). In 1997, a special interministerial panel also recommended that the Government allow the villagers to return to Bir Am and Ikrit (U.S. DOS February 2001). In November 2001, the Israeli High Court of Justice – the Israeli Supreme Court - ordered the government three months to submit a detailed plan for compensating the displaced villagers of both villages, involving lands that could be given to the residents or compensation that it is prepared to pay (Jerusalem Post 26 Nov 01). The government did not submit such a plan. According to a journalist of Ha'aretz reporting on this issue, the government tried to horrify the court by raising the specter of '200,000 absent present' people and stubbornly insisted on turning the Ikrit and Bir'am case into a 'dangerous precedent.' (Benvenisti 29 November 2001 in Ha'aretz).

In July 2003, the Israeli Supreme Court turned down the petition of the people of Ikrit. It ruled that the state's position, which rejects their return, touches on affairs in which the government has great latitude "and the arena of reasonableness granted to it is very broad." (quoted by Benvenisti, Ha'aretz 3 July 03). It also said that it would be appropriate, if there was a change in the political situation, to consider another solution that would allow the petitioners to settle in their village.

The Supreme Court accepted the state's claim that Israeli interests, based on a combination of the current security situation and the Palestinians' persistent demand for the right of return of refugees, could not justify the return of the Ikrit refugees. The state won the case despite a series of promises made by previous governments to the refugees that they would be allowed to return to their village. The court's decision concludes six years of hearings on the issue, and states that

former residents who are now Arab citizens of Israel will have the choice of receiving land elsewhere in the country or monetary compensation (Barkat, Ha'aretz, 27 June 03)

The government's position was expressed in October 2001: "The issue of the refugees and the Arab demand to return the refugees came up intensively at the Camp David talks, at Taba, and in the violent wave that followed, and sharpened the ramifications that could result from a decision on this issue. The precedent of returning the uprooted to their village will be used for propaganda and political purposes by the Palestinian Authority ... [and] invite a considerable number of suits from all those who want to 'reopen' the War of Independence and its results." (quoted by Benvenisti, Ha'aretz 3 July 03)

According to Jerusalem Post Journalist, The Biram Residents Committee has prepared a detailed plan of resettlement. Fostering coexistence, the plan makes no claim to land where Jewish communities currently live or farm. Kibbutzim Bar'am and Sassa have repeatedly decided that they have no objections to allowing the villagers from Biram to return to their village (Prince-Gibson in Jerusalem Post, 19 Apr 04)

Government plans affecting the Bedouin community (2005- 2007)

- November 2005: Israeli government adopted a National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev for 2006-2015 ("Negev 2015")
- Plan has so far not been implemented

In 2005, an association named "Daroma" association submitted "A National Strategic Plan for the Development of the Negev " (henceforth: "Negev 2015". This is the most comprehensive plan proposed to date for government investment in actions intended to help develop the Negev. The plan was adopted by the Israeli government in November 2005, as part of its strategy for the 2006-2015. Some NIS 17 billion were allocated to finance the recommendations, for a 10 year period (Cabinet Resolution 4415, paragraph 5). The main goal of the plan seems to attract some 200,000 new residents to the area, to foster economic development. To a lesser extent, Negev 2015 pays special attention to the Bedouin, and allocates resources to their benefit, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and education, but only to bring them up to the most basic level. However, the plan only targets "recognised" villages, leaving out some 50,000 people in "unrecognised" areas. The implementation of the plan has been delayed so far.

Another plan, *Beersheba Metropolis*, named for the Negev's main city, devotes considerable attention to the Bedouin, but without offering a real solution to the tens of thousands living in "unrecognised" villages.

Another series of recommendations regarding the Negev Bedouin were issued in January 2006 by Israel's National Security Council (NSC). The NSC paper calls on the Israeli government to establish a mechanism for the implementation of existing resolutions on the issue of the Negev Bedouin, adopted in 2003 by the Israeli government. The implementation of the first resolution would lead to the recognition of seven "unrecognised" Bedouin villages. But the other resolutions called for the setting up of new specialised bodies to deal with the enforcement of land laws, which the Regional Council for Unrecognised Negev Villages viewed as "a declaration of war on the Bedouin community in the unrecognised villages". The paper proposed to evacuate all residents of illegal structures after a certain time-frame if no agreement is reached (ADVA Centre January 2007).

In 2005, the Israeli government communicated the following plans to CERD:

“The Government is in the process of establishing the abovementioned seven new Bedouin towns. The names of the towns were chosen by the Bedouin population. In addition, the government is in the process of expanding the existing towns of Rahat, Segev Shalom, Hura, Lakia and Tel Sheva.” (CERD 23 June 2005)

See also:

Government of Israel, Prime Minister’s Office, 28 Feb 06, Government Launches Negev 2015 Plan Website [[Internet](#)]

Jewish Agency for Israel, 2007, Tsafona And Daroma - Plans For Development [[Internet](#)]

National security council, Office of the Prime Minister, government of Israel, Activities of the NSC, Bedouins in the Negev [[Internet](#)]

ACRI, February 2007, Short Presentation to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD): Discrimination against the Arab Bedouin Population of the Negev [[Internet](#)]

Ha’aretz, 30 January 2007, Adalah: Negev development plan discriminates between Jews and Arabs
By Mijal Grinberg, Haaretz Correspondent [[Internet](#)]

ACRI, 17 Apr 07, ACRI protests plans to forcibly evacuate Bedouin residents [[Internet](#)]

Response to displacement from northern Israel and from Sderot (2006-2007)

Response to displacement from northern Israel in 2006

Most of the assistance was provided by Israeli NGOs, Jewish voluntary agencies and individuals. According to NGOs present on the ground, private individuals in Israel and Jewish communities around the world sent thousands of food packages and millions of dollars to help the displaced (IRIN, 6 August 2006). An Israeli billionaire even funded a “tent city” for 6,100 IDPs, which reportedly cost \$500,000 a day to run (IHT, 31 July 2006). About 40,000 children from the north were also taken to special summer camps in central Israel, to put them out of harm’s way (Jewish Agency, 20 August 2006). The Israeli Prime Minister’s Office established an agency to deal with the crisis. The state has primarily relied on NGOs to care for the displaced, a consequence of the fact that in the past 20 years, the state has indeed become dependent on civil society following the privatisation of a large number of welfare, education and health services (Ha’aretz, 24 August 2006).

Following a cessation of hostilities on 14 August 2006 based on UN Security Council resolution 1701, most IDPs and those living in bomb shelters cautiously returned to their homes in northern Israel (IRIN, 17 August 2006). Those too weak or too old to return on their own were assisted by organisations like Magen David Adom, a member of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (MDA, 24 August 2006). Once home, many had to cope with the trauma linked to displacement

Economic and social life was also paralysed during the month of conflict, and many businesses were reportedly going to close down because of the amount of physical damage sustained in the north (JBI, 15 August 2006). Thousands of homes, schools, businesses, synagogues and cars were damaged or destroyed by Hezbollah rockets, and the Israeli government received more

than 7,600 claims for compensation (Y net, 14 August 2006). Many crops were lost as well (JBI, 15 August 2006). The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, under fire for his government's handling of the war in Lebanon, promised \$2 billion to rebuild northern Israeli towns hardest hit by Hezbollah rockets (Reuters, 24 August 2006). The Israeli Ministry of Tourism also announced that the government had agreed to compensate hoteliers and businesses involved in tourism in the affected areas of Israel's north (IRIN, 15 August 2006).

In the absence of an official declaration of a state of war, laws in place create two categories of victims, who are entitled to compensation based on different rules. The first group is made up of those who have businesses in communities described as being on the front line, who have to be compensated fully for the loss of income, according to the law. The second group consists of people whose businesses are not on the frontline, but were exposed to rockets. The vast majority of the business owners in the north fall into the second category and will receive less compensation as a result. According to the Israeli paper Ha'aretz, four Arab communities hit by the rockets which had been part of the first group were taken off the list, for reasons which remain unclear. Several business owners from these communities filed an appeal to the Supreme Court (Ha'aretz, 21 August 2006, "compensation"). In December 2006, the Israeli Supreme Court requested the Israeli Minister of Finance to explain the reasons for excluding businesses in four Arab villages from full compensation awarded for war damages (Adalah, December 2006).

In September 2006, the Israeli Tax Authority, under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, announced that it had settled some 10,000 claims for direct damage and 25,000 claims for indirect damage suffered during July. It also announced that it would support 100 families whose homes had been destroyed. The Israeli government also announced that it would compensate those who had been injured during the conflict, for example by rocket shrapnel (UNGA 2 October 2006)

In December 2006, the Israel Government Coordinator for the Reconstruction of Infrastructures and Institutions in Haifa and the North, appointed following the war between Israel and Hezbollah to coordinate between government ministries and local councils, and to accelerate infrastructure reconstruction, said that his work was completed. Remaining problems would be dealt with by the various ministries and local council (Israel Prime Minister Office 26 December 2006).

Response to displacement from Sderot (2007)

A committee from the Israeli Parliament requested the Finance Ministry to increase the financial aid given to residents of Sderot and communities near the Gaza Strip, who have been bombarded with Qassam rockets fired by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip for the past three years, and experienced an escalation in rocket fire in recent weeks. The Committee demanded that the ministry give a special incentive to Sderot residents who arrive at work regularly, despite the rocket threat, and that workers who missed work days out of fear of attacks be compensated as well. The Finance Ministry said in response that the current law did not allow such financial benefits (Ha'aretz 6 June 2007).

See also:

Haaretz, 17 May 2007, State prepares partial Sderot evacuation, By Aluf Benn, Amos Harel and Mijal Grinberg [[Internet](#)]

Haaretz, 23 July 2007, Despite ruling, no money for Sderot reinforcement, By Mijal Grinberg [[Internet](#)]

UN Response

UN Response

- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) took care of IDPs from 1948 to 1952
- UN reports have exhorted the Israeli government to recognize all existing Bedouin villages
- UN Special Rapporteurs and Special Representative visit Israel and Lebanon in September 2006

UNRWA and IDPs

"Immediately after the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948, emergency assistance to Palestine refugees was provided by international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, League of Red Cross Societies and the American Friends Service Committee. In November 1948, the United Nations established the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) to extend aid and relief to Palestine refugees and coordinate efforts of NGOs and other UN bodies such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Refugee Organization. The United Nations established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) under UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV), of 8 December, 1949, as a temporary specialized Agency. UNRWA's mandate has been renewed every three years since 1949, and is expected to continue to be renewed pending a just settlement of the refugee problem.

UNRWA began its field operations on 1 May 1950. The Agency inherited the assets of the UNRPR and took over the ICRC's refugee registration records. [...]

There are several groups and categories of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs): UNRWA-registered 1948 refugees and their descendants, unregistered 1948 refugees and their descendants, internally displaced Palestinians in Israel, and persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 war and their descendants. UNRWA coverage extends to registered Palestine refugees residing in UNRWA's areas of operation in the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic only, who number 3.8 million in 2001.

For operational purposes, UNRWA has defined Palestine refugee as any person whose "normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." Palestine refugees eligible for UNRWA assistance, are mainly persons who fulfill the above definition and descendants of fathers fulfilling the definition." (UNRWA 2001)

The UN and displaced Bedouin

UN reports, such as a 2003 report by the *UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* urge Israel to recognize all existing Bedouin villages, their property rights and their right to basic services, in particular water, and to desist from the destruction and damaging of agricultural crops and fields, including in unrecognized villages. The Committee further encourages the State party to adopt an adequate compensation scheme for Bedouins who have agreed to resettle in "townships" (CESCR 23 May 2003)

Three UN Special Rapporteurs and Special Representative visit Israel and Lebanon in September 2006

The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights of internally displaced persons, and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, visited Israel and Lebanon in September 2006, following the conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah (UNGA 2 October 2006)

To see their report, see link below

NGO response

Organisations defend the rights of the displaced (2001-2007)

ACRI (Association for Civil Rights in Israel)

ACRI was founded in 1972 as a non-political and independent body, with the goal of protecting human and civil rights in Israel and in the territories under Israeli control. The founders of ACRI rooted their vision in the principles and rights articulated in the Declaration of Independence, and in the United Nation's Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which was drafted under the influence of the horrors seen during the Second World War. ACRI works to protect the right of diverse individuals and sectors of society including men and women, religious and secular, Jews and Arabs, those on the political right and left, new immigrants and veteran citizens, the unemployed, and foreign workers. It has also appealed to the Supreme Court on behalf of Bedouin living in unrecognized villages (ACRI 2003).

Adalah (Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel)

Adalah is an NGO which serves the Arab community in Israel. Its main goal is to achieve equal rights and minority rights protections for Arab citizens of Israel in the fields of Land and Housing Rights, Education Rights, Employment Rights, Language Rights, Political Rights, Women's Rights, Prisoners' Rights, Culture Rights, and Religious Rights. In order to achieve this goal, it brings cases before the Israeli courts that raise issues of group discrimination and Arab minority rights through legislative advocacy; promotes Arab equal rights and minority rights through legislative advocacy; provides consultation to Arab NGOs, CBOs, and other public institutions; organizes and facilitates panel discussions, study days, and workshops, and publishes topical reports on current legal issues concerning the Arab minority in Israel (Adalah 2003).

Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced in Israel (ADRID)

ADRID works to research and defend the rights of IDPs in Israel. In 1995, the organization organized a meeting of 280 representatives of 30 destroyed villages. More generally, the organization:

- Sponsors and organizes Land Day events in the uprooted villages each year;
- Holds lectures and panel discussions;
- Works in schools, libraries, universities, and through the media;
- On the local and national level the committee works to clean up the cemeteries and restore destroyed mosques and churches;
- Supports research on uprooted and destroyed villages since 1948;
- Collects and files documents, aerial pictures, and maps of uprooted and destroyed villages;
- Collects statistics and information on displaced persons in Israel, their properties, where they currently reside, and where, exactly, they came from (ADRI 2004)

In 2002, ADRID was selected as one of four winners of The Body Shop 2002 Human Rights Award. ADRID was selected from among 44 grass-roots initiatives worldwide for its outstanding efforts for the advancement of housing rights (return and real property restitution) of IDPs in Israel (BADIL 6 Nov 03).

Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA)

Promotes the rights of the Arab minority in Israel, through advocacy. It examines issues such as land property and the situation of the Bedouin community in the Negev (HRA 2003, "Homepage").

Committee for the Uprooted of Kafar Birem

The people displaced from Kafar Birem in 1948 joined in a committee to obtain to return to their village in northern Galilee. Despite many appeals to Israeli courts and authorities, they have not been able to return to their village. The Israeli government made various proposals for settling the demands of the displaced, like land exchange and compensation but the displaced will accept to return to their former land. (Committee for the Uprooted of Kafar Bir'em 2003)

Association 40

The association aims to gain recognition for the unrecognized villages in Israel. It was formally established in 1988 in the Unrecognized Village Ein-Hod, by the local committee of the village, by the inhabitants of unrecognized villages and also by Arab and Jewish Volunteers from all over the country (Association 40 2003).

To know more on the creation of Association 40, see the interview with its founder and director, Muhammad Abu al-Hayja, in "Ayn Hawd and the 'Unrecognized Villages'", Journal of Palestine Studies, Autumn 2001 (Vol.31, No.1, Issue 121), pp.39-49

Badil (Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights)

Palestinian organization promoting the rights of the Palestinian refugees through advocacy; also advocates for the right of return of the displaced within Israel. (BADIL 2003)

New Israel Fund (NIF)

NIF is working to:

- Attain recognition and basic services for Bedouin villages;
- Ensure Bedouin children equal access to education;
- Help Bedouin with the transition to permanent townships;
- Raise public awareness about government discrimination and the needs of the Bedouin community;
- Empower Bedouin leaders to better their own circumstances; and
- Improve the status of Bedouin women and promote their involvement in the community(NIF 2003).

National Council for the Defense of the Rights of Displaced persons in Israel

Umbrella organization uniting thirty local committees of refugees [i.e. internally displaced persons] from abandoned villages within Israel.

The Council is legally registered as a non-profit organization. Its members organize activities to strengthen the displaced persons' sense of identification with their native abandoned villages. These include picnic outings to village grounds on Independence Day (that Palestinians refer to as the 1948 'Nakba', or catastrophe), renovation of mosques, churches and cemeteries, and compiling documentary material on their villages (Nir 8 January 2001 in Ha'aretz).

Regional Council for Unrecognized Negev Villages (RCUV)

Elected body, chosen to represent the Bedouin community of the 45 unrecognized villages in the Negev. The residents of each village elect a local committee of 3- 7 persons, who become

members of the general assembly of the RCUV. The general assembly elects the chairperson and the executive committee once every 4 years.

The primary goal of the RCUV is unconditional governmental recognition of the Arab Bedouin (unrecognized) villages in the Negev (idealist.org). In 1999, the Regional Council submitted a plan to the government, whose main objective was to achieve recognition of the existing villages and develop municipal entities allowing to elect a local government and at the same time to guarantee the provision of services to the residents of the villages, as is the standard practice in localities elsewhere in Israel. The plan also sought to make it possible to build and develop within the boundaries of the localities and to raise the residents' standards of living (ADVA Center January 2007)

Sikkuy (Equality)

Advocates for equality of Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel, including the internally displaced. (Sikkuy 2003)

Oxfam

The international non government organization, Oxfam, works with local partners (SIDREH, ADALAH) to improve the life of the Bedouin in the Negev, both of those living in the new towns built by the State, and those living in the "unrecognized villages". (OXFAM 2001)

Reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles (as of August 2007)

Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other References to the Guiding Principles (in reverse chronological order)

The NGO BADIL (Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights) used the Guiding Principles to analyze the protection needs of IDPs in Israel, and to identify durable solutions
Date: November 2002
Document: Internally Displaced Palestinians, International Protection and Durable Solutions [Internet]

BADIL referred to GP 28, para. 1 to call for the return of the IDPs in Israel to their homes, in a report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Date: 23 April 2001
Document: Report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Item: Follow-Up Procedure (Israel), Annex B [Internet]

Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages

The Guiding Principles have been translated into Arabic
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Document: GP in Arabic [Internet]

Training on the Guiding Principles (in reverse chronological order)

None

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