

Arab Bedouin Children in the Negev: Neglected and Accused

- There are 164,000 Arab Bedouin living in the Negev, according to figures provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics for the year 2007.
- There are approximately 84,000 people living in 45 unrecognized villages, who make up half of the Arab Bedouin population of the Negev.
- Sixty percent of the Arab Bedouin inhabitants of the Negev are children under the age of 18.
- All the Arab villages in the Negev fall within the lowest economic rungs (1 or 2 according to the classification of the CBS).
- At least 595 homes have been demolished in Arab villages in the Negev between the years 2001-08, in addition to 45,000 additional homes that are under threat of demolition.
- At the beginning of 2009, the unemployment rate in most of the Arab villages of the Negev surpassed 15%, in comparison with the general average of 6-7% in the country. In a portion of the unrecognized villages of the Negev, the unemployment rate is more than 20-30%.
- Health clinics are present in only 11 out of the 45 unrecognized villages, and only eight of these villages have family health clinics (the majority of which were established as a result of petitions submitted to the Supreme Court of Justice).
- Arab children in the Negev make up around 80% of the child patients in the Soroka hospital, even though they make up only 27% of its residents.
- There are only 15 primary schools in the unrecognized villages (21 schools in total, some of which also offer preparatory/junior high education). There is no high school in any of the unrecognized villages.
- While there are preschools present in some of the villages, adequate transportation to them from the other unrecognized villages is not provided.
- There is an enormous, persisting gap in the size and level of investment in Arab education as compared to Jewish education, which increases further the smaller the age groups are. In early childhood care services it reaches 50%.
- The Arab villages in the Negev suffer from a severe deficit of classrooms equipped for teaching.
- The Arab children in the Negev have the right to compulsory, free education from the age of three, but 30% of children in 4-5 year age group do not obtain any education in an early childhood framework, in comparison to 4% in the Jewish community.

Musharaka organizing a tour for journalists with the goal of taking an up-close look at the reality of Arab children in the Negev. To demand for a new provision of services and full educational and healthcare rights for every child, as well as the implementation of existing laws, such as the Compulsory Free Education Law for those 3 years and up, whose implementation is still lacking since it began to be used in 1999, especially in the unrecognized Arab villages in the Negev.



Shas and the Likud parties forming Israel's 32nd Government planning on changing the National Insurance Law.

In the agreement reached by the coalition formed between the Shas and Likud parties to form Israel's 32nd government, Article 70 touched on the issue of welfare: "The National Insurance law will be changed so as to deny social security installments for children in the situations defined as following: a. every parent whose custody of his/her child was taken away by a court order with the right jurisdiction; b. every parent whose children are not studying regularly within an educational framework, according the definition of the Compulsory Education Law; c. every parent whose children do not receive the necessary vaccinations for their age, according to the Vaccination program in the Health Ministry. "

This demand by Shas is an illegitimate one at its roots, given that the state itself does not provide just about any framework for early childhood care in the unrecognized Arab villages in the Negev, from newborns up till the mandatory preschool age. In addition, there is no provision for adequate, close-by healthcare services, including mother and child clinics.

Arab children in the Negev have been suffering from a policy of neglect and marginalization over many long years, as well as a policy of tightening the screws in all aspects of life, so as to make them be treated as "invisible citizens", and their rights are systematically violated, by not providing them necessary services and equal rights, specifically in the unrecognized villages.

Since the state refuses to recognize these villages, and thus deprives them of the adequate infrastructure, including setting up healthcare and educational services at an acceptable level and distance, the children of these villages fall victim to the dispute over the land between the state and the people of the Negev as a result, despite the fact that all international charters enjoin the guaranteeing of children's right to education and healthcare, without any relation to the legal status of where they and their families live.

Media Insight on the Issue.

- <http://www.akhbarna.com/arabic/?action=detail&id=1608>
- <http://online.alarab.co.il/view.php?sel=00138999>
- <http://www.deyaralnahagab.com/index.php?content=20&id=174>
- <http://www.ashams.com/article.php?id=60046>
- <http://www.bokra.net/?cGF0aCUzRGFydGlibGUiMiZpZCUzRDEwMDE0NQ%3D%3D>



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We Musharaka for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Arab society, see the demand by Shas as one to be rejected at the outset, and consider it a continuation of the policy of collective punishment and discrimination ongoing for the last 61 years against the Arab public and especially against the Arab citizens in the Negev. The same policy that has deprived the villages of the Negev, especially the unrecognized ones, from infrastructure for education and healthcare comes back today to make child social security installments conditional on the use of services that are originally not even provided.



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Health Services

Children's rights in receiving treatment and medical supervision are clearly violated in the unrecognized villages, due to the unavailability of an adequate number of mother-and-child clinics, so that many children lack regular vaccinations and follow-up from specialized nurses.

At the same time, most of the existing clinics in the unrecognized villages lack electricity for most of the day, which makes the possibility of preserving medicine and vaccines difficult, not to mention the lack of medical and pharmaceutical personnel.

In these conditions, and given the lack of public transportation, every attempt to get treatment outside the village becomes a costly financial burden for the families in the unrecognized villages, especially because of the difficult economic situation and the ongoing rise in the unemployment rate in these villages.

Physicians for Human Rights, in its report "Spatial Separation, Discrimination in Healthcare – Israel 2009", wrote the following on the conditions of the unrecognized villages:

"The state imposes its plan to concentrate the residents into special villages by denying the setting of services, including healthcare. In addition, it limits the residents' movement by not linking these villages through regional road networks. As a result, no adequate possibilities are available to obtain the majority of basic services, whatever they may be – electricity, water, sewage treatment, cleanliness, healthcare, postal services and telephones. There are primary schools in only 15 villages (21 schools in total, some of which also offer preparatory/junior high education). There is no high school in any of the unrecognized villages. Health clinics are present in only 11 villages, and only eight of these villages have family health clinics (the majority of which were established

as a result of petitions submitted by Al-Tufula (Member of Musharaka) and Addalah for human rights to the Supreme Court of Justice). As a result of this policy and the absence of healthcare services and services to assist healthcare, the people of these villages suffer from a high disease rate, and the infant mortality rate is three times the general average, and a large percentage of newborns are born underweight or malnourished. In addition, a large percentage of cases of children requiring

To compare the number of clinics in the unrecognized villages with the Jewish villages surrounding them, for example, in the town of Lehafim, there are three clinics that serve 5500 people.

It is worth mentioning that 80% of the children treated in the Soroka hospital are Bedouin Arabs from the Negev, despite their being only 27% of the Negev's residents.

Early Childhood Education

Arab children in the Negev have the right to free, compulsory education from the age of 3, according to the law, which was implemented in 1999 following a sustained struggle by the Early Childhood Care Committee in Arab Society, which was founded and included as a part of the Musharaka group of NGOs and the Follow-up Committee. Despite this, a large portion of children in the unrecognized villages are still unable to obtain their right to education as per the law, because no preschools are built and neither is transportation made available to the educational frameworks for these ages. In many cases, children aged 3 are forced to travel long distances in unsafe and inappropriate means of transportation to reach a preschool in another village, which contradicts the Education Ministry's own guidelines.

In the report "A Snapshot – Bedouin Children in the Negev" that was presented to Knesset Committee for Children's Rights in 2006, the following was written:

"The participation of Bedouin children in the early childhood education system is very low. Within the framework of care

giving up to age 3, there are not many children from the appropriate age groups present in any educational framework, because preschools work only in a portion of the villages and there is no transportation network for the preschools."

According to a document presented to the Knesset Committee for Education in 2007 titled "The Education System in the Bedouin Community of the Negev", the following was written:

"30% of all the Bedouin children in the Negev in the 4-5 year age range do not study in preschools, in comparison to 4% in Jewish society. The caregivers are also not adequately qualified and the majority of the helpers in the preschools have not



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أطفال النقب بين مطرقة الإهمال وسندان التهميش

نظمت مجموعة مشاركة ومركز إعلام، بالتعاون مع المجلس الإقليمي للقرى غير المعترف بها، اليوم الاثنين جولة صحافيين عرب ويهود وأجانب لقرى غير معترف بها في لنقب، وكانت الجولة تحت عنوان "أطفال النقب بين مطرقة الإهمال وسندان التهميش".

استهلّت الجولة بزيارة قرية "خشم زنة" غير المعترف بها، الواقعة بالقرب من موشاف "نباطيم"، حيث أطلع عطية العثامين رئيس اللجنة المحلية في القرية الصحافيين على معاناة طلاب المدارس الذين يحتاجون للسفر يوميا إلى قرية شقيب السلام، وبيّن رفض السلطات لبناء مدرسة في القرية رغم وجود مئات الطلاب من جميع المراحل فيها، كما اطلعوا على نموذج تفعل روضة للأطفال، تقوم عليها جمعية "أجيك"، كما استمعوا إلى شرح مفصل عن معاناة السكان في ضوء القوانين العنصرية التي تقرها الحكومة الإسرائيلية.

كما زار الصحافيون روضة قرية رخمة التي صدر بحقها أمر هدم من المحكمة، وقد كان جزء من جدران الروضة مهدوم تنفيذًا لقرار المحكمة، علما أن الروضة المذكورة بنيت بجهود السكان، وعدد من المؤسسات الأهلية.

كما زارت المجموعة قرية بير هداج، وخاصة عيادة القرية، حيث شعر طاقم العاملين من اليهود في العيادة بالقلق، حيث طلبوا عدم التصوير، وقد بينت الطبيبة المداومة وجود نقص حاد في الخدمات، وأن هذه العيادة تعطي العلاج الأولي لحوالي 5000 مواطن، وبيّنت أن هناك عدداً كبيراً من الأطفال لا يتلقون التطعيمات لأسباب مختلفة.

وفي نهاية الزيارة استضافت جمعية "أجيك" الصحافيين في خيمة التطوع في بئر السبع، وقدمت وجبة غداء للمشاركين، ومن ثم استمع الوفد إلى شرح من قبل المحامي مراد الصانع من "عدالة" عن هضم حقوق الأطفال في النقب، وآليات الالتفاف على القانون من قبل الجهات المختلفة في الحكومة كي يهضموا بشكل متعمد حقوق الأطفال العرب، من أجل الضغط على الناس للرحيل وترك أماكن سكنهم وأراضيهم من أجل العيش في القرى غير المعترف بها، والتي تعد مأوى للسكان، ومراكز لجميع لا غير، كونها تفتقر إلى أدنى الخدمات رغم أنها قرى معترف بها.

كما بيّن المحامي مراد الصانع أن نسبة التسرب بين الطلاب العرب في النقب أعلى من تلك النسبة التي أعلنتها وزارة التربية والتعليم والتي تقدرها بـ 12% فقط، بينما في جرد قامت عليه "عدالة" بتبين أن في مدارس أبو تلون نسبة التسرب تصل إلى 77%، وأوعز أن تخفيض نسبة المتسربين من قبل وزارة التربية والتعليم يأتي لإظهار نجاحات وهمية لها في الوسط البدوي في الجنوب.

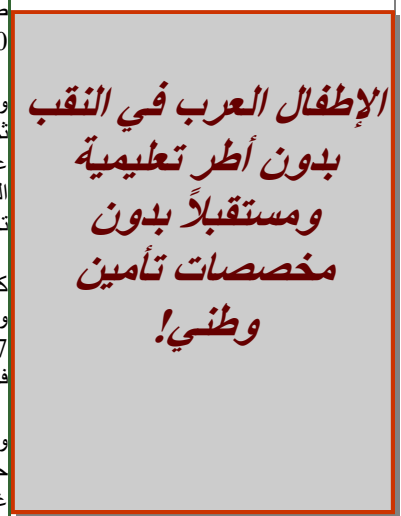
وذكر المحامي مراد أن اشتراط الحصول على مخصصات التأمين الوطني في النقب بالتطعيم، وإدخال الأطفال لأطر التربية حسب قانون التعليم الإلزامي، ما هو إلا خطوة إضافية في سياسة تضييق الخناق على الأهل في النقب، علماً أن غالبية القرى غير المعترف بها تفتقر إلى مراكز التطعيم، وروضات التربية للطفولة المبكرة، أصلاً.

وفي حديث مع مقبولة نصار، مركزة مرافعة وإعلام من مجموعة "مشاركة"، قالت، حول الجولة وهدفها: "تأتي هذه الزيارة للوقوف عن كثب من قبل الصحافيين من كافة وسائل الإعلام على أوضاع حقوق الأطفال في القرى غير المعترف بها في النقب، من حيث الحقوق الصحية، والتعليمية، والخدماتية، علماً أن حركة شاس ضمن اتفاقيتها مع الليكود اشترطت تلقي مخصصات الأطفال لكل من يدرس في المدرسة، أو من خلال سجل التطعيم".

ومن خلال هذه الجولة نريد أن نثبت من خلال الجولة للصحافيين ومن خلالهم لمتخذي القرارات في هذه الدولة أن خدمات التعليم والصحة غير متوفرة لأطفال النقب أصلاً، والسؤال كيف بها تشتت تلقى المخصصات من خلال الحصول على مثل هذه الخدمات؟ الأمر الذي يعني أن هذا الاتفاق بين شاس والليكود هو اتفاق عنصري لا غير".

وشكرت مقبولة جميع من شارك في هذه الجولة، رغم حرارة الشمس الحارقة في النقب.

وفي حديث مع الزميل الصحافي قصي كيه، حول انطباعه من هذه الجولة قال: "اطلعنا على أوضاع إخواننا في النقب، ورأينا بأمر أعيننا ما نقرأه ونراه في وسائل الإعلام، فالوضع صعب جداً، وأثبت قطعياً أن الحكومة تمارس تمييزاً عنصرياً ضد أهلنا في النقب". إخبارنا 19.5.2009



P.O.Box 2539, Nazareth 16000

Telfax: +972 4 6566386

www.musharaka.org

مشاركة لتنمية ورعاية الطفولة المبكرة في المجتمع الفلسطيني في إسرائيل
מושארקה לטיפוח וקידום הגיל הרך בחברה הפלסטינית בישראל
Musharaka for Early Child Care & Development in the Palestinian Society in Israel



Musharaka Member Organizations

AJEEC: Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation- Al Naqab (R.O)

Tel: 08-6405432 Fax: 08-6405451

Email: ajeec@nisped.org.il

Al-Tufula Pedagogical and Women Center – Nazareth Nurseries Institute (R.O)

P.O.Box 240, Nazareth, 16000, Tel/Fax: 04-6566386

info@altufula.org www.altufula.org

Dar al-Tifl al-Arabi(DTA)- al-Muthallath al-Shamali-Northern Triangle (R.O)

P.O. Box. 642, Arara, 30026

Tel: 04-6355322 Fax: 04-6354362

dareltfl@zahav.net.il www.daraltifl.org www.daraltifl.com

Acre Women's Association – Pedagogical Center-Akka (R.O)

P.O.Box 2318 Acre, 24312

Tel: 04-9912436 Fax: 04-9811201

Email: acrewom@netvision.net.il

WE Are a collective group of four non-governmental organizations that came together to promote and enhance the field of Early Childhood Care and Development, in the Arab Palestinian community in Israel.

Our Main Goal

Executing ECCD programs covering areas from North to South within the country; work closely with parents, families and other immediate caregivers to create a protective, nurturing, and stimulating environment for young children, and to lobby for institutional and governmental reform.

Arab Children in the Negev: Neglected and Accused

أطفال النقب بين مطرقة الإهمال وسندان التهميش

What Can you DO ?

To pressure stopping the implementation of the law:

- Write letters to the minister of Education.
- Write letters to the prime minister of the state of Israel.
- Write letters to officials in your own country.
- Demonstrate in front of the Israeli Embassy in your own country.
- Write to media in your own country.
- Support Musharaka continue lobbying by donating (please refer to Musharaka contact on top of the page)

