



State Comptroller | Annual Report 72A - Part One | 2021

Systemic Issues

Aspects of Governance in the Negev



Aspects of Governance in the Negev

Background

"Governance" is defined as the capacity and ability of state authorities to act within their powers¹. The term describes the ability of the government to succeed in fulfilling its functions and implementing its policies in a good and effective manner. According to the March 2013 report by the staff for improving the work of the headquarters and the execution capabilities of the government ministries headed by the then director general of the Prime Minister's Office, governance is the way the administration operates - from the planning stage, through execution to measurement and retrospective monitoring. As a rule, the state is obligated to provide its citizens with various basic services, some through government ministries and some through various local authorities and statutory bodies. The state must also take care of the social order and make sure, with the help of law enforcement agencies, that the citizens of the state and its residents comply with the laws and civic duties imposed on them. Whereas the lack of governance means, inter alia, the lack of executive capacity of the government, which is manifested, among other things, in the fact that the decisions made lawfully are not actually implemented, that the state does not provide citizens with the services to which it is committed and the social order to which they are entitled, and that they do not fully fulfill their civic duties.

1 As the Honorable President of the Supreme Court noted at a conference in December 2017: "Governance means the ability of the government to act within its powers."



Key figures

NIS 1.7 billion

Out of NIS 3.2 billion (53%), government ministries spent in 2017-2019 as part of the five-year plan to assist the Bedouin sector

NIS 1.2 billion

Out of NIS 2.38 billion in debt balances in 2019 for the Value Added Tax (VAT) branch in Be'er Sheva, belong to debtors from the non-Jewish population in the Negev

NIS 348 million

spent by the Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority in the Negev to achieve its goals, which account for 90% of the budget planned for 2019

The 9

Bedouin localities in the Negev are ranked at the bottom of the socio-economic ranking

80,000 addresses

of Bedouin in the Negev as of 2017 were listed as "Tribe", a situation that makes it difficult for them to receive tax benefits and vote in elections

268,000 people

The Bedouin population in the Negev - 3% of the total population of the country in 2018


14,000 women

in polygamous families in Israel in 2017

10 children or more

for about a third of the polygamous men in the Negev

Audit actions

 In the period of August 2018 - July 2020, the State Comptroller's Office examined, intermittently, aspects concerning the governance of the Negev in government ministries and various bodies, including the Ministry of Education, the Accountant General's Division of the Ministry of Finance, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Israel Post, Israel Electricity Company, Mekorot, the Petroleum & Energy Infrastructure Company, Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Ministry for the Development of the Periphery, the Negev and the Galilee, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Negev Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority (Settlement Authority), the Ministry of Interior, and in the seven localities (Rahat, Hura, Lakiya, Tel Sheva, Segev-Shalom, Kuseife, Arara in the Negev), in the two regional councils of Al-Qassum and Neve Midbar, in the Population Authority, in the Ministry of Environmental Protection, in the National Insurance Institute (NII), the Tax Authority of Israel (Tax Authority), the Water Authority, the water corporations "Mei Rahat" and "Neve Midbar", the Israel Mapping Center (MAPI) and Magen David Adom.



Title One - Outlining policies for economic advancement and reducing disparities

Key figures

3,097 residents

were registered in the electoral register of the Al-Qassum Council in 2016, but according to the council's data, about 24,000 residents lived there.

323 agreements

for organized resettlement concluded by the Settlement Authority in 2019 - out of 641 agreements meant to be implemented according to its plan

1,050 housing

units in response to the natural increase in the Bedouin population were marketed in 2019

10,000 births

per year within the Bedouin population

41% of the residents

(only) in the recognized Bedouin localities were surveyed by the CBS in 2019; due to difficulties, the residents of the dispersion (unauthorized residence clusters), were not surveyed

9 Government Ministries

and the Settlement Authority did not report to the Ministry of Agriculture about the performance indices in 19 activities in their field in 2019

46,000 residents

of the Bedouin community are registered at one address in the Population Authority and at another address in the Settlement Authority



Key findings

- 📌 Compliance of the Settlement Authority with the goals of the work plans for 2019** - The Settlement Authority has partially implemented the goals specified in its work plan for 2019 in the areas of development of residential plots, and resettlement of residents from the dispersion in permanent localities and approval of transactions for marketing of residential plots as a solution to the natural increase in population. For example, it developed 758 plots (38%) out of the 2,000 it set as a target in the 2019 work plan. At the same time, according to data from the Settlement Authority from January 2021, 1,050 housing units were marketed in 2019 to the Bedouin population in the Negev. It should be noted that the Authority used 98% of the budget it set aside for the implementation of its work plan and also took action to legalise 24,652 housing units in the statutory planning stages, 23% beyond the target it set - 20,030 housing units.
- 📌 Master plan to complete the settlement of the Bedouin population in the Negev** - The Settlement Authority has formulated a proposal to complete the organization of the Bedouin settlement in the Negev by 2030. This plan was submitted to the Minister of Economy in 2020, but a budgeted master plan for the Bedouin localities in the Negev has not yet been approved beyond the five-year plan (ending in 2022), which considers trends of population growth, settlement of the Bedouin dispersion, construction and upgrading of infrastructure, evaluation of the need to transfer development powers to local authorities and so on.
- 📌 Socio-economic ranking** - According to the socio-economic index compiled by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the socio-economic ranking of Bedouin local authorities in the Negev is low compared to other local authorities in the Negev, and there has been no significant change in the ranking of Bedouin localities over the years despite government investment by virtue of government decisions. Thus, nine Bedouin local authorities are in a low socio-economic ranking - in the lowest places (1 - 11) out of 255 authorities.
- 📌 Implementation of the five-year plan 2397 (for the years 2017 - 2021)** - In three of the five years of the five-year plan (60% of the plan period), commitments were made to finance projects amounting to NIS 1.675 billion (approximately 53% of a total of NIS 3.177 billion). The Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Settlement Authority, responsible for the promotion of Bedouin settlements, have set budgetary commitments at only about 23% of what is required in the multi-year plan. Furthermore, nine government ministries and the Settlement Authority did not report to the Ministry of Agriculture on the result indices in 19 areas of activity (61%) budgeted in their area.
- 📌 Estimated number of Bedouin living in localities** - Regarding the 268,000 Bedouin in the Negev, there are large discrepancies between the Bedouin residence registration



data of the Settlement Authority and the data in the Population Authority. For example, according to data from the Population Authority from 2018, the number of Bedouin living in the seven local authorities is 46,000 greater than the number of Bedouin registered with the Settlement Authority.

- 📌 Gaps in the number of residents registered in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum councils** - Data from the Population Authority from February 2020 regarding the number of residents registered in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum regional councils are significantly lower than the data of the income distribution committee from the Ramat Hovav Local Industrial Council. Thus, the Neve Midbar Council has 8,287 residents, compared to 26,500 residents according to the committee's data, and the Al-Qassum Council has 12,723 residents, compared to 24,600 residents according to the committee's data. In the absence of complete data reflecting the number of residents physically living within the jurisdiction of each locality, decisions regarding budgeting authorities, infrastructure planning in the locality etc. will not be sufficiently established and will impair their implementation in all relevant areas - education, welfare, health, transportation, communications.
- 📌 Difficulty in clarifying residency requirements** - The Population Authority does not have the appropriate tools and resources to carry out a thorough clarification of any requirement for municipal affiliation of a person registered as a "tribe" or change of residence of a Bedouin resident, nor does it have the tools to thoroughly clarify any residency requirement on the part of the Bedouin population. According to a representative of the Population Authority, over the years, fake documents and certificates have been used many times to "prove" residence in Israel, such as fictitious leases and fake water and electricity consumption data. Furthermore, the Population Authority rarely conducts field investigations in the Bedouin villages due to concerns for the personal safety of the researchers. The authority usually relies on investigations and decisions of the NII, which also faces difficulties in conducting such investigations.
- 📌 Social security benefits provided to residents of the Bedouin population living in Judea and Samaria** - Residents of the Bedouin population actually living in the territories of Judea and Samaria enjoy benefits granted to them, in particular benefits from the National Insurance Institute, by virtue of being registered as residents of the Negev, and this leads to the loss of state funds. It emerged that no departures of residents from Israel to the Judea and Samaria area are recorded and monitored, and that entrances to Israel are registered only partially.
- 📌 Non-compliance with property tax collection targets and non-enforcement of orders regarding the distribution of non-residential property tax revenues (military bases and industrial areas)** - according to CBS data, the average residential property tax collection ratio in the nine Bedouin authorities in the Negev in 2016 was 24.4%, while in the other 31 authorities in the Negev it was about 78.6%. The Ministry of Interior does not enforce the orders regarding reduced income distribution (at a rate



of 85%) to local authorities that do not collect residential property taxes at all, such as the al-Qassoum and Neve Midbar regional councils.

- 📌 **Deficiencies in the locality of Tarabin a-Sa'ane (Tarabin)** - 20% of the residents of the tribe live outside the jurisdiction of the locality; in the years since the establishment of the settlement, some of the infrastructure built in it was destroyed - a sports field was set on fire and damaged to the point that it could not be used; development, asphalt and lighting work in a particular neighborhood has been halted due to threats to managers and contractors.



Evaluation of the achievements of the five-year plan for the years 2012 to 2016 -





An accompanying research procedure was conducted to examine the achievements of the five-year plan (3708) for the years 2012-2016.

Key recommendations

- 💡 **Designating an entity for the coordination of treatment of the non-Jewish population in the Negev** - It is recommended that the government ministries responsible for the treatment of the non-Jewish population in the Negev, headed by the Prime Minister's Office, designate an entity which will coordinate all relevant areas regarding the treatment of the non-Jewish population, and be responsible for the strategic plan and the monitoring of its implementation.
- 💡 **Examining the barriers to improving the socio-economic standing of the Bedouin localities** - It is recommended that the five-year plan be formulated in a way that will identify the main barriers and set goals for improving the socio-economic standing of the Bedouin communities in the Negev and other objective socio-economic data concerning the Bedouin population in the Negev.
- 💡 **Implementation of the five-year plans** - it is recommended that the Ministry of Economy monitor the receipt of all required reports from all ministries participating in the five-year plan on an annual basis and after exhausting all budgets on an ongoing basis, examining barriers to their implementation and presenting solutions to these barriers. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Economy initiate a regular discussion in the government regarding the implementation of the five-year plan.
- 💡 **Establishment of a mechanism for settling the registration of residents** - It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior, the Population Authority, local authorities and relevant regional councils, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Welfare, the CBS and other state bodies establish a mechanism for registering Bedouin residents who



receive services in each locality, according to the goals of the various bodies, in such a way that each body will maintain a registration of the residents who apply to receive services from it. This should help to optimally allocate the budgets between the various authorities and to improve the services provided to the Bedouin population in the Negev.

-  **Improving the registration data of the Bedouin in the Negev** - It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior and the Population Authority examine the continued use of the "tribe" status registration against registration according to the resident's place of residence as is customary for all Israeli residents. They should do this with a view to improving the data concerning the number of residents living within the jurisdiction of each of the Bedouin localities.
-  **Enforcement of the order regarding the distribution of income** - It is recommended to enforce the order that established rules regarding the distribution of income from non-residential property regarding municipalities that do not meet their self-collection goals, and to examine the issue of establishing a fund for the development of the Bedouin authorities that did not meet the condition of collecting the property tax for residences, as recommended in the Razin report.
-  **Preparations for conducting expenditure surveys and a census in the Negev** - it is recommended that the CBS be prepared, in cooperation with the relevant parties such as the Settlement Authority, to optimally execute the nearest census among the Bedouin population in the south, while drawing the necessary lessons from the previous census and allocating the appropriate budget. It is also recommended to act to increase the rate of household visits in the annual household expenditure surveys and to perform visits also in the dispersion to present a complete picture.
-  **The treatment of the locality of Tarabin** - it is recommended that the Settlement Authority and the Al-Qassum Regional Council work to absorb and locate all residents living outside the blue Line. The Settlement Authority must continue to act to accompany security personnel in any infrastructure work that has a risk of threats to workers executing their duties. It is further recommended that all relevant parties, including the local leadership and the police, set up a "round table" for the purpose of holding regular talks and resolving disputes, and formulate a plan for the war on vandalism.



Title Two - Functioning of local councils and water corporations in the Bedouin sector

Key figures

<p>91% of public</p>	<p>NIS 180 million</p>	<p>15% - 38%</p>	<p>NIS 21 million</p>
<p>infrastructure is lacking in localities in the Neve Midbar and al-Qassum regional councils, including water, electricity, sewage, roads and communications, as of 2020</p>	<p>The budget for transporting 44,000 pupils in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum councils. NIS 20 million is the budget gap required to finance transportation in al-Qassum</p>	<p>Residential property tax collection rates in the Bedouin municipalities in the Negev, compared with an average of 84% in the other municipalities in the south. The Bedouin municipalities in the Negev have an income of NIS 120 per person from non-residential property taxes, compared to about NIS 2,100 in the Jewish localities in the Negev.</p>	<p>The extent of the financial damage of the Neve Midbar Water Corporation due to water thefts of the residents of the locality in 2016; the corporation has 57% water depreciation and 68% collection depreciation</p>
<p>384 streets</p>	<p>30% dropout</p>	<p>12,600 pupils</p>	<p>53,000 residents</p>
<p>Out of 886 streets in the seven oldest Bedouin localities in the Negev, where the local authority did not advance the mapping process</p>	<p>rate among Bedouin pupils, a rate that is significantly higher than the dropout rate in the whole country</p>	<p>who do not live or study in Al-Qassum were reported by the council to receive a budget for student transportation</p>	<p>of the Bedouin dispersion receive municipal services in seven localities, even though they are not registered in them</p>



Key findings








- Connection of the dispersion villages to public infrastructure** - As of the end of the audit, in most localities of the Al-Qassum and Neve Midbar regional councils, almost no public infrastructure of water, sewage, electricity, roads, communications, street lighting and sidewalks existed. For example: public water and sewage infrastructure was set up only in Tarabin.
- Water depreciation rate** - In the Neve Midbar and Mei Rahat water corporations, the water depreciation rate in 2016-2017 averages about 17% to 38%, compared with an average of about 7% in the other southern corporations. These data indicate the financial vulnerability of these water corporations. Thus, in three of the six localities of the Neve Midbar Water Corporation, water depreciation in 2016 was particularly high, standing at 59% (Tel Sheva), 50% (Lakiya) and 61% (Arara in the Negev). According to an estimate by the Neve Midbar Corporation, the extent of the financial damage due to the theft of water from the corporation in 2016 was about NIS 21 million for water theft of about two million cubic meters.
- Dependence of the water corporations on state funding** - About six years after the establishment of the Neve Midbar Corporation and about seven years after the establishment of the Rahat Water Corporation, and although these corporations benefit from subsidy for water purchase and state grants from the date of their establishment, their dependence on state funding has not been reduced, and it is not clear what the expectation is for their independent existence without such dependence in the future as well.
- The total annual income of the Bedouin municipalities from residential property tax** - stands at only about NIS 25 million out of the income in the regular aggregate budget (about 2%). This compares with revenues from residential property taxes of NIS 1.12 billion in the other municipalities in the south of the country out of revenues in the aggregate budget (approximately 14%).
- Non-issuance of property tax assessments in the Neve Midbar and al-Qasum councils** - Despite the state and council statements to the High Court, since the establishment of the councils in 2012, they have not issued property tax assessments to their residents by law and hence have not collected these charges.
- Balance Grants** - In February 2018, an inter-ministerial team was established to examine balance grants of the Ministry of Interior for residents registered in the Population Registry as residents belonging to the Bedouin tribes in the Negev (hereinafter - the inter-ministerial team). It was learned that the Ministry of Interior has not yet adapted the balance grant formula to the unique situation of the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev.



- 📌 Conducting field inspections regarding pupils' transportation** - In the years 2015 - 2018, two field inspections were conducted. An audit conducted on 4.5.17 to examine the distances and costs requested for transportation submitted by the Al-Qassum Local Council found discrepancies between the distance listed in the application and the distance actually measured, at rates of between 100% and 500%.
- 📌 Bad roads and unsafe buses for transporting pupils** - The roads by which the bus passes in the Bedouin dispersion are unpaved and very bad, and during the winter season the floods sweep sections of road. Therefore, the danger to pupils is increasing, and according to the director of the council's education department, many parents choose not to send their children to school during significant rain events. Also, the transportation companies that transport the students use old buses, more than a decade old, that are inferior in terms of safety.
- 📌 Attendance data of employees of the Education Department of the Al-Qassum Regional Council** - The internal auditor's report on employee attendance reporting raises concerns about the existence of an improper norm of false reports.
- 📌 Documentation and procedures in the execution and approval of subcontractors' work** - In the al-Qassum Regional Council, there is no procedure for submitting execution invoices of infrastructure contractors and their approval. Also, in the computerized system of project performance of the council no project file is managed, which should include the work tender, the employment contract, quantity calculations, execution sheets and so on.
- 📌 Naming streets and giving numbers to houses**- In the Bedouin local authorities in the Negev, there is an ongoing problem of the lack of mapping and naming of streets. Most of the streets in these localities have no official names, and the houses do not have signs stating the house number. Locality mapping was ordered for the seven recognized old localities, but not for 11 other recognized localities in the al-Qasum and Neve Midbar councils.



Key recommendations

-  **Formulation of a multi-year plan to complete all public infrastructure in the localities in the Negev** - It is recommended that the Settlement Authority, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Transportation, the Water Authority, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Finance and the Al-Kassum and Neve Midbar Regional Councils and any other concerned governmental body will formulate a multi-year plan to complete all the infrastructure in all the localities, specifying implementation schedules and required budgetary resources.
-  **Initiating a plan to increase enforcement and payment collection of water corporations** - It is recommended that the Neve Midbar Water Corporation initiate a plan to increase collection and enforcement in all the corporation's localities, which will include mapping of those refusing to pay and use of all enforcement measures available to the corporation, including foreclosure.
-  **Conducting property surveys and charging residents' property taxes** - The Neve Midbar and Al-Kassum regional councils must complete the property surveys and, if necessary, take alternative measures, send property tax assessments to residents by law and in accordance with the state notification to the 2018 High Court and collect these property tax charges by law. The Ministry of Interior must monitor the activities of the regional councils and ensure that the issuance of property tax assessments to all their residents by law and that the activities required by the authorities to collect them are performed. It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior consider the conditioning of the granting of balance grants to the municipalities to meeting the targets for the collection of property taxes and the application of measures against heads of localities who do not perform their duty to collect property taxes.
-  **Legislation of by-laws** - It is recommended that all the municipalities complete the enactment of by-laws in their area, and in particular regarding the imposition of development levies. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Interior monitor the activities of regional councils and all Bedouin municipalities and ensure the completion of bylaws, issuing invoices by the authorities to residents accordingly, performing the activities required to collect levies and completing development work against these levies.
-  **Pupils transportation** - In view of the amount of money invested in transportation through the Ministry of Education budget, its participation in their costs at a rate of 100% and the high degree of inconsistencies with field reports, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education conduct field inspections more frequently and consider computerized methods and means for routine control, such as installation of control devices in the vehicles that transport and equip the students with a smart card (such as a Rav-Kav card to be validated upon boarding the vehicle), in coordination with



the relevant bodies in the regional councils. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education work in cooperation with the Population Authority to improve the data on the students transported by it, thus significantly increasing the reliability and accuracy of the data appearing in the transportation file.



Control over al-Qassoum Council and its staff reports and enforcement of conflict of interest provisions - Al-Qassoum Regional Council must refine its guidelines for all its employees and school principals so that false reports shall not be signed and that regular and routine oversight of all attendance reports signed by the council should be performed. Subsequently, the Al-Qassoum Council must enforce the provisions of the law and the guidelines and require all its employees to fill out the proper disclosure form. It must also complete a mapping of all the relatives employed by the Authority, and, if necessary, submit the appropriate cases for approval by the Service Committee for the Employment of Relatives. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior conduct an array of ongoing audits of the council's reports.



Evaluation of the construction and upgrade project of ORT High School in a-Sayed locality - it is recommended that the council, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, the body that financed the project, conduct a thorough examination of the project management and examine the need to take steps.



Examination of the activities of the Al-Kassoum Council by the Ministry of Interior - It is recommended that the district commissioner in the Ministry of Interior examine the activities of the council and instruct it to prepare a plan for reorganization in all areas mentioned above and monitor its implementation.



Finalizing the mapping of localities and naming of streets - it is recommended that all relevant parties - including the local planning committees, the district planning committee, the Settlement Authority and the Ministry of Interior - work to close the gaps in each locality between the number of streets in the master plan and their location and the mapping of all types of streets actually paved, in such a way that at the end of the process a full understanding will be obtained in regard to the street data in all relevant governmental authorities, including MAPI and the Population Authority. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Interior monitor the activities of the Bedouin local authorities to complete the mapping project regarding the streets mapped by MAPI and verify its completion.



Title Three - Government Infrastructure

Key figures

13 instances of theft

Of transformers from the Electricity Company and high voltage lines in the years 2018 - 2019

30 pirated

connections to the electricity grid in one neighborhood in Rahat in January-June 2018

1,150 instances

of sabotage of the Mekorot water company's infrastructure and theft of water and equipment in the years 2008 - 2018

NIS 41 million

Estimated economic damage to the IEC due to illegal power connections in 2020

NIS 300,000

Estimated damage to the PEI company for damage to fuel lines during attempts to steal fuel in 2017-2019

70,000 houses

in the Neve Midbar and al-Kassum regional councils discharge their sewage through septic tanks, which create a risk of groundwater pollution and diseases.

73 criminal

events including stone throwing and penetration of the Nevatim army base in the years 2018-2019

1,628 events

which included, among other things, theft of equipment, entry into firing range areas and the construction of cannabis greenhouses at the Tze'elim base in the years 2017-2020



Key findings



- Damage to Mekorot facilities** - Mekorot annually deals with about 105 sabotage incidents at its facilities in the Negev and theft from them. The extent of the damage to the company's infrastructure in the years 2008-2018 was very large and amounted to approximately NIS 1.5 million. In 2019, the company's infrastructure was damaged - such as the theft of diesel and water, car theft, burglary of buildings and damage along the lines - which caused it a total damage of NIS 275,900. These events causes considerable financial damage to the company. In addition, such incidents damage the most vital national infrastructure and delay the implementation of projects for the proper connection of the population to the water network.
- Damage to IEC facilities** - The IEC deals with many theft incidents every year, mainly of metal transformers, from its facilities in the Negev. Thus, between January 2018 and September 2019, 13 theft incidents were documented in the northern Negev, mainly of transformers, copper cables and equipment, which are apparently a target for metal traders. In addition, in some of the Bedouin localities in the Negev, there is a pirated connection of local residents to the electricity infrastructure of the Electric Company or of public bodies, and it appears that this is a relatively common phenomenon in these localities. This phenomenon has many negative consequences, including risking human life as a result of unsafe connections, causing faults in the electricity network that affect all residents, damage to IEC equipment and burning of fuses. According to IEC data from October 2020, the estimated annual economic damage caused to it due to illegal electricity connections was at least NIS 41 million in 2020.
- Damage to the facilities of the Petroleum & Energy Infrastructure Company (PEI)** - PEI has been dealing for years with damage to the company's fuel lines in the south and attempts to steal fuel from underground pipelines. Beyond the economic damage to the company, there is damage to the continuity of supply to essential facilities as well as damage to the environment as a result of fuel leaks to the ground.
- Lack of wastewater treatment infrastructure** - Neve Midbar and al-Qassum councils do not have wastewater treatment infrastructure. The effluent from about 70,000 homes is currently carried out in an old-fashioned way, using septic tanks, a situation that serves as a fertile ground for groundwater pollution and disease, while endangering human life. The damage from the environmental hazard that originated in those localities is also expected to reach Be'er Sheva.
- Absence of a water corporation to organize the treatment of wastewater**- In the unrecognized localities, there is no water corporation that organizes the treatment of wastewater. Furthermore, by February 2020, the Water Authority has not yet determined how it will share the burden of the costs involved in expanding the Beer Sheva Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) between the Mei Sheva and Neve Midbar water






corporations. Also, this expansion was not promoted, that concerns the collection of sewage from Wadi al-Naim to the Mei Sheva sewage treatment plant. A precondition for the expansion of the sewage treatment plant is the quality of the sewage.

- 📌 Unregulated Bedouin settlement near Nevatim base and criminal activity near it** - Bedouin settlement near the base results in defense risks, damage to the base infrastructure and damage to the environment, and may harm Bedouins living there. For example: (1) the Nevatim base can be observed, a situation that allows the study of patterns of the base activity, both in routine and emergency, activity that is a strategic intelligence asset; (2) the intrusion of flocks of sheep can cause damage to aircraft; (3) Occasionally there are incidents of tires and stones being thrown at military vehicles; (4) Burning pruned tree branches by the Bedouin residents near the electronic perimeter fence of the base damages the fence.
- 📌 Illegal construction near the Tze'elim base (CGT)** - In recent years, there has been illegal construction by residents, most of whom are identified as residents of the village of Bir Hadaj, near the IDF CGT base in Tze'elim and the firing ranges of the base. There is also a phenomenon of herds grazing in the firing ranges of the base, endangering both shepherds and animals.
- 📌 Criminal activity in the Tze'elim base area (CGT)** - Criminal activity is carried out in the base area, including the theft of equipment for various purposes, including the sale of it to criminal organizations (ammunition, explosives), aiding smuggling activities (night vision devices and radios) and generating economic profits (iron, copper, diesel). Between January 2017 and July 2020 there were 1,628 criminal incidents, and hundreds of cannabis greenhouses were set up in the base's firing range areas.



Key recommendations

-  **Cooperation to eradicate the damage to national infrastructure** - In view of such significant and ongoing damage to the vital infrastructure in the Negev of major government companies in the economy (IEC, Mekorot and Petroleum & Energy Infrastructure Company), it is recommended that government ministries and relevant companies work to eradicate the phenomenon, in close cooperation with the Israel Police. In addition, law enforcement authorities and the Israel Police must work to give high priority to dealing with the issue of damage to infrastructure in the Negev and the illegal connections to water and electricity of the residents and other unauthorized parties.
-  **Lack of resources in weak water corporations** - It is recommended that the Water Authority evaluate the lack of sufficient resources of weak corporations to invest in important projects in the water sector and work to find a solution for investments in these projects. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the local authorities and regional councils responsible for these areas take care of organizing the solutions required for sewage treatment and the consequences of the sewage leakage phenomenon.
-  **Non-regulated Bedouin settlement and criminal activity in the vicinity and within the Nevatim and Tze'elim bases (CGT)** - it is recommended that the IDF, the Ministry of Defense, the Israel Police and the Settlement Authority work to prevent criminal activity in close proximity to IDF bases.



Title Four - Enforcement and Public Health

Key figures

87% of the fines

for people driving without a license were given to residents of the non-Jewish population in 2017-2018

264 extortion cases

were opened in the Negev region between January 2015 and March 2020; 205 of them from January 2019

4,411 calls

to the Southern Police Control Center in 2018 due to dangers on the road - shooting, bullying, throwing stones and roaming camels

20 pirate waste sites

are located in the Negev, to which household waste is also sent from the center of the country

224 polygamy cases

out of 259 handled in the Southern District were closed, and only 15 were transferred for indictment

61% of fatal accidents

in the Negev and 60% of serious accidents in 2018 involved drivers from the non-Jewish population, who account for about 10% of the drivers in the Southern District

244 children

Below the age of 16 of the non-Jewish population (61% of the underage population) were caught driving in the years 2016-2020

17 persons

were killed in accidents with animals and about 399 were injured in the years 2008-2018

70% of criminal

cases in the Negev for material tax offenses are associated with the non-Jewish sector

NIS 400 million

Loss of tax revenue each year due to water dilution in gasoline sold at pirate gas stations



Key findings



- Disposal of waste and carcasses in the public space** - In the temporary localities and permanent localities where the Bedouin population lives, there is a phenomenon of waste disposal in the public domain and in violation of the Cleanliness Law, and "private initiatives" are carried out for unregulated waste fires, causing significant air pollution to which the population is exposed. In addition, the local authorities in the temporary localities where the Bedouin population lives do not collect waste and carcasses following the slaughter of animals for private purposes and do not take care of it properly. Permanent localities lack waste recycling sites, and the frequency of waste collection and treatment is low. In addition, the Ministry of Environmental Protection is unable to prevent the phenomenon of dumping waste in the unincorporated areas throughout the Negev.
- Proximity of educational institutions to Neot Hovav** - about 3,000 pupils study in two elementary schools and 13 kindergartens in a large educational center under the responsibility of the Neve Midbar Regional Council, which is close to the Neot Hovav site (2.5 km from it), and as of July 2020 they had not yet been transferred to another school as required by the Minister of Environmental Protection.
- Establishment of police stations** - As of February 2020, police stations had not yet been established in Hura, Kuseife and Lakiya, intended according to the plan of the Minister of Internal Security to strengthen the police deployment in the Arab sector in the south. A police station has been established in Arara in the Negev, and a sub-station is operating in Segev-Shalom where a small number of police officers are stationed compared to a regular police station. In comparison to the staffing levels of a standard police station.
- Extortion of protection fees from business owners, private builders, educational institutions and factories** - From January 2015 to March 2020, 177 (67%) cases of extortion of protection fees in the Negev region were shelved or transferred to closure proceedings, and 87 cases (33%) were transferred to the Southern District Attorney's Office. The police data regarding the extent of the phenomenon of extortion of protection fees in the Negev do not fully reflect the extent of the phenomenon, but only the reports to the police about this phenomenon.
- Lack of enforcement of pirate gas stations by local authorities** - In 2014-2018, local authorities and regional councils did not initiate enforcement against the pirate gas stations in their area. It also emerged that the information received by the Israel Police regarding the pirate gas stations came from private sources and not from government bodies related to the field.







- 📌 **Involvement of drivers from the non-Jewish population in fatal and serious road accidents in the Negev** - The involvement of drivers from the non-Jewish population in the Negev in fatal, serious and minor accidents is significantly higher than their rate in the Negev region (10%) and the general population (21%). Thus, in the Negev region, drivers from the non-Jewish population were involved in 62% of the fatal accidents and 45% of the serious accidents in 2016-2019.
- 📌 **Reports of life-threatening traffic offenses and road bullying in the Negev region** - in 2016-2019, the rate of recorded fines for drivers from the non-Jewish population in the Negev region was higher than the rate of recorded fines for these drivers throughout the country and in the Southern District. Thus, 57% of the reports for life-threatening offenses and 62% of the reports of road bullying offenses were recorded for drivers from the non-Jewish population.
- 📌 **Driving without a valid driver's license / insurance** - the rate of traffic reports (tickets) in the Negev for drivers from the non-Jewish population is higher than the rate of reports recorded for drivers from the non-Jewish population throughout the country and in the Southern District, in each of the offenses examined, and stands at between 81% and 90%. In addition, in the years 2016-2019, the rate of drivers from the non-Jewish population who received traffic reports for insurance offenses in the Negev region was 88%, higher than this rate in the Southern District (73%) and throughout the country (68%).
- 📌 **Child driving** - from 2016 to 2020 (partially) 399 children (aged 0-16) were caught in the Negev area driving a vehicle, without ever having a driver's license. 244 of them (about 61%) are from the non-Jewish population. However, the work plans of the Israel Police at the villages station and at the Rahat Negev station for 2017 and 2018 did not address the phenomenon of child driving in the Negev region, and no goals and enforcement methods were set.
- 📌 **Traffic danger due to wandering of camels on transport routes** - Between 2008 and 2018, 17 people were killed in road accidents involving animals, most of them in camel accidents, and 399 people were injured, including more than 70 seriously. The work plans of the Traffic Division in the Southern District and of the stations in the towns of Rahat-Negev for the years 2017-2018 do not address the phenomenon of camel wandering and no enforcement targets have been set.
- 📌 **Closure of polygamy cases without indictment** - Although the Attorney General gave instruction to increase enforcement in the field of polygamy, and hundreds of reports of polygamy offenses were forwarded to the police from the Sharia court, the Ministry of Interior, the Civil Prosecutor's Office and the Population and Immigration Authority, in practice, between 2017 and February 2020, as of February 2020 data, 18 indictments had been filed, while 345 cases had been closed. That is, indictments were filed in only about 5% of the cases.



- 📌 **False reports to the National Insurance Institute** - There is a phenomenon according to which women are divorced by their husbands and remain living in their place of residence and even remain under his control, but report to the National Insurance Institute as independent (single-parent) families. There is also a phenomenon of Bedouin women residing in Israel who have moved to the territories of Judea and Samaria and continue to receive payment from the NII. Due to the lack of adequate resources and objective difficulties, the NII is unable to conduct proper investigations and checks, that could enable to prove that most women who report as independent families still have a regular family lifestyle, in one form or another, with the man who divorced them. The lack of adequate enforcement allows the exploitation of the phenomenon of polygamy for the purpose of receiving benefits illegally.
- 📌 **High rate of tax offenders among the non-Jewish population in the Negev** - As of June 2020, 218 of the 388 criminal cases (56%) opened for tax offenses (Offense Disclosure Report) in the Negev region were related to the non-Jewish population. It should be noted that the percentage of active dealers (active businesses in the VAT), in the Negev region is 22,416 dealers, of whom 3,504 belong to the non-Jewish population (approximately 16%). In other words, the rate of VAT offenses of the non-Jewish population is 3.5 times greater than their relative share in the total population of those active in the Negev.
- 📌 **Enforcement operations of the Negev Tax Authority** - In the years 2016-2019, the Authority conducted 327 enforcement operations in the Negev region, but only one of them was conducted in the Bedouin dispersion. The Tax Authority's failure to enter these areas could result in a material loss of tax revenue and a reduction in deterrence.
- 📌 **Loss of tax revenues for the state as a result of the gasoline mix at pirate gas stations** - The loss of annual revenue for the state taxes as a result of the gasoline mix at pirate gas stations is estimated at NIS 400 million (not including tax loss due to tax evasion at these gas stations). According to data from the Tax Authority from October 2020, in the years 2016-2019 at the Beer Sheva Assessing Officer, no assessments were made for owners of pirate gas stations. At that time, only one person who sold fuel in the yard of his home was subject to enforcement through the Beer Sheva VAT office, in cooperation with the Israel Police.
- 📌 **Security of Educational Institutions** - The Ministry of Education and the Israel Police have not assigned morning positions for security guards to educational institutions in the al-Qassum and Neve Midbar regional councils. Also, contrary to the procedures of the Ministry of Education, in the al-Qassum and Neve Midbar regional councils, educational institutions are not secured in the morning. There is "property protection" in the evening by security companies, which were budgeted in 2018 in the amount of about NIS 19 million.



Key recommendations

-  **Treatment of pirate waste sites in the Bedouin local authorities** - It is recommended that all Bedouin local authorities throughout the Negev work to remove the waste from their area to regulated waste disposal sites, and the Ministry of the Interior must monitor their activities on the subject. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Israel Police must work to close all pirate waste sites throughout the Negev and enforce legislation prohibiting the dumping and burning of waste at unauthorized sites, as well as issuing cleanup orders to local authorities and landowners by law. It is recommended that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of the Interior formulate a comprehensive plan for cleaning the Negev areas from the many environmental hazards found in it.
-  **Dealing with the phenomenon of extortion of protection fees** - It is recommended that the State Attorney's Office and the police examine ways to eradicate the protection phenomenon. It is also recommended that the police formulate courses of action and, accordingly, regularly hold proactive operations in the blackmailers' centers of activity - construction sites, industrial areas, public institutions, and the like.
-  **Institutionalized treatment of pirate gas stations** - The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Israel Land Authority and the Israel Police, must examine the need to name an entity for organization of enforcement operations in pirate gas stations, and the storage and destruction of confiscated fuel. In addition, the police must act, along with enforcement in the localities, to gather intelligence on pirate gas stations in the Bedouin dispersion areas as well, and work to close all these gas stations.
-  **Enforcement in the field of traffic offenses** - To ensure the safety of all passengers and pedestrians in the south of the country, it is recommended that the Ministry of Transportation and the Israel Police join forces to eradicate the prevalent criminal driving of some non-Jewish populations, creating a risk to all residents and passengers in this area. It is also recommended that the Israel Police carry out effective enforcement of the ban on driving and using a vehicle without any auto insurance or with expired insurance coverage permitted the use of the vehicle. It is also recommended that the responsible parties consider initiating a settlement that will allow for the imposition of a sanction by way of a fine of a high amount for the offense of using a vehicle without insurance alongside the enforcement of an offense of driving without a valid driver's license. It is also recommended that the Israel Police, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Education and other relevant parties work to eradicate the phenomenon of child driving through strict and systematic enforcement, including imposing administrative sanctions on a person who allows a minor - who cannot obtain a driver's license - to drive a vehicle he



owns or controls. It is also necessary to carry out information activities in schools about the dangers involved in children driving.



Systemic handling of polygamy cases in the Southern District - It is recommended that the Attorney General examine the implementation of his guidelines among law enforcement systems regarding the phenomenon of polygamy, and that the Ministry of Justice and the Israel Police conduct processes to learn lessons from all the investigation files closed in 2017-2018. Among other things, they should examine the need to allocate appropriate resources to enforce the legal prohibition of polygamy and to reduce this phenomenon, which is rooted in deep social, cultural and religious strata among the Bedouin population in the Negev. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Justice examine the implementation of all the recommendations of the Palmor Committee regarding the eradication of the phenomenon of polygamy in an orderly and periodic manner, and verify the compliance of all the different entities with the various recommendations. It is recommended that the National Insurance Institute regularly compare its files to examine the cases of women who, on the one hand, receive an income guarantee after their divorce and, on the other hand, had additional children with their spouses after their divorce and receive child benefits for them. This should be done in order to make sure that they have the right to continue receiving these benefits.



Treatment of material tax offenses and the phenomenon of fictitious invoices - The Tax Authority must continue to deal with the phenomenon of fictitious invoices among the non-Jewish population in the Negev region in order to reduce it as much as possible. It is also recommended that the Tax Authority formulate an annual collection plan with targets for all the Bedouin localities in the Negev, in which it will integrate the residents of the dispersion, and will allocate enforcement resources as required. Increasing the physical presence of the Tax Authority units in the Bedouin localities and in the Bedouin dispersion will strengthen the authority's deterrence capability and is expected to raise the level of compliance and reporting among taxpayers and dealers. In addition, all relevant parties, including the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Police and the Fuel Administration, must cooperate with the Tax Authority in all operations they conduct to locate pirate gas stations in the Negev region. The tax authority must act to collect the taxes and even consider filing indictments for these tax offenses. It is also recommended that the National Insurance Institute and the Tax Authority examine ways to improve cooperation between them in order to advance their goals, especially with regard to the non-Jewish population in the Negev, which on the one hand, as stated, receives a share of National Insurance benefits which is high in relation to the entire population, and on the other hand, is subject to a low level of enforcement by the Tax Authority which needs to be improved.



Eradication of the phenomenon of paying protection fees for "night guard" in educational institutions - it is recommended that the relevant bodies create effective control and supervision mechanisms for the current activities of local



authorities and regional councils, so that the money from the five-year plans and the budgets of the current activities will not actually be directed to the payment of protection fees as part of night guards, at the expense of guards in educational institutions during school hours and educational activities.



Title Five - Provision of regular services

Key figures

48.4%
of
registered
mail

sent to the residents of the Bedouin population in the Negev in 2019 was returned to sender

41 cases

of attempted burglary and robbery in postal units in the Negev, most of them in the localities of the non-Jewish population, in the years 2015 - 2019

55% of residents

who were supposed to participate in health training courses within the framework of the five year plan (2397) for the years 2017 - 2019 did participate in them

54% of resuscitation

systems and devices provided to localities in the Negev compared to those that were supposed to be provided under the five-year plan (2397) for the years 2017 - 2019



Key findings





- Difficulties in the distribution of mail in permanent and dispersion localities** - the rate of return of registered mail in the localities of the Bedouin population in the Negev is about 48.4%, much higher than the rate of return anywhere else in the State of Israel, which stands at an average of about 24%. This mainly hurts the state, its agencies and debtors who are unable to collect their debt. This creates a kind of protection for debtors who refuse to accept the registered mail from taking enforcement action due to non-payment of taxes, fees and debts.
- Post offices in the Bedouin localities in the Negev** - the branches are not physically and logistically prepared to handle the large number of those in need of their services, especially during the days of distribution of social security benefits of all kinds, such as income support and child benefits.
- Damage to postal distribution centers** - In some localities of the Bedouin dispersion, the postal company was unable to distribute mail through postal distribution centers due to damage to the distribution centers, and some were even dismantled. Also, in recent



years there have been many break-ins and cases of damage to post offices in the Negev. Thus, in the years 2015-2019, there were 18 burglary incidents, 14 robbery incidents and nine robbery attempts at post offices, mainly in the localities of the non-Jewish population in the Beer Sheva area.

-  **Absence of Home Front Command alerts in Bedouin dispersion localities** - As of the date of the audit in May 2020, no warning systems have been installed in the Bedouin dispersion localities using horns, which provide preliminary notice of rocket fire. This is due to the fact that their installation requires a combination of an orderly connection to electricity and decent and stable public buildings, which are lacking in these localities. Also, in most of the settlements in the dispersion, those responsible for the mosques refused to install loudspeakers. The main means for receiving alerts in the dispersion is the Home Front Command's applications for mobile phones.
-  **Emergency Rescue Services organization in the Bedouin population in the Negev** - Although actions were taken among the Bedouin population in the Negev to train rescue workers and provide resuscitation equipment, it appears that about 1,700 residents participated in training courses out of about 3,080 residents who were supposed to participate (about 55%). In addition, 334 resuscitation kits and devices were provided to the localities out of 620 intended to be supplied (approximately 54%).

Key recommendations

-  **Organization of the distribution of mail in the localities of the non-Jewish population** - it is recommended that the postal company work to examine solutions for non-delivery of registered mail in the permanent localities and the Bedouin dispersion in the Negev, and among other things will file complaints with the police when there are concerns about harming its agents. The postal company should consider applying the solution it had at the time with the court administration about other registered mail that it distributes for other law enforcement agencies. The police must also examine the phenomenon and the ways to eradicate it. It is also recommended that the National Insurance Institute examine ways to increase the use of a personal area on the institution's website among the Bedouin population and send messages by it via text messages in accordance with its procedures.
-  **Improving the service in the post offices** - It is recommended that the postal company work to improve the service in the Bedouin localities, while examining other alternatives for paying allowances. This becomes even more important in light of the fact that the rate of those in need of benefits among the residents of the Bedouin population is significantly higher than the rest of the population. This also has the effect of regulating the loads in the branches in a better way. It is also



recommended that the postal company examine the establishment of additional mail distribution centers in localities where there is a demand for it.



Arranging measures for the Home Front Command alerts in the Bedouin dispersion - it is recommended that the Home Front Command work to find solutions to install alert devices, including contacting with those responsible for mosques regarding the placement of loudspeakers, and examine the placement of loudspeakers in existing public buildings in all localities (kindergartens and schools). If necessary, the Home Front Command should work to raise the issue with the Ministry of the Interior for their assistance in this issue with the Bedouin local authorities.



Formulation of a plan to reduce gaps in emergency infrastructure and train health trustees - It is recommended that the Ministry of Health formulate a multi-year plan to complete the reduction of gaps in the deployment of emergency and rescue services and training in the Negev in general and among the Bedouin population in particular, in coordination with Magen David Adom and relevant local authorities.



Summary

Demonstrating the state's governance in all parts of the country is required as part of the need to ensure the provision of proper and regular services to all its residents wherever they are.

This report discusses the range of services and roles imposed on state authorities as part of their commitment to its residents in the Negev region. On the other side are law enforcement and the fulfillment of the obligations imposed on the residents. In the absence of these two, governance is significantly harmed.

According to CBS data, at the end of 2018, the Bedouin population in the Negev numbered about 268,000 people, which is about 20% of the total population in it, but according to the data in the report, its involvement rate in incidents related to violations of governance is significantly higher. This, among others, includes issues of transport, environment protection, tax payments, polygamy, protection payments and damage to civilian and military infrastructure.

In this report, deficiencies were noted regarding municipal management, water and sewage management, the fight against polygamy, dealing with cases of abuse of rights, pupils transportation, security of educational institutions, transportation infrastructure, receiving data from the population for statistical needs of the CBS, tax collection, environmental aspects, welfare, health and more.

Despite the government's budget allocations over the years in billions of shekels in five-year plans aimed at reducing the gaps between the sectors, and allocating current budgets to local authorities and Bedouin regional councils in the Negev, the gaps between Bedouin localities and other localities in the Negev remain considerable.

The promotion of the Bedouin population in the Negev depends on coordination between all related parties: the Settlement Authority, the Ministry of Housing, the Green Patrol, the Planning Administration, the Enforcement Unit, the Budget Division in the Ministry of Finance, the designated headquarters in the Ministry of Economy, the Israel Land Authority, Israel Police, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and more.

The Bedouin in the Negev are entitled to a socio-economic framework that will allow them to really integrate into the Israeli society. Their position today as the poorest group in Israel imposes on the Israeli government the responsibility to work to increase governance in the Negev to enable the Bedouin to emerge from their situation and provide them, and especially the younger generation, with the necessary tools and physical infrastructure to successfully face future challenges.

