



# The Truth About The Bedouin

in the Negev



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### Credits:

Research: Amichai Yogeve, Avraham Binyamin & Meir Deutsch

Writing & Editing: Avraham Binyamin, Dr. Jan Sokolovsky & Ari Briggs

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## Foreword

The land issues relating to the Bedouin citizens have been simmering on the national agenda for decades. The situation has now reached the boiling point, and requires our immediate understanding and attention, and the correct course of action by the State of Israel.

To strengthen the Bedouin case, organizations claiming to represent them have made a number of false and misleading statements that have been presented as facts to the general population. Many of these claims have been stated repeatedly and with authority, completely distorting the truth in the eyes of the public.

This document clearly and irrefutably dismisses and disproves many of these myths, using indisputable facts on the ground such as aerial photography, maps and documents.

Any solution should clearly take into account the undeniable facts on the ground. We are convinced that this document will clear the air and provide a more informed and educated discussion on the way forward for the Negev.

## Myth 1 Are the Bedouin “Indigenous”?

Around twenty-five years ago, a global discussion began surrounding the term “indigenous peoples” as it relates to ethnic minorities throughout the world. International law, however, began to address the issue of indigenous peoples as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and by and large the matter was left to the discretion of the individual states. With the passing of the years, the law began to recognize the independent status of indigenous ethnic groups (such as the Indians and the Aborigines) in a way that was bound together with previous legal agreements regarding preservation of culture, holy sites, and other factors.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) associated with the United Nations tried to advance two international treaties concerning the rights of populations that define themselves as indigenous, yet were unsuccessful in formulating a statement, due to the differing views of each country on sovereignty and indigenous populations.

In the past few years, key figures in the Bedouin sector in Israel began to apply this term to themselves as defining their independent status, together with a demand for recognition of their historic ownership of lands across the Negev.

Despite the lack of an international agreement as to the definition of “indigenous”, the general recognition of indigenous peoples uses several parameters, focusing on the following:

**Original Inhabitants** – Indigenous peoples are descendants of the first peoples to inhabit a particular territory.

**Extended Period of Time** – Indigenous peoples

have lived in a territory “from time immemorial”, over a period of thousands of years.

**Pre-Colonial Sovereignty** – Indigenous peoples had territorial sovereignty before the arrival of a developed nation that took possession of the region.

**Group Connection to the Land** – Indigenous peoples have a spiritual connection to the land on which they live.

**External Validation** – Indigenous peoples are recognized by other external groups which affirm that they are in fact indigenous.

Professor Ruth Kark of the Geography Department of the Hebrew University, considered an expert on issues of land ownership in traditional and pre-modern cultures, in an article that appeared in the “Middle East Quarterly,”<sup>1</sup> enumerated the generally accepted parameters of the term “indigenous,” and explains why the Bedouin cannot be included in this category. Here is the synopsis of her conclusions:

**Original Peoples** – Many groups preceded the Bedouin in Palestine in general and in the Negev in particular, including Jewish inhabitants who maintained an uninterrupted presence in the land since the days of the Bible. Therefore, the Bedouin cannot claim that they were the original inhabitants of the land.

**The Dimension of Time** – The variable called, “from time immemorial” requires a long-standing presence on the territory. The Bedouin tribes currently living in the Negev have been there for about two hundred years<sup>2</sup>.

As such, they cannot claim that their presence predates the arrival of a foreign power, such as the Ottoman Empire, which preceded the current Bedouin tribes present in the Negev by hundreds of years.

**Sovereignty** – The Bedouin of the Negev never had sovereignty over the region. When they arrived, the Negev was already under Ottoman control, followed by British and then Israeli control.

**A Unique Spiritual Connection to the Territory** – Nomadic life precludes any specific fixed connection to the land. There is no long-standing proof in Bedouin tradition establishing a spiritual connection between them and the Negev, a logical result of their relatively brief presence there and to their nomadic lifestyle. Indeed they claim the Arabian Peninsula to be their historic homeland. Today, the Bedouin are not claiming collective rights to the land, but are rather demanding fulfillment of private land ownership claims of individual families, giving them the possibility of selling the lands and transferring them to a third party. Such individual demands are contrary to the spiritual dimension, and point to the fact that the main aspiration of the Bedouin is financial gain, with no collective character that would support their campaign to be recognized as indigenous.

**The Group Defines itself, and is regarded by others, as indigenous inhabitants of the Territory** – The claim of the Bedouin as indigenous is quite recent, and was first mentioned only a number of years ago<sup>3</sup>. Previous studies did not find that the Bedouin regarded themselves as indigenous and no researchers made the claim as such. Although the UN Committee on Indigenous

People did bestow indigenous status on the Bedouin of the Negev, the fact that no other Bedouin tribe in the Middle East ever made a claim of being indigenous raises questions as to the motives and authenticity of such a claim. The fact that the Bedouin of the Negev, in many cases, are part of the same tribe that dwells in neighboring countries, also makes it illogical to say that only the Bedouin who live on the Israeli side of the border should be considered indigenous.

### Conclusion:

The narrative according to the Bedouin claim that they are “indigenous” does not fulfill the world’s accepted criteria for being considered indigenous.

1. “Are the Negev Bedouin an Indigenous People? Fabricating Palestinian History”. Havazelet Yahel, Dr. Seth Frantzman & Prof. Ruth Kark. Middle East Quarterly. Summer 2012, pp. 3-14
2. Ottoman tax records from the years 1596-97 specify the names of forty three Bedouin tribes in what was to become the Palestinian Mandate, including three in the Negev, yet the names of the tribes living today in the Negev do not appear in this list.
3. The first articles to relate to this claim appeared about ten years ago in the platforms of organizations identified with the radical left in Israel such as “Adalah,” “the Negev Co-existence Forum,” and “Human Rights Watch.”

## Myth 2 Are the Bedouin Villages Historical?

In the past few years, the Bedouin of the Negev and extreme left non-government organizations (NGO's) have repeatedly claimed that most of the Bedouin villages are "historical" and that Bedouin have inhabited these villages since before the creation of the State of Israel. Take, for example, the Joint Position Paper: Bill on Arrangement of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, of May 2013).<sup>4</sup>

*"About half of the Bedouin population in the Negev, around 90,000 people, lives in approximately 46 Bedouin villages, the majority of which (around 35 villages) the State of Israel refuses to recognize and arrange for their planning and/or municipal administration. **The majority of these villages existed before the birth of the State of Israel, and a number of them were established in the 1950's, a time when the agencies of the State moved the Bedouin population from their ancestral territory under their ownership and/or control, to a smaller area in the northeastern Negev, known as the Sayag, termed a restricted area. In contradiction to the impression widespread among the Israeli public, the Bedouin are not intruders, but are rather the original inhabitants of the Negev, and they have the rights of ownership to the lands that they have worked and occupied. Among them are people who continue to live on their lands where they have lived for a long time before the creation of the State, and similarly are the internally displaced, who have been transferred from their historical lands to the restricted area by the State, as was stated. It may be emphasized that the Ottoman Empire as well as the British Mandate recognized the ownership rights of the Bedouin and the traditional methods by which they transferred ownership. Commensurate with this and based on this***

*method of acquisition, lands were bought, and Jewish settlements were created in the Negev, such as Be'er Sheva, established on lands that were bought from the Bedouin in official transactions." (Emphasis added)*

The Bedouin's claim of "historical villages" is proven to be a myth by the use of historical aerial photographs. Tens of aerial photographs of these so-called "historical" villages have been examined. Below are examples of aerial photos used to examine this "historical" claim for 5 Bedouin villages.<sup>5</sup>

No one is denying that there were nomadic tribes living in the Negev prior to 1948. However, due to the nature of these tribes, no permanent residences were established. There are signs of cultivation in the aerial photography that was examined, but the form of farming used was seasonal, not long term, in order to supply feed for their herds as they moved from place to place.

### The Village of Al Araqib

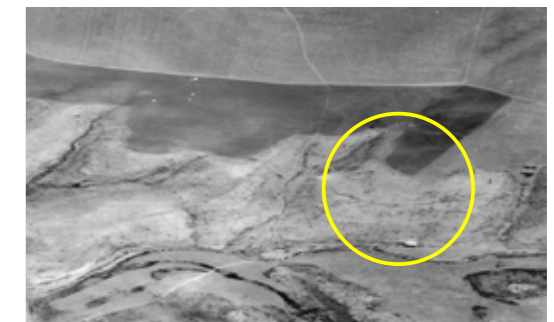
The illegal village of Al-Araqib is situated on state lands managed by the Israel Land Authority (ILA), about ten kilometers north of Be'er Sheva. This village has been mentioned in numerous headlines, when Bedouin families who claim ownership of the land repeatedly trespassed into the area from which they had been evicted tens of times by the authorities. According to Bedouin from the A-Turi tribe, they have lived in the area since the Ottoman period, and were evicted from the area after the War of Independence by the Israeli

Army, with a promise that the eviction was only temporary. As evidence of the village's long history, they point to a cemetery that they claim is "ancient". The series of aerial photographs below, dating from 1945 to 2010, indicates that the reality is completely different. From a photograph taken

in 1965, it is indeed possible to see the cemetery in its first stages, yet there is neither a village nor anything that looks like a village visible. In a photograph from 1956, the cemetery does not exist at all. So too the imagery from 1945, 3 years before the establishment of the State of Israel.



Al Araqib 2010, a village and a cemetery



Al Araqib 1989, a cemetery but no village



Al Araqib 1965, indication of a new cemetery, no village



Al Araqib 1945, no cemetery and no village

**Conclusion:** The "historic" village Al Araqib, which the Bedouin claim was established during the Ottoman period, was built in the end of the 1990's and thereafter. The aerial photos from 1956 and 1945 have disproved the claim of the A-Turi clan that this location was a village prior to 1965. The Beersheba district court accepted Prof. Ruth Kark's analysis to this end during the trial of Al Araqib.

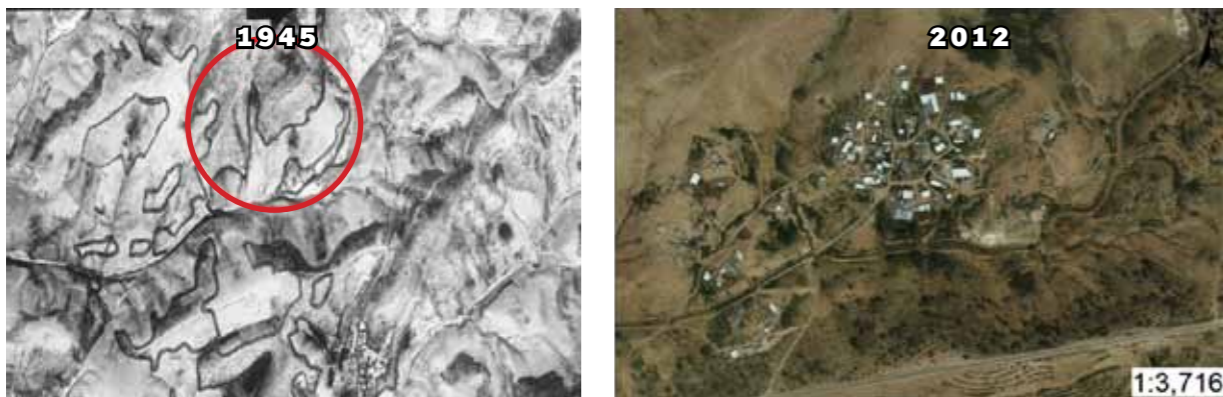
4. The Joint Position Paper: Bill on Arrangement of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, of May 2013, sent by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and Bimkom, to the Ministerial Committee for Legislation regarding the proposed Law for the Arrangement of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev, 5773-2013.

5. The aerial photographs taken prior to the establishment of the State of Israel were done by the British Authorities, and then transferred to the Government Center for the Mapping of Israel, which is the source for all aerial photographs contained herein.

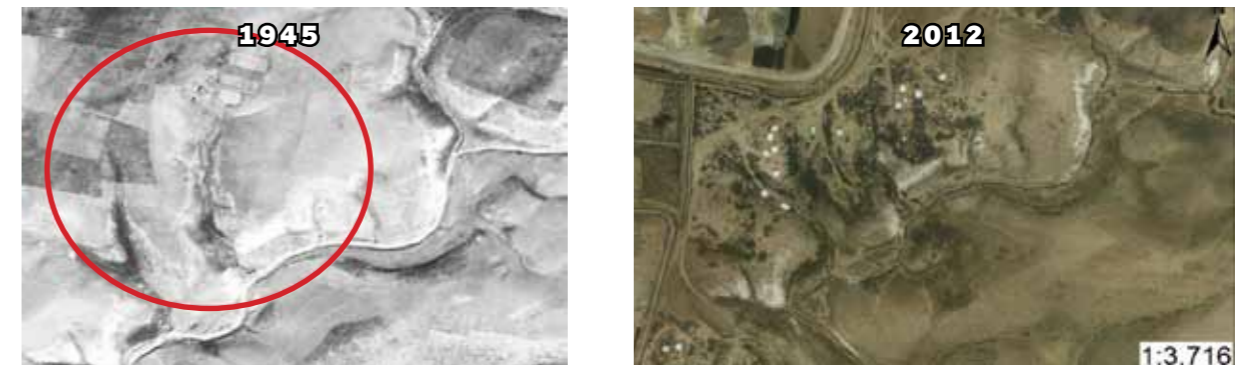
Some other examples of so-called "historic" Bedouin villages.

Beside the photo from 2012 is the historical photo of the same place from 1945

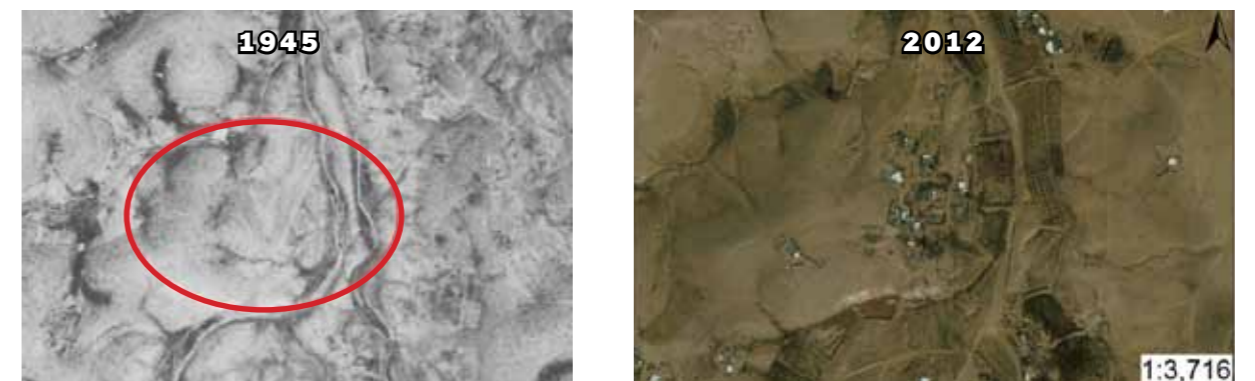
The village of Al Sira



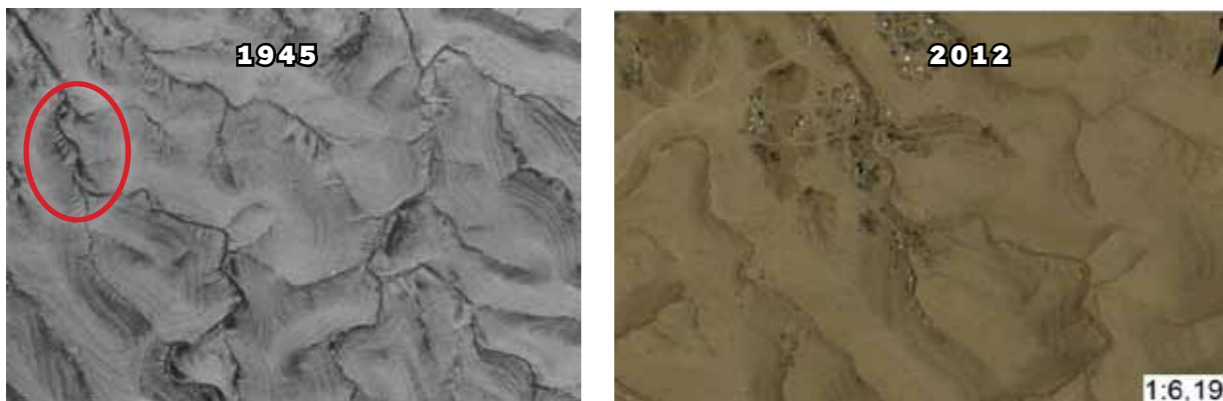
The Village of Karkur



The village of Al-Madbach



The village of Umm Ratam



The village Bir Al-Meshash



### Conclusion:

The above aerial photos speak for themselves, without the need for further explanation. It is fairly easy to identify the land described in the photographs when set side by side, in order to understand clearly that the claim voiced day and night that "our villages were here even before the founding of the state", is an ongoing falsity.

### Myth 3 Are there only 45 unrecognized villages?

Another myth speaks of the existence of only 45 villages where tens of thousands of Bedouin live. Their present tactic is to claim that the Negev is a huge territory and “all we are talking about is the recognition of only 45 villages,” as stated in a position paper circulated by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), Bimkom, and the Council of the Unrecognized Villages, which claims that the institutional recognition and legal organization of these “45 villages” would solve the prolonged dispute between the Bedouin and the State of Israel:

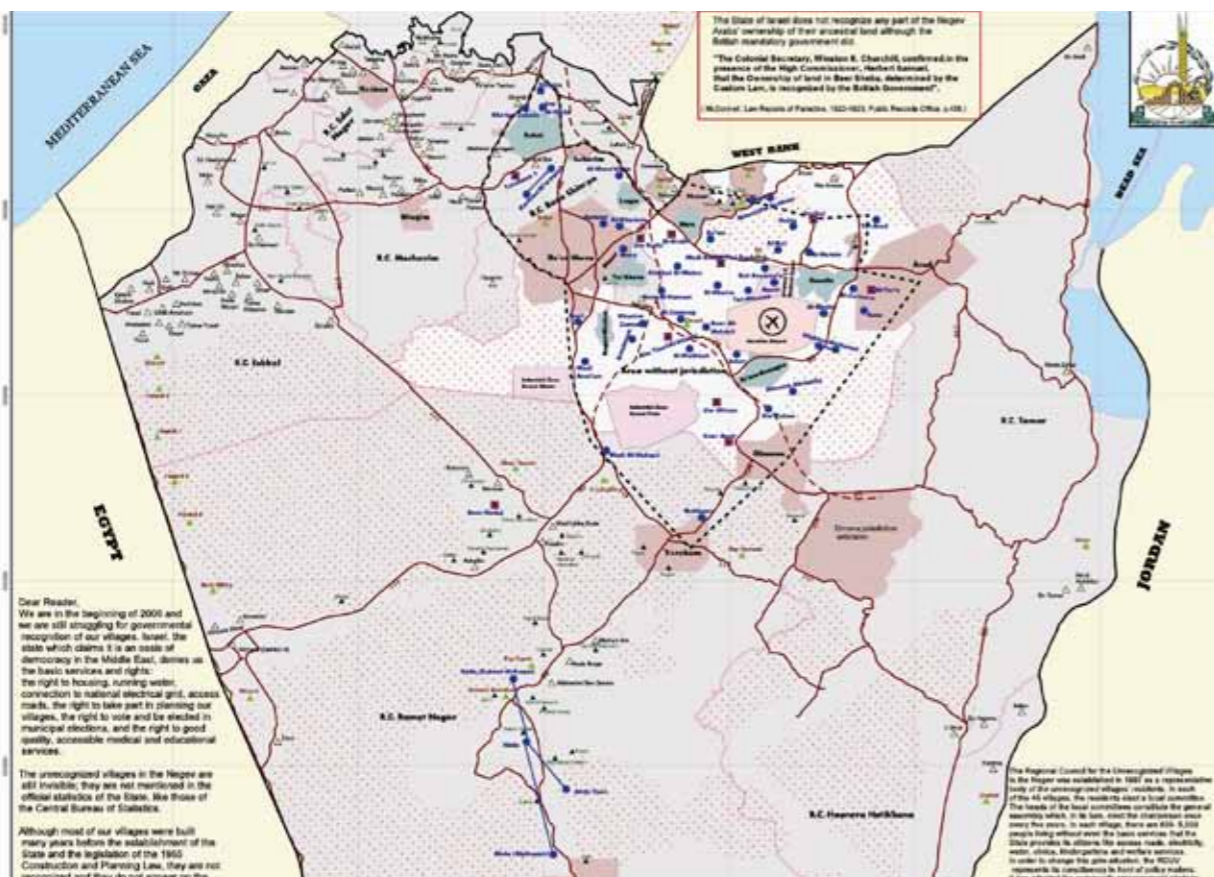
“The Goldberg Commission has recognized that the main solution to the arrangement of Bedouin settlement is recognition of unrecognized villages, in order to prevent the deterioration of an already intolerable situation and to bring about an historic solution to the dispute. This is the central principle that stands at the heart of any solution, and we must follow it in order to bring about an agreement. As will be detailed below, this principle can be applied to every unrecognized village in the Negev.”<sup>6</sup>

The Bedouin connect this claim to 45 points on the map of the Negev (See the 45 blue dots on the map published by the Council of Unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev). What they neglect to tell us is that these points are attached to thousands of clusters of structures spread all across the Northern Negev, in the area between Beersheva, Arad and Dimona, creating one large contiguous territory of illegal Bedouin villages.



A bird’s eye view over the village of “Al-Ara”, one of the blue dots on the previous map (south of the town of Kseifa), with the help of “zoom in” and “zoom out” functions (which can be easily replicated in Google Earth), reveals that, rather than the 45 indicated villages, there are actually thousands of clusters of Bedouin residences in various stages of development. spread across the Northern Negev.

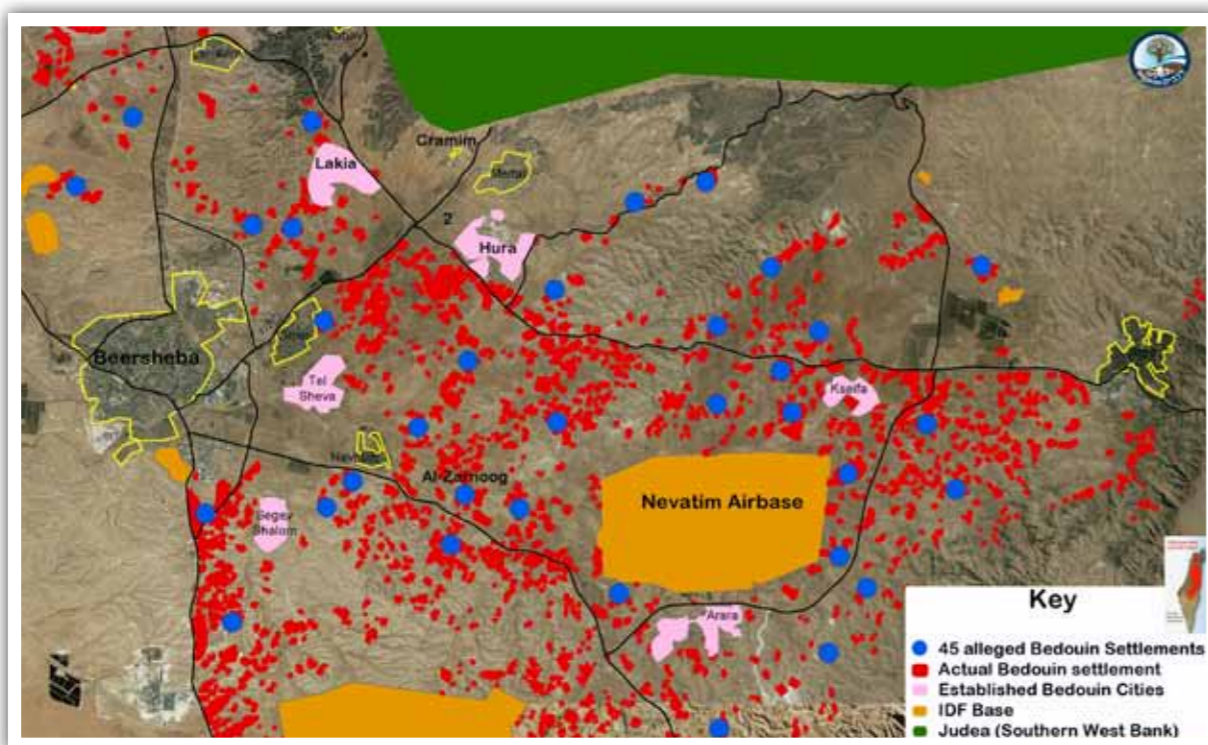
The red markings on the following photographs are polygons indicating illegal construction clusters. As you zoom out, thousands of these small areas merge together to create the most accurate picture of Bedouin settlement in the Northern Negev. It is clear by comparison, that using the 45 points on the previous map does not provide an accurate picture of the number of Bedouin villages or the extent of settlement..



6. Position paper - Principles for recognizing the Bedouin villages in the Negev: ACRI, Bimkom etc. May 20, 2011. See n. 4.

## Myth 4 Are the Bedouin neglected by the State in terms of building rights

The map below shows the overlay of the 45 blue dots from the previous map on an aerial photo including the actual Bedouin settlement areas described above.



### Conclusion:

Aerial photography proves conclusively that the claim of “only 45 villages” has no basis in reality. The ‘Regavim’ investigation as signified by the red layer of markings on the aerial photography points to the existence of over 2000 villages/clusters/hamlets.

The Israeli Justice system describes the crisis of illegal construction as “a national plague.” Different estimates indicate that there are some 100,000 illegally constructed structures throughout the country. The illegal construction of the Bedouin accounts for a sizable portion of this crisis. As of the end of 2012, the number of illegal structures by the Bedouin is estimated at some 65,000 and each year more than 2000 new structures are built.<sup>7</sup>

A common claim is that the Bedouin have no recourse but to resort to illegal construction. The finger of accusation is pointed at the State that does not allow planning or construction permits in the Arab sector. Take for example the position paper of the Coalition for Citizen’s Rights:<sup>8</sup>

*“Illegal construction in Arab villages does not take place in a vacuum **and is not done by choice** or the desire to break or disrespect the laws of the state. Such building ... is done in order to provide housing for young people and Arab families, whom the state and planning authorities have left for many years with **no solution to their housing problem**. It basically stems from a cessation of planning by the authorities, expressed by, among other things, a lack of planning or faulty planning which does not meet the minimum requirements of Arab citizens.*

*“It is important to note that the Arab citizens who are forced into this situation are not greedy construction criminals ... all they seek is a modest house over their heads. We are not talking about luxurious villas. In many cases they are tin shacks, shelters, or small apartments ... **if it were only possible, and if they had a legal choice***

*before them, we would not see them building without permits, construction, which from the standpoint of the costs, is much more expensive than building with permits and according to approved construction plans.”*

The truth is that over the years, the State of Israel has established plans in order to settle the Bedouin in legal towns connected to infrastructure (electricity, water, and sewage), educational and medical facilities. Towards this end, seven Bedouin towns were established; later the State implemented a process of retroactively legalizing and recognizing 11 illegal Bedouin villages (referred to as Abu Basma Council towns). As of May, 2013, among the 220,000 Bedouin citizens in the Negev, some 132,000 are registered as living in organized, legal towns and villages (excluding Abu Basma Council towns).

The official position paper of the Israeli Land Authority shows a broad array of enticements offered to those Bedouin who leave the numerous illegally constructed villages and move to the legal towns and cities. These enticements are given regardless of financial status or whether they have a claim to the land.<sup>9</sup>

*“The enticements granted to the Bedouin include free housing lots exempt from development fees – the State grants the Bedouin, free of charge, lots on average 800 square meters per family (close to a ¼ acre). The plots are completely developed, including infrastructure for roads, drainage, sewage, electricity, and water. It is important to note that on these lots a Bedouin family can chose to build between 1 and 4 housing units according to their preference and need.*

7. Interior Ministry figures, 2012

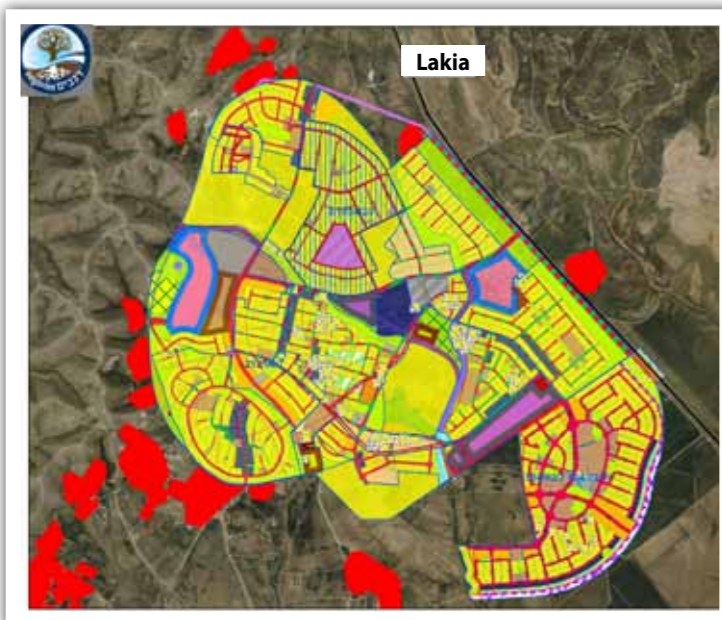
8. “The Policy of Home Demolition in Arab and Mixed Settlements.” The Coalition for Citizen’s Rights. <http://www.acri.org.il/he/?p=2326>

9. [http://www.mmi.gov.il/static/HanhalaPirsumim/Beduin\\_information%20hebrew.pdf](http://www.mmi.gov.il/static/HanhalaPirsumim/Beduin_information%20hebrew.pdf)

*“The Bedouin family that moves from an illegal village to permanent housing in a legal town or village receives monetary compensation from the State. The average amount of compensation for those moving to permanent housing is several times higher than the true value of the illegal structure. The amount of compensation is fixed according to the index of the ILA and can reach hundreds of thousands of shekels (NIS) per family.*

*“In addition, Bedouin families who move from illegally established villages to permanent housing receive **financial grants**. The State of Israel give Bedouin residents who move from these areas to permanent housing a “moving grant” of 7500 NIS per family and an extra 1500 NIS per child. **It is important to note that the advantages given to the Bedouin sector are exclusive and are not given to any other sectors of the population.**”*

A good example of the phenomena is Lakiya. See photos above. The government provided plans for 30,000 residents, yet today only 11,723 resident reside there.



Lakia plans for 30,000 residents



Lakia In 2013 only 11,723 resident

### Conclusion:

The claim that Bedouin are forced to resort to illegal construction due to withholding of permits and adequate planning on the part of the authorities is far from the reality on the ground. The State of Israel has assigned large budgets and made every effort above and beyond what is required by the law in order to allow the Bedouin to move to legal communities.

## Myth 5 Do Governmental Budgets discriminate against Bedouin?

**“T**he Bedouin sector is the poorest in Israeli society; Bedouin local authorities are ranked at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder in Israel. For years we have heard complaints from the Bedouin and leftist organizations about discrimination and bias on the part of the State. Take for example the claim of Professor Ismail Abu Sa’ad from the Ben Gurion University in Be’er Sheva:<sup>10</sup>

*“Statistics about the situation of Bedouin towns in the Negev teach us of the abject failure of the urbanization policy implemented within this framework. The sources responsible for this failure include a shortage of land and accompanying services, budget crises in local authorities ... The municipal budgets come from two sources: budgetary transfers from the government and independent income from local taxes. In addition to this, eligible municipalities are sometimes given grants for exceptional development projects. The offices of the government systematically discriminate against Bedouin municipalities. Formulae for consideration for Bedouin towns are biased and grants for development given to them are meager in comparison with their urgent needs and what is given to Jewish settlements.”*

A table published by the Central Bureau of Statistics<sup>11</sup> regarding data about local councils in 2011 compares the budgets of local authorities for development towns to those of the Bedouin local authorities. The development towns that were chosen are also recognized as being ranked low on the socioeconomic ladder and having high unemployment rates. On the development towns side, data was gathered from Yeruham, Sderot, Ofakim, Arad, Netivot, Dimona, Kiryat Gat, and the regional council of Bnei Shimon. On the Bedouin side, data was gathered from Segev Shalom, Arara, Tel Sheva, Hura, Ksifa, Rahat, Lakiya, and the regional council of Abu Basma.

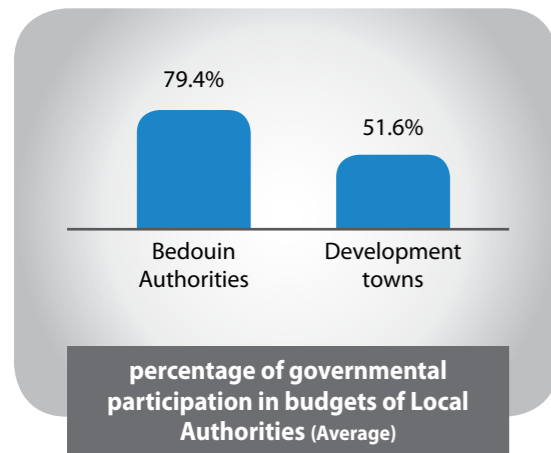
**A comparison of data from 2011 displays the exact opposite: governmental participation in the budgets of Bedouin local authorities is almost twice as high as its participation in budgets of development towns.**

1. The annual percentage of governmental participation in budgets of local councils for development towns (including “exceptional budgets”) stands at an average of 51.6%. For Bedouin local authorities, the annual governmental participation (including “exceptional budgets”) is an average of 79.4%. The regional council of Abu Basma stands out with a striking 98% (!) of its budget coming from governmental aid, with only 1.8 percent from independent income, including local taxes.

10. Bedouin towns in Israel at the beginning of the 21st century. Professors Ismail Abu - Saad, Ben - Gurion University of the Negev. [www.sikkuy.org.il/2003/word/beduim03.doc](http://www.sikkuy.org.il/2003/word/beduim03.doc)

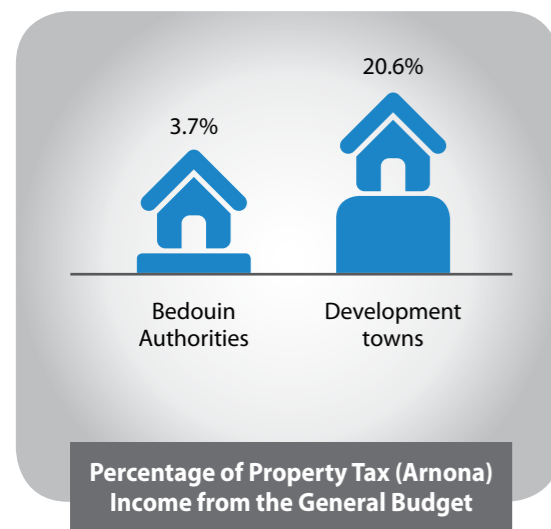
11. [http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?Mlval=cw\\_usr\\_view\\_SHTML&ID=357](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/?Mlval=cw_usr_view_SHTML&ID=357)





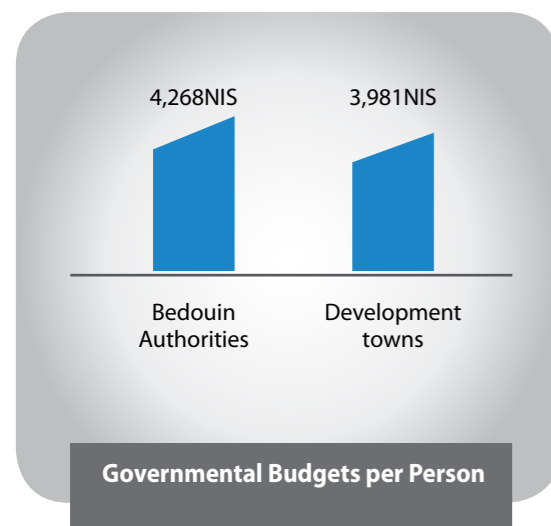
### 1. Governmental participation in budgets of local councils:

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### 2. Property Tax Income as a percentage of the General Budget:

For development authorities, the percentage of independent income from property tax payments in the annual budget stands at an average of 21.3%. By contrast, the percentage of property tax in the annual budget for Bedouin local authorities stands at only 3.7%. It is noteworthy that for the Council of Arara, the percentage of property tax collection rose 142% from 2010 to 2011, following a change to a more effective administration. In contrast to this, during the same period, property tax collection for Abu Basma fell by 87%.

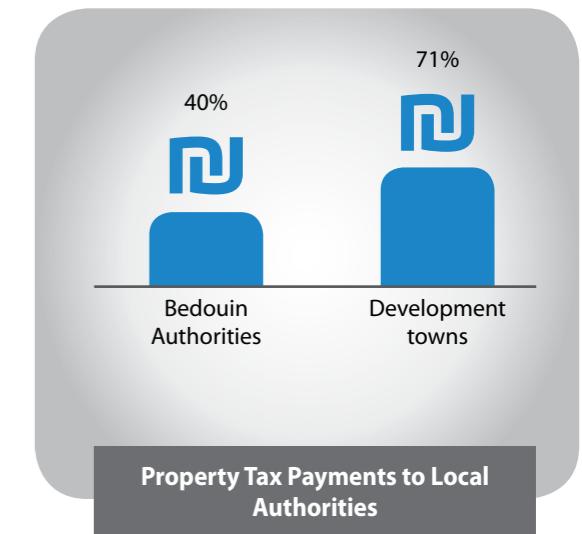


### 3. Governmental Budgets per Person

Dividing the governmental participation in budgets for development towns mentioned (767,949,000 NIS) by the total number of residents (192,900) amounts to 3,981 NIS per person. Dividing the governmental participation from the budgets of Bedouin local authorities (639,375,000 NIS) by the number of residents in all of the authorities mentioned (149,800)\* leaves 4,218 NIS per person. Thus, the Bedouin local authorities enjoy a governmental investment per person that is 287 NIS higher than the governmental participation per person in the development towns.

### 4. Percentage of Actual property tax payments collected

Residents of development towns, numbering 192,900 people, were levied NIS193,170,000 in property tax payments for 2011. The amount of actual property tax collected in these local authorities was NIS137,618,000. This equates to 71% of property taxes collected vs. the levied amount. The residents of Bedouin local authorities, numbering 149,800 were levied NIS55,422,000 in property tax payments for 2011. The amount of actual property tax collected in these local authorities was NIS22,339,000. This equates to only 40% of property taxes collected vs. the levied amount. This data demonstrates the general dysfunction in the collection system of the Bedouin local authorities.



The full findings of the report conducted by Regavim<sup>12</sup> conclusively refute the claims of discrimination in budgets. In fact, the percentage of governmental participation in the general budget for these authorities is 36% higher than the governmental participation in development towns. If one considers the amount of governmental aid per person, there is a difference of more than 287 NIS in favor of the residents of Bedouin local authorities.

The budgetary discrimination actually favoring the Bedouin (affirmative action) continues despite the unusually low amount of property tax payments within the Bedouin sector, where the amount is an average of only 3.7% of the total budgets for these authorities.

**Conclusion:** The source of poverty and underdevelopment among the Bedouin local authorities is largely due to the fact that residents do not pay taxes as required by law. The key to improving quality of life in the Bedouin communities lies in the application of law and participation by residents in property tax payments - as is usual in any other authority in the country.

\* The official number as stated in Myth 4 of 132,000 excludes Abu Basma Council towns. Including the number of registered residents of these towns the total is 149,800.

12. "Discrimination or Lack of Inspection?" A report comparing the Jewish and Bedouin budgets in the Negev. Regavim. July, 2013

## Myth 6 Are the Bedouin “only” claiming 5% of the Negev?

Unilateral refusal by the Bedouin sector in relation of all generous offers from the government over the years is in fact a bargaining chip for the Bedouin position, which refuses any compromise and creates “facts on the ground.” For the sake of discussion, they claim that the percentage of lands needed for settling the Bedouin population is only 3% of the area of the Negev (around 86,487 acres), and the amount of private land claims of ownership amounts to “only” five percent (about 160,618 acres) from the total area of the Negev, which comprises some 3,212,400 acres.

*“To remind you and to wake you from your slumber, the Bedouin comprise 30% of the residents of the Negev. The lands in dispute with the government are 5% of the Negev... what is the fuss over? It's all over 5%. Over this the government establishes an administration? Over this the government establishes staff upon staff? Over this the government makes new committees each day? Apparently there is too much unemployment in the public sector. Shame on the State of Israel that chastises the Bedouin over such meager amounts of land in the Negev.” (Knesset Member Taleb Abu Arar)<sup>13</sup>*

These numbers waved before us are completely divorced from reality, both in terms of the amounts of land on which the Bedouin reside today, and also in relation to the amount of land claimed by individuals.

The aerial photographs printed above in Myth #3 (“only 45 villages”) gives tangible evidence to the great spread of Bedouin settlement. The investigative division of Regavim has made an updated map of settlement, showing this spread

covers 148,263 acres, as will be explained below.

The fact that the Bedouin are only claiming 5% is nonsensical because obviously not all of the land in the Negev is available for settlement or agricultural use. The true extent of land used for Bedouin settlement today is approximately 20% of the available land in the Negev.

After taking away the area of the firing ranges used by the IDF, the nature reserves and the areas protected by the National Master Plan (Plan 35), the remaining lands reserved for settlement of the Negev amounts to only 687,200 acres.

It should be emphasized that the settlement area is not actually ever fully used for settlement and agriculture, since it also includes parks, open areas and the like. As such, the numbers have a completely different meaning: The Bedouin actually occupy 21.5% of the land, 148,263 out of 687,200 acres allotted for settlement throughout the Negev, and make claims for a similar amount of land.

**For the sake of comparison:** There are 205,000 residents in the city of Be'er Sheva, living on only 8,650 acres of land. The Bedouin population, numbering around 211,000, lives on an area seventeen times larger, approximately 148,260 acres of land!

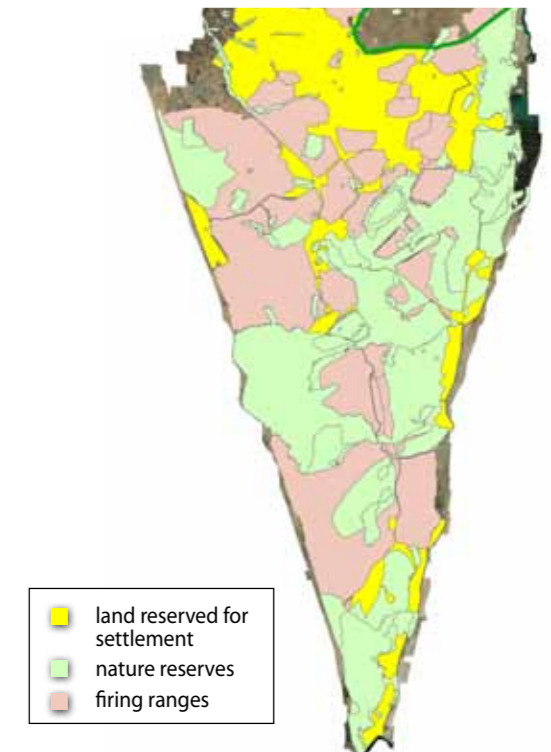
**Percentage of Land Claimed:** All individual land ownership claims that have come to the courts since the 70's until today, whether initiated by the Bedouin or in the context of opposing claims filed by the State of Israel in the past ten years<sup>14</sup> have

been dismissed. The State of Israel has declared over the years that according to the law and according to the registrations, it is the owner of the scattered areas of the Negev and it is willing to clarify all claims of ownership of the Bedouin in court. Only 12% of the Bedouin population have any form of ownership claim over land in the Negev.

**In other words: 15,000 Bedouin are claiming private ownership over 23% of the Negev that is reserved for settlement!**

In order not to leave an opening for the Bedouin claim that some individual farms and agricultural settlements in the Negev receive vast lands; it should be mentioned that this claim is NOT genuine. The farms in this region are placed there as guardians over government land and live under a tenant agreement. None of them make ownership claims over the lands they work and none of them expect to receive the land as private land.

The area of the Negev that has been allotted for settlement



### Conclusion:

The true extent of land which the Bedouin claim, is not only 5% of the area of the Negev, but rather 23% of the area of the Negev that has been allotted for settlement. Among all of the sectors of Israeli society, there is no sector so small that makes a claim of private ownership over an area so large, despite the fact that from a legal perspective, it has been proven time and time again that their claims are without basis.

13. Knesset Member Taleb Abu Arar – Ra'am Ta'al Party, from a speech in the Knesset over the Regulatory Act (27/05/2013) [www.knesset.gov.il/plenum/data/19\\_tor\\_232195.doc](http://www.knesset.gov.il/plenum/data/19_tor_232195.doc)

14. Regavim position paper, "The Renewal of Opposing Claims for Land Regulation in the Negev."



P. O. B 4 4 4 3 9  
Jerusalem 9144302  
Tel: 02-6560303  
Fax: 02-6560363  
office@regavim.org

[www.regavim.org/en](http://www.regavim.org/en)

**This document has clearly and irrefutably dismissed and disproved the various Bedouin myths in circulation, using indisputable facts on the ground, such as aerial photography, maps and documents.**

**We are convinced that this document will clear the air and return the discourse to one that will allow a more informed and educated discussion on the way forward for the Negev.**