

Suggested Questions for the UN Universal Periodic Review of Israel, January 2013
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Submitted 30 November 2012

Constitutional and legislative framework

Please indicate whether the State party envisages including the **right to equality** and the prohibition of discrimination explicitly in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. In the absence of a constitutionally-guaranteed right to equality – or even an ordinary statute that guarantees equality for all citizens – how does the State of Israel reconcile its duties under international human rights law to ensure equal rights and protections to all its citizens and to protect them against discrimination?

Many Israeli laws include the terms “**Jewish and democratic State**”, “the values of the State as a Jewish State”, and/or refer to “Israel’s heritage” as a source of law. Why does this not constitute discrimination against non-Jews, in particular, the Arab minority?

Right to participate in political life

The frequency of disqualification motions in advance of the Israeli general elections targeted explicitly against **Arab political leaders and Arab political parties** is deeply concerning in regards to the protection of the democratic and political rights of the Arab minority in Israel. Furthermore, the fact that the promotion of a “state for all its citizens” is being inferred as grounds for disqualification from the Israeli elections is very concerning, as it contradicts democratic principles.

What measures will the state take to ensure the right of Arab citizens of Israel to political participation, including for all Arab political parties and Arab political leaders in the upcoming national elections in January 2013? Further, what steps will the State Party take against the severe attacks and harassment of Arab members of Knesset?

Participation of minorities in public service

Seeing that the rate of **Arab employment in the civil service** has failed to reach the interim quotas set out by the government, what new measures or strategies will Israel take to increase the representation of Arab citizens in public services, particularly Arab women? How will the state ensure that Arab citizens are adequately represented in all government ministries that have a direct impact on their lives, including the Ministries of Health, Education, Transport, Housing and Finance? What measures will the state take to facilitate the promotion of Arab employees to higher positions in government ministries?

Right to work and favorable conditions of employment

What policies will Israel implement to alleviate the **high rate of poverty** among Arab citizens? How does Israel plan to address the **unequal allocation of state resources** that disadvantages Arab localities, including the lack of employment-generating industrial zones in Arab towns and villages? What measures is Israel taking to increase the employment rate of

Arab citizens, particularly Arab women? What measures will Israel take to bridge the gap between income earned by Jewish and Arab citizens of the state?

The **lack of public transportation** in Arab towns and villages is also a major obstacle that hinders Arab citizens' ability to go to their places of work, which are often in other cities and are long distances away from their homes. What steps will be taken to improve the availability of public transportation services for workers in Arab towns and villages?

Right to health and social security

Given the **lack of health clinics or hospitals in Arab towns and villages** as compared to Jewish towns, and the barriers faced by Arab citizens in receiving health access such as language and transportation, how will the state ensure that Arab citizens are provided adequate health care services and equal health rights? What measures is Israel taking to address the **pervasive discrepancies in health indicators** between the Jewish, Arab and Arab Bedouin populations, including the infant mortality rates and life expectancy rates, particularly in light of comments that the state is not providing adequate resources to thousands of Arab Bedouin citizens in unrecognized villages in the Naqab (Negev) region?

Right to equal educational standards

How does Israel plan to reduce the **gap in educational resources** allocated between Jewish and Arab students, particularly in light of the absence of many basic services and facilities for Arab Bedouin students in the Naqab? What measures is Israel taking to reduce the **high dropout rates** of Arab students? Why do Arab schools receive very little instruction in Palestinian and Arab history, geography, literature and culture? How will the state facilitate greater representation of Arab citizens in higher positions in the Ministry of Education?

Rights of minorities and indigenous peoples

“The Plan for the Regulation of Settlement of the Bedouin in the Negev” (also known as the **Prawer Plan**) is a source of great concern, as, if fully implemented it will **displace and dispossess tens of thousands of Arab Bedouin** from their homes and villages in the Naqab. Why does the state refuse to officially recognize the so-called “unrecognized” Arab Bedouin villages? In particular, why does the state withhold recognition of these villages while neighboring Jewish towns have been allowed to grow and expand? What steps is Israel taking to respect and protect the rights of Arab Bedouin children living in the unrecognized villages in the Naqab to an adequate standard of living and to provide them with basic infrastructure and services? Why doesn't the state consider alternatives to home demolitions, evacuations and other forms of forced relocation for the Arab Bedouin? Are there any processes in place for Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel in these villages to continue living on their traditional ancestral lands in the Naqab?