

### Unrecognized Bedouin Villages in the Negev - Facts & Figures

- Originally, **46** unrecognized Bedouin villages existed in the Negev. The State has granted recognition to **11** of them leaving **35** currently unrecognized villages. Of these, some have existed since before the establishment of the state, and others, whose residents were transferred to their current location by the State, have lived there for many decades.
- Despite the fact that **11** villages have been granted recognition by the State and planning authorities, residents continue to exist without access to basic infrastructure (water, electricity, roads) and without easy access to education or medical services. This is due to the refusal of the State to develop the communities, to provide residential permits to the residents or to develop the infrastructure and conditions for development as part of the land ownership arrangements.
- The villages sit on territory comprising **2.7%** of the total territory of the Negev (about **350,000 dunams**). Land ownership claims have been submitted for land constituting **4.9%** of the Negev (**640,000 dunams**).
- All **35** of the remaining unrecognized villages meet the criteria set by the Central Bureau of Statistics as to what constitutes a settlement in terms of social characteristics. According to the CBS, a settlement is a location that is permanently inhabited by more than **40** adults, with an independent administration and which does not infringe on the municipal area of any other locality. The only criterion lacking in the cases of these villages is a declaration of status by the Minister of the Interior. By comparison, only **18%** of the **112** rural Jewish settlements in the Negev meet these criteria.
- The smallest unrecognized village contains approximately **400** men and women, and the largest village has a population of over **10,000**. The total population of all of the villages is approximately **70,000**.
- Each village has a clearly defined physical and social structure, logical internal planning guidelines and a unique identity. The villages function as a community in the fullest sense of the word, based upon internal agreements between the residents.

The consequences for the villages of remaining “unrecognized” include:

- The absence of any planning conducted by the State for the villages;
- The absence of any investment by the state towards the development of basic services for the villages.
- All internal structures in the villages are deemed illegal, and cannot be made legal, as the settlements allegedly don't exist.

In other words, in the absence of recognition, the residents of the unrecognized villages are unable to receive any building permits, and the basic residential structures in their villages are considered ‘unauthorized’ and are in constant danger of legally sanctioned demolition.

In 2010, **275** buildings were destroyed, and in 2011, **1,000** buildings were destroyed. This is in addition to the acute economic and social distress suffered by the Bedouin population as a result of long-standing State neglect.

- Failing to recognize the Bedouin villages causes severe and constant damage to the fundamental rights of the residents of these villages, including the right to basic housing and the right to infrastructure and basic services such as education, health, the ability to earn a livelihood, access to proper planning services regarding the future of the villages’ development.

**It is time to grant recognition to the Bedouin villages, to involve the residents in the planning and regulation processes and to treat the residents as equal citizens.**