



Français	Home	Contact Us	Help	Search	canada.gc.ca
--------------------------	----------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	------------------------	------------------------------

[Home](#) > [Research](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

The Board		
About the Board	ISR100382.E	29 July 2005
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Israel: Treatment of Bedouin, including incidents of harassment, discrimination or attacks; state protection (January 2003 - July 2005)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References	General Situation	
Publications		
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	According to recent government figures, Israeli Bedouin Arabs, who are members of the Muslim faith, number approximately 170,000 (Israel 1 Feb. 2004; Jewish Virtual Library n.d.). While the vast majority of Bedouin live in the Negev desert in southern Israel, the Jewish Virtual Library indicated that approximately 10,000 live in central Israel and 50,000 live in the north of the country (n.d.).	
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division	Considered a community "in transition" (Israel 1 Feb. 2004; <i>The Phoenix</i> 9 Oct. 2003), Bedouin were formerly nomadic shepherds but are becoming increasingly sedentary (Israel 1 Feb. 2004). According to the Mossawa Center, an organization that aims to promote Arab-Israeli citizens' rights, while in 1948 approximately 90 per cent of Bedouin were employed in agricultural work, by 2003, 90 per cent were making a living through waged labour (5 Feb. 2003).	
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics		
Research		
Research Program	According to a Bedouin representative of the Israeli Defense Ministry, "Bedouin grievances ... are more socio-economic than political," and "most Bedouins want at some point to integrate themselves completely into Israeli society" while maintaining much of their traditional culture (<i>The Phoenix</i> 9 Oct. 2003). However, these statements could not be corroborated by the Research Directorate within time constraints.	
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	According to numerous sources, Israel's Bedouin constitute the country's poorest community (<i>The Observer</i> 23 Feb. 2003; AI June 2005, 29; <i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5), with the country's highest unemployment rate (AI June 2005, 29; <i>Houston Chronicle</i> 30 Nov. 2003) and lowest level of government investment (<i>The Observer</i> 23 Feb. 2003).	
Recent Research		
Media Centre	Discrimination	
News		
Information Sheets	An article appearing in <i>The Observer</i> cited a Bedouin man referring to discrimination against Bedouin when they try to enter nightclubs, go through security checks at airports, or apply for employment (23 Feb. 2003). This information could not be corroborated by the Research Directorate within time constraints.	
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure		

Military Service

Israeli Bedouin are among the minority of Arabs in Israel who voluntarily serve in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) (AI June 2005, 22; Israel 1 Feb. 2004; *The Phoenix* 9 Oct. 2003; AFP 5 Jan. 2004; *The Journal News* 11 Apr. 2003; AFP 4 Jan. 2004); one source indicates that up to 75 per cent of Bedouin men serve in the Israeli army (*The Phoenix* 9 Oct. 2003).

Bedouin Women

According to a 2001 survey cited by Amnesty International (AI), over three-quarters of Israeli Bedouin women either have "no schooling at all or ha[ve] not completed their elementary school" (AI June 2005, 17). Women also apparently suffer from high unemployment, and high rates of family violence (US Fed News 6 July 2005). There are six times as many Bedouin women as there are other Israeli women receiving welfare benefits (ibid.). On the other hand, an article appearing in *The Jerusalem Report* noted that Bedouin women are increasingly attending university, and that as at July 2005, there were more Bedouin women than Bedouin men at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba (25 July 2005).

In July 2005, *The Jerusalem Report* magazine mentioned that police had yet to make any arrests in an arson attack against an embroidery workshop operated by two Bedouin women who believed the attackers were from their tribe and were "motivated by jealousy and anger at the women's success."

Police Incidents

In July 2003, for unclear reasons, an Israeli border police officer allegedly shot and killed a young Israeli Bedouin man who was in his car (Mossawa Center 23 July 2003; AFP 24 July 2003; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.a). The police officer was later found not guilty on the grounds of self-defence, since police claimed the man had tried to run police over; however, this claim was contested by at least one witness (ibid.).

Bedouin in the North and Centre of Israel

The Jewish Virtual Library has indicated that while Negev Bedouin who have migrated to cities in central Israel maintain good relations with their mostly Arab and Jewish immigrant neighbours, Bedouin who have migrated to Arab villages have experienced more uneasy relations with their Arab neighbours (n.d.).

Bedouin in the Negev

Estimates on the number of Bedouin living in the Negev run between 110,000 (Jewish Virtual Library n.d.; Arab HRA n.d.) and 140,000 (*Houston Chronicle* 30 Nov. 2003; *The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003; *Country Reports 2005* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5; AFP 2 Apr. 2003) or 145,000 (*The Daily Star* 10 May 2005).

While approximately half (*Country Reports 2005* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5; *The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003; *Houston Chronicle* 30 Nov. 2003; *Christian Science Monitor* 20 Feb. 2003; Arab HRA n.d.), or up to 85,000 (*The Jerusalem Report* 25 July 2005), live in seven officially authorized townships, sometimes described as "sprawling urban dumps" (*The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003), or ghettos (*The Daily Star* 10 May 2005), the other half, up to 80,000 people (AFP 2 Dec. 2003), lived in unrecognized "shantytowns" or settlements (*The Jerusalem Report* 25 July 2005; *Le Monde* 27 Jan. 2003; Arab HRA n.d.; *The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003; AI June 2005, 29; see also Mossawa Center 5 Feb. 2003); some from this group retain a semi-nomadic lifestyle (*The Jerusalem Report* 25 July 2005). The seven recognized townships reportedly lack adequate sewage, roads, and homes (*The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003).

It should be noted that according to Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority

Rights in Israel, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) does not publish official data on the Bedouin residents of unrecognized communities in the Negev (Adalah June 2005).

Education

Illiteracy among Israeli Bedouin has reportedly been reduced from 95 per cent one generation ago to 25 per cent in 2005 within [the latest] generation (Jewish Virtual Library n.d.). Those who are still illiterate are over 55 years of age (ibid.). Bedouin children are eligible for 12 years of free compulsory education (Jewish Virtual Library n.d.) but, according to Adalah, the approximately 12,000 three- and four-year-old children who live in unrecognized villages do not have access to compulsory education (June 2005). Bedouin children reportedly receive less funding and fewer educational services than children in the Jewish public education system or in many Arab communities (HRW 12 Aug. 2004).

Health Care

All seven recognized Bedouin towns in the Negev have medical clinics (Jewish Virtual Library n.d.). However, unrecognized communities in the Negev lack medical facilities (*The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003), and have the highest rate of health problems and child mortality in the country (AI May 2004, Sec. 7).

Unrecognized Villages

One of the most often cited problems affecting Israel's Bedouin community is that of unrecognized villages (ICG 4 Mar. 2004; Global IDP 2 June 2005, 4; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5; AI May 2004, Sec. 7).

The United States has reportedly insisted that Israel use a portion of its American aid package to assist, among others, Bedouin living in the south (*Haaretz* 15 July 2005), and according to the Jewish Virtual Library, the Israeli government has said it will "leave some 20 [per cent] of the land claimed in Bedouin possession and ... compensate them for the remainder" (n.d.).

Residents of unrecognized villages do not have access to many basic services (ICG 4 Mar. 2004; Freedom House 9 Sept. 2004; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5), such as water, electricity, roads (*Houston Chronicle* 30 Nov. 2003), schools (*The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003), sewage systems, or health services (Mossawa Center 22 Jan. 2004; AI May 2004, Sec. 7). Residents of these 46 villages (*Christian Science Monitor* 20 Feb. 2003; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5) are allegedly denied the right to vote or to receive government welfare, and must travel great distances to reach medical clinics (*The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003).

For instance, the town of Laqiya, which has a population of 5,000, has no traffic lights, no public transportation, and has an unemployment rate of 22 per cent (*The Daily Star* 10 May 2005). According to Lebanon's *The Daily Star*, high joblessness among Bedouin "has led to depression, drug use, and a turn to religious fundamentalism" (ibid.; see also *Houston Chronicle* 30 Nov. 2003; *Le Monde* 27 Jan. 2003).

Several sources noted the ongoing demolition of Bedouin homes that sit on unzoned land (Ynetnews.com 8 July 2005; ICG 4 Mar. 2004; AI May 2004, Sec. 7). Besides actual demolition is the "permanent threat of demolition," as well as evictions (ibid. June 2005, 33; ibid. May 2004, Sec. 7; Global IDP 2 June 2005, 6) which have apparently had a negative psychological effect on Bedouin women (AI June 2005, 33). *Country Reports 2004* also reported that one Bedouin resident of the unrecognized village of Atir was killed during a conflict with a home-demolition unit (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5).

In February 2003, Israeli authorities reportedly demolished a mosque in an

unrecognized Bedouin village (ACRI 5 Feb. 2003; Mossawa Center 5 Feb. 2003) because it was built without a permit (*The Guardian* 27 Feb. 2003; AFP 2 Apr. 2003; *ibid.* 5 Feb. 2003). One Orthodox rabbi and member of the Knesset joined in Muslim condemnation of the mosque's demolition, calling it "a disgrace" (*Christian Science Monitor* 20 Feb. 2003). According to Agence France-Presse (AFP), a district court later banned the demolition of houses of worship (2 Apr. 2003). The International Crisis Group (ICG) (4 Mar. 2004) and Mossawa Center (2 Dec. 2003) have urged the Israeli government to deal with the unrecognized Bedouin villages in consultation with local community representatives (ICG 4 Mar. 2004).

Between mid-2002 and mid-2004 Israeli security forces sprayed Bedouin crops with insecticide on seven occasions (AI May 2004, Sec. 7; Global IDP 2 June 2005, 4; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5; AI May 2004, Sec. 7; AFP 2 Apr. 2003). According to Amnesty International (AI), Israeli authorities did not warn Bedouin farmers of the spraying, and several people had to be hospitalized as a result (May 2004). However, according to *Country Reports 2004*, the Supreme Court issued a temporary injunction in March 2004 to prevent the Israel Land Administration (ILA) from spraying these crops any further (28 Feb. 2005). The human rights organization Adalah expressed concern over the negative effects the pesticides would pose on the Bedouin's health, but the ILA retorted that the crops had been planted without permission on government land (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5).

Negev Development Plan

On 20 July 2005, *Haaretz* indicated that Israel's Southern District Planning Commission had recently given approval to a new master plan that does not take into consideration the needs of the thousands of Bedouin citizens living in unrecognized villages. However, *Haaretz* also indicated that a Negev Plan would include enforcement of laws requiring Bedouin children to attend school, as well as providing for the education and employment of Bedouin women (15 July 2005). According to the Mossawa Center, the Negev Development Plan calls for the transfer of the approximately 70,000 Bedouin residing in unrecognized villages to seven government settlements (Mossawa 3 May 2003; see also *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). In its 2 June 2005 report on internal displacement in Israel, the Global IDP Project cited "intensified pressure" on Bedouin to leave their unauthorized settlements (2 June 2005, 6). A new draft law entitled the "removal of intruders" law provides for increased funding for security operations to carry out evictions and removals of Bedouin from unrecognized settlements (AI May 2004, Sec. 7).

Country Reports 2004 further stated that much of the Negev development plan's funds were earmarked for house demolitions, and that as at the end of 2004, funds allocated toward the construction of new homes for Bedouin in the seven new townships were insufficient (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5).

Advocacy for Recognition

According to a 27 April 2005 article published in *Haaretz*, the Interior Ministry was in the process of recognizing the previously unauthorized Bedouin village of Um Batin in the Negev, following an appeal to the High Court by the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, Physicians for Human Rights, and El Oneh, an organization that does advocacy for unrecognized Bedouin villages. Even before it becomes fully recognized, the village will have access to municipal services for the first time (*Haaretz* 27 Apr. 2005). The [translation] "Regional Council of Unrecognized Bedouin Villages" is trying to obtain official recognition of the remaining villages (*Le Monde* 27 Jan. 2003).

For information on the situation of Bedouin in Israel at the end of 1998, please consult *The Bedouins in Israel: A Special Report*, published by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) and available online at <<http://www.acri.org.il/english->

acri/engine/story.asp?id=99>.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel. June 2005. *Adalah's Newsletter*. Vol. 14. Morad El-Sana. "The Official Data on the Absent-Present Arab Bedouin." <<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/jun05/comi2.pdf>> [Accessed 27 July 2005]

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 5 January 2004. "Les druzes d'Israël traités en 'citoyens de seconde zone', accuse Joumblatt." <topic@alc1.par.afp.com> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2004]

_____. 4 January 2004. "Manifestation de 300 druzes bloqués à la frontière israélo-jordanienne." (Dialog)

_____. 2 December 2003. "Israeli Arabs Face Official Discrimination, Poverty: Report." (Dialog)

_____. 24 July 2003. "Israeli Police Shoot Dead Bedouin Driving Palestinian Workers." (Dialog)

_____. 2 April 2003. "Israel Destroys Negev Bedouin Harvest With Crop-Dusters." (NEXIS)

_____. 5 February 2003. "Israël démolit une mosquée construite sans permis par des bédouins du Néguev." (NEXIS/AFP)

Amnesty International (AI). June 2005. *Israel: Briefing to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*. (MDE 15/037/2005) <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engmde150372005>> [Accessed 27 July 2005]

_____. May 2004. "The Unrecognized Bedouin Villages in the Negev Region: Trespassers in their Homes." *Israel and the Occupied Territories. Under the Rubble: House Demolition and Destruction of Land and Property*. (MDE 15/033/2004) <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGMDE150332004>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]

The Arab Human Rights Association (HRA). N.d. "The Arab Bedouin in the Negev." *Factsheets*. <<http://www.arabhra.org/factsheets/factsheet3.htm>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). 5 February 2003. Banna

Shughry-Badarne. "ACRI Denounces Demolition of Mosque in an Unrecognized Bedouin Village." <<http://www.acri.org.il/english-acri/engine/story.asp?id=113>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]

_____. November 1998. *The Bedouins in Israel: A Special Report*. <<http://www.acri.org.il/english-acri/engine/story.asp?id=99>> [Accessed 29 July 2005]

The Christian Science Monitor [Boston]. 20 February 2003. Ben Lynfield. "In Israel's Desert, a Fight for Land." (NEXIS)

- Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004*. 28 February 2005. United States Department of State. Washington, DC.
<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41723.htm>> [Accessed 27 July 2005]
- The Daily Star* [Beirut]. 10 May 2005. "Bedouin Arabs in Israel: An Invisible Community." <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=14924> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- Freedom House. 9 September 2004. "Israel." *Freedom in the World 2004*.
<<http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2004/countryratings/israel.htm>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- Global IDP Project. 2 June 2005. "Profile Summary." *Profile of Internal Displacement: Israel*. <[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountriesb/Israel/\\$File/Israel%20-June%202005.pdf](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountriesb/Israel/$File/Israel%20-June%202005.pdf)> [Accessed 27 July 2005]
- The Guardian* [London]. 12 March 2003. Chris McGreal. "Bedouin Feel the Squeeze as Israel Resettles the Negev Desert." (NEXIS)
- _____. 27 February 2003. Chris McGreal. "Bedouin Feel the Squeeze as Israel Resettles the Negev Desert."
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,903627,00.htm>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- Haaretz* [Tel Aviv]. 20 July 2005. Oren Yiftachel. "Ending the Colonialism."
<<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/601659.html>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- _____. 15 July 2005. Aluf Benn. "U.S. Demands Aid be Used to Boost Bedouin and Druze." <<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/600604.html>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- _____. 27 April 2005. Zafir Rinat. "Interior Ministry to Grant Recognition to Bedouin Village in Negev."
<<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=569735>> [Accessed 27 July 2005]
- Houston Chronicle*. 30 November 2003. Jason Keyser. "Tribes Refuse to Leave Israeli Desert." (Factiva)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). 12 August 2004. "Israel: Budget Discriminates Against Arab Citizens." <<http://www.hrw.org>> [Accessed 11 Aug. 2004]
- International Crisis Group (ICG). 4 March 2004. "Executive Summary and Recommendations." *Identity Crisis: Israel and its Arab Citizens*.
<<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2528&l=1>> [Accessed 27 July 2005]
- Israel. 1 February 2004. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). "Society - Minority Communities."
<<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/facts%20about%20israel/people/society-%20minority%20communities>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- The Jerusalem Report*. 25 July 2005. Matti Friedman. "One Stitch at a Time."
- Jewish Virtual Library. N.d. Yosef Ben-David. "The Bedouin in Israel."
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/Bedouin.html> [Accessed 22 July 2005]
- The Journal News* [White Plains, NY]. 11 April 2003. Khurram Saeed. "Bedouin Describes Life as Israeli Citizen." (Factiva)

Le Monde [Paris]. 27 January 2003. Stéphanie Le Bars. "Les Bédouins du Néguev, oubliés du débat électoral en Israël." (NEXIS)

Mossawa Center. 22 January 2004. "Government Builds New Jewish Settlements on Bedouin Lands."

<<http://www.mossawacenter.org/en/pressreleases/2004/01/040122.html>>
[Accessed 25 July 2005]

_____. 2 December 2003. "Social Economic Status of Arab Citizens and Local Councils." <<http://www.mossawacenter.org/en/events/2003/12/031202.html>>
[Accessed 25 July 2005]

_____. 23 July 2003. "Two Arab Citizens Killed this Week by Israeli Police." <<http://www.mossawacenter.org/en/pressreleases/2003/07/030723.html>>
[Accessed 25 July 2005]

_____. 3 May 2003. "Protest the Campaign Against the Bedouins in the Negev!!! Removal of Bedouin Part of Economic Plan." <<http://www.mossawacenter.org/en/pressreleases/2003/05/030503.html>>
[Accessed 25 July 2005]

_____. 5 February 2003. "Bedouin Mosque Demolished." <<http://www.mossawacenter.org/en/pressreleases/2003/02/030205.html>>
[Accessed 25 July 2005]

The Observer [London]. 23 February 2003. Conal Urquhart. "Angry Bedouin Find Loyalty to Israel Goes Unrewarded." <<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,901130,00.html>> [Accessed 28 July 2005]

The Phoenix [Swarthmore, PA]. 9 October 2003. Eleanor Joseph. "Bedouin Speaker Describes Israeli Minority's Experience." <<http://phoenix.swarthmore.edu/2003-10-09/news/13289>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]

US Fed News. 6 July 2005. "Women's Anti-Discrimination Committee Voices Concern about Inequalities among Ethnic Groups, as It Takes up Israel's Report." (Factiva)

Ynet News.com. 8 July 2005. Rose Nahmias. "Bedouins Slam Government Policies." <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3109685,00.html>> [Accessed 22 July 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Al Jazeera, Arabic News, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *The Economist* [London], European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), *Gulf News* [Dubai], *The Jerusalem Post*, *Maariv* [Tel Aviv], World News Connection (WNC).

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.