



REPORT

THE STATE OF HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN ISRAEL IN 2024

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
1. CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT.....	1
2. VIOLATIONS OF HOUSING, LAND, AND URBAN PLANNING RIGHTS.....	2
2.1 Forced Demolitions and Displacement in the Negev.....	2
2.2 Discriminatory Land Allocation and Housing Policies.....	2
2.2.1 Discriminatory Planning and Home Demolitions:.....	2
2.2.2 Blocked Local Housing Opportunities.....	3
2.2.3 Budget Cuts and Policy Failures.....	3
3. ATTACKS ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.....	3
3.1 Legislative and Administrative Suppression.....	3
3.2 Media and Alternative Discourse.....	4
3.3 Attacks on Human Rights Advocates.....	4
4. DENIAL OF LEGAL RIGHTS AND JUDICIAL DISCRIMINATION.....	4
4.1 Inadequate Legal Procedures and Virtual Hearings.....	4
4.2 Unlawful Dismissals and Discriminatory Legal Practices.....	4
5. ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION AND BUDGETARY MISALLOCATIONS.....	5
5.1 State Budget Discrimination.....	5
5.2 Cultural, Educational, and Social Service Budget Cuts.....	5
5.2.1 Cuts in Palestinian Arab Cultural Budgets.....	5
5.2.2 Underutilization of Welfare and Environmental Funds.....	5
5.3 Disparities in Industrial, Banking, and Employment Opportunities.....	6
5.3.1 Economic Marginalization Through Planning Policies.....	6
5.3.2 Banking Services and Mortgage Disparities.....	6
5.3.3 Employment Discrimination in the Private Sector.....	6
6. VIOLATIONS AGAINST WORKERS AND PUBLIC SERVICES USERS.....	7

6.1 Persecution and Harassment in the Workplace.....	7
6.2 Public Services and Transportation.....	7
7. SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION IN JUDICIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS....	7
7.1 Systemic Underrepresentation in the Judiciary.....	7
7.2 Political and Administrative Exclusion.....	8
8. ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL WELFARE INJUSTICES.....	8
8.1 Unutilized and Mismanaged Budget Allocations.....	8
8.1.1 Transparency Failures and Economic Neglect.....	8
8.1.2 Educational Disparities.....	8
8.2 Infrastructure in Social Welfare Departments.....	9
CONCLUSION.....	9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report offers a comprehensive analysis of systemic human and civil rights violations affecting Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel during 2024, as meticulously documented by the Mossawa Center. It reveals how discriminatory state policies and practices - including forced demolitions, displacement of unrecognized villages in the Negev, and discriminatory urban planning - are used to marginalize these communities. The report details severe infringements on legal rights through practices such as remote “virtual” court hearings, which undermine due process, as well as unlawful dismissals that target individuals based on their religious expression and political views. Additionally, it highlights economic discrimination manifested in drastic budget cuts, misallocations of funds intended for cultural, educational, and social welfare services, and inequitable land allocation that forces Palestinian Arab families into precarious living conditions. The report further documents legislative measures such as the controversial NGO Bill that are designed to stifle civil society, as well as discriminatory policies within the judiciary and other state institutions.

Together, these violations underscore deep-rooted structural biases in judicial appointments, urban planning, and economic policies that exacerbate socio-economic divides and erode the civil rights and quality of life of Palestinian Arab citizens. This report is intended to serve as an essential informational resource for policymakers, human rights advocates, and international observers, urging immediate reforms and accountability to secure equal rights for all citizens.

1. CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Palestinian Arab communities have long experienced high crime rates and violence. Organized crime rings often operate with relative impunity due to insufficient police intervention. In 2024, 221 Palestinian Arab citizens were murdered. In contrast, Jewish communities typically receive faster and more decisive law enforcement responses, further deepening Palestinian Arab citizens’ distrust in police and state institutions.

2. VIOLATIONS OF HOUSING, LAND, AND URBAN PLANNING RIGHTS

2.1 Forced Demolitions and Displacement in the Negev

Mossawa Center has been monitoring and documenting the realities of unrecognized villages such as al-Araqueeb and al-Zarnuqa. Residents face continuous demolitions, state-led house demolitions, and neglect - even during wartime. Community leaders like Sheikh Sayyah Al-Turi have repeatedly recounted that their villages have been demolished more than 400 times. These operations are part of systematic efforts by local authorities to “evacuate” these communities from their ancestral lands, which constitutes a direct violation of the residents’ right to housing and property.

Recent actions in the Naqab have seen the demolition of entire family homes in Bedouin villages (e.g., the attack on the Abu Kaf family’s home in Um Batin). These demolitions, conducted by heavily armed police forces, are interpreted as an attempt to open a new front against Palestinian Arab citizens and as an instrument to force relocation. The report details how over 100,000 Palestinian Arab citizens in the Naqab live in substandard conditions - often in tents or dilapidated structures - and are systematically denied the legal right to build, with discriminatory planning policies exacerbating the crisis.

2.2 Discriminatory Land Allocation and Housing Policies

2.2.1 Discriminatory Planning and Home Demolitions:

For decades, discriminatory urban planning policies have denied Arab towns the permits and land needed for expansion. Authorities routinely block the development of industrial and employment zones, exacerbating overcrowding, job shortages, and poverty. Families in Arab municipalities are forced to build without permits, which places them at constant risk of forced eviction and demolition.

In the Naqab, entire villages such as Umm al-Hiran and al-Araqueeb - face repeated destruction under the pretext of illegality, despite residents’ deep historical ties to their land. In the case of al-Araqueeb, the village has been demolished close to 400 times since 2010. In stark contrast,

Jewish communities and illegal settlements in the occupied territories benefit from state-backed support for expansion.

2.2.2 Blocked Local Housing Opportunities

The Israel Land Authority has been accused of obstructing the marketing of housing units meant for local Palestinian Arab populations. By opening tenders to non-residents, the authority forces young couples and families to look for homes in predominantly Jewish or mixed cities, thereby eroding the social and economic fabric of Palestinian Arab towns. The systematic withholding of permits and master plans directly undermines the community's right to develop and maintain viable neighborhoods.

2.2.3 Budget Cuts and Policy Failures

Government resolutions, such as those intended to close housing gaps and allocate tens of thousands of housing units, have been severely compromised by budget cuts (up to 15% for Arab-specific programs) and administrative delays. These measures have increased land prices and limited the state's ability to provide affordable housing solutions, directly impacting the rights of Palestinian Arab citizens to safe and secure housing.

3. ATTACKS ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

3.1 Legislative and Administrative Suppression

A proposed amendment to the Associations Law imposes an 80% tax on foreign government donations to human rights organizations - a move aimed at stifling dissent and cutting off funding to groups that document state abuses. The bill grants the finance minister unchecked discretionary power to exempt certain organizations, effectively targeting independent human rights groups while favoring right-wing aligned organizations. It also limits the ability of NGOs to petition Israeli courts, removing a critical judicial oversight mechanism. This targeted legislation represents a direct attack on civil society and freedom of expression.

3.2 Media and Alternative Discourse

Panels and conferences organized by the Mossawa Center have documented how mainstream Israeli media consistently marginalizes Palestinian Arab voices and alternative viewpoints. Journalists and alternative media outlets are forced to rely on under-resourced platforms, while state-controlled narratives dominate public discourse. This imbalance undermines the right to information and hinders public debate on human rights issues.

3.3 Attacks on Human Rights Advocates

In a particularly egregious case, former police officer Liyor Hatam was finally convicted - after seven years - for assaulting Mossawa Center Director Jafar Farah. The assault occurred during a protest-related incident at the Haifa police station, where Farah was beaten and suffered a broken leg. The delayed justice in this case, combined with internal police cover-ups and institutional deflections, underscores a broader pattern of state-sanctioned impunity against human rights defenders.

4. DENIAL OF LEGAL RIGHTS AND JUDICIAL DISCRIMINATION

4.1 Inadequate Legal Procedures and Virtual Hearings

The Mossawa Center has documented multiple cases where the rights of detainees have been compromised by “virtual” court hearings. Instead of having physical presence before a judge - a critical component of a fair trial - detainees appear remotely via mobile devices. This arrangement severely diminishes their ability to communicate effectively with legal counsel and to defend themselves properly, thus constituting a serious breach of due process and judicial fairness.

4.2 Unlawful Dismissals and Discriminatory Legal Practices

Two key cases illustrate how administrative decisions are used to curtail civil rights. One involves an Palestinian Arab nurse at Bnei Zion Hospital, who was unlawfully dismissed after fabricated charges linked to sympathizing with a terrorist organization - a claim unsupported by

police evidence. In another case, a Palestinian Arab employee from Clalit Medical Engineering was dismissed for posting Quranic verses on social media. In both instances, the actions taken not only deny the individuals' right to work but also infringe on their freedom of expression and religion.

5. ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION AND BUDGETARY MISALLOCATIONS

5.1 State Budget Discrimination

In 2024, a 15% reduction was imposed on Arab-directed programs, whereas other sectors faced only a 5% cut. Between 2024 and 2026, NIS over 4.7 billion (approximately \$1.25 billion) will be slashed from funding originally earmarked for Arab citizens.

Government Resolution 550 (the “Takadum Program”) was designed to allocate NIS 30 billion (\$8.2 billion) over five years, with an intended annual transfer of NIS 6 billion (\$1.63 billion) for 2022–2026. However, only NIS 3.9 billion (\$1 billion) was actually transferred in 2022. These discrepancies and the lack of full disclosure on budget distribution details further exacerbate socio-economic disparities in education, employment, health, and infrastructure.

5.2 Cultural, Educational, and Social Service Budget Cuts

5.2.1 Cuts in Palestinian Arab Cultural Budgets

A 15% reduction in the Palestinian Arab culture budget has been documented, which jeopardizes the establishment of key cultural institutions such as public libraries, museums, theaters, and art exhibitions. These cuts hinder access to cultural production and education, depriving Palestinian Arab communities of the tools needed for social empowerment and collective identity building.

5.2.2 Underutilization of Welfare and Environmental Funds

Transparency petitions have revealed that significant portions of funds allocated under Government Resolution 550 (aimed at improving welfare and environmental conditions) remain unutilized or are insufficiently transferred. For example, only 20% of the budget earmarked for addressing environmental issues in Palestinian Arab localities has been spent. Such delays and

misallocations deepen existing gaps in public services and violate the rights of the community to a healthy and supportive living environment.

5.3 Disparities in Industrial, Banking, and Employment Opportunities

5.3.1 Economic Marginalization Through Planning Policies

More than 20 Palestinian Arab towns have demanded the development of industrial zones to stimulate local economic growth. However, funding has been allocated to only a handful of towns, leaving most municipalities economically stranded. This inequitable distribution of industrial investments limits job creation and revenue generation in Palestinian Arab communities, contributing to chronic poverty.

5.3.2 Banking Services and Mortgage Disparities

Studies highlighted by the Mossawa Center show that Palestinian Arab citizens face significant obstacles in accessing banking services. With only 10% of bank branches located in Palestinian Arab towns and average mortgage loans significantly lower than those for Jewish citizens, these financial disparities push many into the informal economy. The Mossawa Center has actively engaged with the Bank of Israel to demand reforms and increased outreach to Palestinian Arab communities.

5.3.3 Employment Discrimination in the Private Sector

High-profile cases - such as the controversy involving Rami Levy (owner of the third largest retail supermarket chain in Israel), who initially made discriminatory remarks about replacing Palestinian Arab workers - underline ongoing workplace discrimination. Legal actions have been initiated by the Mossawa Center to address employment practices that systematically marginalize Palestinian Arab citizens, thereby curtailing their economic rights.

6. VIOLATIONS AGAINST WORKERS AND PUBLIC SERVICES USERS

6.1 Persecution and Harassment in the Workplace

Amid the ongoing war, there has been a noticeable escalation in the persecution of Palestinian Arab workers. Mass dismissals and harassment, including cases where workers are fired without compensation, have been documented. The Mossawa Center reports that such dismissals are often justified under dubious allegations of “supporting terrorism” or engaging in inflammatory social media posts, thereby criminalizing ordinary expressions of dissent or faith.

The targeting of Palestinian Arab workers not only affects individual livelihoods but also undermines the broader economic stability of Palestinian Arab communities. The resulting loss of income, compounded by discriminatory budget cuts in public services and welfare programs, drives families deeper into poverty and exacerbates the cycle of social marginalization.

6.2 Public Services and Transportation

Mossawa Center’s campaign for enhanced bus services between neighborhoods in areas like Halisa and Abbas highlights a less-discussed civil rights issue. Insufficient transportation services affect students’ punctuality and safety, limiting access to education and essential services. This deficit is symptomatic of the broader neglect of public services in Palestinian Arab localities.

7. SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION IN JUDICIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

7.1 Systemic Underrepresentation in the Judiciary

Mossawa Center’s analysis reveals that only a small fraction of the judges appointed in Israel are from the Palestinian Arab community - even though Palestinian Arab citizens constitute around 20% of the population. With only three Palestinian Arab judges appointed out of 39 new judges in one documented cycle, the lack of adequate representation extends to the Judicial

Appointments Committee. This systemic bias perpetuates discrimination by marginalizing Palestinian Arab voices within the very institutions meant to ensure justice and equality.

In response to these disparities, Mossawa Center has formally demanded legislative and procedural reforms to guarantee fair representation in judicial appointments. The Mossawa Center's recommendations include amending the committee's composition to include more Palestinian Arab members and ensuring that judicial decisions reflect the diversity of Israeli society.

7.2 Political and Administrative Exclusion

The Mossawa Center's interventions document that Palestinian Arab citizens are systematically sidelined in the political arena. From inadequate representation on planning committees to discriminatory practices in municipal services, the evidence suggests a deliberate strategy to marginalize the Palestinian Arab voice in policy-making and governance.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL WELFARE INJUSTICES

8.1 Unutilized and Mismanaged Budget Allocations

8.1.1 Transparency Failures and Economic Neglect

Repeated Freedom of Information petitions have revealed that only a fraction of the funds allocated for environmental improvements, welfare services, and educational gap-closing initiatives are actually spent. For instance, significant portions of the environmental budget remain unspent, and many welfare programs are chronically underfunded. These misallocations have severe implications for public health, infrastructure, and the quality of education in Palestinian Arab communities.

8.1.2 Educational Disparities

Data provided by the Ministry of Education show that despite allocations intended to bridge educational disparities, key indicators such as matriculation rates and performance in

international assessments remain significantly lower among Palestinian Arab students. The failure to fully implement budgeted programs further entrenches these inequalities.

8.2 Infrastructure in Social Welfare Departments

The Mossawa Center has documented that in many Palestinian Arab towns, infrastructure for social welfare services is critically lacking. Proposals for new welfare departments are in place, but allocated funds remain underutilized due to bureaucratic delays and discriminatory prioritization by central ministries.

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in this report paints a stark picture of systematic and multifaceted human and civil rights violations against Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel. The extensive documentation by the Mossawa Center exposes a deliberate pattern of state-sanctioned discrimination - from forced evictions and demolition campaigns to legal injustices and economic marginalization - compounded by inadequate state protection and political repression. Discriminatory urban planning and budgetary misallocations further entrench inequality, while legislative measures targeting civil society serve to silence dissent and restrict judicial oversight. These practices not only undermine the fundamental rights to housing, education, and employment but also marginalize Palestinian Arab voices in judicial and political institutions.

Urgent and coordinated action is required to address these violations, ensure accountability, and implement reforms that promote equitable resource allocation and genuine inclusion. This report calls on national and international stakeholders to recognize the severity of these violations and work collectively to establish a framework that upholds the principles of justice, equality, and human dignity for all.